



## CASE STUDY

# How A+E Networks entertains the world with Airtable

A+E Networks is a global content company with a portfolio of media brands that extend across platforms and genres, including A+E®, Lifetime®, and HISTORY®

A+E Networks transformed the way they work by creating their own customized workflows on Airtable. Establishing a central source of truth between their programming and marketing departments allowed A+E to increase agility and move faster to capture new opportunities in the market.

“People would just start on projects without thinking ahead of time about what they actually needed to produce or planning the best route to get there.”



**Kate Leonard**  
Vice President,  
Marketing Production

## Collaborating successfully in a global marketplace

A+E Networks programming spans the globe with popular and culturally relevant brands that are home to hits like *Pawn Stars*, *Intervention*, *Curse of Oak Island*, and *Biography*. In addition to 1,600 hours of programming, A+E Networks produces original short- and long-form content, podcasts and thousands of associated marketing materials annually. **Collaboration isn't an afterthought — it's mission-critical.**

In 2018, A+E Networks committed to finding new ways for departments to collaborate, communicate, and stay nimble. Their business was growing in a number of different areas and they knew they had to streamline their workflows to keep moving ahead efficiently. The company faced an incredibly daunting landscape: hundreds of people and processes across departments create assets, serving them to a dizzying array of distribution channels and platforms. The hunger for great content was always growing, with new international opportunities opening up every day. And in a continually evolving industry, the company had to think beyond traditional collaboration tools to keep everything on track.

## The challenge: Hamstrung by inflexible tools

A+E Networks had no common workflow system or central source of truth between the programming and marketing departments, making asset creation, scheduling, distribution, and tracking complicated and disorganized. Moreover, teams were saddled with an inflexible legacy asset management system that did not meet their current business needs. There was no system for managing and prioritizing contracts, putting revenue at risk because deals took too long. On top of that, adding new projects or adjusting workflows required extensive planning and hard-coding: even the smallest change took weeks or months to make.

## The solution: Customized workflows for every team

Jennifer Pierce, director of marketing production at A+E Networks, was obsessed with improving collaboration amongst teams. Using Airtable's low-code software creation platform, she could link marketing assets to their associated programs in one central location, exactly the way A+E Networks needed, and in a way that made sense to their employees. “When I started digging into Airtable, I got excited about the possibilities,” Pierce says. “I saw that it could integrate into our workflow, rather than making us adapt our workflow to Airtable.”

Airtable quickly grew to do more than linking marketing assets to programming — it was becoming a centralized platform utilized company-wide. For the next four months, Airtable's Customer Success Manager embedded with 12 different teams at the organization, helping them tailor the platform to their needs. They created a project tracker and management system for the marketing team, giving them clear oversight over assets. They also created a contract tracker that connected the legal, finance, and programming departments so they can execute on distribution deals faster. And in the process, they took advantage of the wealth of features Airtable offers, like linked records, API & third-party integrations, personal views and filters, reporting and dashboards, point and click design, notifications, attachments, and comments.

**“Airtable has made us smarter about what we’re producing and how we’re producing it.”**

**Kate Leonard**

Vice President, Marketing Production

Michael Alfieri, senior production manager at A+E Networks, was frequently amazed to see how quickly they could build on Airtable, compared to what would take months in the old system.

“Our CSM would sometimes create a solution in a meeting. We’d say, ‘Great, how long will that take to build?’” he laughs. “And she’d say, ‘It’s built. I just built it.’”

Over Labor Day weekend, 2018, Pierce and her team moved operations for all of the portfolio’s brands to Airtable so the departments would be ready to hit the ground running when they came back on Tuesday. The work they’d put into planning made for a seamless transition; Airtable’s multitude of views allowed employees to create an environment that felt instantly familiar. They could pick right back up where they left off in their work before the long weekend.

## Results: A more agile, unified, and empowered team

**“Airtable revolutionized the timeline for creating new tools, which we can use to manage everything we do across the spectrum of marketing.”**



**Michael Alfieri**

Senior Production Manager,  
360 Marketing

- ▶ **Agility:** With one centralized hub for all their information, management can now see what every department and employee is doing and be more proactive in their decision-making. Analytics are easier to run and more complete now that all their data is in one place, enhancing their ability to strategize. They have a clearer picture of how assets are being produced and can update information and change workflows on the fly with a simple change of views.
- ▶ **Unity:** A+E Networks’ goals of increased communication and collaboration have succeeded beyond expectations. Every department now has more insight into what other departments are doing, easing communication and increasing productivity. They collaborate within and across departments in a way they could not before because everyone — from management to PR to line producers to graphic designers — has immediate access to the same information.

- **Empowerment:** Employees are empowered to devise their own solutions in a way they never were before. This isn't just empowering for the people who have an idea of what they want to change already, it's also enabling employees to tap into strengths they never realized they had.

“Airtable has built a robust platform that enables the business teams to quickly build out use cases and workflows for our enterprise. Our business and technology teams are truly enhanced by working with Airtable.”



**Jack Fong**  
VP, Revenue, International,  
Marketing & Research Solutions



## What's next for Airtable and A+E

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit America, A+E Networks was prepared. The connections enabled by Airtable made it easy for them to move to a remote workforce without skipping a beat. Alfieri and his team even used Airtable to create their moving plan, assessing which equipment needed to be moved on the same day A+E Networks made the call to send employees home.

Every day, they're finding new ways to incorporate Airtable into their workflow. Recently, they've started building meeting agendas and creative reviews in Airtable so people who can't attend meetings will have all the information they need, whenever they're ready. A+E Networks continues to move ahead faster than ever while helping employees through the challenges of the moment — all while continuing to evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.