Property Services Group Plans to make 2+2=5 with Information Technology

After our clients merged to create a super-force in the UK Estate Agency and Property Services market with revenues of £100m and 147 branches with ambitious growth plans they had an important question.

"How do we combine the IT infrastructures, IT Solutions and related business processes, and existing IT teams to best support the business in the future?"

Both companies had invested extensively in different technologies and systems, to support what were sometimes quite different business processes and each had its own initiatives underway. Some of these new initiatives were strategic and high profile, involving core Line of Business solutions sponsored and supported by senior business executives.

With different positions, interests and champions in the two businesses, **the challenge was how to pull them together to find the best way forward.**

"We felt what was needed was an impartial, external assessment from someone that had a deep understanding of both business and technology. Luckily we had worked with Michael Hully at IT Solutions and Services (ITSS) before and knew that we could turn to him for this level of expertise." said the COO of the new parent company.

The COO worked with Michael to agree a clear brief for a review of the current IT Operations and the development of an IT Strategy for the business.

What was agreed was a holistic, wide ranging remit to determine the way the Group should approach and govern IT and related business change in the future. **ITSS was to produce an IT Strategy that advised on the future direction the merged group should** take on IT systems, infrastructures, the delivery of IT support services and the shape of its IT Department.

The depth of the assignment was bounded by an agreed maximum amount of effort and was carried out over a 3 month time period.

Meetings and interviews were held with over 30 Directors, business managers and staff across the two businesses as well as the key IT vendors. A wide range of existing business and IT strategy, control and contractual documents were analysed.

"The meetings reinforced that bringing in Michael as an external, independent expert had been the right decision" said the COO "Not only was he able to demonstrate in depth knowledge of how IT can be best applied to support the many different business functions but he understood the business challenges.

Michael offered many new insights and asked some challenging questions, which made us think harder about what we were trying to achieve and what we expected as a business from technology and our internal IT teams."

An in depth Strategic IT Review report, a drafted IT Strategy and new role descriptions for the senior members in a restructured IT department were delivered, to timeframe, at the end of the exercise. These were then discussed by the Group Board, where the recommendations were substantially accepted and the report was circulated and discussed with the Group's senior managers.

"The review report was extremely detailed and professional" said the COO **"It provided clear analysis on what were often complex, strategic and politically sensitive issues and made clear recommendations.** We are able to use it to focus the senior teams on a common, agreed position and direction on both IT and business process improvement. This will help us achieve our ambitious growth targets and business improvement plans."

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Chief Operating Officer