

ADITRO



Practical experiences of starting project in nearshoring mode

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Software

Aditro

Shortly about Aditro

- » Aditro's core expertise lies in improving business processes within financial management, human resource management, document management and logistics
- » Offices in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Estonia
- » Aditro employs over 1 600 people, has more than 18000 customers in private and public sector
- » www.aditro.com

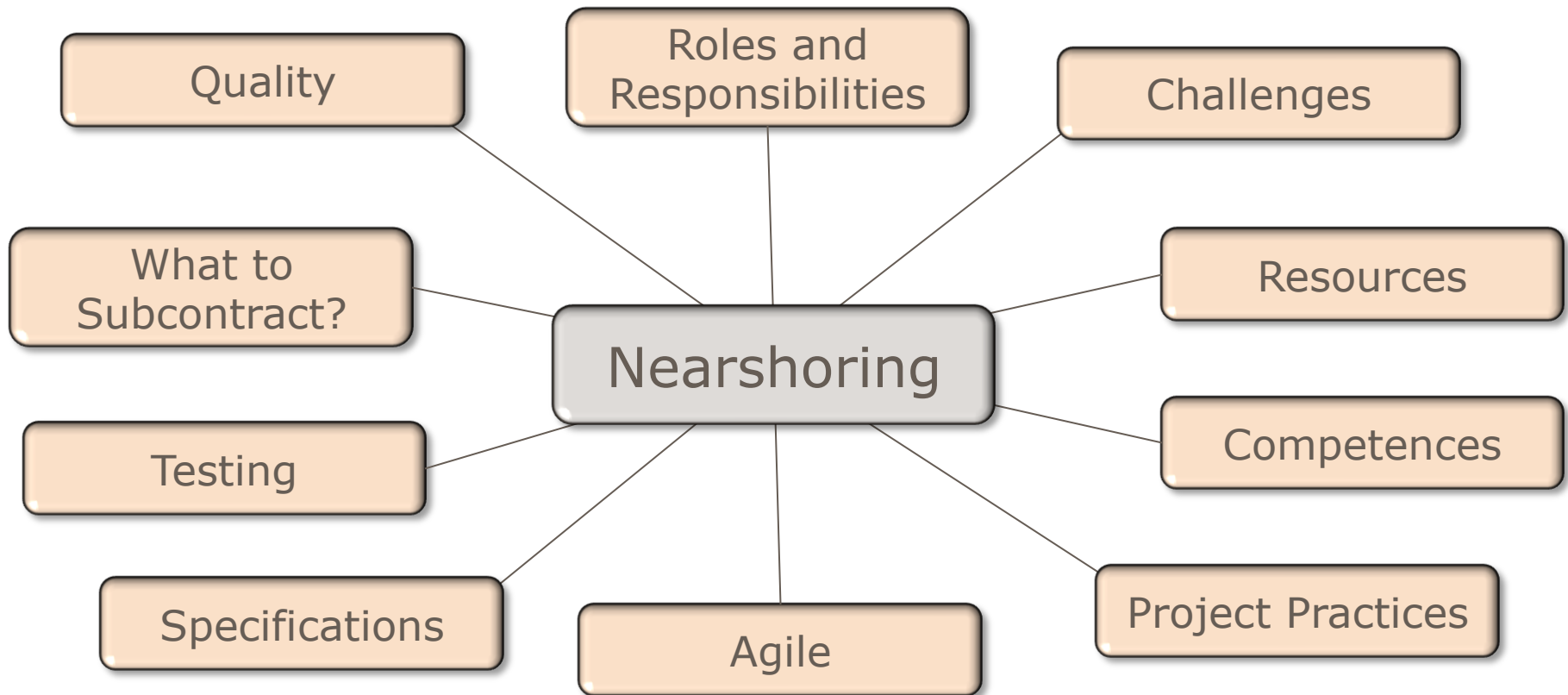


Shortly about me...

- » About 11 years experience in software development
 - » Software specifications, project management, software research, subcontracting
- » Currently employed by Aditro as Senior Solution Architect
- » Studies
 - » Master of Science (Mathematics and Software Science)
 - » Post graduate studies ongoing
 - » Main focus in business process understanding in software development



One Case from different perspectives



Case: Renewing VB6.0 based software solution

- » Financial, material and HR management software solution
- » Made with VB6.0
- » 1200+ direct customers, that provide services to 100 000+ customers with help by the software
- » Customers mainly in Finland



Targets of renewal



- » Modern technologies: C#, .Net, Visual Studio 2008/2010, TFS
 - » Architectural renewal:
 - » SOA
 - » Better fit to Aditro's software strategy
 - » Better fit to different business models. For example ASP, SaaS, Web based UIs
 - » Make feature development faster
 - » Improve quality
 - » Look and Feel
 - » Get rid of difficult 3rd party components
 - » Ensure that business continues strongly
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Challenges in the Case

- » The businesses with current customers should not be endangered
 - » Data, Databases
 - » Ways of working
 - » Reliability as provider
- » Need to release constantly (2 times per year), to satisfy legal and statutory requirements that are changing every year
 - » Branching the development
- » Big amount of code
- » Old language (VB6.0)
 - » Theoretically possible to use automated migration, but the quality would not be good enough and would still require lots of effort
- » Architecture not compliant with modern target architecture
- » Finnish and Swedish version
- » **Time + resources**



Nearshoring with team who has not done it before

» Need to “sell” the idea about subcontracting to own team

- » *“Do we need to start writing specs in English?”*
- » *“Do we need to keep our meetings in English?”*
- » *“What are we doing if ‘they’ are doing all the work?”*

» After some time, when work is ongoing in full-steam, nobody asks the questions anymore.

» The comments get to more realistic and practical level

- » *“My English not so good, can you help me with this Use Case?”*



Resources and Nearshoring

- » Recruiting own persons not always the best possible solution
 - » Need of resources fluctuates
- » Nearshoring makes it possible to get swiftly several persons into project
- » Especially, if a business relationship with Subcontractor is existing
 - » In our case, relationship was already started with other projects
 - ➔ Getting resources was flexible and quick
 - » Borrowing resources from another project is sometimes possible
- » If you need to start looking for a new Subcontractor, it may take longer time
- » Resource planning is important



Competencies and Nearshoring



- » Competences are not typically a bottleneck in nearshoring
 - » Actually, some specific competencies might be much easier to find in subcontracting mode
 - » Specific technologies
 - » Old technologies, especially in renewal projects
 - » The challenge is that in the beginning, it is difficult to estimate the skills and competencies
 - » Requires couple months of co-operation to get to know each other
 - » Drawback or a risk in subcontracting is that the competence is growing in Subcontractor side. It should be taken care of that also own competencies are growing
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Setting up Project Practices

- » People are used to face to face meetings
- » In nearshoring mode mostly phone meetings
- » Some issues are discussed twice. Firstly, in internally. Then together with Subcontractor
- » Some more effort needed to reporting and follow-up
- » Need to set up common "virtual" workarea
 - » Team Foundation Server
- » Workshops are important and useful
- » → The challenges in setting up project practices are very practical but always solvable



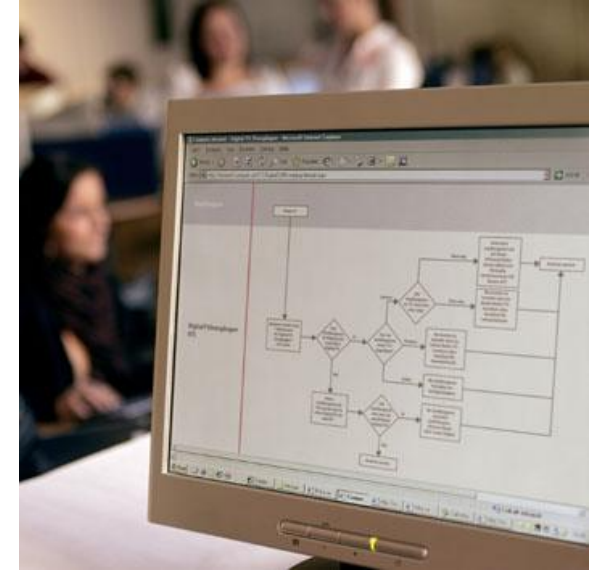
Agile and Nearshoring

- » In this case, we are not using Scrum as such. But we have adopted some good practices from it
 - » Backlogs, sprints
 - » Release often ("Fail Fast")
- » We have had other nearshoring projects, where pure Scrum has been used
 - » Subcontractor employees in same team
 - » Daily scrums, and other Scrum practices
- » In some projects two scrum teams:
1 in Aditro, 1 in Subcontractor
 - » Separate meetings
 - » One phone meeting with only few participants



Specifications and Nearshoring

- » The role of software specifications is, naturally, more important in nearshoring project
 - » ***"They are always important"***
- » In nearshoring scenario the Subcontractor rarely knows the legislation, practices, terms etc of Market countries
- » Reviewing specifications commonly in email → One social aspect and possibility to learn missing
 - » ***"Has Subcontractor understood my spec correctly?"***
- » Probably easiest way to fail in Nearshoring is to NOT to do good specifications



Testing and Nearshoring

- » Unit tests should be always demanded from Subcontractor
 - » Also build verification tests
- » Subcontractor can also do “play-around” testing of most UI’s
- » Proper system testing should be made based on Test Cases (or Use Cases)
 - » Some part of the software may be such that Subcontractor can write the test cases.
- » Dedicated persons needed in our side as well, to follow the quality
- » Monthly internal releases
- » Continuous integration
 - » Automatic nightly builds



What to subcontract?

- » Ideally, I would like to subcontract mainly modules or service components with well defined interfaces
 - » Sometimes it is even possible, but not always
- » I would also try to avoid scenarios, where huge amount of code lines are sent to subcontractor
 - » Sometimes needed for maintenance
- » We chose the middle course strategy:
 - » Aditro is mainly responsible of maintaining old code
 - » Creation of new code is done together (Subcontractor is focusing into coding)
 - » Renewal is done module-by-module



Quality and Nearshoring

» We would not do Nearshoring if the results were of lower quality

**We use nearshoring, so that we can ourselves
focus in our core competencies
AND
to get more high-quality resources
that helpus in product creation**

→ Quality



Roles and responsibilities

- » There are numerous ways of sharing responsibilities, but the most important thing is that it is known by all project members
- » It is possible to discuss with Subcontractor case by case how certain things are handled.
- » In our case we discuss often
 - » Specifications (usually technical, or detail level)
 - » Test cases/data
 - » Design and Architectural descriptions



Conclusions

- » There are challenges in Nearshoring, but they can be overcome. The challenges are mainly practical and solvable quite simply
- » The benefits are heavier than challenges
- » You can be Agile when you are Nearshoring

