WEB BASED PRICE EVALUATION MODEL FOR A GLOBAL TRAVEL SERVICES COMPANY

Client is a global player in the travel services industry offering a range of services targeted towards travel managers, procurement professionals, C-level executives and business travelers alike. Managing business travel being their core business, they focus on cost optimization through highest return on business travel investment.

The Vision

The client is the world's largest business travel management company with air, rail, hotel and car, constituting the client's product portfolio. Their customers come from diverse background and hence have varied preferences. The client pitches their offerings to these customers through 'Bids' and 'PEM' [Price Evaluation Model]. PEM is an efficient tool to design these bids, keeping in mind the client's present and future business travel needs.

The automation of workflows was most complex in Excel based PEM with thousands of fields with complex formulae spread across 50 sheets. The desired for the standardization of their bidding process across globally distributed client offices using web based bidding tool.

The client was looking for a business and technology consulting partner who would help them replace their existing MS Excel based Bid Management tool into web based application which can be accessed by all the global offices of the company. Their earlier Bid Management Process with Excel based PEM proved to be ineffective and time consuming to carry out this task.

Situation Analysis

The organization's finance division pitches their offerings to their prospects through bids. Since their MS Excel based pricing tool, PEM – Price Evaluation Model, was not flexible enough to adapt rapid changes, it was difficult to build proposal for international clients. Their global distribution of business constitutes Asia Pacific, Latin America, North America and EMEA countries which made integration and consolidation of bidding processes almost impossible. Critical activities (listed below) were carried out manually and proved to be tedious:

- Bid Approvals at 3 levels
- Consolidation of Bid version at 2 levels
- Report Generation

Challenges and Solutions

Difficult to build proposal (bid) for clients with global presence. As client profiling process differs from country to country, it was difficult to integrate country specific costing and pricing models.

Excel PEM was neither very secure nor scalable due to manual exporting of data and manual consolidation for each country and regions. Year-on-Year update in country data (Master Data) was difficult to maintain.

e-Zest after understanding the flaws in the Excel based pricing tool decided to use 'SaaS based' delivery model. The application that will be the cleint's 'Corporate Travel Proposal Management System'.

Solution Architecture

e-Zest's solution- The project's primary goal was to cover the Excel based Bid management tool into web-based application, that cover the following key solution areas:

- Standardization and automation of bidding processes across client offices
- Consolidation of processes at Regional and Global level
- Report configuration for designing custom reports and dashboards
- Three level approval workflow – at Country, Region and Global level
- FX rates management module
- Global product and services catalog and one-click update and publish process
- Import and export data in multiple formats
- Advanced email notification system with context based auto-generated attachments

Technologies and Tools:

- Client – HTML5/ JQuery/ Angular 35
- RIA Framework – Flex 3.5
- Java Framework – Spring 3.0.4
- Data Access Framework – Hibernate 3.6.0
- Web Server – Tomcat 7
- Application Server – Apache 2.0+
- Database – MySQL 5.1.51

Project Breakthroughs

e-Zest's development teams delivered a PEM that standardized and automated the client's bidding process. The pricing tool which is capable of generating MIS and BI (Business Intelligence) reports to meet worldwide strategic business goals of the company. These are the most desirable functionalities of the PEM which got us the client's appreciation.

The icing on the cake was when the team, with its development and UI capabilities took lower time to take the application to the market.

Business Benefits

- PEM defines the geographic scope for the bidding process
- Offers role based user access model with improved security
- Scalable and high performance solution with high availability
- User specific dashboards and reports to review Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Global organization level data analysis and business intelligence capabilities
- Addresses costing and profitability management needs across client offices
- Automated report generation

Bottom Line

e-Zest with its strong expertise in travel and hospitality domain coupled with business and technology consulting skills provided the client with a highly cost effective technology solution. The web based pricing tool as a solution is highly scalable and provides better performance with highest ROI.

The UI of the application is very professional; users could easily find their way through the application. PEM automates business processes and workflow associated with Bid Management efficiently.

As this tool is deployed in 20 countries, it merges financial rules, processes and terminologies used by the company globally.

Client Testimonial 1:

"I would like to thank you, whatever the result of the next release. First you have being achieving fantastic results in the past two years. And secondly, the efforts you have been doing in the past couple of weeks are really impressive. This is only possible when individuals are committed but also when the team is committed. And this is what I really appreciate with you. I can feel the solidarity between team members as well as a great team spirit and I am sure it is the reason for your success." – Senior Manager Pricing Execution & Tools - Commercial Finance

Client Testimonial 2:

"I am proud of the application. I am also really happy about the report configurator. As you know I won't be a daily user of the Web PEM myself except for the report configurator. It is like my gadget in the Web PEM.. for the good of the users of course. So… thank you for this clever and efficient functionality." – Senior Manager Pricing Execution & Tools - Commercial Finance