

Buy or Build?

Assessing options for implementing corporate community investment technology

Is it better to buy pre-built technology or have your company's IT programmers develop it from scratch? This question is especially important when the decision involves buying or building solutions for specialized areas such as corporate donation and sponsorship programs.

Framing the Decision

To remain competitive, companies must stay on the cutting edge of evolving technologies and changing business needs; however, one of the most difficult challenges for IT decision-makers is where to invest their limited financial and human resources. Buy-or-build decisions typically incorporate consistent decision-making criteria that include:

1. Time-to-market;
2. Cost analysis;
3. Core competencies; and
4. Achieving a custom fit.

When each of the above factors is taken into account, the advantages of GrantStream's technologies are compelling.

Time-to-Market

Building your own deployment solution always means longer time-to-market. To that end, time-to-market is often the first and most important factor that a company considers when making the buy-or-build decision. If time-to-market is a concern in a company's development and implementation process – and it most likely is – GrantStream's technology will yield results dramatically faster than building from scratch (i.e., eight to 12 weeks versus six to 12 months).

Cost Savings

What are the costs associated with buying versus building? Does the benefit of building justify the cost, especially when mature solutions such as GrantStream's are available? This is a difficult determination since no value measure can be one-size-fits-all. With most companies, the dollar cost of building can be estimated by the number of hours that the company's developers will invest in the project; however, companies typically underestimate the hours required for application development. Furthermore, the ongoing maintenance and support costs required for internally-developed solutions are frequently left out of the equation. Your company's IT department must dedicate tens of thousands of dollars more for ongoing maintenance and development than if you were to go with GrantStream technology. Another key cost driver that is often not considered is the time required for the involvement of the content experts – the company's community investment staff – who must guide the development of the application.

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Core Competencies

The choice to build often entails more 'building' than initially forecast. GrantStream has spent years of development effort creating and refining our GrantRight™, MatchRight™ and ScholarRight™ tools. Furthermore, we've benefited from the ongoing feedback and demands of our clients who are top CI professionals with leading corporations. It can be an unpleasant surprise to learn that your company's developers will invest hundreds of programming hours to develop a tool that is not as comprehensive as GrantStream's. Add to this the dozens of hours required by your community investment managers to work with developers to ensure that the technology solution meets their needs and you have a huge cost (both in real terms and in opportunity cost). Unfortunately, most companies don't realize this until they are beyond the point of return. The critical question is this: will your company benefit from developing a core competency in grant management technology? If not, then investing in GrantStream's services makes the most sense.

Custom Fit

In the past, getting a custom fit meant being trapped between unlimited flexibility at high cost, and narrower flexibility at lower cost. This is no longer the case since GrantStream's solutions are built to be inherently flexible and customizable.

Summary

Beyond significant advantages in regard to real cost, GrantStream's solutions offer important benefits in terms of time-to-market and allow your developers to focus on their core mission. In terms of custom fit, GrantStream provides solutions that meet the most demanding community investment user's requirements.

Unless your company stands to gain a competitive advantage by building its own grant management system, your decision is an easy one: GrantStream's community investment technologies are the fastest, most cost-effective and customizable solution for your company.