

Operational Design & Support for ASP

Situation

A niche software company with products that support the construction industry had recently developed a product targeted to the contractor / subcontractor / owner interfaces. The company established relationships with several regional Associations of General Contractors [AGC]. The national AGC also showed interest in the product. In most states, all public construction projects and many public projects are bid through the AGC organizations.

The product had unique processes for the delivery of drawings and specifications and collaboration between the bidding parties. The product also had competitive and integrated contact management and project management functionality required during bidding and construction.

The company pursued an ASP [application service provider – via the internet] delivery for the product. In order to secure a first round of investment funding, assure national AGC endorsement, and build traction for the ASP, the company needed to move the product from beta development through launch.

Solution

The company used DHC in support of several strategic and tactical phases of the launch plan. This included ASP site & product testing, documentation, training strategy & materials, and strategies to reduce the projected operating costs to remain competitive.

DHC quickly assembled and landed an on-site team to attack testing, documentation, and training. Within six weeks, the first training sessions at a regional AGC were completed. This included all the associated training materials for general contractors, sub-contractors, and others [architects, design firms, owners]. During the development of the training modules, DHC provided product testing support, ASP testing, and recommendations for future training.

DHC also visited the auxiliary operations the company had acquired to support their unique drawing / specification delivery process. Recommendations to consolidate, improve process flow, address bottlenecks, and modify the go-to-market partnering strategy for the supporting operation were made. In addition, a dual process for internet supported training modules and a train-the-trainer program were completed.

During the engagement, DHC participated and supported the go-to-marketing planning within the company. This included development of upgraded selling materials and company overview executed by our MossWarner Communications division. For the period of the engagement, DHC acted as an on-site marketing / sales arm that had not been fully developed internally at this point in their development process.

Results

The company was successful in securing the endorsement of the National AGC. Critical to this was the training and documentation detail of use and functionality of the product that the company was able to present. After the AGC endorsement, the company was able to sell into the first state AGC within a month.

Another key for the company was to secure the first round of funding from investing groups. There are many competing ASP's and products in this market space. With the company's track record in software, the National AGC endorsement, and the bulk of materials development to support the product, the company was successful in achieving the first round of funding.

Market conditions forced the company to pursue its traction objectives without a second round of funding. This was achieved via the signing of six additional state AGC's over the next nine months. With the AGC's comes the signing of general contractors to the service. Both the model for traction and the reality of business case proved out as general contractors recommend that their subcontractors become members of the service.