



Partnerships Built on Agile Solutions

CSC Trusts Russian Programmers

A Case Study: Seven Years of Successful Collaboration with Star Software

Executive Summary

CSC and Star's collaboration started in early 1997 and has covered a variety of projects of different sizes calling for a number of different skills. Among the users of these projects are the Danish Parliament, Danish State Enterprise Registry, and Danish Ministry of Labor, Government of Cyprus, and H:S, the largest hospital in Copenhagen. Star has a frame subcontracting agreement with CSC under which it has performed 19 Task Orders since 1997. Task Order #16, involving 50 software engineers from Star, is currently in progress. The total amount of work performed by Star specialists within this collaboration now exceeds 110 man/years.

Over these six years, Star's relationship with CSC has evolved from a small pilot project to large projects involving business-critical tasks. Star specialists now actively participate in each stage of a project, from discovery to deployment and maintenance. This high degree of openness and mutual trust between a multinational and a Russian service provider is unique in the Russian offshore outsourcing industry. It was made possible because Star has repeatedly proved its ability to quickly acquire new skills and respond to new challenges.

The success of the CSC/Star relationship is an excellent example of how distance and cultural differences may be overcome when partners share values and responsibility, have open and honest communications, and are committed to long-term partnership. CSC and Star have been able to avoid traditional pitfalls of outsourcing through proper planning and oversight, thorough quality assurance and quality control, preventive risk identification and mitigation, continuous assessment of the efficiency of the partnership, and regular personal meetings.

Through its cooperation with Star Software, CSC has gotten high-quality services from a reliable partner, access to skilled resources during peak workload periods, an ability to refocus on value-creating activities and cost savings of up to 60%. The CSC/Star experience is set out in CSC Scandinavia's White Paper on Subcontracting and in the CSC Global Off-shore Case Studies.

Project examples

Project "Integrated Enterprise"

Business challenge

CSC Denmark is Denmark's largest system integrator serving the public sector. One of its end-customers in this field, the Danish Ministry of Tax and Customs, required a system to support registration of taxable companies in the country. The project, which was known as "Integrated Enterprise", was placed with CSC. The technology for the design and development was Seer HPS, a rare and expensive skill. CSC didn't have enough specialists at its disposal. It was unlikely that the team assembled for "Integrated Enterprise" would be required for further assignments; hence hiring new Danish personnel was not an option. And external consultants in Denmark were far too expensive.

Solution

Star had already participated in two CSC projects utilizing HPS and proved its ability to get the job done. Although Star didn't have a ready team either, it was able to quickly hire and appropriately train lacking staff. The development started in April 1998 and the application was successfully put into production in Feb 1999.

The software itself is a database application with approximately 80 different windows and 900 database transactions. The system is an HPS-based client-server application with a server side running under OS/2 and utilizing DB2 as a DBMS.

Responsibilities

Star was responsible for the development of the system, documentation and assistance in onsite testing and customer acceptance. Star adopted CSC's methodology for issue, change, risk and configuration management. CSC was responsible for project management, systems analysis, high-level design and onshore integration testing.

Star undertook approximately 60% of the total development effort. The total volume of development performed by Star in this project was 101 person/months, including 21 person/months onsite. The project team was up to 16 people during the development stage. A group of seven people worked in Denmark for 2 months and a group of four people were there for another month during the acceptance period. Two Star consultants also assisted CSC in the final acceptance by CSC's client.

Project "AMANDA"

Business challenge

AMANDA is a large electronic data processing system used by the Danish Ministry of Labor. The project was huge and had been in development for several years and involved several sub-projects. In certain subprojects, CSC needed to compensate for the shortage in its own personnel while staying within the budget. It was decided to leverage offshore capabilities through outsourcing these subprojects to a reliable partner. Since CSC knew Star from previous successful projects, their ability to do the work was not an issue.

Solution

The subprojects outsourced to Star included a Lotus Notes workflow automation system, a planning system for regional offices of the Ministry built with SAS tools, components of a registration system for the unemployed built with Seer HPS tools, and a scalable Web-interface to the system.

The competencies required for the offshore development included SAS, Lotus Notes, Seer HPS, ASP, Oracle, VBScript, JavaScript, and HTML in the scope of development of the web-interface. Star translated project requirements from Danish into English. The development started in 1998 and ended in 2000.

Responsibilities

It was obvious that Star could not take any subproject on their own without support from system analysts working directly with the client in Denmark. Therefore, the mix in all outsourced project was defined in such a way that system analysts were assigned from internal resources, while Star provided software developers and testers. In the web interface project, Star was also responsible for the design of software and hardware architecture. In three other projects, CSC provided the design and Star was responsible for development only.

Star established the necessary training programs in SAS and in Lotus Notes development environments. Through earlier engagement with CSC, Star already had engineers well trained in Seer HPS.

The total amount of development work performed by Star in the project was 274 person/months. The offshore team rose to as many as 20 people in certain periods. During the Development Stage the team performed tasks of low level design, coding and unit testing, as well as partial off-site integration testing (to the extent possible in Star's offshore environment) and complete on-site acceptance testing. Star also supported CSC during the deployment stage by providing CSC with a team of developers for work on-site.

Major parts of the subprojects were developed offshore. In HPS and Web projects, the Russian staff worked mostly off-site. In SAS and Lotus Notes projects, three Russian consultants spent about 60% time offshore and 40% time in CSC's project location.

Project "Labka II"

Business challenge

"Labka" is a laboratory information system (LIS) supporting requisition and analysis of clinical chemical samples as well as microbiological samples. The system was developed and deployed in 40+ Scandinavian hospitals by CSC Scandihealth, one of the CSC companies in Denmark.

CSC's incentive to develop the new software system, Labka II, as a replacement to their currently deployed system came from the fact that the hardware and operational platform on which Labka runs (HP1000) reaches its end-of-life in five years.

CSC required a system incorporating the most up-to-date technology in order to ensure long life, high competitiveness, efficient deployment and maintenance, and further evolution. The new software should match and exceed the old system's functionality.

Solution

Star has actively participated in the project from the very beginning. Taking into account the complexity and importance of the new software, as well as estimated development effort, the very fact that CSC decided to outsource the project to Star is indicative of the very high level of trust CSC has in Star Software.

One of the hospitals where the old system is currently being used was chosen for the first deployment of the new Labka II. Key members of the Star development team were introduced to the hospital environment onsite. All the needed industry-specific knowledge (healthcare) was transferred to the development team. Other competencies required from Star included HP-UX, Oracle 9i, Java, J2EE (BEA WebLogic), XML, HTML. The old system served as a functional prototype for the new system.

"Labka II" is a first for Star involving as it does several techniques of eXtreme Programming (XP) methodology. The project started in August 2001 and the end of the deployment stage is planned for April 2004.

Responsibilities

The project has been logically divided into four stages: Discovery, Design, Development and Deployment, as defined by CSC's Catalyst 4D model. The Design and Development stages are outsourced 100% to Russia. CSC staff actively participated in the Discovery stage and will be responsible for the Deployment stage.

Star took responsibility for designing and developing server and client software including database processing, business logic, standalone and web-based user interfaces. Star's participation in the project also involved project management, quality assurance, development of documentation, testing, and assistance in deployment. Necessary translation of CSC deliverables from Danish into English is also provided by Star.

CSC is responsible for several components of the system, primarily those that maintain communication with physical instruments installed in hospitals and for interfaces with other software systems running in the hospitals.

The Star project team has varied in size from 7 specialists during the Discovery Stage to 57 people at the Development Stage.

Star will also support CSC during the deployment stage by providing CSC with a team of developers for on-site integration testing and assistance in deployment. To facilitate the deployment, Star has reproduced the hospital environment off-site.

Conclusion

Always committed to long-term partnership, Star Software continues to be a source of leverage for CSC and follows its mission of generating value for the customer through development of high-quality software on time and within budget.

Based on our experience with CSC, we now position our **Flexible Offshore Development Centre (FODC)** as Star's main business proposal to prospective new clients. The major distinguishing feature of the ODC model which is in turn the main benefit to customers is a permanent core team that accumulates business knowledge and technical expertise related to the client's technology over an extended time frame. Other important characteristics are transparent pricing with very competitive rates and secure custom operational set-up tailored to the client's needs with respect to required hardware, development tools, office facilities, communication links, additional contract clauses, and other issues.

A white paper describing our ODC model is available at http://www.star-sw.com/whitepapers/Star_WP_FlexODC.pdf.

About Star Software

Star Software is a leading Russian software-outsourcing provider specializing in the implementation and maintenance of information systems. On November 15, 2002, CIO Magazine named Star Software among the Top Three Offshore Software Developers in Russia. See www.cio.com/offshoremapping/russia.html

Star offers particular expertise in database-intensive applications, migration of legacy systems to web-based environments, application maintenance and software localization. For corporate Knowledge Management solutions, Star Software offers proprietary data mining tools based on NLP (Natural Language Processing) techniques.

Former and current clients of Star Software include CSC/Denmark, IBM/Tivoli, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Contex Scanning Technologies, STAC, Tupperware, Foss Electrics, LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association), and UNU (United Nations University). Among the end-customers for the developed software are Berghof Muhlhausen, Hugo Boss, Adidas, Schreyer, Danish Ministry of Labor, Danish Ministry of Tax and Customs, and many others.

About CSC

CSC is one of the world's leading consulting and information technology service firms helping clients in industry and government to achieve strategic and operational results through the use of technology. The company's success is based on its culture of working collaboratively with clients to develop innovative technology strategies and solutions that address specific business challenges. Having guided clients through every major wave of change in information technology since 1959, CSC combines the newest technologies with its capabilities in consulting, systems design and integration, IT and business process outsourcing, applications software, and Web and application hosting to meet the individual needs of global corporations and organizations. With more than 92,000 employees in locations worldwide, CSC has revenues of \$11.3 billion.

Star cooperates with CSC companies based in Denmark (CSC Denmark, CSC Scandihealth, CSC Datalab, CSC Datacentralen).

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