



## Ensuring an off-shore success

Focusing on cost alone will undermine the advantages of off-shore developments, argues **Noor Hussein**

» The rise in off-shore developments has been one of the most influential business trends over the past decade. It has fuelled extraordinary economic growth – especially in India – and allowed a far lower development cost for organisations struggling to afford high-priced UK expertise.

However, exploiting the off-shore model has not been easy. Many organisations have struggled to manage the interface between the UK user population and the off-shore development team. Also, problems in communication, culture and expectation have created delays.

Off-shore companies are good at turning precisely defined requirements into code. The process is slick, fast and extremely good value. However, they are not good at interpreting requirements from a set of imprecise documents or specifications.

With many UK organisations looking for rapid development to meet changing business needs, there is a clear gap in expectation. As the focus shifts from traditional developments that can take up to two years to deliver to a sixth-month turnaround, any delay is unacceptable.

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*Noor Hussein, Smart421*

UK-based development costs. But unless those tasked with the prototyping activity understand the UK business environment, the off-shore model breaks down. Furthermore, while Indian off-shore companies offer fantastic skills in traditional technologies, they tend to lack familiarity with leading-edge technologies. As a result, organisations are reliant on expensive UK expertise in areas such as IBM WebSphere or Microsoft BizTalk.

Therefore, there is a growing move towards multi-shore activities, either creating an in-house team tasked with delivering an interface between the business and the off-shore resource or outsourcing to a third party. The on-shore team leverages local business expertise to project and manage the development as well as

defining user requirements.

The cost reductions offered by off-shore and near-shore resources provide compelling arguments for changing the way companies employ IT services. But focusing on cost alone will undermine the development. Combining excellent cultural and business understanding in both on-shore and off-shore environments with standards-based project management is essential to ensure a rapid, transparent development process, irrespective of location. **CRN**

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