intetics

Where software concepts come alive

OFFSHORE DEDICATED TEAM® FOR A BIG DATA SOLUTIONS COMPANY

OBJECTIVE

Set up a dedicated offshore team for a Bid Data Solutions company to grow its software development abilities and capacity.

CHALLENGE

The client is a Big Data global business intelligence and technology consulting company headquartered in a North Shore suburb of Chicago, IL. The company is focused on building data factories and other advanced analytics for their clients. These intelligent data-centric services allow its customers to get data under control by providing customer insights throughout the enterprise.

The client was looking for a global team with diverse skills and a specialized approach to grow its software development abilities and capacity. The Intetics Offshore Dedicated Team® business model was the optimal solution for the customer. This model provides dedicated development teams along with complete infrastructure and administrative services at one of Intetics Offshore Development Centers. The client gets their own remote development department on a fixed monthly budget.

The challenge for the team was the subject area on which the client was focused: economics, business performance analysis methods, and other business operations functions. The team members had to learn the fundamentals of economics terminology, turn and promotional sales forecasts, ordering forecasts, inventory management, and so on.

Another challenge was the efficiency of communication between the offshore team, the client's in-house staff, and the client's customers that the off-shore developers and project managers would have to interact with directly. It took time for the participants to work out the optimal frequency and means of communication in order to make it possible to discuss issues, solve problems, and keep all stakeholders updated on vital information.

SOLUTION

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With assistance from Intetics, our client selected the initial team of three specialists in Kharkiv, Ukraine. The team's skillset precisely matched the client's IT and business requirements. A dedicated manager was appointed by the client to supervise the work of the offshore team and interview each potential team member. The manager scrutinized both experience and personality traits of the candidates. All necessary infrastructure and communication facilities were provided at the Intetics' Kharkiv development center.

Since the customer requirements are frequently and substantially modified, the work of the team is based on the Agile development methodology with priorities set according to the customer's preferences. Short iterations allow the developers to obtain prompt customer feedback and get a better idea of the business needs and logic of the target products. Automated builds and updated unit tests, as well as web reports on the build and tests results, are delivered to the customer on a regular basis.

Communication is conducted via telephone, e-mail, and instant messaging. Daily chats and voice conferences via various web-based tools are held to discuss status reports and customer requirements. Desktop sharing tools are also being used so that various project artifacts can be visualized and demonstrated in a real-time environment.

Intetics' ability to build an effective team, manage it, and deliver projects that exceed client's expectations quickly became obvious to all parties involved. As a result, the client expanded the team to over 15 members with a dedicated project manager under the Intetics ODT model.

The major project that the offshore dedicated team has worked on involves a range of interacting applications requiring frequent integration. The components developed by the team range from command line utilities and COM objects, enabling interaction with the Visual Basic scripts used by the customer, to enterprise data warehouses and web portals for monitoring and management. The team has also created desktop applications for Windows XP based Tablet PC devices, as well as their web versions for small screen PC and Pocket PC devices. The client targeted applications range from Windows Mobile inventory management tools to a web-based inventory and order management site, and a web dashboard that features a set of KPI measurements.

Since all of the client's projects are database driven and databases are initially built and developed by their customers, the utmost attention is given to the database design, structure, optimization, and ETL/ELT data processing. Presently, the team maintains over 40 databases with 50 to 200 tables each and with hundreds of millions of records. After the functionality of the applications is modified, the database performance often needs to be optimized, and the production source code updated accordingly. Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services are employed for efficient reporting.

RESULTS

Within the first two years of cooperation with Intetics, the client's offshore dedicated team has grown dramatically. Now in the sixth year of partnership, the team has about 50 professionals, with plans to double the capacity within the next 12-18 months.

As the partnership grows, the technologies, methodology, and processes are becoming more sophisticated and mature. This allows the joint team to scale up in a controlled and efficient manner. Continuous improvement is the crucial objective that is constantly being addressed and closely monitored by management on both sides. In the context of the current project, the team has successfully delivered a set of product releases for various customers.

Close integration between the on-site and off-site teams (with regular trips by the offshore team members to customer's

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headquarters and to customer clients' locations) makes it possible to maintain an inherent business culture which minimizes the effect of language and time zone differences, while allowing for smooth and seamless teamwork between the onshore and off-shore groups. Directly controlled and managed by the client with help of local managers, the offshore team has become an integral extension to the company's in-house staff. The experience accumulated by the team has reinforced our client's business capacity and significantly grew the company's market share.

QUICK FACTS

- ✓ *Over 40 databases maintained*
- ✓ *ODT of 50 engineers*
- ✓ *Agile Development approach*