



Great to find an IT provider we can build a genuine partnership with, says beyond-profit recruitment specialist, Prospectus

A meticulous search for a new IT services provider that it could build a genuine collaborative partnership proved difficult for beyond-profit recruitment specialist Prospectus, until it found a company that cares about relationships as much as it does about fixing IT.

Established almost 60 years ago, Prospectus is a specialist recruitment consultancy and recruitment advertising and design agency working exclusively with the beyond-profit sector. The business delivers recruitment services including executive search, professional staff placement, and frontline recruitment support for not-for-profit organisations.

An allied division called Talent Attraction creates and delivers high-impact advertising campaigns, design and branding work for the same sector.

David Gold, CEO of Prospectus, says it looks after around 1,400 clients, which include some of the smallest organisations as well as the largest household names, from social enterprises and charities to museums, galleries and educational sector.

"Our challenge is to ensure you have the best and most talented people who are flexible and professional. People who are able to adapt to changes in the marketplace, and to the demands from clients, especially in the fast-moving world that we live in."

Prospectus is also proud of its B-Corp registration, which certifies not-for-profit companies to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

"Our business runs on three core values: trust, collaboration and community. That is not something we paint on our walls, but is what we genuinely do. Our strongest value is collaboration – both internal and

external. We prefer to work in a partnership way – to live out those values fully."

Immediacy of business

Peter Beeby, deputy CEO and lead on all operational matters at Prospectus, says the company needs a reliable IT system because of the immediacy of the business. *"We need to get back to our clients quickly and be very responsive, which is why we need dedicated IT services and support."*

The technology therefore needs to be robust, secure and work constantly, adds Peter. *"We handle a significant amount of personal data, so need robust and secure systems in place. It is also very important that we have flexibility in terms of access – whether onsite or remote."*

Search for IT provider

In 2012 Prospectus decided to review its IT support and ran a search for a new provider. It initially researched 10 companies, including the incumbent provider. *"We did a detailed spreadsheet where we gave numerical scores to what people were offering and how much we valued that. The scoring system brought Bluecube into the final three," Peter recalls.*

Lost out on first pitch

The three shortlisted companies were then invited to pitch. *"Although Bluecube was very strong in that presentation, we decided to go with another provider. Very quickly we realised that provider didn't live up to its promises."*

Having signed contracts, Prospectus had committed itself to this provider for the next year. Though David and Peter say they were happy with the decision they made and the reasons they'd made those decisions, they found the provider was unable to live up to their pitch.

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Peter Beeby, Deputy CEO, Prospectus

Bluecube back in the frame

A year later, Prospectus contacted Bluecube once again, says David. *"The decision was made very quickly. Bluecube was not only good at dealing with the fact that we came back to them, but taking over from someone we worked badly with for 12 months. I was very pleased with the way it was handled. They dealt with the handover very quickly and efficiently."*

A genuine partnership

With the infrastructure needing attention, Prospectus wanted to work with a proactive IT company that would fix the problems it was experiencing. Critically, it wanted a genuine partnership and strong account management from the new provider, says Peter. *"We had bad experiences around account management before. I don't think we are demanding, but we expect a lot. We expect to have a responsive support company, because it is really important that we don't have downtime."*

Looking after all the IT

Today, Bluecube looks after all the IT requirements, says Peter. *"We get a full service from Bluecube. It looks after all our technology, servers, and desktops. It also handles third-party support, so if we have any issues with internet connectivity or with our outsourced database, it will deal with those parties on our behalf."*

Excellent account management

When asked to rate Bluecube's customer support, David instantly says: *"I think excellent! It is never always perfect, you can have peaks and troughs, but it is excellent – it is a partnership. We have had the same account manager for three years. He really knows our company well. He understands our values and our culture and isn't afraid to make suggestions."*

Always helpful

As CEO, David says it is unusual for him to contact the helpdesk directly, but says that when he does, Bluecube *"...is always really helpful, doesn't put me through too much procedure, and when they say they will call me back, they do."*

He says that when he was abroad recently, he needed help with connectivity. *"The guy was absolutely fantastic on a Sunday evening. He was getting it all sorted. I have never had a bad experience in terms of feeling they want to resolve things for me."*

A desire to fix problems

Peter adds that when problems do occur, the people at Bluecube genuinely want to fix them. *"We haven't had a situation in a while, but when we've had an emergency, I have to say Bluecube is exceptional. They always jump on any serious issue very quickly and tend to resolve it quickly as well."*

Technology works

Prospectus has experienced less downtime since working with Bluecube, says Peter. *"Previously we had significant chunks of downtime. Now we get frustrated when email isn't available for half an hour. We definitely benefit from the knowledge that Bluecube has about IT and IT infrastructure."*

The Prospectus systems are also far more flexible than before: *"We have far more flexible working across the organisation and that is due to the infrastructure and recommendations that Bluecube makes."*

Relationship works

The success of the relationship is down to true collaboration says Peter. *"I think that is reflected in our relationship with Bluecube, that we do collaborate. When there's a problem we work together to try to fix it."*

Peter tells how Bluecube came to the rescue and lent Prospectus a server when it needed to make some infrastructure changes, but was pressed for time. *"They didn't need to do that. It basically gave us the flexibility to make some decisions. We value that."*

Don't need metrics as proof

It's almost impossible to measure the impact, says David, but he is happy to trust his intuition and doesn't need a metric to prove it. *"We feel comfortable that our expectations are being met; that Bluecube resolves issues, ensures a stable operating environment. Bluecube meets, and quite often exceeds, our expectations. Therefore, great value, but impossible to assess."*

Built a trusting relationship

David states that the biggest benefit from his perspective is the length of time Prospectus has been working with Bluecube: *"They understand us, we understand them and have built a trusting relationship. It allows us to have a very open, honest and mutually supportive conversation around every issue.*

"The fact that we haven't even considered re-tendering would suggest that we have the benefits of longevity, which hopefully will continue."

"Bluecube meets, and quite often exceeds, our expectations. Therefore, great value, but impossible to assess."

David Gold, CEO, Prospectus



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