

Amido

With the move to company-wide remote work, the Amido team has focused on building the right tech stack to make employees successful from wherever they are. They've adopted the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite in order to help support real-time collaboration, facilitate effective meetings, create a single source of truth, and consolidate their tech stack.

Key benefits

SUPPORT REMOTE WORK

With a now fully remote company, Amido is dedicated to providing employees with the tools they need to be productive and successful. The Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite has become a vital part of their evolving tech stack and helps teams work together seamlessly.

CREATE A CENTRAL REPOSITORY

The Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite helps Amido ensure learnings and resources are centrally managed and easily discoverable so that team members can benefit from each other's knowledge.

COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY

Lucidspark and Lucidchart allow the Amido team to work collaboratively and hold more effective meetings with team members and clients, especially now that they can't go on site.

SAVE TIME

Lucidscale allows Amido to improve communication with clients and deliver solutions more quickly.

INDUSTRY: B2B Services

SIZE: Medium (101-2500 employees)

ROLE: Engineering, Business, IT, Professional Services

Amido, an Ensono company, is a cloud-native consultancy dedicated to providing clients with better business outcomes. They help clients design, build and run cloud solutions that are resilient at scale, innovative, and deliver meaningful customer experiences—all while minimizing business risk and build cost.



As a cloud-native consultancy and Ensono company, Amido's goal is to create better business outcomes for their clients by helping them design, build, and run cloud solutions that are resilient at scale, innovative, and deliver meaningful customer experiences. However, Amido knows that the first step to delivering optimal solutions for their clients is to provide their internal organization with the toolkit they need to get their work done successfully.

According to CTO Simon Evans, "Amido spends quite a lot of time on our internal tooling, basically trying to make sure we pick what we believe is the best breed of everything."

Building the dream tech stack

With the company-wide move to working fully remote last year, the Amido team has focused on dreaming up what a productive remote team looks like—and, more specifically, what tools are needed to best support that team. They've developed key initiatives around the company's evolving tech stack.

The products Amido adopts need to:

1. Support real-time collaboration.
2. Help facilitate effective meetings.
3. Avoid fragmentation between solution vendors.
4. Create a single source of truth for company knowledge and artifacts.

Amido discovered that the three products in the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite work together seamlessly to help meet each and every one of their company initiatives.

The company has relied on Lucidchart's intelligent diagramming capabilities for years for activities like process mapping and architecture diagramming, and they adopted Lucidscale to further enhance their cloud architecture diagramming. When Lucidspark was launched, Amido embraced the full suite, turning to this third product to support their remote whiteboarding needs.

Mapping user flows with Lucidchart

The Amido team has been using Lucidchart for nearly a decade, and the decision to use the product was simple.

"We wanted a collaborative diagramming tool," Simon says. "And we decided long ago that we thought that Lucidchart gives us the capabilities we need to work together effectively with each other and with our clients."

The Amido team now relies on Lucidchart for a variety of use cases. Leo Barnes, senior business analyst, says he uses Lucidchart every day. In fact, he has his diagrams down to a fine art—clients can instantly recognize his "brand" of diagram. Each time he starts a project with a client, he uses Lucidchart to understand their business and how this project fits into their overall goals.

Leo has very little time to come up to speed on a client's domain, so he creates user flows that depict his understanding of the user journey and business requirements, which are then presented to the client. Leo likes going to meetings prepped with one of his diagrams, since it encourages discussion and feedback from everyone in the room, which he is then able to incorporate in real time.

Leo has found creating these visuals to be far superior than lists or blocks of text for ensuring all relevant information is captured and accurate.

"I really use Lucidchart as a starting point because I think very visually, and I think a lot of people are more visual than they realize. Quite often people will say, 'Oh no, it's fine. I'm fine with the list.' But then when you show them a diagram, they go, 'ah,' and then they figure out a whole bunch of stuff that they thought they'd already uncovered."

Leo also uses Lucidchart to map out internal process flows, sketch ideas out on the fly in real time, and collaborate with the architects he works with. The Amido team uses the Confluence integration to keep all their visuals in a central place that is always up to date. This makes sharing knowledge between the business analysts and other teams simple.

Improving communication with architecture diagrams

Dusan Nitschneider, senior consultant at Amido, calls Lucidchart his "go-to tool" when he's working on conceptual designs for a client's solution. He uses the product to first create a basic skeleton drawing of high or low level infrastructure, using different tabs to display varying levels of detail. The result is a unified view of a system—something he says he wouldn't be able to depict within a single canvas.

Dusan then uses containers and shapes to display application and networking components. He presents the final visuals to clients and stakeholders so he can gather feedback and continue his iteration.

Dusan loves how easy it is to share his diagrams with others, whether it's using presentation mode to walk through his diagrams, embedding them within other living documents, or exporting them as PNGs to embed in markdown. He also uses the Visio export to work seamlessly with clients.

According to Dusan, Lucidchart has resulted in significant time savings for him and his team. He says:

"The speed or the velocity at which we can turn out artifacts has increased by just limiting the number of tools that we use."

The product has also improved collaboration in today's remote world. "When we're having remote calls, we always start off by saying, 'Oh, hold on. Let me explain this. Let me just open up a Lucidchart diagram and let's go through this.' Just by virtue of having used the product for a while and knowing how you prefer to use it, it's very quick just to draw something out and everyone just kind of gets it right away. That makes life a lot easier than having to explain a concept just using my hands."

Saving time with Lucidscale

Dusan's Lucidchart diagrams are just the beginning. Next he moves to Lucidscale, where he can auto-generate cloud architecture diagrams by importing data from AWS. He creates an operational guideline for people to understand how a solution truly operates, rather than solely relying on a more conceptual view.

Using Lucidscale, Dusan can filter and customize his cloud diagrams to create different views so that he and his team can dive into specific details and get the information they need. He can start at a high level and drill down into additional detail, such as when he only wants to view the network elements or wants to dig into security groups. He can also implement conditional formatting to further customize these visualizations.

Dusan says, "Lucidscale diagrams reflect what has been done because obviously everything is controlled via code, especially in terms of infrastructure. All that infrastructure is then resurfaced back inside Lucidscale. You get a feel for what is controlled or what the code actually does."

These diagrams are easy to maintain and keep up to date with data refresh, which provides living architecture documentation that anyone can reference. They help guide those doing the actual implementation.

Afterwards, these diagrams serve as simple reference documents for anyone who needs to understand how a system works without reading through lines of code. This documentation is especially crucial for those who don't build the systems but are charged with maintaining them and resolving issues that arise. These teams rely on these diagrams to understand the cloud infrastructure and easily identify the root cause of problems.

Using Lucidscale has saved Amido time and helped prevent human error, since they no longer need to do all their diagramming work manually. Dusan says using the tool is "100 times easier than starting from scratch."

Dusan describes:

"After delivering a solution, we have to hand off diagrams showing what we actually built. Before Lucidscale, you would have to spend time recreating artifacts either from memory or going over the code, trying to understand what you've actually done and what's there as part of the hand-off. Now that we can import our architecture, it saves us a good few days, if not a week, of time. You know that it's accurate, as opposed to there always being that one thing that you miss. And if there is something that you haven't done in code and is done by hand, it will show up in the diagram, which helps raise red flags so we stop and evaluate."

Collaborating remotely with Lucidspark

Simon has always been a big proponent for consultants being very hands on with clients and working on site with them. When Covid hit, this traditional model was no longer possible. As the team built their remote toolkit, they realized they needed a digital whiteboard.

After considering the options, Amido chose Lucidspark largely due to the Lucidchart integration. Simon and his team are trying to avoid fragmentation between vendors whenever possible, so the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite is the perfect solution for having diagrams and whiteboards consolidated within a single platform.

Simon has found Lucidspark to be invaluable for meeting facilitation. He says, "The interesting thing about that is if you've got a team that knows what they're doing with Lucidspark, it's actually more efficient working in Lucidspark than it is working on a traditional whiteboard. For example, if we do user research, the UX crew will have a collaborative session with a bunch of users in Lucidspark, and effectively it's taking friction out of the whole remote working world. That's the whole point really."

Lucidspark helps teams across the company to not only collect and collaborate on ideas but to also sort them and move towards next steps.

Leo relies on Lucidspark for initial workshops with both team members and clients. He loves that Lucidspark is integrated with his existing Lucidchart workspace, allowing him to easily switch between products as needed. He conducts activities like dependency mapping, retrospectives, and pre-sales work within Lucidspark boards.

He finds that the product helps him come to a workshop with a framework already in place to make the meeting more effective. Leo starts with initial templates on the board, but he likes the flexibility the infinite canvas provides.

"I used some of the basic templates that we could fill in, and some of them we used and some of them we didn't use, and that's okay. I think people feel more comfortable having that set up. We started by filling out a spider diagram, but what I liked was that I could then set up other grids and templates on the infinite board. And that's something that I wouldn't have easily done in a real whiteboard situation because you'd run out of space."

Leo can then tag and automatically group his ideas to save time during synthesis. He appreciates that throughout his workflow, the software "never gets in his way" and is easy enough for anyone to pick up right away. This is especially key during remote workshops.

"Some software you use and you're trying to think about how it works and why it works that way, but what I like about Lucidspark and Lucidchart is that I can easily just grab something and get started. But also I'm not constrained by thinking I have to get it right the first time. I can focus on being creative and getting ideas down."

Creating a single source of truth

Another of Amido's key initiatives is trying to ensure learnings and resources are centrally managed and easily discoverable by all employees. The company moved to an Enterprise account to take advantage of Lucid's Team Folders, which allow them to organize their boards and documents so they are easily accessible and browsable.

Simon explains:

"We're trying to make sure that the learnings of an individual consultant or the output of a successful project aren't just lost. In a consultancy, what tends to happen is you have a team of people that work really hard to deliver something during the course of a project, and at the end of that project they go on and move onto the next thing. The learnings and outputs are forgotten."

The Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite is helping Amido focus on what Simon calls "muscle memory," which encourages employees to use what they've learned from previous projects—and also make sure that the company as a whole gains from that learning so they aren't just in one person's head. Tooling is one of the ways they ensure learnings are centrally managed.

From intelligent diagramming and client communication to virtual whiteboarding and knowledge sharing, the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite has helped round out Amido's "dream toolkit," arming employees with the resources they need to succeed in a remote world.