RAGNARSON
PERFECT PROGRAMMERS

HOW DO WE WORK AT RAGNARSON

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RAGNARSON

Collaboration in a nutshell

Dear entrepreneur, it looks like you want to build a web-based application. That's great, we are Ruby developers specialized in building web applications for start-ups. We surely can make it big together. In order to give you a general idea of how we work, we have prepared a brief roadmap:

1. First contact
2. Signing a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) (optional)
3. Sharing a code repository (if exists) and other useful materials with us
4. Preparing estimates (optional)
5. Interviews with developers
6. Signing a Contract
7. Development
8. Possible directions of development
9. Ending the contract

First contact

Before starting any project we always arrange an introductory call (or a meeting in person if possible). We would love to get to know you and your idea and make sure that we are a good match for each other. When you first get in touch with us be ready to answer lots of questions. We want to know if and how we can help you.

A typical conversation consists of:

• Introduction
• Pitch of your idea. A good pitch should answer following questions:
- What pain would you like to relieve?
- Who is your target?
- What distinguishes you from competitors?
- How do you want to make money out of it?
- What is the stage of the product?
- What does your team look like?
- What are your milestones for the next 3 months?

• How do we work in a nutshell: We will briefly describe how we work and what we expect from you.

- More info about the project: Apart from the pitch we also need to get some additional information. In order to get an idea of what kind of developers and how many of them you need we would really like to know:
  - When would you like to start?
  - How many developers do you need?
  - What is your test coverage? (optional)
  - What is your budget?

- Our rates and available developers
- Q&A
- Next step

After a conversation you will get a summary along with requested documents, typically templates of non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and/or frame agreement. If you like our offer and decide to go to the next step we will arrange interviews with selected developers.

Prepare for development

It's your idea and it's great! The question is: how will people use it and how are you planning to make a business out of it?

At the beginning you have to gather the information on who and how will use it. The simplest approach is to write user stories. Also, as the picture is worth a thousand words, draw mockups and wireframes. This doesn't have to be comprehensive - but enough to start work and at least cover MVP usage. Focus on the main functionality and we will fill in the blanks later on. We usually use **Pivotal Tracker** for project management.

Set aside enough time for leading the development. We will build it but you need to guide us and be available. At the beginning you will need a day or two to clarify what you want to achieve and to get used to the tools. Later on each feature will require your input and clarification - to make sure that implementation is as good as you would like it to be.

What is extremely important for both sides is that we work on time and material (T&M) basis. It means that you have to pay for each hour of development. From our experience this approach is what startups need to properly lead the development of their product.

Development

First steps are similar for all projects. We will suggest a number of services that will help us with development. If you would like to use other tools, it's fine as long as they are not terribly outdated or barely usable. We practice agile software development by following SCRUM rules.

Even though we provide you with a team of self-sufficient professionals it is expected of you to lead the project. After each iteration you should gather the team and discuss the two most important things: what was done during this sprint and what do you plan to put in the next one. Each delivered task should be checked by you in order to make sure that it works and/or looks as you anticipated. The next step is to choose the most important tasks from an icebox (stories not assigned to any sprint) and move as many of them as your developers are able to do to backlog. Prioritize them and ask developers for estimates.

During the week when developers start to work on particular tasks there is always something unclear which requires a more detailed description or a wider perspective in order to implement it properly. It is completely normal. Reserve some time for additional questions from developers.

Development teams

Ragnarson provides a team of developers who are able to lead the project on their own from the technical point of view. They know how to prepare a scalable solution and implement what is best for it. Some startups hire a first developer who is trained by our team in order to make him a CTO in a suitable point in time. We are able to teach him/her and pass on all the necessary knowledge.

It is always possible to extend or shrink the team. Just let us know about your plans and needs in advance. We have experience with working in mixed up teams. You can provide your own CTO, developers, we can work with cooperation with other contractors. Everything is possible as long as it is well organized and everyone follows the same good practices in communication and product development.

Agreements

Typically there are two documents which we sign with our customers: NDA and a Frame Agreement. We can provide you with templates for both of them. After reviewing the content they are printed, signed, scanned and sent to you by e-mail. The original version is sent later by traditional post. We expect you to send us back both versions (digital and original) with your signature.

Most of the contracts have indefinite duration. We are completely fine with ending our relationship as long as we get notified before the minimum period of notice (included in the agreement).

Estimates

Some of our potential customers ask us to prepare estimates for their project. They want to know how much time do we need need to implement an MVP or a group of features. For some of them this approach works, for some not.

This is not how a typical startup works. Usually everything is very dynamic, priorities change during development, each sprint may look completely different from what we have planned at the beginning.

From our experience it is really hard to properly estimate the amount of time required to implement a set of features. Often, the pessimistic estimate takes twice as much time as the optimistic one. The difference is even bigger if the estimate is prepared by more than one developer.

Even though we are not fond of estimates we can prepare them if necessary. Usually it takes 8-16 hours (depending on the size of the project) of work and it is not free. You will have to pay for developer's time accordingly to his rate.

FAQ

Do I have to pay for bugs?

Yes, bugs are inevitable part of software development. Because of T&M approach we charge for fixing them as well.

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED TOOLS

Code repository - GitHub
Issue tracker - Pivotal Tracker
Internal chat - Campfire, HipChat
Calls - Google Hangouts, Skype
Hosting platform - Shelly Cloud

APPENDIX B: TECHNOLOGY STACK

As web developers we focus on working with Ruby, however there are many different frameworks and technologies that we know:

BACK-END DEVELOPMENT:

• Ruby
• Ruby on Rails
• Sinatra
• Padrino
• Goliath
• Event Machine

FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT:

• HTML5
• Scalable CSS
• JavaScript
• jQuery
• Angular.js
• Backbone
• CoffeeScript

DEVOPS:

• Chef
• Capistrano
• OpenStack
• Ceph
• GlusterFS

DATABASES:

• PostgreSQL
• MongoDB
• Redis
• Elasticsearch
• Sphinx
• Apache Solr

OTHER:

• RSpec
• Git

and many, many more. We always choose the technology stack individually for each project.