



Delivering progress in a rapidly changing world

AOL case study

QUORTEX



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Quortex provides expert guidance to the AOL Talk business launch team

With more than 2.4 million members, AOL is the leading online interactive services provider to the UK. In 2004 the company decided to diversify its product portfolio and enter the UK home phone market with AOL Talk. To build and launch the new line of business, AOL needed telecoms and integration specialists who could help them structure and plan the delivery programme and ensure effective testing through to launch.

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David Carr,
Senior Vice President,
AOL

Looking to deliver on time with a quality customer experience, the new business team wanted to make some changes to the programme, and they asked Quortex to help them evaluate its structure and plans.

Quortex MD, Hugh Buckley explains how the collaboration had a significant impact on the AOL Talk delivery programme: **“From our initial evaluation we identified that the AOL team had a lot of strengths and experience, but that some changes to the programme organisation and controls could be implemented to improve the delivery process and ensure its success. We also recognised that they needed someone to take overall responsibility for programme delivery.”**

Quortex worked closely with AOL to help validate its resource requirements and then find and interview candidates for specialist roles. Having selected a candidate put forward by Quortex for the role of Programme Manager, AOL capitalised on the experience and expertise of Quortex to build a new delivery plan from the ground up. The success of this new plan owed much to the fact that cross-functional representatives were actively involved in its development, which meant that they understood the programme thoroughly and felt confident that it was right for the business.

Steering a course to launch

With a new structure and delivery plan in place, the next issue was how to plan the testing and release process to secure the successful launch of AOL Talk. Dave Watler, Senior Project Manager at Quortex, worked as part of the AOL team to develop a strategy for overall testing and release which included live testing with real customers. Following on from this, he also provided expert support to manage the business readiness testing through to launch.

Dave recalls that when it came to programme delivery, AOL and Quortex shared the same philosophy: "You strive for perfection but it's unrealistic to think that you can achieve it. So you have to know the risks and then manage them whilst delivering the programme."

AOL also asked Quortex to help them manage the systems integration planning with their billing provider. Hugh Buckley explains how, by contributing to joint project meetings, a valuable insight was gained into the issues and challenges faced by both parties: "It helped us to understand the implications of AOL's requirements and we were able to improve communication on both sides. Moreover, this approach enabled joint planning to identify what was achievable and what requirements could crush the supplier."

Support to fit the need

AOL Talk was launched in May 2005 and has proved a huge success with its members. Reflecting on the part Quortex played in the programme's development and delivery, Hugh Buckley describes their distinct approach:

"It's not our style to muscle in and take over the show. Instead we'll always spend time with a client to understand their objectives and challenges, and develop a clear picture of what the project needs to secure its success. We then use this insight to work with the client's team to come up with a realistic approach that we think will secure the best possible outcome for them. If this means that Quortex takes less of a leading role and only provides support as and when it's needed, that's fine. Because to see a client achieve their overall goals for a project is our overriding aim."

"With the AOL Talk launch programme, our role was to remain objective and highlight the risks so that the AOL team could make the calls that were right for their business."

View from the top

AOL Senior Vice President, David Carr held overall responsibility for the launch of AOL Talk into the home phone market: "Quortex are pragmatic and level-headed people who gave us straightforward advice and provided experienced resources who could understand our business. They were definitely on our wavelength and, while some consultancies choose to remain very much apart, the Quortex guys were part of the team."



Quortex

To find out more about Quortex go to www.quortex.com.

If you would like to discuss how we can help to increase your certainty of success with challenging integration or business change programmes, please call +44 (0)118 942 8025 or email quortex@quortex.com

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