



Success Story

One of the top suppliers of mobile surveillance for
the bus and coach industry



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Client

One of the top suppliers of mobile surveillance, for mass transportation systems and fleets.

Industry

Mobile Surveillance

Countries

Canada

United States

Solution

Custom Application Development

Methodology

SCRUM (Agile)

Core Technologies

.NET

Java

SOA

Web-applications

iPhone App

Mobile Video

Google Maps integration

Context

Our Client, is a manufacturer of video surveillance systems for terrestrial vehicle fleets. Today, **it is one of the top manufacturers of video surveillance systems for transportation fleets.** The systems our client develops and markets act as a veritable “black box” for moving vehicles, registering video, audio, GPS positioning and “status of vehicle” indicators in real time, while allowing fleets to manage and improve the efficiency of their fleets with this information.

The Client’s expertise rests in the design of cutting-edge hardware components full of innovative functionalities; components that are

able to withstand the harshest climate and usage conditions. With the advent of inexpensive cell-phone based communication and GPS positioning, our Client began to see extensive business opportunities that could leverage their existing installed base. Most of these revolved around the creation of software applications that allowed large fleets to manage their services, drivers and vehicles via the web. Our client had many business ideas, **but required a reliable partner to materialize them in world-class software products at a reasonable cost.**

Our Client’s CIO had previous experience outsourcing software development services to India, Taiwan, and Germany. Although companies eventually had delivered what was promised, he manifested the process was grueling, with communication being difficult and team moral riding low due to the long hours that had to be put to adjust to opposite time zones.

“Our original thought was that we would just outsource the user interface side of it; the web app, essentially, and that we would try and do the real-time aspect of it internally. We have a strong engineering team in-house here, that, for the most part, is really busy dealing with all the existing things we’re doing. It was probably only after we started working with PSL that I came to the realization that, you know what, with a little bit of mentoring these people really are talented. They can pick up the real time stuff, which they had never done before.”

- Client’s Director of Technology

Challenges

This time around, there was another ingredient in the equation. The applications that were to be developed were novel within the industry. This imprinted on them an additional measure of risk that would probably require constant iterations and adaptations of a new idea to the market's initial feedback. For this reason, our Client's CIO was clear on going selecting agile as the development process. He was also highly aware that for agile to work, it was critical that both the client product leads and the development team share the same time zone and maintain a fluid and open communication. Hence, our Client limited itself to seeking partners in Latin America. After an arduous process that involved over 12 client visits in 5 different countries, **our Client chose PSL as its preferred partner for the initiative.**

"I have this belief that at the end of the day, anything that is lacking in a technical skill or a piece of infrastructure can always be resolved. It really comes down to what's the leadership like and if they can be trusted, and what's their attitude towards fixing those things, because, I recognize right up front that no matter how great a company is, there are going to be issues that are going to come up. So, it was really a question for me that when these issues come up, would they be able to work together through them to resolve them. And that was actually, the key thing for me that put PSL at the top of the list. I felt really good about the leadership in the organization."

- Client's Director of Technology

Why PSL?

What attracted our Client to PSL was the **company's remarkable quality history, coupled with our more than five years of experience with agile development.** Indeed, PSL seemed to be an interesting combination of a CMMi 5 company gone agile. Furthermore, Our Client underscored the quality of the management team, which was easily accessible even to a new and potential client. "There will always be issues in software development, but you know that with a good management team they can always be resolved".

Scope

For the past two years, PSL has deployed three different development groups (or cells) for the client. One has been in charge of maintaining and enhancing a legacy application the client has in operation in large vehicle fleets. A second cell has been in charge of deploying a new application for reading, organizing and visualizing the information stored in each "black box" device, in a user friendly manner. The third and largest cell is currently in charge of developing a turn-key, SaaS application to manage large vehicle fleets in real time.

The latter initiative is the largest and most telling of the three. The turn-key initiative was deployed under agile SCRUM, following a completely integrated pipeline organized around Test Driven Development.

It was decided to deploy the product in 4 week sprints. After each sprint ended, the client chose to meet with PSL on-site (be it PSL travelling to the client or the client to us) in order to discuss the objectives of the next sprint and to polish or re-prioritize the functionality backlog.

Between sprints, the PSL team would develop the product autonomously, consulting the client

real-time whenever doubts arose. The Client also had real time access to our Jira (the management tool utilized in this specific project) as well as the project's repository, allowing for full transparency of the project's progress, milestone progress and challenges.

At the end of each sprint, the client would release the finished code internally to end users, who would provide feedback that was immediately incorporated as part of the next sprint's tasks.

Results

This agile nearshore deployment method has been extremely successful. The project is now in its second year with the current version of the code now in operation. The success of the application has been so high, other clients of our Client pushed to be included in the initial pilots deployed by PSL. Thanks to the adaptability of the SCRUM services deployed by PSL, all client comments have been incorporated to future releases almost immediately, without traumatic refactoring or loss of work.

Of course, the project has presented its share of technological challenges and difficulties, but all of them have been resolved by the client and vendor team. Furthermore, due to Test Driven Development, the quality of the code has been excellent, and the application has performed above expectations in its new environment. To boot, project costs are running under budget and all the target functionalities to be included within each spring have been met by the team without delays.

The Bottom Line

“... Due to Test Driven Development, the quality of the code has been excellent, and the application has performed above expectations in its new environment. “

- Client's Director of Technology.



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