

Agile Offshore Development Gives Lift to Avionics Training Company

MATRIX



“You can’t offshore Agile.”

According to CIO magazine, that had largely been the accepted wisdom in corporate IT since the iterative development approach was introduced more than a decade ago.

Distance, it seemed, would only make Agile methods of close-working, collaborative teams, self-governance, and rapid, time-boxed development more difficult.

Finding top talent for legacy app support was difficult.

After some attrition, the client needed to hire a couple of internal developers to support and perform enhancements for two mission-critical .NET legacy applications – one for an eCommerce storefront, the other for a courseware testing lab.



But over the last few years, some offshore providers have been quietly evolving their Agile development offerings. And more IT leaders are now embracing the offshore model.

For the client’s Courseware Division based in Fort Worth Texas, using offshore with Agile has been a great way to get quality software at an affordable price.

This client is the world’s premier professional aviation training company, with hundreds of training courses delivered to thousands of customers every year.

Two things worked against them. Finding top talent --- a small or mid-size company competing against Facebook, Google and the like has a lot of difficulty finding the best resources. And most top developers want to work on cutting-edge technologies --- not provide support for legacy applications.

Enter MATRIX Global Delivery, based in Bangalore, India with a perfect blended solution.

“Our model works very well with companies of all sizes,” said Rick Stephenson, Vice President of Delivery – Western Region. “Unlike some of our larger competitors, we treat all of our clients

the same. From the largest to the smallest client, we deliver the same level of high-quality talent to every project. Having experienced resources combined with shadow resources and rotating teams, we are able to maintain excellent knowledge transfer over the long term.”

With a trusting MATRIX relationship spanning nearly a decade that also included IT staffing and payroll services, the client’s IT executives were willing to consider the global delivery solution, which also featured a MATRIX onshore technical delivery lead.

Everything flows through the Technical Delivery Lead.

What was their biggest fear?

“The quality of the work and the performance of the team,” said John Gruebmeier, MATRIX Account Executive. “Would it be a good tradeoff not having physical resources on site, who you could talk to every day? We had to convince them that our onsite lead would take care of everything in terms of communication and quality,” he added.

Once they met their technical delivery lead, software architect Siva Sirigiri, whose technical credentials include Certified Scrum Master as well as numerous MS certifications, and nearly 20 years of experience, they were convinced.

Offshore Agile may seem like an oxymoron since teams are oceans and time zones apart. But it worked for this team using a very transparent process.

A MATRIX Agile coach was brought to train the Fort Worth IT team in Scrum and Kanban techniques to help familiarize them with the iterative approach.

With Sirigiri working onsite, he was able to verbally explain the business value rather than giving the offshore team detailed functional and technical requirements. “That way teams could swarm problems. It was more about understanding the problem and trying to fix it,” he said.

Time zone differences were rendered insignificant as the offshore team came to work late in the day and worked into the night. Daily scrum standups at 9 a.m. CST with the global delivery team made it a very transparent process. Instant messaging sessions were used around conference calls so the information conveyed was spoken as well as written.

Sirigiri, onshore delivery leader, and Jagadish Gokavarapu, offshore delivery leader, provided leadership to the offshore developers and handled all the timelines, deliverables, work review and QA, before turning the code over to the Client for production. This diversity in skills created a culture focused on delivering a high-quality solution to the client.

“We reached steady-state after 90 days,” said Gruebmeier. “The MATRIX global delivery team began to build excellent relationships with the client. And it’s been on cruise control ever since.” The client renewed its support contract now entering into its third year, and may be looking for other opportunities to offshore.

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MATRIX is a technology solutions provider that blends staffing, consulting and professional services to help companies solve tough IT and business challenges in an increasingly complex and competitive world. Over the last 10 years, we’ve delivered more than 1,000 IT projects and filled nearly 25,000 jobs with talented IT professionals for clients across the U.S.