



Partnership enables Costello Medical to accelerate future growth

A fast-growing medical communications and health economic services provider to the healthcare sector needed a managed service provider (MSP) that could meet their very high expectations, respond to the needs of a growing business, and deliver exceptional customer services to staff based in offices connected across the world.

Costello Medical provides scientific support in the analysis, interpretation and communication of clinical and health economic data to the healthcare sector, including pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, and public health bodies. Founded in 2008, Costello Medical has grown to a community of over 170 individuals. The company is headquartered in Cambridge in the UK, and has other national offices in London and Manchester, has an international presence in Singapore, Shanghai, China and Boston, USA.

William Marsh, Head of MedTech and acting IT Manager at Costello Medical says that what sets the agency apart in the medical communications sector is its customer service.

"We're aiming to offer unparalleled customer service in the industry. We're a globally connected company - not siloed or independent. We're one company based over the whole world. So, we have the same needs, the same clients and the same data in each of our offices. And that creates IT challenges."

Customers expect high rigour

Supporting clients in the highly regulated healthcare industry, Costello Medical deal with confidential and highly sensitive data all of the time. *"Our clients expect very high rigour in terms of our IT security and IT management."*

Though the relationship with their previous MSP was initially good, say Costello Medical, problems crept in that wouldn't be tolerated in a highly sensitive, regulated environment. *"It wasn't worth risking our business for."*

Projects put on hold

Costello Medical had an MSP but were doing a lot of the management themselves. *"Despite the low cost we didn't feel we were getting good value. Our MSP wasn't doing a terrible job, but the customer service was absent. We had to do a lot of daily chasing of ongoing projects and outstanding support tickets, which was disruptive."*

Costello Medical employed an extra member of staff to help its IT team, who by this stage were overworked and feeling avoidable pressure in their roles. *"It was just chasing. Nagging. Discovering they'd created problems and then trying to fix them."* The thought of a new project simply added to the anxiety, so they started putting projects on hold towards the end of the contract.

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William Marsh, Costello Medical

Wanted a proactive MSP

The agency wanted a proactive MSP, who could think about future problems, and see potential risks and vulnerabilities in the system. *"We didn't need a huge internal IT team - we just needed IT leadership in house that understood our needs - and a partner to advise on how to meet those needs and execute those actions."*

Support a growing global business

Costello Medical kicked off the search for a UK-based MSP that could support a global business, provide good customer service, support project delivery, and proactively manage the risks and vulnerabilities associated with their environment.

More than simply respond to its IT needs, Costello Medical wanted a company that viewed them as a business, evaluated and anticipated future needs and shared expertise. Also, the IT infrastructure needed to keep up with the demands of a rapidly growing global business.

Similar core values

Costello Medical drew up a long list of candidates, which were whittled down before companies were invited for interviews and to submit proposals. Following a second round of meetings, Costello Medical appointed Bluecube.

"We had a good feeling about Bluecube. First and foremost, our own core values were very similar. Their biggest focus is customer service. And, that's very much our focus and how we work. It felt like a really good fit."

Put customer service first

The biggest drivers in selecting Bluecube was its approach to putting customer service first, and its 24/7 support. *“Our previous MSP wasn't doing that, so we had to find subcontractors or other support providers in places such as Singapore. We wanted one company to support us 24 hours a day, anywhere in the world. Because that's where our business is going. Other companies we looked at didn't have that to the same extent, either outsourcing the night shift, or providing highly limited cover during the late hours in the UK.”*

Costello Medical had outgrown two previous MSPs quite quickly. *“We didn't want to be in a position where they weren't able to meet our needs anymore. We wanted a long-term partnership with someone because we see how clearly that offers benefits for both parties through the relationships we have with our own customers. Our impression was that Bluecube were aligned with that.”*

A technical and cultural fit

A further concern was that Costello Medical's previous MSP had been sold twice. *“Bluecube's CEO was very upfront about his direction and plans for the company and he described a strong vision for the company. It is really important for us that the leadership doesn't change, since that is when the values often change, and it risks the good fit.”*

Just get on with it

Once appointed, Bluecube had a backlog of projects to work on. Today, Bluecube provide a full support service, the managed infrastructure, strategic support, help desk and project delivery.

“When anything goes wrong, they fix it. It's clear they'll always try to fix things with a sense of urgency. They've been very generous. When one of our servers wasn't working properly, they replicated and hosted it in their data centre. They just got on with it. It took them two days, working flat-out, when it became apparent they needed to rebuild it from scratch. Bluecube recognise that working at 100% productivity is important to us. We really appreciate that.”

Meet high expectations

Costello Medical expect clear communication from its MSP. Not to necessarily action everything on the day, but to be kept informed about progress and understand when things will be done. *“It's helpful when our MSP takes things off my plate. I want to trust them to deal with it, knowing that they're getting on with it. That's the sort of relationship that I personally really value.”*

“We've got insanely high expectations and not many of our suppliers get to meet them. The service desk is brilliant. The project teams try to understand our needs and work with us to deliver. With my Costello Medical hat on, I think it could always be better. But, with a real-world hat on, actually it's good service. Especially in this sector where we've found quality of service to be so varied.”

Value working relationships

Costello Medical value the good working relationships formed, *“Our account manager is really knowledgeable about IT. That's very important. On occasion he may need to consider something or refer to the team, but he always has a really good answer. We've regular meetings to discuss how everything's going – providing open feedback both ways”.*

Difference is in the subtleties

Costello Medical is now able to deploy things a lot quicker, be more agile with IT, and fix issues a lot quicker. *“Rather than saving X pounds per year – the difference is in the subtleties. We weren't looking to drive cost savings. We wanted a better quality of service and to build a system that meets the needs of ourselves and our customers. We're paying a lot more, but we're getting exponentially more value in return from it.”*

Plan for the future

Costello Medical is no longer focusing on maintaining its systems, it says. *“We're thinking about the future. Thinking about where we're heading as a company. We're rolling out projects that benefit everyone. Our internal IT team enjoy their jobs a lot more. We're not on the back foot from an IT perspective.”*

The biggest benefit is the shift in mindset to planning for the future. *“We're able to roll out improvements. We're able to innovate. We're able to increase efficiency. And, people enjoy their jobs.”*

“Ultimately there's that classic metric of, ‘Would you recommend to a friend? I would! I can't say that for any other MSP.”

William Marsh, Costello Medical

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