

AT8 Group Limited
Case Study
**Beckett Investment
Management Group Limited**
BECKETT



Project Highlights

- Review IT support systems
- Creation new IT Strategy
- Managing procurement of new infrastructure in aggressive timescales
- Overseeing the implementation programme

Introduction

In the summer of 2006, following the appointment of a new Managing Director, Beckett Investment Management Group (BIMG) created an ambitious growth plan for the business to achieve over the next three years. As a result, they concluded that a formal review of their IT support systems for sales, administration and infrastructure was necessary. Following a competitive tender, AT8 was chosen to carry out this exercise.

The brief included an evaluation of whether the existing solutions and business processes were capable of enabling the growth and profitability targets to be achieved and if not, how could the business quickly and cost effectively resolve the deficiencies and create the necessary productive capability

The Legacy

Over the previous 20 years, a considerable investment had been built into their infrastructure, resulting in a functionally rich solution, but with significant manual intervention needed along with a considerable overhead of supplemental checklists and procedures within standard office tools, such as Microsoft® Excel® and Access®.

The major requirement was to allow Becketts to increase their new business flow through existing and new consultants, without increasing administrative headcount or taking further office space. In addition, as the company operates split sites, they needed to improve inter-branch access and to allow the advisers to work remotely, having access to office functions and client information away from the office. The reliance on paper files - built over many years - was considered a business risk as well as an inefficient use of space and as part of the exercise Beckett wanted to see how they could reduce this dependency.

The company was operating an ageing solution, that required custom hardware to operate and that had resulted in bespoke and costly developments that increasingly failed to fulfil their needs – in effect ‘pouring good money after bad’!

Following and investigation and evaluation by AT8 on the suitability of the legacy infrastructure and procedures, including recommendations of how the business objectives could best be met, Beckett commissioned AT8 to conduct a procurement exercise.

The Procurement

With AT8's professional background in solutions, an accelerated (three week) procurement process was undertaken. The process comprised workshops with Becketts' personnel to identify and qualify the business requirements. With these agreed, a simple RFI was created and supported by face-to-face briefings with the short-listed vendors. The responses enabled a functional, comparative matrix to be created, along with a rated and weighted analysis of the respective companies abilities to meet 9 key objectives that Beckett required.

The Matrix

AT8 employed a functional matrix approach (an example is shown below), to enable a comparison to be made of the shortlisted vendors, coupled with the business imperatives of BIMG.

Vendor Selection Analysis												
Key Criteria	Weighting (Importance) 1 - 5	Vendor A		Vendor B		Vendor C		Vendor D		Vendor E		
		Rating 1 - 10	Score	Rating 1 - 10	Score	Rating 1 - 10	Score	Rating 1 - 10	Score	Rating 1 - 10	Score	
ASP capability	5	5	25	4	20	6	30	9	45	4	25	
Migration capability	4	8	32	8	32	9	36	5	20	9	36	
Chemistry	3	6	18	3	16	8	24	9	27	6	25	
Delivery	5	8	40	3	15	7	35	8	40	7	35	
Scalability	3	5	15	8	35	8	24	9	27	5	15	
Functionality	5	6	30	5	25	9	45	8	40	7	35	
Company stability	4	6	24	6	24	7	28	6	24	8	32	
Tech Architecture	4	7	35	6	24	7	33	8	32	4	16	
Price	4	10	40	6	30	6	24	8	32	4	16	
Totals		61	259	49	221	67	279	70	287	54	235	
Positions		3	3	5	5	2	2	1	1	4	4	

From the initial selection of five providers, the responses were analysed and a shortlist of two solution providers was derived. The two companies were then asked to present their relative offerings to a broad and representative user group from with Beckett. Although users were asked for initial feedback, AT8 ensured that a series of logical, factual assessment criteria were used to gather objective judgements and opinions. Following this, AT8 acted as an independent voice to test and challenge the final selection made by Beckett. The exercise resulted in Beckett selecting Intelligent Office (IO) from IntelliFlo Limited, a pure online solution (ASP). As planned, the total time taken for the process was 3 weeks!

The Implementation

Programme construction, scope, planning, timescale and resourcing were not areas of expertise in Beckett, but they had the maturity and honesty to accept this.

As a key strategic project, the implementation of IO needed careful planning to ensure that it was delivered quickly and effectively whilst allowing the business to continue to operate and grow.

AT8 wanted to help Beckett to do as much of the work themselves, both to manage costs and to build internal competence and confidence.

A project team was identified and through a number of 'kick off' workshops the plan was created and appropriate responsibilities assigned. A close working relationship with IntelliFlo was fundamental and has become an enduring friendly as well as business relationship.

AT8 personnel oversaw the programme, providing direction and support as well as a 'nagging' pressure to ensure that timescales were properly managed.

The team had to manage and work with IntelliFlo to carry out the Business Process review, the design and configuration requirements of workflows in IO, manage and carry out data migration, deal with training and business continuity. The use of IO meant that Beckett's reliance on their one server infrastructure could be reduced and although some infrastructure changes were necessary, these were relatively straight forward to implement and manage.

One of the major priority tasks and risks identified was that of data migration. AT8 assisted Beckett in creating a methodology for the conversion, together with expertise supplied by IntelliFlo. The migration was a major task and did cause some interesting challenges as well as pressure to delay going live. It was important to the business to ensure that the data transfer was accurate and comprehensive and was done in a way that enabled a full transfer of clients along with full sets of data. The objective was achieved and Beckett went live after the closure of their financial year end had been completed on the existing legacy systems.

Benefits

A range of benefits for Becketts have been realised:

- The removal of disparate solutions has enabled a single point of reference for all client information
- The rolling out of the solution to enable some or all advisers to work remotely
- By using an ASP solution, the requirement to run dedicated servers was removed
- Electronic data, eg Commissions EDI, Valuations etc from Product Providers was introduced

AT8 Added Value

- By using AT8 knowledge the requirements gathering process was optimised
- AT8 employed their industry contacts and knowledge to ensure the right questions were asked of the right people
- AT8 used their drive and initiative to accelerate the project timescales
- By utilising their procurement experience, AT8 assisted in the contractual negotiations
- AT8 levered their programme management experience of large financial services solutions' implementations to keep the project on track