MSWL Project Management: OLEF

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1   Introduction

WebTools SL is a company specialized on Web Developement. With a total of 20 employees, the company has developed different web tools designed and customized for different software development customers in Spain. Among the customers, they have important companies in different environments, such as:

- Hardware development companies.
- Software development companies.
- Internet Service Providers.

The main strength of the company belongs to the well qualified work force. For working in the company, having a good knowledge of Web development languages and tools is a MUST, although additional knowledge having to do with FLOSS projects associated to Web development are appreciated as well.

Moreover this, the company invest up to 20% of the earnings in technology training for the employees, in order to provide employees with updates of the latests technologies used, both in Web development, but also in other environments such as DDBB (DataBases) programming and administration, generic programming languages, scripting languages, software forges and VCS (version control system), graphic design, etc.

Among the weaknesses of the company, the lack of a strong marketing knowledge is an issue. Besides this, the commercial work force consists only of 2 of the 20 people working on the company, so selling strength needs backing to wide spread the company's business.

Among the different available web products they have developed, main incomes come, nowadays, from most to less importance, due to the next ones:

- Web Network Administration tools.
- A web software forge frontend for CVS and SVN.
- A web forum framework, based on CSS3, HTML5 and JQuery.

All of this software products are under propietary licenses, with copyright belonging to the company.

Regarding Web Network Administration tools, the product is well sold and has a strong market share position, increasing along the time, so no changes are considered in terms of licensing, development strategy or billing.

Meanwhile, the company has lost definitely the market associated to their software forge web tools, due to the appearance and huge spread of GIT.

Somehow, this company wants to promote, improve and enhance their Web Forum framework, called OLEF (Open Libre Enhanced Forums) in order to explore this Market Niche. Feedback regarding this tool is quite good from customers perspective, above all in terms of usability, performance and look-appearance.

However, customers have communicated the company the lack of different functionalities they would like to own for integrating the product on their corporate network. Among the different functionalities pending, next ones can be found:

- Integration of an additional Question / Answer mode, similar to Stack Overflow
- Integration of a badging/vote system to highlight the best responses
- Integration of a much powerful report & statistic moderation tool
- Integration of a live chat and voice over IP communication system between the forum members
- Security improvements
- Multiple theme selection

The mission is to achieve previous enhancements in one year time.

Unfortunately, the company has no budget to invest on developing all the new functionality, so releasing the software as FLOSS is the unique solution for achieving the goal. Two very important customers would be willing to integrate the FLOSS product and acquire a very important integration and support contract with the company.

So, to summarize, this is the challenge. Developing all the new functionality described above by starting a FLOSS project, with no impact on performance, while keeping the look and feel and ease of use of the framework.

2 Current competitors analysis

3 Licensing selection

4 Technical Infrastructure

5 Project Management

- Communication strategies, Marketing.
- Documentation, Netiquette.
- Organization politics (Apache/Neutrality/Community Driven vs. Single-Vendor)

6 Community Management

- Volunteers: Community Management
- Mechanisms to grow
- Emphasize on:
- Quality?
- Usability?
- ???