

# ACCELSCALE

## CASE STUDY

# Stabilized a troubled Project for an IT Vendor

A risk driven approach to turning around a troubled project for an IT Vendor



## Introduction

Our client is a mid-size IT services vendor in India specializing in software development and cloud migration services. Their customer, a Financial Services company, based in the UK, had outsourced a system development project to them. The project was primarily a technology upgrade from a legacy web-based application to the cloud, along with new functionality enhancements and support for mobile apps.

A few quarters into the development, the vendor was facing significant quality and delivery schedule issues. In addition to delayed delivery milestones, the deliverables were not up to the quality standards agreed upon. Their client's expectations in terms of scope were also evolving and not well managed by the vendor's team.

Their client was increasingly unhappy with the delays, and it was vital for the vendor (our client) to get the project back on track and retain the customer. Not only was there immediate revenue impact if the project were to be cancelled, but future business for maintenance and enhancements was at risk.

## Objective

AccelScale was contracted by the IT Vendor to assess the current state of the project, identify key problems affecting delivery and provide recommendations for remedial actions along with a roadmap for turning around the project. While initially, our scope was to perform an assessment and provide the report, subsequently it was extended to provide guidance services to turnaround and bring the project to a stable state.

## Solution

The core of AccelScale's approach is our Delivery360™ process which is a systematic assessment of an ongoing project across multiple dimensions to identify risks and variances from best practices in execution. Typically, the scope of an assessment covers risks relating to the Client, Governance, People & Processes aspects of the project. AccelScale's team initiated a risk assessment of the project, which was done via interviews of the team leaders and key staff members, along with review of data in various systems being used, relevant documents, mail communications etc.

Upon analysis of the findings, several gaps were identified in staffing, quality processes and governance. A detailed report of issues identified was prepared along with mitigation or remediation recommendations and submitted to the Vendor's management team. Some of the key findings in this project were:

- Below par skill levels in some team members leading to subpar productivity and rework.
- Lack of backup for a critical role, leading to overload and bottlenecks in work execution.
- Ad-hoc scope additions from the Client's technical staff, which were not being managed by the vendor's team as formal changes, leading to delays and rework.
- Poor code review practices and lack of clear standards, leading to client rejection of deliverables, and unplanned Dev & QA cycles for rework, further adding to delays.

At this stage, after reviewing the report, our brief was extended to provide project oversight, and guidance to the project delivery team to ensure the project was successfully stabilized and back on track. While AccelScale was not responsible for day-to-day project management, we worked closely and continuously with the project leadership as well as key team members to:

- Develop a detailed remediation action plan to address the identified risks and concerns, with key activities, dates, owners etc.
- Assist the vendor team in documenting and communicating their concerns regarding ad-hoc scope changes and impact to their client's management. An agreement was reached with the client's staff on criteria for minor vs. formal changes and for delivery timelines to be reasonably adjusted appropriately.
- Enhance the requirements management and quality processes, including defining basic coding guidelines and defining quality gates for client deliverables. This was also accompanied with training and sensitization to the entire team on the new processes.
- Help project leadership in making staffing changes to the vendor team to strengthen key roles
- Schedule a review cadence for tracking the remediation action plan and provide project oversight and guidance until the current phase of delivery was completed.

## Outcome

With a continuous focus on risk mitigation driven by AccelScale, the steps taken helped resolve the project quality and schedule issues. In a little over 3 months from the start of remediation actions, the following results were achieved:

- Quality problems with the deliverables were fundamentally addressed. Rejections based on client team reviews reduced to near zero with typically only minor comments.
- Communication between the vendor and client technical teams improved, with a much clearer process for agreeing to and managing any scope extensions.
- The project team was now able to work in a consistent rhythm without constant firefighting of the quality issues and customer escalations.
- Client's management confidence in the vendor turned positive and client communicated that there was significant improvement from the situation earlier.

While overall the project was delayed from the originally planned timelines, the improvement in the vendor team's execution enabled the client to meet their commitments for an initial release to their stakeholders. As a direct outcome of the successful project turnaround, our client, the IT Vendor, regained the trust of their customer, and was favourably placed to win a contract extension for ongoing development of the project.