

Communications approach is valued by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

An independent grant funding organisation that enables people to overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, want an IT partner that will ensure the right infrastructure and services are in place to support future growth.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation was established by Paul Hamlyn in 1987. Upon his death in 2001, he left most of his estate to the Foundation, creating one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK. The foundation's mission is to help people to realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. It has a particular interest in supporting young people and a strong belief in the importance of the arts.

Lucy Palfreyman, Chief Operating Officer of Paul Hamlyn Foundation says that the Foundation inherited a substantial investment portfolio, which it looks after. The return on that investment funds grant making in areas set out by its founder and the current trustees.

"We are quite specific about we're interested in, so that we are fair to applicants. We focus on access to the arts, education and learning through the arts, investing in young people and supporting people who migrate. We also have a strand of work in India."

Support matches frontline activity

The foundation is growing, which impacts on a whole host of issues such as the buildings, HR and IT. It's important that it has the right infrastructure in place to support the organisations increased activity.

"One of our biggest challenges is growth. Over the last five years, the trustees have taken the decision to spend more each year. We're giving out more grants and getting involved in more activities. I'm trying to make sure we have the right support services in place to match frontline activity."

Wanted an IT partner

Prior to Bluecube's involvement, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation had worked with the same IT support company for a number of years. However, felt it needed to change because of the increase of pace on digital working and demands on IT.

"We went into the tender process looking for a company that would get us, understand what we're about and work as a partner on a range of projects – in effect, stepping up our IT."

The foundation says it wanted an IT partner, and not purely a support company. An IT company that could offer a range of different services and could adapt to the growth going on in the organisation. *"Through the process, we felt Bluecube were the ones who met those criteria."*

"There's something around fit with the organization and feeling that your IT partner understands what you're trying to do and where you're at."

Lucy Palfreyman, COO of Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Having a plan to work on together

Knowing that its IT partner understands what they're trying to do is very important to the Foundation. *"We want someone to work with us to find out precisely what our needs are and to jointly come up with a solution."*

"A lot of IT companies are support companies and the core of their offer is the helpdesk. That's important and we wanted that to be right. But that wasn't the core thing. It was more about having a plan to work on together. A sense of where we want to get to and how we might do that. A process of improvement and development."

A good cultural fit

When choosing suppliers, the foundation looks for a good cultural fit. *"We put a lot of emphasis on relationships in our work, and do that on the supplier side too. I don't want it to be all about filling out forms and service level agreements. I want to work with a company that when we had a problem, can have a conversation, rather than (filling in) a form."*

"That's where it's a very good match with Bluecube, because they're relational as well. The time they put into client meetings. The way they communicate on the helpdesk. It's about talking to people. It's about understanding if there's something behind the problem. It's their communications approach that we really value."

A better remote working offer

The foundation had a good set up for working in the office, but wanted a better remote working offer. *"We had a process for logging in remotely, but it was clunky and not very adaptable. That's been one of the major projects that we've*

implemented with Bluecube, and it's been quite revolutionary in terms of enabling people to work outside the office. And I have to say, I thank my lucky stars that we did that, as come March 2020 and Covid lockdown it meant everything was that much easier."

A couple of years ago staff could only access remote working via a desktop terminal server. The number of people that could access it was limited, but now anyone can.

"People can be anywhere and log into their files and undertake core business, wherever they are. That has really changed and improved productivity and the benefits."

A more professional helpdesk

A good helpdesk remains an important requirement. Previously, the foundation often found itself in the role of broker, answering many of the IT queries. *"Bluecube provides a more professional helpdesk facility, which has taken the load off our people and enabled them to do different things, which is more useful to us as an organisation."*

"One of the things we like about Bluecube is the 24 hour helpdesk support. It means we are able to cover the needs of our colleagues in India as well."

Plan future projects

Regular meetings help to address any immediate issues and to plan future projects. *"Through conversations with our client manager, we develop a work plan of what projects we have coming up, and pick up on any issues. So, there's a process of having conversations, and having a plan which leads to projects."*

Support awards judging process

Bluecube stepped in to help with the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Foundation 'Awards for Artists' scheme. Launched in 1994, the awards supports visual artists and composers at a pivotal moment in their careers. *"We started putting the judging materials on tablets for the judges, rather than sending them files, which didn't work."*

"Bluecube provided an engineer to work with us to streamline the process. They set up a larger range of tablets for different types of people, and got all the data we wanted on there. That helped us to undertake our judging work in a more efficient way."

A trusted partner to turn to

The Foundation value being able to turn to a trusted IT partner for insight and advice when needed. *"For example, being able to talk to Bluecube when we wanted to upgrade the audio visual in our meeting rooms. Bluecube didn't have the in-house resources to do that. But, had the contacts and suggested an approach, and were able to help us on the integration of the core systems."*

"It's having a trusted partner that can help you ask the right questions, even if it's not something they're providing themselves."

Do the right thing

Bluecube has delivered a number of projects outside the scope of the core provision, and also liaise with third party software providers on behalf of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. *"What I'm getting from them is their expertise. They also have engineers that come out to the office when we need them. That's been really helpful."*

"I feel Bluecube push, but aren't pushy. They seem to be good at getting the balance right. I've never felt they are suggesting something because it's a financial advantage for them. It's because it's the right thing to do. That's an important distinction sometimes. They're proactive in pointing out areas for us to take action."

Would absolutely recommend

Lucy says she has recommended Bluecube to a number of other charities. *"Because of that ability to develop a relationship and be a partner on the journey to improving your IT provision. They're not the cheapest. But it's about what you value."*

"Bluecube care about you as a client having the right solution for your needs. I think they'd be upset if they thought you were sitting on a problem and they hadn't been asked if they could resolve it."

"If you asked most of the staff to describe Bluecube, they'd say helpful. They feel reassured that there's somebody there who is interested and able to help. 'A constructive person-centred approach to IT' would be my headline."

"If you value more than the mechanics of IT support - it's worth the investment."

Lucy Palfreyman, COO of Paul Hamlyn Foundation



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