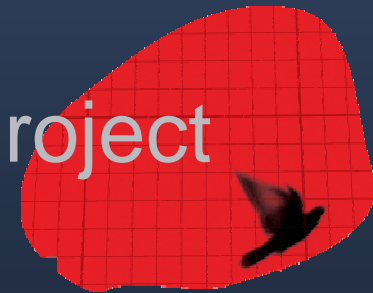# Applied Software Project Management

Managing an Outsourced Project

Prevent Project Failure

- Don't be a hands-off client
- Constantly communicate project goals
  - ▷ The vendor's goals always differ from the clients
  - ▷ Don't expect the team to ignore the vendor's goals
  - ▷ Work with the team to establish the goals of the project as an equal or greater priority
- Transparency is especially important in an outsourced project.

Estimate the Work

- Vendors often estimate the work as part of contract negotiation
  - ▷ This happens before the team is assigned.
  - ▷ When the project team is assembled, it may be necessary to re-estimate the work.
  - ▷ Unrealistic estimates cause projects to fail.

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Actively Manage the Project

- A hands-off project manager is usually surprised when the software is delivered
  - ▷ And the surprise is never a pleasant one.
- It's not enough to just have weekly status meetings with no follow-up
  - ▷ Project managers need to know the team.
  - ▷ Just like an in-house project!

The Vendor's Management

■ Build a relationship with the vendor's management

▷ If they don't support the project manager's goals or trust his decisions, the project will likely fail.

▷ Don't allow the vendor's escalation process to interfere with the project.

▷ Make sure the management at the vendor recognizes and rewards good work.

The Project Team

■ Build a relationship with the team

▷ A project manager doesn't have the same kind of relationship with the team that he would with a team in his own organization.

▷ The project manager isn't always right! The team does not report to him.

▷ Gain credibility by making good decisions.

Collaborate With the Vendor

- Plan and manage the project scope
  - ▷ The project starts with a scope and a budget.
    - As opposed to an in-house project, which starts with a set of known resources.
  - ▷ Plan for knowledge transfer.
  - ▷ Recognize that success for the project manager and success for the vendor are often two different things.

Maintain Tracking and Oversight

■ Don't depend on the vendor to maintain the project plan and project schedule

▷ When a project manager is responsible for the project, he must keep track of its status himself.

■ Hold reviews and inspections

▷ Use a collaborative inspection process that has been optimized for outsourced projects.

Design and Programming

- Don't delegate the entire design and programming of the project to the vendor
  - ▷ Establish design constraints early on.
  - ▷ If possible, design the software in-house, or in collaboration with the vendor.
  - ▷ Monitor the code base using code reviews and project automation.

Software Quality

■ Take responsibility for the quality of the software

▷ Quality is not just another deliverable that can be bought and paid for.

▷ Don't make decisions that undercut the QA team.

▷ Ensure that adequate time and budget is allocated for test planning and execution.

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Don't Blindly Trust the Vendor

- Even though individual team members may have certifications or degrees, it doesn't mean that they are competent.

- Just because the vendor's organization is certified, that doesn't guarantee that they know better than you do how to run your project.

- Don't be intimidated by the vendor's pedigree. If something on the project looks wrong, it probably is!