

Agile Dedicated Teams or How to Make Outsourcing Software Development More Reliable



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The Internet is flooded with articles about outsourcing software development and success stories about it. However, IT outsourcing involves certain risks, too. So no wonder that the next typical question here is: How to make relations with IT providers more safe and reliable and at the same time profitable enough? A possible answer and a way to a win-win outsourcing strategy can be agile dedicated development teams.

Dedicated Software Development

In short, a dedicated development team is a software production and managerial staff who works for your company remotely (nearshore or offshore). Such a team is established on the basis of (or with help of) a local IT or specialized outstaffing firm. Normally such firms provide:

- IT specialists with required skills;
- Infrastructure: hardware, software, networks, office space, etc.;
- Necessary tax, accounting, and legal services for the team members;
- Administrative and technical support and supervision.

Every team member is selected by the customer. Usually the size and skill profile of a dedicated team can be changed with time.

To date a wide experience is accumulated in utilizing dedicated development teams located in Asia, Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia, Romania, etc.), and other popular outsourcing destinations. According to analytical reports, this model can be considered as one of the most reliable forms of IT outsourcing both for large companies and small software firms and start-ups from the USA and the European Union.

At the same time the practice demonstrates that in many cases the best results are achieved when the dedicated team model is united with Agile software development methodology.

Agile Development

According to Wikipedia [Agile software development](#) refers to a group of programming methodologies based on iterative development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between cross-functional teams. The term was coined in 2001 when the [Agile Manifesto](#) had been formulated.

The Manifesto accentuates close collaboration, ongoing communication, welcoming requirements change on any project stage, and customers' satisfaction as an ultimate goal of paramount importance.

Agile Dedicated Software Development Teams

Applying Agile approach to dedicated software development teams, we get outsourced software development which is characterized by the following points:

- Common purposes and values for the customer and remote team
- Iterative planning and development
- Regular communication between the client and dedicated team
- Early identifying and mitigating risks
- Aspiration to finding solutions for every problem
- Continuous learning, knowledge exchange and processes improvement

Agile dedicated teams are not just a sum of the above-mentioned approaches. This is a synergy that helps to mitigate such outsourcing risks as lack of mutual understanding, different treatment of tasks, late (and, as a result, costly) recognition that something isn't right, etc.

Establishing an Agile Dedicated Team

Here are some tips how to make an agile dedicated team more effective.

1. Build a proper team and team spirit

Choose experienced and educated staff with good language skills to be double sure you are on the same line with them. The team members should accept criticism, tend to optimize the process and make it clearer for you at all stages. Another important thing to take into account is a team spirit and readiness to collaboration. Every member should respect the project goals.

2. Try to minimize the culture gap

Minimizing the culture gap is another way to save you time, money and nerves. Good language level and interpersonal skills of the team members help to ease communication and secure successful project completion. But if you are not strong in understanding different mentalities, try to work with countries which have cultural traditions close to yours.

3. Set up regular status meetings and open discussions

This will help you to understand where the project is at any given moment. In fact, open relations and close communication between you and the dedicated team are cornerstones of the software development project success.

4. Small iterations and continuous integration

Divide your project into small iterations and require regular software integration. This will give you more fine-grained control on the real project progress. You'll be able to scope portions of completed functionality and, as a result, find any misunderstandings, detect problems at the very early stage, and react in time by clarifying the requirements or fixing the code.

5. Check the code is clean and documentation is well-structured

Well-shaped and commented source code is a key for further smooth maintenance. Also, that helps to keep the project responsive to requirement changes with minimal effort. Proper documentation makes knowledge transfer easy and cost-effective.

So, make sure the team members have relevant experience in source code design and documenting techniques.

In conclusion

Agile dedicated teams can essentially decrease risks typical for other outsourcing models. Really, here, the key activities in project management, software development and quality inspection are comprehensively controlled by the customer. Being used properly the agile dedicated team model provides both the main benefits of nearshore/offshore IT outsourcing (such as cost savings) and a high level of control and confidence inherent for in-house software development processes.

About the Author



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