

Collaboration Services Strategy: Web 2.0 Applications

SITUATION

A team from iValue recently developed a collaboration services strategy for one of the largest global professional services partnerships, with a very significant North American presence. The goal was to protect, enhance, or augment the Firm's competitive advantage through better use of web-based collaboration applications that encourage social networking and knowledge sharing. The Firm was keen to harness the enthusiasm of staff and clients for popular Web 2.0 applications such as Facebook, Linked-In, and Wikipedia. The scope was the US, with global links. The technical infrastructure had already been decided upon.

The core team consisted of five members from iValue together with four of the Firm's own staff. In addition, a working group of eight met frequently to assist with progress. In all, some 25 partners and senior leaders, representing the key constituencies of the Firm, were involved in reviewing and setting the direction that was taken over the four-month duration of the project. The project was delivered on time and under budget.

SOLUTION

The initial phase was the identification of collaboration opportunities, together with an assessment of the inventory of collaboration tools already in use. In the second phase customer demand for collaboration services was assessed. The enquiry ranged across all aspects of the Firm's business, and iValue staff also researched other professional services firms and some technology companies. In all, some 100 interviews were conducted over the whole of the project.

The third phase was the alignment of the tool box available within the technical infrastructure to the needs identified in the first two phases. The total cost of ownership was then calculated, and the economic value of the most attractive solutions assessed. Five major opportunities were identified and the road maps to their delivery developed.

RESULTS

The strategy was well received, and is now in the early stages of implementation. It has been circulated by the US IT leadership to other IT organisations in the Firm as an example of best practice in the collaboration arena.

Chris Pravetz, the project sponsor, is full of praise for the iValue team, which was led by Christopher Gardner and Tom Morgan. "They were constantly committed to doing whatever was needed to bring the project in on time. They were spot on time, never a day late". According to Pravetz, some constituencies in the Firm doubted that the project's goals were attainable so lacked confidence in a successful outcome, but the iValue team were assiduous in their management of the concerns of all stakeholders. This was a complex project that could easily have been deflected from its course, but it was run so tightly that everything went to plan.

Further, Chris was most impressed with the quality of the team that iValue assembled – "they are very smart people", he said. He would be happy to recommend them, and would use them again "without hesitation".