CASE STUDY

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING ADVISORY SERVICES

HOW WITHUM HELPED MUSIC TOGETHER ACHIEVE BUSINESS HARMONY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

Utilizing Withum’s Customer Journey approach, we reviewed and analyzed the current state of Music Together’s people, process, technology and data/information usage. Customer Journey focuses on the key interactions of internal and external customers and assists in prioritizing key initiatives to create a holistic modernization roadmap. The intention is to reduce complexity, drive value, and achieve financial planned growth and operational efficiencies that will provide flexibility to support future growth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too much time was being wasted on patching holes, repetitious efforts (adding Excel worksheets), combating human error, managing day to day activities, sharing information outside the system with others to collaborate, and more. Music Together’s functional needs led them to build custom software and applications around their ERP in an attempt to establish workflows and empower the team to complete their jobs.

With good intent, ongoing development over many years left them with a heavily customized ERP and aging software code initially established to build around the ERP. The challenges of maintaining an outdated system, lack of confidence in their data, manual and duplicative efforts pushed the company to consider modernizing their applications. Music Together was supporting a system, where the system should have been supporting them. When done correctly, the right system should enable the business to rethink how work gets done today by leveraging technology as an enabler to the business, where access, data transparency and reliability comes standard “out of the box”.

CLIENT: Mission-driven organization focused on early childhood development through music education.

STRENGTH: Faced a period of rapid growth.

CHALLENGE: Struggled to support heavily customized and antiquated business systems.

OPPORTUNITY: Considered investing in a technology modernization program.

OUTCOME: Developed an actionable technology roadmap to help them achieve their desired future state.
THE CLIENT

Music Together is a global company based in Hopewell, New Jersey that provides early childhood music and movement programs for children and their families from birth to age eight. For over 30 years, they’ve helped children develop their innate musical talent, and have facilitated time for children, families, and teachers to express themselves through music and more. Music Together’s research-based programs help caregivers enable their children to become confident music-makers, through fun and engaging activities.

THE CHALLENGE

Music Together’s existing IT infrastructure was unable to support the type of growth they were beginning to experience. Withum was asked to help develop an innovative technology roadmap that would align with their overall growth strategy and help to:

■ Reduce complexity & simplify their technology footprint;
■ Optimize technology investments to drive discipline and accountability;
■ Streamline/re-engineer key processes to achieve financial and operational efficiencies;
■ Leverage technology as an enabler to the business;
■ Increase scalability to new geographies with expanded programming.

THE APPROACH AND SOLUTION

Withum’s Customer Journey approach examines the business processes used to manage internal and external customer interactions across an organization. With the days of the single customer touchpoint long gone, Withum leveraged this technique to analyze Music Together’s existing technology architecture, interviewing key internal and external customers to understand each of their unique challenges. Withum used the unique “customer journey” stories to develop a comprehensive roadmap that aligned to the organization’s actions with its desired future state. Some of the activities involved in the roadmap creation included:

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Customer Journey “Day in the life” interviews to identify and document the potential opportunities for improvement related to people, processes, technology, and data/information usage (e.g. single source of truth);</td>
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<td>Grouping our findings by business function with examples of key business processes aligned to the functional areas;</td>
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<td>Prioritizing initiatives using our collaborative prioritization workshop, going beyond the management team by bringing the business (internal customers) together to formulate and align on the future. Categories that were identified during the “day in the life” interviews and workshops were used to segment initiatives and prioritize subsequent workstreams, each with consideration given to people, processes, technology, and data/information;</td>
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<td>Alignment of the key initiatives identified to achieve the Future State based on business stakeholder (internal and external customers) needs, the company’s strategic goals, and time/cost estimates for all initiatives;</td>
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<td>“Sequence of Events” workshops to establish the modernization program’s rollout to drive Music Together’s strategic mission and uncover financial and operational efficiencies to enhance their position in the marketplace.</td>
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THE RESULTS

After determining that their existing ERP system was heavily customized to act as their CRM tool, combined with the use of several other disconnected tools, we outlined which current systems and processes needed to be replaced, consolidated or modernized to enhance the future state of their internal and external customer experiences. Given their global presence and multiple disparate systems, data management was identified as one of their biggest challenges posing the greatest risk to achieving success. Improvements to data quality involved changes to management policies and governance over technology architecture. This was woven into the modernization program by including a unified system architecture to ensure that everyone in the organization is using the same data, sourced from a single source of truth, to make actionable decisions.

Combining prioritization workshop feedback, customer journey findings, and decades of industry experience, Withum recommended an implementation sequence with ERP (Finance) and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) technologies to come first. Their impending technology modernization transformation must leverage a unified business system architecture that will drive and support a single source of truth, scale for significant growth, enable operational and financial excellence, and ultimately reveal innovation opportunities.

As Music Together continues to optimize for the future, replacing their ERP & CRM software are just two pieces of many in the roadmap that will need to be considered. People, processes, technology, and data/information will all need to evolve collectively.