

# BLKBX Creative Group Sets Strategy to Combine Discipline and Creativity for Long-Term Success

CASE STUDY

**armanino** 

## At A Glance

### Customer Profile:

Headquartered in Hollywood, California, BLKBX Creative Group produces award-winning content and digital marketing for the entertainment industry. BLKBX grew from a startup into a rapidly expanding studio, working with all the major players in the business. Facing growing pains and a concern about future profitability, the founders turned to Armanino for guidance in developing a long-term strategy tied to company and personal leadership goals.

### Software and Services

- Armanino Strategy & Transformation Services
- Armanino Outsourced Finance & Accounting, including Human Resources Services
- Armanino Tax Services

### Benefits

- Achieved goals for company performance after implementing new strategic plan
- Gained structure and discipline without impeding creativity
- Aligned the company for growth and profitability with clear goals and strategy

***"The right partner shines a flashlight under the hood of a business to illuminate what's really happening with a company."***

**-Frank Donner**

## Challenge

BLKBX Creative Group delivers award-winning content that promotes every major studio, including Disney, Sony and Warner Brothers, as well as streaming powerhouses such as Netflix and Amazon. The company was launched in 2010 as its founders realized that the entertainment industry was rapidly changing, and that digital marketing and advertising were leading the revolution.

Success, and then incredible growth, came quickly for the agency, which found itself hiring many new creative staff as it landed agency-of-record contracts with one leading brand after the next. Company executives began to be concerned that the agency's mission and vision were becoming diluted as it rapidly added new employees and clients.

"Our team was working on amazing projects, but we started to worry that with all the growth, something was missing," says Frank Donner, president of BLKBX. "There was an elephant in the room, and we began to ask, 'Are we working harder, but not smarter?'" Indeed, presented with financial statements, agency executives and the company board of advisors were disappointed in the agency's actual bottom-line results.

Donner knew it was time to take action, and he reached out to the agency's long-time partner for corporate accounting (now part of Armanino LLP, one of the 25 largest independent accounting and consulting firms in the U.S.). His contact put him in touch with the Armanino Strategy & Transformation team.

## Solution

From the moment that Donner spoke with Armanino about strategic advisory services and help with long-term financial planning, it was clear that the Strategy & Transformation team was going to be a good fit for the agency. "Armanino put us at ease while demonstrating the knowledge, rigor and discipline that we knew would be necessary to get where we wanted to be with the company," says Donner.

The goal of the engagement was to create a strategic plan tied to company objectives. The first step was a one-day company strategy session facilitated by Armanino to define company goals and how to reach them, as well as set personal leadership goals for Donner and the executive team. Key BLKBX finance and operations leaders rolled up their sleeves, participated in defining the strategic plan and now serve as the day-to-day conduit to execute upon it.

Once the strategy, goals and scorecard for success were defined, the BLKBX team felt it had a "bulletproof plan" that enabled the agency to move forward and perform at its best. "The plan aligned all of our senior managers and made our goals perfectly clear," says Donner. "Everyone is now moving forward in lockstep."

*“Armanino’s support has been like having a strong, well-equipped Sherpa while climbing Mount Everest.”*

**-Frank Donner**

## Results

With strategic guidance from Armanino, BLKBX implemented structure and discipline into its day-to-day operations—all without compromising creativity, which is the backbone of the agency. After implementing the strategies developed with Armanino—including managing to goals, using a scorecard to prioritize activities, and gaining better visibility into the opportunity pipeline—the company immediately started to experience tangible shifts in business performance. The agency is now on track to achieve one of its best years ever.

Donner credits the Armanino team for helping him “get his arms around all the fundamentals of the business” and lead the agency toward greater success over the next three to five years. “The right partner shines a flashlight under the hood of a business to illuminate what’s really happening with a company,” says Donner. “With Armanino, we have a unique partnership, one that is based on trust and value, confidence and understanding, and communication and transparency.”

The efficient engagement delivered lasting value for BLKBX. “Armanino’s support has been like having a strong, well-equipped Sherpa while climbing Mount Everest,” says Donner. “It took us five years to get to base camp on our own, but now with a solid strategy in place thanks to Armanino, we’re on our way to the top.”

## About Armanino

Armanino provides an integrated set of accounting services—audit, tax, consulting and technology solutions—to a wide range of organizations operating both in the US and globally. You can count on Armanino to think strategically, to provide the sound insights that lead to positive action. We address not just your compliance issues, but your underlying business challenges, as well—assessing opportunities, weighing risks, and exploring the practical implications of both your short- and long-term decisions. When you work with us, we give you options that are fully aligned with your business strategy. If you need to do more with less, we will implement the technology to automate your business processes. If it’s financial, we can show you proven benchmarks and best practices that can add value company-wide. If the issue is operational, we’ll consult with your people about workflow efficiencies. If it’s compliance, we’ll ensure you meet the requirements and proactively plan to take full advantage of the changes at hand. At every stage in your company’s lifecycle, we’ll help you find the right balance of people, processes, and technology.