

How to choose the right software development partner

Go beyond the basics to ask big picture questions in 4 key areas.

1 Technical Expertise

2 Time to Market

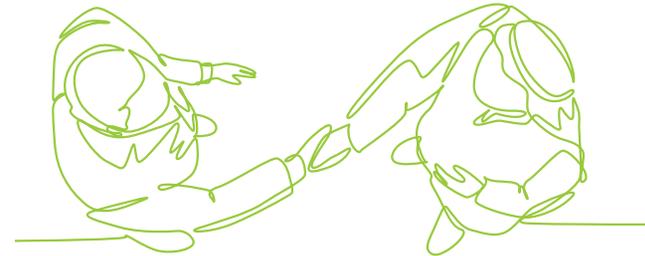
3 Innovation Capacity

4 Risk Mitigation



How to choose the right software development partner

Many factors influence the decision to **outsource software product development** instead of building or expanding an in-house team. Whether it's a lack of time to recruit, the **need for specific expertise**, tight deadlines, or other reasons, outsourcing development needs can be an **excellent way to create** innovative, high-tech products and solutions.



Deciding which company to partner with, and finding the best fit for your needs can make all the difference in the **success of your project**.

Outsourcing is no longer simply offshoring to the lowest bidder.

If developing innovative technical solutions is likely to be more than a one-time project, it's worthwhile to fully investigate companies of interest and assess them for **long-term partnership** potential.

Having external technical partners **that work well with your in-house team** is invaluable for ongoing product development.

Knowing what to ask a potential partner company can help you avoid common pitfalls.

There are some obvious questions such as areas of expertise and availability; however, additional questions will show the bigger picture of what it's like to work with each outsourcing team, and whether or not they'll be the best fit for you.

This guide covers:
What to ask to see the bigger picture in these 4 key areas:

1 Technical Expertise

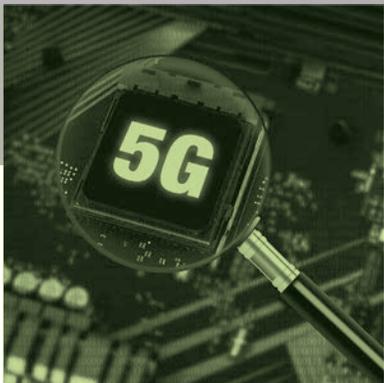
2 Time to Market

3 Innovation Capacity

4 Risk Mitigation

Technical expertise

The need for technical expertise drives many companies to look for a **software development partner**. However, to find the right for a lasting partnership, checking off a list of technical capabilities is only a first step.



The basics

To meet your requirements, a software development company must have **designers and developers** with **expertise in** the technology you need, such as **embedded software, FPGA**, networking and communication protocols, **digital signal processing**, security, **cloud connectivity, machine learning** and data science.

The bigger picture

Beyond the basics, a team with long-term partnership potential will offer added value by offering these benefits along with technical expertise:



Industry experience.

What experience do they have? Teams with a **proven track record of experience** in different industries bring a wealth of knowledge to the table.

Implementing best practices.

What is their process? Experienced developers can **guide you in making the right choices**, and creating a robust platform.

Innovation.

How do they encourage **innovative thinking** and creative problem solving? If you're developing a product using an approach that's never been done before, you need **experienced partners** who can think creatively and come up with innovative solutions.

Knowledge transfer.

Can they train your in-house team? If needed, a software development partner can **help your in-house team learn the new technology** and software product development best practices.

Accelerating the development cycle/ time to market

“How fast can you get this done?” is a question that potential partners ask when evaluating outside developers. However, fastest isn’t always the best fit. It’s important to keep other criteria in mind to prevent time-consuming issues from arising.



The bigger picture

Beyond the basics, a team with long-term partnership potential will offer more than getting the job done. Look for a company that can meet your deadline the right way:

The basics

At a minimum, a potential development partner must have the **bandwidth and resources to take on your project**, and meet your deadline.



TIME TO MARKET

Track record of timely deliveries.

What is the company's history of project completion? Do they deliver on time or have ready excuses for multiple project delays? How do they **reuse knowledge gained from other projects** to help save time?

Bench strength.

What if a primary resource gets sick or becomes unavailable? Does the outsourcing team have **the bench strength** to assign another developer to complete your project on time?

Research and development.

How does the company invest in research and development? Do team members **stay current with the latest technology and tools**, so they're ready to implement them on your project right away?

Fastest isn't always the best fit.

Teamwork.

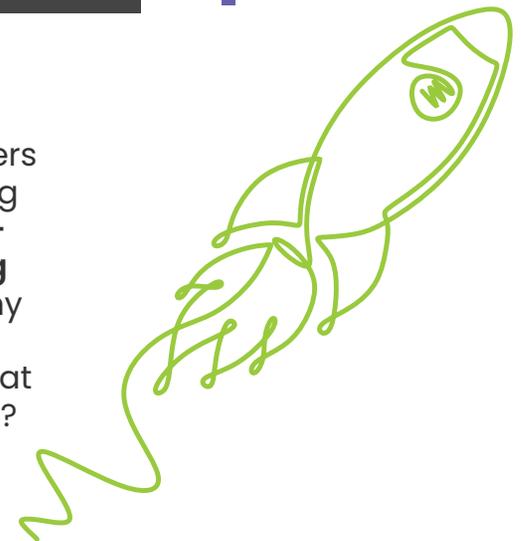
How do they integrate with your in-house team? Sometimes, a lone developer will offer to get the job done their way. This approach can be fast, but it's extremely high risk. Developers with a **teamwork approach are better suited for big projects** that will require collaboration.

Partnerships.

Is the company involved in the tech community? Do they have a **network of partners that can support and accelerate the process** of going to market with a new product?

Communication.

Are the requirements clear? Do team members feel comfortable voicing concerns, **offering suggestions, and receiving feedback**? Are there any cultural differences between companies that could cause a problem?



Expanding development and innovation capacity

Having a reliable, trusted outsourcing partner allows you to **scale your extended team up and down** as needed for different project cycles. This flexibility is a primary driver for many companies to develop long-term partnerships.

When working with an outsourced team, a key objective is to minimize the strain on your in-house resources. A good partner will bring a team of creative thinkers and innovators to the table who can offer new ideas and improved methodologies.

The basics

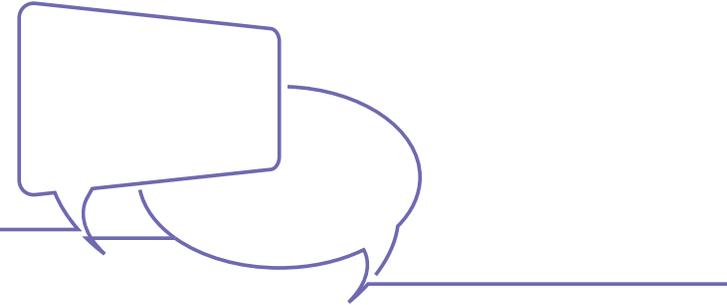
Simplifying the criteria for evaluating potential partners down to what each will charge to get X done in X time makes it easy to compare up front. However, **order-takers aren't innovators**. And, inexperienced developers may need more oversight than your team can offer.



The bigger picture



If you need creative problem-solving and innovative new solutions, ask for information that goes beyond bandwidth:



Proven innovative approach

Ask for specific examples of innovative thinking that the team has applied to projects. Of course, companies can't share confidential information; but, for completed projects with products on the market, they should be able to talk about innovative thinking that went on behind the scenes.

Respect for constraints

Engineers are creative. If you ask for fresh thinking and new ideas about how to solve problems, they'll enjoy the challenge and return with a wealth of ideas. However, every project has constraints. How well can the **outsourced team work within those constraints**, even if they would prefer to use another method?

Independent and transparent

While you want an outsourced team to be able to work without being micro-managed, they shouldn't go dark until the end. Ask if they **work collaboratively, and how they keep everyone up to date** with what they're doing.

Communication

The ability to communicate comes up over and over again for a reason. Ask about **how a company's team will prepare and present their ideas**. Even if developers are highly skilled, they need to be able to communicate with people who don't share their level of expertise to be able to explain what they're doing.

Reducing risk with project controls

Building a technical team in-house requires human resources as well as equipment and infrastructure that can quickly escalate in scope. For that reason, some companies prefer to **outsource and eliminate the risks involved** with building an in-house team. In the interest of minimizing risk, it's important to work with an external partner that has good project controls in place.



The basics

Start by asking how the team evaluates projects. For large projects, sometimes a **feasibility study** must be done separately **before creating a detailed plan** and budget. Can the company do a separate evaluation of the project itself, before bidding on the work?

4

An experienced team with a proven track record will greatly reduce the risk of making mistakes.

The bigger picture

Beyond the basics, a valuable partner can reduce multiple risks throughout the product development process. Look for a team that offers risk-minimizing strategies:



Changes.

Keeping a project moving on time and under budget can look easy on paper, but is **challenging when inevitable changes happen**. Ask how the company estimates workload, sets priorities, and raises issues about potential problems.

Additional costs.

After determining that the company's pricing works within your budget, ask **what contingencies are built in** for additional out-of-scope work.

Deliverables.

What guarantees can the company make to ensure that they will **meet the deadlines** they agreed to?

Quality.

Are you in **agreement about the level of quality** that can be delivered at the agreed-upon price in the timeframe needed? Be sure that terms such as **rough prototype** are well defined so that there are no surprises in the end.

Professionalism.

How do you know the company can **successfully implement new technology**? An experienced team with a proven track record will greatly reduce the risk of making mistakes.

As developers of the seemingly impossible, Orthogone provides **a team of experts in software development, systems engineering, electronics engineering, and technology innovation.**

Customers value the unique set of capabilities, know-how and skills that Orthogone brings to a wide variety of projects, and the team's passion for **digital transformation.**

To learn more about partnering with Orthogone to drive innovation, **contact us.**

T : 1 (514) 316-1917

info@orthogone.com

orthogone.com



Orthogone