MANIFEST

IT Strategy and Management Consultancy
for Registered Providers of Social Housing

A guide to our services

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What is the IT Strategy and Management consultancy service?

Organisations usually put into place an IT Strategy covering a three or five year period. It provides the overarching description of the purpose and aims of the IT Service. The key expression of the strategy is a document approved by the Leadership team or Board, that flows from and directly supports the Corporate Business Strategy. It is objective focussed and provides a high level description of the themes and outcomes the IT service should be oriented towards.

Supporting the Strategy are delivery, management and project plans, budget projections and other tactical and operational plans. Some of these may be produced alongside the Strategy but they will also arise and change over the lifetime of the Strategy. It is important to note that the Strategy itself is does not specify details of operational delivery.

Our IT Strategy and Management consultancy service provides organisations with all the assistance they may need to develop their IT Strategy as well as the supporting delivery plans and the IT service generally.

In addition we offer reviews of existing strategies and IT service management arrangements. This can be helpful to ensure existing strategy is still appropriate compared with organisational objectives and can also be used to regain or retain focus on the delivery of the strategic objectives.

We also offer ongoing engagement to organisations to assist them with any aspect of their IT leadership and management. This may take the form of a critical friend, a fractional leadership arrangement or ad hoc specific tasks.

IT Strategy Development

The typical structure of our strategy development methodology is shown below. This will always be tailored to the needs of the organisation and agreed in advance.

- Stakeholder interviews, budget and policy document reviews:
    a. Interviews with CEO, directors and service heads to agree guiding principles, key themes and required outcomes. Tactical issues that are a priority for specific services will be ascertained from discussions with service heads.
    b. Interviews with the IT Team, Managed Service Providers, Application Management Service providers and project delivery staff.
    c. Interviews with vendors of key line-of-business applications.
    d. Review of capital and operational budgets relating to the IT Service.
    e. Review of IT policies.
    f. Review of the corporate and IT risk registers.
    g. Review of any recent or outstanding audit recommendations relating to IT systems.
    h. Review of Disaster Recovery (DR) and Business Continuity Plans (BCP) relating to IT services.

- Detailed analysis of interview findings and document reviews, leading to research of solutions, suppliers and investment with conclusions and recommendations.

- Analysis of specific service aspects identified for enhanced review.

- Drafting of the main strategy document and a corresponding delivery plan (see below). Attending meetings to present and review the material among stakeholders.

The new strategy will be aligned with the current Corporate Business Strategy and plans. It will be expected to include sections such as:
- Fitness for purpose of current IT solutions.
- IT Infrastructure and cloud provisioning/transition.
- IT Service Value for Money and benchmarking.
- Quick wins.
- Assessment of modules/solutions procured but not implemented.
- Opportunities for further integration and automation.
- Phone and call-centre related issues.
- DR & BCP.
- IT Risk identification, management and mitigation.
- IT related data protection compliance issues.
- Data security and accreditation.
- Online offerings including self-service and channel shift opportunities.
- Social media utilisation.
- IT policies.
- Horizon scanning, emerging technologies possibly of benefit e.g. IoT, AI.

Delivery Plans

As mentioned above, as well as producing a main IT Strategy document, we would also usually provide a number of detailed supporting documents setting out how the objectives of the strategy can be achieved. The nature of these depends on many factors specific to the organisation but may include:

- High level programme of key implementation projects.
- Budgetary requirements.
- Service management changes.
- Procurement plans.
- Risk mitigation recommendations.

All of these documents would be subject to possibly considerable change during the lifetime of the strategy but would provide a starting point for organising delivery of the strategic objectives.

IT Strategy and Management reviews

Housing organisations inevitably encounter changes in general business circumstances and often experience unforeseen issues. These can render an existing IT Strategy non-reflective of the new needs of the business.

We can adapt our development methodology to provide mid-term reviews of an existing IT Strategy. Rather than carrying out a wholesale re-development, we can analyse it against new requirements and recommend changes to it and the supporting delivery plans.

The business changes mentioned above can also give rise to concerns relating to the practical aspects of IT service delivery and management. In these cases we offer consultancy working with your team to help review these issues and develop solutions to address them. This could take the form of:

- Technology evaluations
- Budget reformulation
- Policy and procedure updates
- Risk management and mitigation
- Supplier and contract management

or any other facet of management of the IT service.

Leadership Support

Organisations large and small occasionally find themselves in a position where their IT leadership and management team could benefit from targeted assistance without having to resort to hiring permanent or interim staff. Often this is due to demands caused by significant change programmes, other times because of temporary skills gaps and also in cases of new initiatives or projects that need specific attention.

We can offer tailored support to the IT leadership to help them through these and many other circumstances, by providing the services of consultants experienced in the management of IT services in the housing sector.

This support can be in the form of:
- A 'critical friend' to operational or project leadership.
- A 'fractional' leadership role whereby certain leadership functions are provided on a flexible basis with the option of very low time commitment compared to part time employment.
- Delivery of specific, self-contained leadership tasks.

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To learn more about these services and find out how we can tailor them to your needs, please contact us at:

hello@manifestconsulting.co.uk

0203 797 1012

www.manifestconsulting.co.uk

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