

The little Web site that couldn't

How do you survive when an IT vendor has irretrievably damaged your Web site?

CLIENT

IT CONSULTANCY PRIOR ANALYTICS

PROBLEM

IT VENDOR DAMAGES CUSTOMER'S WEBSITE

SOLUTION

BPG PROJECT-RECOVERY PROCESS BRINGS VENDOR BACK ON TRACK

RESULT

"BPG HELPED US RESOLVE PROBLEMS WITHOUT WASTING ENERGY ON BLAME."



In late 2003, Clare Robinson, sales director of Prior Analytics, was not happy. Her company was suffering because it had asked a vendor to update its web site. But instead of improving accessibility, the vendor had damaged links and design, leaving the site limping.

As a result, Prior had a Web presence that made it look incompetent - a situation the company could not afford to continue.

"What we wanted," says Robinson, "was to get the site working again. Then we wanted the improvement work done that we had paid for. As an IT consultancy ourselves, we couldn't afford to look incapable of managing a simple Website".

The problem had begun more than a month earlier. Robinson had been approached by the vendor, a consultancy that helps its customers improve their

ranking in Internet search engines. Given five days work, the vendor said, it would modify Prior's site, navigation, and the way it presented itself to search tools. However, the vendor actually took a frustrating thirty-five days to complete the work. And when the new site went up at Prior's Web site address, it featured numerous broken links and wrongly displayed pages.

It was a disaster. And the vendor refused to acknowledge it was responsible for the problem. In desperation, Prior turned to Best Practice Group, a consultancy that specialises in making sure IT projects work as expected, and come in within their original budget.

That organisation also has a "project recovery" division, explains BPG's managing director Allan Watton. "The first step, with any dispute with an IT vendor, is to ask a Court-registered technical expert for an impartial report on projects that run off track. Use that report to negotiate with your vendor. Your aim should always be to stay out of court. Ideally, you want to restore an amicable relationship on both sides. The goal is to get the broken system working, not play point the finger.

"An expert opinion helps reduce that finger pointing," he adds. This document should always be created by an registered 'expert witness' in IT - an individual who the UK courts has validated as trustworthy to present evidence on that topic. BPG is one of few UK companies to be registered in the UK programme. As a result, the reports

presented by its consultants have the credibility to often end IT disputes without further involving lawyers or lawsuits.

That proved to be the case for Prior Analytics, says Robinson. "BPG's report detailed problems with our vendor, where they were at fault, and the legal remedies to which we were entitled. And because the report was clearly written by someone who understood technology as thoroughly as contracts, our vendor was quickly convinced they had to act seriously to resolve our problem."

And with this will to move forward in place, Prior's problems were just as quickly resolved. "BPG created a framework within which we could work amicably with our vendor. That meant that we didn't waste time or energy on blame. Instead, we were both able to accept the report, the vendor fixed their mistakes, and our Web site was restored at no additional cost to ourselves."

Says Robinson, "I wouldn't hesitate to recommend BPG to any organisation needing help with project recovery."

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