Banking on financial innovation

There’s no such thing as complacency in Canada’s financial sector. Technology, self-serve models, and partnerships with platform providers are changing the banking landscape at a break-neck pace, creating the opportunity for institutions to meet rising client expectations with innovative solutions that can be deployed quickly from the Cloud of a strategic partner.

Canada’s banks are no strangers to change; and in 2016, one of them made a move to partner with the online lender Borrowell in its bid to be the first major Canadian bank to market a “one click” online lending service.

On paper, the partnership provided the opportunity to develop a new lending solution in Canada that would require one of the country’s largest financial institutions to disrupt its operations from the inside out. For the bank, this meant updating processes, challenging assumptions, and aligning teams to support new technologies and a new way of delivering a lending business in the digital age.

The partnership not only had to work for the bank and Borrowell – but it also needed to prepare both parties to disrupt the financial world. Understanding this, KPMG was brought in by the bank to define business priorities, identify policy control points, assess capabilities of the fintech, set the parameters for mutual success, then negotiate the commercial relationship to make success a reality. With both partners at the table, we worked to align goals, operations and helped the team to manage the technical, legal, and risk management challenges that arose along the way.

After successful negotiations, we leveraged an Agile approach to innovation used by start-ups to guide our client through a process that would help ensure the alternative lending product had the support, capacity and growth to evolve over time. In Fall 2016, the stage was set for the bank and Borrowell to release its lending innovation to the world – further demonstrating both companies’ ability to deliver innovative technology aimed at making the online lending experience faster and more customer friendly.

“Going into this partnership, we knew that Borrowell had the potential to bring significant value to one of the country’s largest names in banking and – more importantly – transform the lending experience for its customers. We also knew that applying our existing technology, platforms, and approach to innovation to working with the bank would require significant transformation by both parties if we hoped to launch and manage our alternative lending solution as true partners,” said Andrew Graham, Co-Founder and CEO of Borrowell, adding, “With KPMG in the mix, we did the work and made those changes, becoming the first to market with a truly unique financial product.”

Our client’s partnership with Borrowell wasn’t just a landmark financial industry pairing, it was a catalyst for transformation. In response to new technologies, rising competition, and shifting consumer trends, one of Canada’s biggest banking institutions challenged the status quo and become a true financial innovator.

We know how to exploit technology.