CASE STUDY

Technology Strategy for a Professional Services Firm

ANALYSE ✅

PLAN ✅

DELIVER

OPTIMISE

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Working with PE and Portfolio in digital transformation since 2016. Helping tech leaders pre and post deal through coaching and advisory.

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High-growth CTO & Digital Product Leader with over 20 years' experience as an advisor & non-exec helping startups and SMEs to avoid common barriers to growth, reach their goals more quickly and at a lower cost.

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BACKGROUND

Our client was a reputable firm in the language services industry, about to undergo a management buyout (MBO). Prior to our engagement, the firm had been operating its own custom technology solution, interfacing with customers and thousands of interpreters worldwide. The in-house solution offered complete control over the platform and its development, and it was also less expensive compared to cloud alternatives. Therefore, persuading the management to consider other options required a delicate and evidence-based approach.

IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGE

Upon initial assessment, we identified three main challenges:

1. **Scalability:** The firm's current business practices and system usage limited the automation opportunities and scalability. If the business were to secure larger clients, there was a need to reduce complexity and increase automation.
2. **Architecture:** The architecture of the in-house system was a single platform and highly tailored to the business. Scaling would require a shift to more traditional cloud systems and the need to separate some of the core functionality.
3. **Operations:** The firm needed to simplify and speed up operations. This began with creating a clear vision for the company to follow, determining the key areas of focus: financial systems, business systems, or another option.

STRATEGY DEFINITION

To address these challenges, we embarked on a comprehensive assessment of the firm's vision, strategy, scalability, IT budget, team, and customer needs. This involved in-depth evaluations of the customer journey, current system architecture, and exploration of various vendor solutions.

DELIEVRING A POST-MBO ROADMAP AND OPERATING MODEL

Through our comprehensive evaluation, we created a scorecard that presented all options, including maintaining the current system, updating it, or shifting to various cloud products. Each option considered the potential impact on staffing numbers, capital and operating expenditures, EBITDA, and the firm's appearance to future investors.

Our team played a vital role in enlightening the CEO on the necessity of adopting newer systems. Although this meant fewer internal controls, we helped them see that the focus needed to shift to commercial matters, rather than IT, Security, and Governance. Subsequently, we assisted in selecting the most suitable technology solution, which was used in MBO discussions.

After the completion of the MBO, we continued our collaboration with the CEO and new Chair to articulate how technology would drive future business growth. Through our strategic advisory, the firm was set on a solid path towards technological transformation, empowering it to scale operations and secure larger clients in the language services industry.