SPHERICA

CASE STUDY: WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE

Shaping the Future of IT

THE CUSTOMER

Wales Millennium Centre (WMC) is the nation's home of performing arts situated at the heart of Cardiff Bay. As one of the UK's leading cultural attractions, the Centre provides an extensive programme of world class entertainment, showcases Welsh creativity and talents, partners with international artistic companies, and offers creative learning and community engagement opportunities aimed at increasing accessibility to art and culture.

Since opening its doors to the public in 2004, the Welsh landmark has welcome more than 16.5 million visitors, and has experienced great success.

At a Glance

Industry
Performing Arts

Key Challenges
- A complete review of the current IT service to ensure that technology could support the vision for the business.
- To further develop the world class arts centre and deliver online digital content in order to reach a wider audience.

Spherica's Method
- On-site workshops held with end-users and the leadership team to understand the current IT experience and the vision for the Centre.
- A "deep dive" technical assessment of the IT environment and service provided an understanding of the current state of IT.
- Detailed analysis by Spherica's team provided inputs to formulate the roadmap and IT strategy.

Results
- A vision for IT which supports the future plans of WMC.
- An IT strategy that aligns with the wider business strategy.
- Delivery of a fully budgeted roadmap with a phased programme of projects.
- The adoption of a service-centric model to deliver an agile and cost-effective IT service.

THE CHALLENGE

Like many organisations, WMC's IT had evolved over time, reacting to business needs rather than driving change. The focus on delivering projects to meet these needs meant that whilst projects were being delivered, there was little time to take an overarching strategic view of the IT service and plan for the future.

With exciting plans that include a drive to deliver online content, improve the IT experience for staff and patrons and to produce more of its own productions, there was a recognition that the dependency on IT was only going to increase.

An external review was needed to take a fresh, pragmatic look at where IT needed to be focussed to ensure it could support these initiatives and growth plans.

Mat Milsom, managing director, Wales Millennium Centre, said: *"We have some really exciting plans for the future and so we wanted to engage an external organisation to take a cold, hard look at our organisation and to use their experience and expertise to guide us on how we can ensure that our IT service can support our plans".*

THE ENGAGEMENT

The initial stage of the analysis focussed on understanding the current end-user experience of IT and gaining an insight into WMC's business strategy and direction.

Working with WMC, our consultants hosted workshops that provided an opportunity for users to voice their opinions on the use and adoption of technology. This enabled them to highlight areas where they felt constrained.

Then, a separate workshop was held with key business stakeholders to provide insight into the future plans and vision of WMC. This was vital to ensure that the IT strategy and roadmap could be tailored to support its wider business goals.

The information gained from the workshops was then used to formulate an action plan for the next stage of the project, which would see Spherica's technical consultants conduct a "deep dive" assessment of the IT environment, including the entire architecture and service delivery models.

Mat added: *"Right from the start, it was clear that Spherica had a proven track record of delivering this type of engagement with a tried and tested methodology which really impressed us. We were keen to not just work with a company that provided an "off the shelf" review, and Spherica carefully tailored the project to our specific requirements and that made a huge difference for us".*

THE FINDINGS

On completion of the workshops, we collected information which was then analysed to identify the focus areas for change.

One of the key findings from the engagement was a desire amongst WMC's staff to be able to work more closely together, with internal staff and the wider community.

The drive to produce and deliver content using streaming services was also highlighted. It was clear that the adoption of digital technologies would present a positive change, but it was also evident that as a small IT team, there was a limit to how much of this work could be planned and executed without external support.

Mat said: *"Our vision is to be accessible to every person in Wales. The geography of the country makes that challenging, but with the adoption of technology and streaming services, we can deliver content not just across Wales and the UK, but globally, and that's a really exciting goal for us."*

From the analysis, we conducted a gap analysis and goal mapping exercise to determine the steps to move the entire IT operation forward.

THE RESULT

The new IT vision and strategy that we delivered made fundamental changes to WMC's IT operations by placing the end user experience at the heart of all new initiatives.

The adoption of a "Service Centric" delivery model transformed the existing IT team into the role of a "Service Broker" which encouraged the adoption of a hybrid insourcing/outsourcing model, where core IT services continued to be delivered by WMC but non-core, or specialised areas, were outsourced to specialised third parties.

This approach enabled the delivery of a highly agile and cost effective service to WMC, while allowing IT to focus on its primary objective: creating and delivering value to the business, and freeing up time for its team members to focus on their own tasks rather than the day-to-day IT processes.

And, the strategy also included a set of IT principles which were to be consulted whenever investment in technology is required, thereby establishing a consistent decision making process to ensure WMC stays up to date with emerging technologies.

Our roadmap included a detailed plan of IT projects and initiatives, specifically designed to prioritise those areas that deliver the greatest benefits in the shortest time frames.

Mat said: *"As a not for profit organisation WMC is home to a small team of inhouse IT experts. Spherica's external review was crucial in getting to the root of what was needed to maximise the customer experience and deliver the exciting changes WMC are so passionate about.*

"Spherica was able to deliver a robust IT strategy that will take the Centre forward and help us to deliver a great service for both our own staff and the wider community."

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