Neustar® Professional Services

Evaluating Professional Services:
Key Questions to Ask

As you explore a professional services engagement for any project, it pays to do your homework. Below are some questions to ask as you explore your options for this investment in your business, prepared by the consultants at Neustar Professional Services. Are you at the point where you truly need outside expertise? If so, how do you know which provider is the best fit? By performing due diligence, you can solve technical challenges on time and within budget, ensuring your organization gets the results it needs.

When Deciding if You Need to Use Professional Services

- Do you have the technical resources in-house to solve your problems?
- Do you have the technical resources but too many open projects to dedicate time to the project?
- Do you have the budget/headcount to hire resources to manage the project?
- Do we have the personnel and knowledge to do it our self?
- Can those resources be dedicated to this effort based on other core business objectives or priorities?
- Can we meet the delivery timeline without getting outside help?
- What is the impact on the business if we can't get this done on time?
- Do we need a fresh perspective, someone that hasn't been part of the development? Unbiased?
- How much will it cost our business if we don't complete this project on time? What is cost if we don't deliver it at all?
- Do we need assistance with determining what the solution needs to be or the best solution is?
- Will we be able to expedite solution delivery without impacting other priorities?
- Are we able to build the business case without external help?
- Do we have strong Program Management/tracking skills in place today?
- Do we have existing partners or vendors that can help?
- Can outsourcing help reduce our liability?

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When Interviewing Providers

Credentials

- What industry certifications does your team hold?
- Do you have any customer references for same/similar work as you're going to do for me?
- Can you share some success stories/references?
- Do you offer a proof of concept or free evaluation?

Validation of work product

- Sans reference customers, can you give me examples of similar work you've done?
- Are you able show the value – e.g. operational savings or additional sales?
- Can you show me abstract/example reports that similar to the deliverables you'll give me?
- Do you have sample deliverables, e.g. weekly status reports, defect trackers, project plans, test plans, acceptance criteria, etc.?

Team Member Qualifications

- May we "interview" one or more team members that might be working with us?
- Is the resource performing the work a resident expert on the type of engagement I've purchased (i.e. are they a load testing engineer, or are they really a software engineer who can script but doesn't know the LT space)?
- What certifications do the team members hold that are applicable to this engagement?
- Can you please share resumes that highlight the specific skill-sets of the team working with us?
- Are the engineers full time employees or contracts?

Onshore or Offshore

Project Management & Logistics: Approach

- Will I get an assigned resource?
- Will the resource me dedicated to me?
- Once I sign how long until I get my resource?
- Onsite or Remote? Assuming remote, what access is needed? SSH, FTP
- What tools are used?" – clients often interested if using proprietary, open-source, or commercial tools
- How I sign off that work is completed and acceptable?

Organizational Capability

- What kind of methodologies do you use for development/deployment?
- Do you have repeatable processes in place?
- At what CMM (maturity capability) level do you rate yourself?

Business Terms

- What are your pricing increments?
- Contract Questions:
  - Time & Materials or Fixed Bid – Why?
  - If Fixed Bid, what happens if you finish early? Late?
  - What if the scope changes?
  - How do you calculate your rates?
  - Do you have liability insurance?
  - If "anything" is created, who owns it?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Online www.neustar.biz/professional-services

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About Neustar

Neustar, Inc. (NYSE: NSR) is a trusted, neutral provider of real-time information and analysis to the Internet, telecommunications, technology, financial services, retail, media and advertising sectors. Neustar applies its advanced, secure technologies in location, identification, and evaluation to help its customers promote and protect their businesses. More information is available at www.neustar.biz.

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V1-08222012

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