Howes Percival
Consultancy

Scope

Following a sustained period of growth and a doubling of the partnership, Howes Percival committed to a significant program of IT expansion and transformation. This would see the replacement of the incumbent Envision PMS and the introduction of several new 'best of breed' solutions to underpin its strategy going forward – a bold initiative signaling an unprecedented period of change for the firm and workload for the IT team.

Under the stewardship of IT partner Stuart Maggs, the firm moved to ensure its IT function was 'future fit' ahead of project start ie structured appropriately with mature processes in place, and sufficiently well resourced and skilled to manage the migration and modernisation to time and budget.

Baskerville Drummond was engaged to undertake an independent review of the IT team to:

▸ Provide an assessment of the gap between current skills and required skills

▸ Analyse staffing levels to ensure that the increased workload could be supported without compromising business-as-usual delivery to the practice

▸ Identify specific new roles and capabilities to inform recruitment decisions

▸ Make recommendations on how best to organise and align the IT function to better serve the needs of the business

Approach

We undertook a number of interviews with key members of the IT team. These were deep dive sessions that really allowed us to build a very comprehensive, insightful picture. Participants were extremely cooperative and as well as sharing their thinking and observations they also took us through their operational setup, including IT processes, support metrics, management reporting, and the day-to-day realities of IT service delivery.

We also reviewed business planning and budgeting documents where they referenced any IT dependencies, and factored into all our work the strategic vision and ambitions that had been earlier been shared with us.

Outcome

Our report provided Howes Percival with detailed recommendations in three key areas:

▸ Organisation of the IT function
▸ Team skills
▸ Project resource requirements

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The firm was extremely receptive to the report, fully acknowledging the changes it needed to make and the roles it either needed to recruit or skill up for, as part of its project success preparations.

The team structure was revised, job responsibilities redefined, new talent brought in; processes around both project management and support were also developed in line with best practice and the practical needs of the firm.

Too often report recommendations can be 'accepted' and then sat on. Howes Percival is to be commended for its very positive actions as it looked to move from 'good to great' in readiness for its IT program. It's one thing to ask the question, quite another to take on board the answer.

We knew that we were embarking on one of the most critical projects for the firm in recent memory, and we had to be sure that we were properly set up for success. David's incisive questioning and meticulous approach, coupled with a wealth of know-how and experience, resulted in recommendations that were refreshingly pragmatic, and ones we felt able to act on ourselves. There was no 'consultancy speak', just a very clear-sighted, well argued case for judicious change – and with those changes made, we are now 'future fit ' and pushing on confidently with our transformation program."

Stuart Maggs
IT partner, Howes Percival

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