

Partners: Seven Keys to Making Software Outsourcing Work

Outsourcing is the new normal - but it can be a terrible experience if not done correctly. Here are seven keys to unlock the efficiencies and strengths of global partnerships in software development.

Maybe it's just us. We hear a lot about the benefits of outsourcing - but meet our fair share of companies who have been burned badly. Between cost overruns, blown timelines, and poor communication, we have heard (and experienced) it all. It seems that outsourcing can either be a great experience or a terrible one - and more often than not, each side blames the other for a poor outcome. **What if you could leverage the global resources available to some of the world's greatest companies - and make it actually work? We'll show you how.**

Key #1 - Great Developers are Everywhere

The first thing you need to get out of your mind is that software outsourcing partners only come from India. That's an "Outsourcing 1.0" mindset. It's just not true. These days you can find good developers just about anywhere - onshore, offshore and nearshore. Some of the finest in the world are in places like Europe.

You also don't want to think of software outsourcing as hiring individual developers or freelancers. Who's got time to chase down a bunch of individual contractors around the globe? Outsourcing 2.0 is about hiring TEAMS of developers.

Now how do you go about doing that? I'm going to assume here, in most cases, you do what most people do when looking for recommendations -- you ask friends, family, and colleagues. But is that the smartest thing to do in outsourcing? Not at all.

Most of your colleagues are going to be familiar with huge outsourcing firms, ones that employ hundreds of developers. But for smaller companies, you might only need maybe five, ten, or twenty developers. Pick a company that can scale with you - they don't need to be big today to be able to add skilled developers tomorrow.

With giant outsourcing companies, often located in India or East Asia, the chances are high that you'll be just one of many, many contracts and ultimately you'll feel it. They just won't be invested in your project in the way you need them to be.

Pick the right team, and your project will be a win.



Key #2 - Focus on Your Vision

Don't just run head first into software outsourcing. Have a solid vision for your project. Does it serve a purpose in your business? Does it make sense? Most importantly, is the user experience compelling? Fail to take these into account and you'll end up with a resource-draining dud.

Developing an app just because you can is a horrible strategy. In the same vein, not having a clear vision before you write those first lines of code is equally problematic. Don't wing it: take a pain point and focus on alleviating that pain and delight your end user.

Key #3 - In Person Investigation is Critical

Would you buy a car sight unseen? It's been done, but better done in person. Outsourcing 1.0 was more focused on cost, and companies were more focused on finding the cheapest team. Outsourcing 2.0 is about finding the best team,

and how are you going to be able to judge that based only a long-distance vetting?

Take a business trip to your prospective outsourcing partner, get to know them and how they work. Does their work culture match yours? Do their developers seem genuinely skilled? Face-to-face discussions can bring critical insights to light and the result will be a smoother operating engagement that is both cost and time efficient.

But doesn't travel eat up any cost savings? Nope - international travel is increasingly inexpensive, and with budget airlines within Europe, you can be anywhere in a few hours for less than \$100.

PRO TIP

Our city, beautiful Skopje, Macedonia, is a central European hub for these budget airlines. Our food is amazing and you'll be glad you made the trip. Just a few hours drive from the Greek islands, you can add a few days and enjoy the Mediterranean after an excellent visit with our development team.

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Key #4 - Quality Matters as Much as Price

This echoes Key #3, but it's worth it to stress it again on its own. Old school software outsourcing seemed to be about driving costs down as far as possible, quality be damned. Frankly, this is a stupid way to think.

Yes, you might get code on the cheap, but how much time are you going to spend afterwards fixing shoddy code? That could blow those cost savings out of the water completely.

Fivrr and Upwork may be an easy place to go, but the majority of the clients we serve have dabbled there first and come to us having lost valuable time, money, and trust. Don't make that mistake.

When outsourcing, you're looking for value and that means putting quality matters as much as price. Does this mean you might choose for a developer that isn't the cheapest? Sure, but you won't be spending more money later fixing issues.

Key #5 - Think Like A Partner & Embrace Cultural Differences

Treat your outsourcing partner like a partner, and not some kind of expendable resource. At the same time, you need to understand that people around the world have different ways of communicating. For example, India's people have a much more polite (and potentially confusing) way of saying "no", like telling you "it's difficult" instead. But an Eastern European developer will tell you a flat out "no" much like a New Yorker.

Either way, you're going to need to do your homework and be prepared to embrace cultural differences. When it comes to talking to your outsourcing partners, treat them as people, not robots. By treating them with respect, you invite them to make a more personal connection with your project. They'll feel more inclined to push out quality work if they feel like a part of the larger end goal.

Key #6 - Effective Communication Is Key

Don't fall into the cheap outsourcing trap - lowering your expectations. Expect the same level of quality out of these outsourced developers that you would from your in-house employees. That's really the core of Outsourcing 2.0: thinking of outsourcing as an extension of your team, and not just more bodies in front of a computer coding away.

Key #7 - 3x ROI on Hiring a Good Outsourcing Partner

Take your outsourcing hiring process seriously. Industry research shows that you'll get roughly three times the time and effort you spent in looking for a good outsourcing partner. You are looking for more than cost savings. A good partner

will add new resources and networks for your business to access, accelerate your project cycle (a team working while you sleep!), and communicate well and often.

Outsourcing 2.0 is about quality, and you should expect it from any outsourcing partner you select.

We want to be your partner.

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Beyond our own products, Inform deploys teams for partners around the world, with a virtual structure that is efficient and saves clients' time and expense. Past clients include US government and Silicon Valley startups, as well as companies across Europe and the United States.

We are ready to be your trusted partner! Please contact us for a free consultation on your next project at partners@inform.mk or <https://inform.mk/partners>.

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