Project Kickoff Primer

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"A job well begun is half done."

Outsourcing software development is a lengthy endeavor. It requires careful and thorough preparation to maximize the chances of success.

A great way to start the process is with a Project Kickoff, allowing both the client and the software house to get to know each other, establish rules of cooperation and communication, and get the developers started with their work.

We've created this Primer to help you discover what constitutes a successful Project Kickoff. Have a look at the **sample agenda** below, and use the **Kickoff Evaluation Checklist** to measure the effectiveness of your event - or to plan it properly.

Sample agenda - Full Kickoff

Schedule	Agenda
Day 1	General information about the business, product, process, people and technology.
Day 2	Product Roadmap workshop. The workshop should build a common understanding of what the project is about. It's also the time to define the product backlog and fill it with the first user stories, and plan the first development Sprint.
Day 3	Technical workshops aiming to set up development environments with the full set of required tools and explaining the software architecture of the application.
Day 4-5 (optional)	If there are any developers on the client's side, the software house should let their developers work alongside them. Devs can implement some simple functionalities and fixes in the application, and direct all the necessary questions to the client's technical personnel with the right knowledge to answer.

Sample agenda - Day One

Schedule	Agenda	Time	Lead
9:00 - 9:30	**Let's get to know each other** • Who is who in the project	30 min	SM
9:30 - 10:30	**Project's intro** • Overview of the client's business • Product's business model • Key features of the product • Overview of the competition	60 min	PO
10:45 - 11:30	**Technology and dev tools** • What tech stack will we use? (assuming it wasn't agreed on prior to the kick-off) • Who will be responsible for specific stages of the development flow (e.g. who will do the releases?)	30 - 45 min	Developers
11:30 - 12:30	**Process** • How long will the Sprint last? • What days should Scrum events take place on? • What will Scrum events look like? • Who will be involved in each type of meeting? • What will the development flow look like?	60 min	SM/PO
12:30 - 13:30	**Lunch break**		

Sample agenda - Day One

Schedule	Agenda	Time	Lead
13:30 - 14:00	**Roles** • Defining the PO's responsibilities • Defining the SM's responsibilities • Defining the responsibilities of other people involved in the project	30 min	SM /PO
14:00 - 14:45	**Communication** • How often will we organize video calls? • Who should be involved in the video calls? • What tools will we use for video calls? • How often will we meet off site? • What is the availability of members of the project? Any planned leave/holidays? • What are the working hours for both sides?	45 min	SM
15:00 - 16:00	**Team building exercise** • Short game that will help project members know each other better, such as **The Tallest Tower**	60 min	SM
16:00 - ?	**Socializing** • Informal dinner: talk, talk, talk and be merry	As long as you like	

Kickoff Evaluation Checklist

☑ Did every key stakeholder have a chance to provide their input in organizing the kickoff? Were any key stakeholders left out of the process?

☑ Did the kickoff venue enable easy collaboration and communication? Was there any missing equipment that hindered the kickoff?

☑ Did both sides get to know the key professionals on each side of the project?

☑ Does the software house have an understanding of the client's business as a whole? Could they accurately explain the basics to an outsider?

☑ Do both sides have an understanding of the product, its business model, key features and competition?

☑ Is the Product Roadmap clearly described and ready for development?

☑ Is the tech stack clearly defined?

☑ Are the developers properly set up with any tools they might need, or systems they may be required to use? Do they have the access and system permissions they need?

☑ Did the software house developers have a chance to work with in-house developers or technical personnel?

☑ Are there any initial questions from the developers left unanswered?

Kickoff Evaluation Checklist

- ☑ Do both sides have a clear understanding of the Scrum process? Did both sides agree to implement Scrum?
- ☑ Is the Sprint length defined? Are the days chosen for each Scrum event?
- ☑ Do both sides know who takes part in which Scrum event?
- ☑ Are the Product Owner's responsibilities clearly defined and known to both sides?
- ☑ Are the Scrum Master's responsibilities clearly defined and known to both sides?
- ☑ Is everyone else aware of their responsibilities for the project?
- ☑ Are any availability details and planned holiday/leave on either side known to both sides?
- ☑ Are the work hours defined for both sides?
- ☑ Are the details of the video calls (who will take part, when they will take place, how they will be organized) known to both sides?
- ☑ Was the team building exercise well-received by both sides? Did it help break the ice?
- ☑ Was the Day 1 afterparty fun? Did the kickoff participants get a chance to know each other?

Want to know more about how to ensure a great project kickoff? Looking to tailor a kickoff specifically for your software project? Drop us a line at:

business@stxnext.com

We're eager to help!

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