Case Study: Technology

Our client, a new publishing company, approached Maverick to develop a suitable RFP which outlined the business and technology requirements they had for a new, yet to be developed eJournal and eContent delivery platform. At the same time, being totally new and therefore having no support systems in place for their emerging journals, they also required a similar RFP to be researched and written for the acquisition of a Peer Review System to be integrated (as much as possible) with the new platform.

Maverick initially undertook a discovery and scoping phase to determine the requirements of the business including reviewing content needs (format, availability and production/editorial processes); identifying the features and functionality the new platform would require for the immediate and longer term and identifying the future content strategies, including production and dissemination of content as well as the optimum peer review requirements.

Following the completion of this phase, a full RFP was written and reviewed with the client to ensure it not only met their immediate and longer term service requirements, but also laid out the strategic imperatives and type of collaborative and far sighted platform partner profile they wanted to engage.

Once complete, work then began on the second part of the project - the vendor selection process itself. This work included:

- Identifying and drawing up a list of proposed vendors with the right levels of experience, track record and vision.
- Managing the distribution of the RFP.
- Managing the resultant Q+A process with vendors through their "response generation" period via telephone and bespoke response email address.
- Collection and analysis of tender responses, scored according to previously agreed and structured "key criteria" matrices.
- Identifying and communicating with successful final candidates and providing feedback to unsuccessful respondents.
- Organizing and overseeing the final presentations of shortlisted candidates.
- Working with the client to assess the presentations and final proposals (both from a technology and business standpoint), providing recommendations as to "best fit" partners for their needs; and
- Notifying the successful vendor.

Two successful candidates were chosen (one platform provider and one Peer Review system) and contract negotiations started. Maverick were asked to stay on board and assist in the negotiation process itself, right through to completed contracts.

Here our support for the client included;

- Initial internal discussions and decision points regarding commercial terms and contractual arrangements with the successful partner; negotiation strategies and "check lists" to gain the "best deal / best fit".
- Initial vendor contract review, discussion and response positioning.
- Ongoing contract review and analysis during negotiation - recommendations and support on "deal breakers"; negotiation points; contract structures and conditions; and final iterations, clause edits and revisions.
- Final contract and commercial term negotiation and closure.

Although the end of the selection process itself, and given Maverick's additional technical experience in online system development and content production management, whilst full time IT and content teams were being put in place, we were then asked to stay on board and oversee the actual site and system build itself. We were very happy to do this, not least as we had been involved in some of the initial design and build conversations as part of the RFP scoping.

Over the course of the next year Maverick associates effectively became the outsourced IT and content production departments for the client and joined the management structure.

Our work included:

- Developing the necessary site designs, site maps and wireframes.
- Developing and finalising all necessary project and production plans.
- Assuming the role(s) of IT Director and technical project managers to oversee and drive the platform and functionality development schedules.
- Running the project review meetings, milestone planning and partner communications, as well as monitoring service levels and site / feature delivery.
- Working with the vendor project managers, technicians and management until the final site and peer review system was developed and delivered. Ensuring adherence to agreed budgets.
- Assuming similar project management roles and responsibilities in content production management and site design and administration.
  - Managing and coordinating the content and production editorial workflows and vendors.
  - Managing, coordinating and producing the overall design, "look and feel" and usability of the site - including production of all necessary graphics and HTML templates and artwork.
- Advising on the overall technology strategy and future technology roadmap.
- Ensuring full training and transition processes were established with the incoming in-house resources before we disengaged with the project.

The platform was successfully launched over the Summer of 2011.

Today, Maverick continues to provide marketing and technical support on an ongoing basis to ensure the client's continued success.