

Intermusica talk about how they ensure IT is meeting business goals.



Who did we interview?

Peter Martin

Director of Finance & Operations at Intermusica



The heart of the business is artist management, working with individual musicians. We work exclusively with classical musicians at the top of their profession; so conductors, opera singers, pianists, etc., from all over the world. We manage their careers, securing the best work and conditions. Work ranges from international tours for symphony orchestras to live orchestra with film. We're based in London with outposts in China and Berlin. We're one of the leading companies in our field, having been established forty years ago and are still owned and run by the original founder.

How did the initial audit help Intermusica's development?

The audit was valuable as a technical review of the state of our IT; what did we have, was it effective, what didn't we have, where were the risks that we should address immediately?

But the mind map made the audit significantly more valuable. Raja considered us as a business, not just as an IT client. There were insights into the nature of our business, consideration of what makes us successful and what we want to achieve in the next five years set in the context of where the IT stands at the moment. The combination of business understanding and audit helped us find our path.

How do audits help with strategic IT decision making?

The Board became actively engaged and supportive. These are busy people who rely on data and expert opinion to make quick decisions.

Raja identified key IT issues to propel the business forward. For example, our activity is international, and we have people travelling a lot. Enabling better remote working and connection with international artists helped maintain deep and high-quality client relationships that are extremely important to the nature of our business. IT helped us do that.

How do the regular reviews, budgets and roadmaps help?

They maintain progress and control with the whole company engaged and well-informed. The Final Step (TFS) said from the outset we would have monthly review meetings as part of the relationship. They help me as the Director charged with managing all of this. They help my fellow Directors, less directly involved, and they help the entire company. Roadmaps and budgets are important for the Board to debate and settle on what we're trying to achieve. We're agreed on what we're doing and why before we embark and start spending money on it.

How did the audit align thinking about IT's role in Intermusica's development?

The audit was successful because of its scope. Firstly, it looked at the business qualities and business needs, and not just the IT. Secondly, Raja met and spoke with key directors individually, so they were able to experience this firsthand. Thirdly, at the end of the process, he came in and gave an extended board presentation of the findings, talking through the mind maps and dealing with detailed questions and reactions. Those three steps allowed directors to get the measure of IT and The Final Step.

Is IT more of a strategic investment now?

We have increased expenditure over a period of time as The Final Step is doing more than our previous provider and the helpdesk and projects are of higher quality. Given what we've achieved, I consider it an investment for three reasons. Firstly, productivity has risen with our becoming much more mobile, accessing work from wherever and whenever. We had one substantial test of TFS when we moved office, and that was a big project because at the time we had most of our computing on-premises. Secondly, our users have a very high degree of confidence in TFS as a support operation. They know that TFS is happy and willing to sort things out and get good results. Finally, and possibly most importantly, our Cloud strategy started two years ago has proved itself. Since 16th March we've had everybody working from home with minimal fuss. It could have been very disruptive, but people simply went home on the weekend with their laptops and worked normally on Monday. If we'd have been in this situation two years ago, we would have been stuck.

What do you have now that was missing before?

Being shown how inadequate the current setup had become. Of course, we knew there were constant complaints and frustrations, but now we understood why as opposed to 'it's just not working'. Gaining control of what we needed to do about it and the difference it would make. Helping people understand what the modern business IT world looks like, for example, getting to grips with Cloud fundamentals.

Is your role as Operations and Finance Director easier?

It's easier at two levels. Firstly, far less annoying day to day problems come to me. More importantly, as a director, I have a lot of steering to do, making sure the business is running effectively, having TFS on Board as business partners developing IT support of the company has made a lot of difference.

What was your experience working with TFS?

I've always found them to be very good to work with at all levels. I regularly work with senior tech Steve Anderton; less regular meetings but still a strong relationship with Raja, the MD; and good working relations with engineers and other departments. Raja's philosophy about building long-term working relationships is evident throughout TFS; they all care about partnership rather than just short-term transactions. Intermusica has the same ethos in how we work with our clients. Building strong relationships that last decades is positive for people and for the bottom line, so it's something we value in TFS.

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