**Reflections on outsourcing**

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**Planning**

The first thought that went into our heads when we thought of what to outsource was this: would we rather have something we thought was easy done, or something that we found hard?

We chose to outsource the design of our project. Our reasoning for this was, that none of us found it something particularly hard to do – and there was also no one who would rather make the design than code functionality. We also agreed that while a pretty design and nice UX is something worth focusing in a project, it is not something that would make or break it – as long as the functionality was there, the design wouldn’t really matter that much.

**Process**

We signed up on upwork.com in order to find a freelancer. The site is very easy to use, and it has a lot of very cool functionality that makes it easy and safe to do business with a complete stranger. Namely the escrow and milestone system for payments, and the fact that the site has a complete messaging function built in made it attractive for us.

In the process of finding a freelancer, we had made a document with job requirements. This document also included a bullet point that simply said: Hippopotamus. This is a trick we learned. We asked all applicants to tell us the word that stood out in the document was – out of 5 applicants, only one managed to find this word.

Kyle Murphy, a computer science student of a university in Arizona applied, with no previous ratings. After messaging him a bit, we decided to go with him, despite no previous experience on the site. We felt he was trustworthy, that he could do a good job – and also, he speaks English natively – a trait that was very welcome to us.

We agreed with Kyle that he would do no functionality, only design. We supplied him with the basic idea of the components the site needed to have, and he got to work.

**Milestones and budget**

We divided the work into 2 milestones – 1 for supplying us with mockups and some initial ideas and thoughts about the project, and 1 for finishing the work. The first would earn Kyle the first 40$, the second the rest, 80$.  
This worked very well for both parts, since Kyle would get something out of his work, even if we didn’t like his mockups and ideas - and due to us being more secure in actually receiving some work. We quickly gained a lot of trust in Kyle, especially after the first milestone, where he supplied some screenshots of his work so far, with totally corresponded with what we had asked of him.

**Ending the work**

Sometime later we had made some changes to our program, including some changes that would affect how the design should be. Within 1 hour of sending our new and improved job requirements to Kyle, he had answered, and asked some extra questions he had come upon.

This felt great to us as clients, since we knew that he was working, thinking and actually caring about the work he was doing – something some freelancers might not have.

As we neared the end on the project, on the Thursday before the last meeting it occurred to us that we should have set the deadline earlier in the week. We received the finished work on Friday morning, right before our meeting with the product owner.  
We therefore did not get to implement the design we had received beforehand.

This is obviously something that we should think of next time, to make sure that you have the outsourced work in hand in good time, so that you can actually implement it beforehand.  
The code might take some time to understand, and therefore it is something that should be considered in the sprint planning process.

**Conclusion**

All in all, we had a good experience outsourcing some work for our project. It is definitely something that can help a project along, since your can “save” some time by making someone else doing some of the work.

We got something done that matched our requirements, cost us a fair price, and all in all filled our needs, and satisfied our expectations.