



Any company finding themselves in need of developing a program faces a choice in deciding who to perform this task. Essentially, there are two choices: do it yourself or hire someone to do it for you. If your own personnel are not equipped to accomplish this undertaking, that leaves seeking an outside partner as the only option. The advice laid out in this article is meant to help you solve this problem.

We, as a development agency, know how difficult it can be to make heads and tails of new industries, as we deal with these sorts of tasks every day. So, we want to help you work through the question of how to measure a developer's aptitude to take on your future project, looking objectively at his or her past performance in creating mobile and web applications.

## The criteria that helps form an objective evaluation

### Experience in Performing Similar Projects

We first recommend checking the developer's work on comparable projects. If the development agency has demonstrated making mobile apps to optimize inventory management or developing web applications for logistical support at a freight company, it means they best understand the problems and nuances of those industries and are fully suited for such an order. Therefore, if you need an application for tourism, and in searching the developer's site you have found dozens of these types of customers, his specialization should be obvious.

Be sure to request from your future partner examples and overviews of project that mirror your own, or at a minimum, are from the same field. If they can provide these, it is an undoubtable plus, but it is not a golden ticket.

### Portfolio

Get to know the developer's portfolio. Knowing how they have realized projects in the past will help you, as the customer, to trace the path of the partner, determine in what direction their work has gone and is going, as well as observe the level of performance and detail in their work.

## References

So, how do you check the developer's experience when you work in a niche industry, without much in the way of comparable products or services on the market?

### Look at the following indicators:

- The quantity of completed projects;
- Reviews from clients on independent websites; and/or
- Certificates, diplomas, and prestigious awards.

Connect with a few of the developer's former clients and learn their impressions about how the project was carried out and whether or not they are pleased with the results.

If the feedback is positive, compile your assessment results and add a point to this potential partner.

## Expertise

A beautiful site and an organized portfolio of past applications isn't everything. A development agency's experience is not only based on ability to write code for a given technical task, but also on ability to solve the problem that your company has encountered. If you feel that your potential contractor is only able to see within the narrow framework of code, and does not think in terms of your business strategy, they might not be able to offer the effective solution you need.

### Assign a Task (Software Requirements Specification (SRS), as the professionals call it)

What is the best market test? Ask your potential partner to develop a technical task which will be appropriate for your project.

### Assignment of tasks to develop mobile application falls into two, polar versions:

- You know exactly what you want and have prepared a specific, professionally organized technical task.
- You understand the problem, but the optimal technical solution is something that needs to be developed in collaboration with the potential partner.

The first model implies that you have an appropriately qualified specialist(s) at your disposal, not only to take part in the development, but to verify the quality of the implementation and results. In this situation, you can trust a individual, freelance programmer if the amount of work and timing is not critical.

Yet, life is seldom so simple, and, more often than not, the second model prevails, which brings with it a contradiction at the start of the project: For you, just as for the customer, the look of the application (design) is important first and foremost; however, from the developmental point of view, the logic and functionality (what it does and how it works) are the vital aspect.

Once you have gotten the SRS, then you can use it as a basis for understanding how the product (program) will work and resolve your problem from there.

You should ask all potential partners to develop an SRS as a preliminary evaluation before proceeding.

### **Ask Questions**

Before making any decisions, ask the developer, “How are you going to carry out this project?”

This simple question will help you to determine the capability of the developer to plan their actions, timeframe and budget. Why do you need to know all that? To ensure successful completion of the project.

A compact vision of exactly what is going to be completed and an accompanying timetable will show you that the designer agency has a complex approach to completion of your request. This will also help you ensure the process is on track, and that all obligations are being met at any stage of development. Furthermore, planned dates and milestones will give you an overall feel for how well the company is coping with the job in general, and if they will manage to complete the project within the agreed amount of time.

## **The Critical Stage: Choosing a Partner**

When you are communicating with sales staff, who are professionally trained at selling software development services, be sure not to forget that these are not the people who will be completing your project. At this stage, before making a final decision, you will want to organize a meeting with the team, and particularly with the Project Manager, Team Leader and Designer. It is important to put faces to these key players. As the customer, you can do a final review of the partner, which will allow you to figure out what kind of specialists the company brings to the table, their level of training, professionalism, and just get a feel for the team as a whole.

### **Make sure the Project Manager tells you about:**

- The process;
- Reporting;
- Responsibilities;
- Program communication

The Team Leader should confirm his team's successful completion of similar projects (Within large companies you want to make certain you have an experienced team).

Finally, have the designer tell you about his experience in matters of User Interface and User Experience.

After these negotiations, it is time to make a decision. I hope this article will help you to avoid dubious offers and be more confident in your decisions. Now, the choice is yours!