



**IT Competition XXI – 2017 IT Strategy Case**  
**Request for Information (RFI) for Consulting Services for**  
**Develop Controls for Internet Enabled Shopping Appliances**

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**Background Information**

Bazinga's! ([www.bazingas.com](http://www.bazingas.com)) was founded in 1998 as an online retailer, initially selling small electronic devices to consumers over the Internet. The company's early website design was nothing more than simple hyperlinked text, since Internet technologies had not evolved to support rich content. Bazinga's! was known for its sense of humor and frequently posted random funny sayings at the bottom of its web pages for user amusement. By the end of 2005 Bazinga's! had diversified its product inventory to include almost anything which could be sold online that was not perishable. The company had transitioned to stocking/fulfilling orders via regional distribution centers. Bazinga's! had also established an online marketplace and payment/order fulfillment process for individual merchants to sell their products.

Based on the success of their affinity program, Bazinga's! Best Buds!, they developed an Internet enabled appliance called Bazinga's! Online's Best or BOB for short. The appliance was programmed to process a variety of voice activated commands and worked as an assistant to play music, control streaming program selection on the TV, answer questions based on Internet queries and to place online purchases at Bazinga's! shopping site among other functions. BOB was easy to activate since all you had to do was say "Hi BOB".

BOB quickly became one of Bazinga's! most popular products and a leading Internet enabled assistant. One family used BOB all the time and found ordering online to be made even easier by using voice commands. This family had a very bright 9-year-old son who skipped grades and was already a freshman in high school. One day his parents discovered a couple of adult content DVDs in his bedroom closet. When they confronted him with this discovery they asked where he had been able to obtain DVDs which should only be sold to people over 18 years old. He explained to his father he had used BOB to order the DVDs and had learned to use BOB by observing his parents place online orders. The two adult DVD titles he ordered had been discussed by some of his friends at school and he was curious to see what they were about.

**Problem Statement**

The 9-year-old boy's mother is a board member of the National Parents Television Council (NPTC) which advocates for TV programming decency, especially where minor viewers are

involved. She discussed the BOB ordering experience with her fellow NPTC Board members and the organization launched a very visible national campaign to ban the use of BOB until proper safeguards can be implemented to control shopping by minors. The NPTC campaign received great media exposure and resulted in Bazinga's! sales being reduced by 20 percent. Bazinga's had no practical alternative except to take BOB offline until these problems could be resolved.

The unfavorable press resulted in Bazinga's! stock suffering a sell off which reduced Bazinga's! market capitalization by 17 percent. The sudden drop in stock price caused Bazinga's! Board of Directors to summon the CEO to a meeting to discuss these events. The Board indicated the shareholder perception viewed the current leadership team as being unable to effectively control the management of technology and run Bazinga's! and thus issued a warning to the CEO that anymore events like these may require Bazinga's! Board to consider changes in the executive leadership team.

The CEO invited the SVP of Consumer Business and the CIO to a working lunch where they discussed these situations and the CEO raised the following issues:

1. I thought we knew what we were doing when we designed BOB. I'm still amazed with how people use products we develop. Did anyone ever anticipate we might have a problem with minors ordering inappropriate merchandise with BOB? Could our web site and mobile ordering processes have the same abuse potential?
2. It appears to me BOB may be causing our company more harm than good. Would it be prudent of us to pull BOB from the market?
3. If we decide to keep BOB on the market what are the best practices for using this technology for our company in order to avoid future problems? Should these best practices be used for our web site and mobile ordering processes?

At the conclusion of lunch the CEO, SVP of Consumer Business and CIO agreed to develop a request for information (RFI) to solicit ideas and hypothesis on how to address the above issues from qualified consulting firms to map out a plan to review the Internet ordering process (web site, mobile and BOB) and to determine the feasibility of implementing an acceptable set of parental controls.

### **Request for Information Terms and Conditions**

Bazinga's! is requesting RFIs from qualified consulting teams to provide assess the practicality of obtaining consulting services to assist with assessing the feasibility of implementing an acceptable set of parental controls for the Internet order process. In order to evaluate RFIs and to rank consulting teams the CEO, SVP of Consumer Business and CIO have formed a Consultant



Selection Committee composed of prominent IT executives from industry. The Consultant Selection Committee will review all RFIs and concepts submitted and rank the consulting teams based on RFIs and oral presentations/interviews. ***The request for information should describe ideas and approaches for how an acceptable set of parental controls might work and how they might be implemented.***

It is recommended each RFI submitted contain at a minimum the following sections:

1. **Background Observations** – The consultants’ interpretation and understanding of Bazinga’s! problem (problem statement) and proposed assignment. Identify any special issues the consulting team believes the proposed consulting assignment should address as well as any potential risks.
2. **Scope and Objectives** – What parts of the Internet Order process will be addressed by the parental controls? Are different parts of the Internet Order process more critical and contain more risk of abuse than others?
3. **Proposed Parental Controls and Implementation Plan** – What types of parental controls should be deployed and in which parts of the Internet Order process would these controls be implemented? A high-level outline of the implementation plan steps (not too much detail) which will be completed by Bazinga’s! personnel and consultants together to deploy the parental controls.
4. **Proposed Consulting Team** – Present the consultants to be assigned, identify their roles in the project and provide information on their past experiences as it relates to completing the consulting assignment.
5. **Timetable and Cost** – What is the schedule for implementing the parental controls, how long will it take to complete and what might the implementation project cost? Bazinga’s! is only interested in a very general estimate for cost and schedule, specific detail is not required at this point in time.
6. **Benefits to Bazinga’s!** – What business benefits (value) will Bazinga’s! receive in exchange for the fees spent to implement these parental controls?

Care should be taken with preparing the contents of the written RFI since it will be relied upon as part of future final contract between Bazinga’s! and the selected consulting team. All RFIs submitted become the property of Bazinga’s! and the company will not be responsible for any costs associated for preparation of RFIs or for attending the oral presentation/interview.

### **Oral Presentation and Interview**

The CEO, SVP of Consumer Business and CIO have expressed a desire to sit in on the oral presentations. These executives are busy people and thus do not have a tolerance for meetings longer than 30 minutes. Therefore, Consulting Teams will be given 20 minutes to deliver their presentations and then the Consultant Selection Committee will limit questions and answers to



10 minutes. In order for the Consultant Selection Committee to properly understand and evaluate your proposal, it will be very important for the entire oral presentation to be completed within the 20 minute presentation period.

### **Submission of Proposals**

It is the policy of Bazinga's! to accept RFIs in electronic form only (Adobe Acrobat .pdf format). Consulting teams are responsible for ensuring their RFIs are received by Bazinga's! Consultant Selection Committee by the date and time indicated below. Completed RFIs shall be emailed to [itc2017@calpolymissa.org](mailto:itc2017@calpolymissa.org) and consulting teams will receive an email confirming successful receipt by the Consultant Selection Committee.

### **Important Dates**

Prospective consulting teams should be aware of the following important dates. Failure to complete submissions or attendance at these dates will result in disqualification from being considered for final ranking:

- **April 21, 2017 – Proposals in electronic form due to Bazinga's! by 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time**
- **April 29, 2017 – Oral Presentation and Interview to Bazinga's! Consultant Selection Committee**

Bazinga's! Consultant Selection Committee is looking forward to receiving your RFI and attending your oral presentation and interview.