

CASE STUDY

INNOVATION PROCESSES STRENGTHEN BUSINESS CAPABILITY



AIM OF CONSULTANCY: TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE BUSINESS COULD EXPAND WITHOUT RISKS TO SERVICE AND PRODUCT QUALITY.

BACKGROUND

Hot Horse is an established, creative and technically acclaimed supplier of web design, development and software for business services. Working with a diverse national client base, the company delivers effective web based solutions that are user orientated and maximise client return on investment. The Directors have a spectacular record in delivering projects on time and on budget. Over 10 years a technical solution has never been proposed to a client and not been delivered as specified. This is because a detailed pre-project evaluation and business analysis process is used to truly understand the business objectives of the client. This knowledge is then matched with extensive technical and design expertise to ensure the delivery of a creative, robust and cost effective online solution.

The high quality of product and service level delivery has become a key element of differentiating Hot Horse in the market place. A significant percentage of new business comes from client recommendation. It was essential to explore options for expansion that would not compromise this reputation for excellence.

CHALLENGES

The Directors are experienced in the delivery of project management, art direction and technical development for a number of prestigious web accounts. They wanted a more structured methodology to develop new products and services whilst minimising the risks associated with expansion and ensuring that existing client management was not compromised.

CUSTOMER DEMANDS

The clients are demanding tailored products and services, and suppliers who can grow with their evolving needs. Hot Horse wants to sustain client relations with a wider spread of offers and grow client relationships into long-term partnerships. However, finding the right balance between delivery of the tried and tested, and development of new services, is not easy to implement.

CHOICES

Hot Horse examined the option to resource innovation process improvement both internally and externally. Internally they had the project management skills and a close understanding of their market and clients. The Directors were also aware that they could obtain more objectivity and new ideas by contracting an external interim manager experienced in innovative business development. They decided to explore both options and, with Business Link support, chose an independent interim manager, Clive Bonny, to work closely with the Directors part-time over a six month period.

OBJECTIVES

The project objectives agreed were to increase the client base, identify pricing and brand strategy, expand market geographically, develop a business action plan, maximise resource management and identify new markets and niches. Additional value added objectives were to transfer process management skills to enable the business Directors to apply best practice innovation methods to sustain growth.

ACTIVITIES

Clive's support activities included: delivering innovation processes enabling Directors to redraft a more concise business and marketing plan; defining research targets for specific clients; designing, conducting and evaluating a client survey improving client communication channels; assessing new product applications, potential users, cost-benefits and pricing strategy; identifying best distribution channels, marketing methods and brand strategy; identifying risk management processes.

OUTCOMES

All objectives were achieved within agreed deadlines with minimal distraction for the business managers as changes were implemented on a step-by-step basis.

Clare Wilkinson, MD of Hot Horse wrote: "We were briefed comprehensively so we knew what to expect; our objectives were agreed and taken into account and all our agreed objectives were met; Clive related well to people at all levels; development areas were identified which we accepted and acted upon and which improved our capabilities; and Clive enabled us to engage with change by building on our legacy of past successes. We're thinking about what we do in a very different way now which realises the true value of external input. This has given us an enormous amount of confidence when dealing with new business opportunities and managing future change".

Clive added: "It is not easy for successful business managers to allow an outsider to critique their plans and processes. Hot Horse's openness to flexible change with a partnership focus on pro-actively meeting future client needs ensures their own unique competitiveness and sustainable success".

TESTIMONIAL

"Hot Horse redesigned the City of London Website for their 2006 Festival. At each stage of the process, they were efficient, clear thinking and delivered on time and within budget. I have no hesitation in recommending them."

Judy Grahame, Chief Executive, M&C Saatchi Arts

CONTACT

Some of Hot Horse's clients include Arts & Business, Brighton and Hove Chamber of Commerce, Charities Aid Foundation, Cisco Systems, City of London Festival, the Compass Group, Glyndebourne, Jones Lang LaSalle, JP Morgan IT, NHS, Penguin, Publishing, Portsmouth FC, Suzuki, Tickets.com, West Bromwich Albion FC and the Wigmore Hall. If there is a project you are interested in discussing please contact Clare Wilkinson by email clare@hothorse.co.uk or telephone **0845 458 2536**

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