The Innovation Group

Consulting Services Outline

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The Innovation Group provides analytics, business intelligence, design, development, and quality assurance services, in addition to producing in-house applications and other technology assets. This document outlines the services offered by The Innovation Group along with standard rates, procedures, and other information for clients.

Our company was founded in 2018 by Shayla Dalgliesh, a business intelligence analyst with years of experience in large healthcare and billing systems, and Kenneth Reilly, a software and IT consultant with a background in tech support and customer service. In our respective careers, we have witnessed an alarming lack of proper security and business practices across the United States. These cases include blunders like unencrypted systems with weak authentication, wide-open SQL injection vulnerabilities, hopelessly broken databases with no clear relationships between critical data points, randomly placed UX elements, and other mistakes that should be considered embarrassing for any modern corporation or entrepreneur to be making well into the information age.

The wide range of business and technical challenges we've solved in the past allow us to work closely with clients to discern important and critical information, collaborating on designs, objectives, and vision. Each project is a unique piece of work, which we build using an iterative strategy that enables us to continually scope, define, design, develop, and maintain everything from simple tools and websites up to complex production scale cloud-native applications.

Working With Us

As consultants in the vast and ever-changing field of information technology, we make it a priority to help clients understand their needs and how they relate to the numerous tools, methods, and production strategies available today. We understand that each business or technical challenge your company faces represents a new horizon with a distinct set of requirements for each phase of the design and development lifecycle, which requires diligence and an open minded approach towards understanding what these needs are and how to implement them in the real world.

We begin every client relationship by gathering some basic information about the general nature of the client's business or field of interest, and then researching the company and client interests in further detail as necessary.

This process can take anywhere from a few hours to a few days or more, depending on the scale and complexity of the client's vision and overall goals in mind. With this information we can provide design specifications, time/cost estimates, breakdowns for each main component or task, and descriptions of technology to be utilized. Higher level architectural decisions are worked out in detail ahead of time, to create a stable environment in which clients have a great amount of autonomy and flexibility in setting milestones and targets, and adjusting them when necessary.

Our Process

Once we have obtained enough information to define the requirements and specifications for a project, we then create documentation outlining main objectives and the steps necessary to achieve them, along with estimates and timeframes for project milestones. These specs and estimates are drafted and revised to match any real-world business scenario, from highly specific client-driven requirements with exact parameters, to more creative pursuits with less stringent constraints that involve rapid agile development of new ideas on-the-fly.

At The Innovation Group, we have experience with a range of project management and development styles, from the traditional waterfall method to modern approaches like agile and dev-ops. We can integrate into existing teams and management strategies, or define and implement a custom project management solution for all or part of the lifecycle of your project, based on your needs as your business or service grows and expands over time.

We utilize the latest in development tools, including modern builds of Linux, MacOS, and Windows, the latest versions of Adobe CC and MS Office applications, highly stable and durable languages and frameworks, powerful databases, cloud platform services from top vendors, and open-source community libraries from expert authors.

Project Management

The software industry is constantly evolving, and the concept of an ideal development strategy changes dramatically every few years. In theory, many of the emerging trends within this field aim to be the end-all solution to the common issues that teams and clients deal with, however that is usually not the case. In practice, the best project management style is one that is tailored specifically for the project and based on known-good management tools.

Generally, the waterfall method works well for scenarios in which some kind of blueprint already exists, such as in the construction industry or with a system, service, or other application which has been pre-defined in detail, with specific instructions for each component or feature, all of which have been thoroughly designed and carefully reviewed.

Agile methods are well-suited for creative projects developed on-the-fly, and complex scenarios which involve many unknown parameters such as when integrating with legacy systems or conducing research and development.

We choose the best approach to each project or goal based on a number of factors, such as how much work involves designing and building from scratch versus maintaining or integrating with pre-existing or other third-party systems.

Tools and Technology

The Innovation Group uses modern programming languages and tools, such as C#, Dart, TypeScript, PostgreSQL, and various leading cloud service providers such as Heroku and AWS. While we can work with a variety of technology, we recommend that new development is undertaken using the best resources available, based on years of industry-wide efforts to improve the performance, reliability, and security of software applications and services as a whole.

We utilize the latest available operating systems and applications from leading vendors like Adobe and Microsoft, and incorporate best-known design elements in everything from graphics and UX to databases and APIs. This is to ensure that our work meets or exceeds the highest industry standards in terms of proper design and development.

Our powerful and flexible workflow allows for rapid prototyping and testing of new features and ideas, seamless deployment to production-scale cloud hosting platforms, and predictable scheduling of maintenance and upgrades.

The up-front investment we make in researching the latest in computer science and information technology saves us and our clients large amounts of technical debt and overhead. We avoid common mistakes and deliver solid results.

Standard Rates

A project consists of a variety of tasks which are billed in hourly increments, at a rate based on their complexity:

General services are billed at $50 per hour, and include business consultation, drafting of system architecture, graphic / web / UX design, database design and development, deployment and maintenance, technical writing, creation of digital assets and other materials for marketing and promotion, and general day-to-day production work.

Advanced services are billed at $100 per hour. These specifically include tasks that deal in artificial intelligence or machine learning, require design and implementation of custom proprietary technology for a client (such as a framework or SDK), or integrating with very old and unmaintained architecture, for example when creating an adapter service to enable communication between two systems that are generally incompatible in design.

Typically, most work falls under the general services category, as most business cases involve standard technology. Only specific components of a project that involve advanced work are billed at the advanced services rate.

Example Project

Prezence is a mobile app for meditation, developed as an internal R&D project and feasibility study by the company CTO. The objective was to design and build an example application from scratch using the latest available technology within roughly a one-month timespan. The process took four and a half weeks, from concept designs to an MVP published on Google Play, which includes the time spent learning the Dart language and Flutter mobile SDK.

During this timespan, we produced graphic designs and assets, learned and adopted emerging technology, published a web landing page with basic SEO and social media pages, built the back-end API, database, and fileserver that powers the in-app content library, and implemented the mobile application itself, complete with a parallax scrolling background video, meditation audio, professional animations and transitions, and a history log.

This project illustrates our capabilities and open-minded approach to software development. Were this a client project and not an in-house production, the total hours for the MVP (not including internal R&D which is non-billable) comes out to around 150 hours, or $7,500. As usual, larger and more complex projects require more resources, but this is a good example of time and cost involved in bringing a simple application idea to life. Check out the app here.

Conclusion

Contact us to find out how we can help you streamline your business processes, consolidate and manage large and cumbersome datasets, design and build high-value digital products and assets, and create strategies for upgrading and future-proofing the underlying IT infrastructure of your company and products or services. We are generally available for consultation Monday through Friday 7AM – 7PM PST and occasionally on Saturday by appointment.

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Contact Shayla for general consultation, analytics, business intelligence, and matters dealing in finance or healthcare.

Kenneth Reilly – CTO

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Contact Kenneth for information related to design, development, systems architecture, and other technical matters.