



# HOW TO CHOOSE THE IDEAL SAAS DEVELOPMENT PARTNER



## **FAR TOO MANY SAAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FAIL.**

Why? A variety of reasons, including unrealistic expectations, unclear objectives, weak processes, evolving markets, and underqualified or overpriced development teams.

After two decades in the trenches of software development, we've seen projects that were wildly successful and others that were miserable failures. And those lessons are what we are here to share.

We invite you to explore our tips on how to choose the ideal SaaS development partner.

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Studies show that less than one third of all software projects succeed. The more you understand how application development works, the more likely you'll have a successful outcome with your product. Trusting you'll get the right solution from a "black box" is risky at best, so if you can learn the basics, you'll mitigate risk of failure.

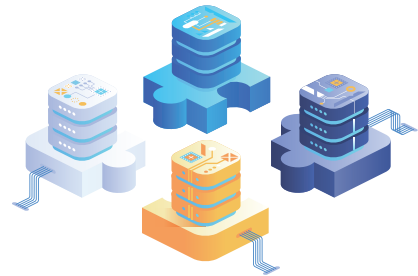
## KEY TOPICS TO UNDERSTAND



**Defining Project Requirements**



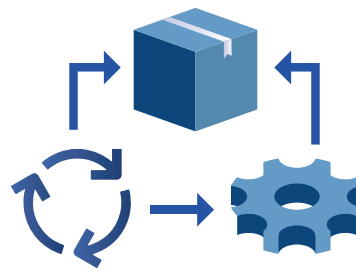
**Setting Project Scope**



**Agile/Scrum Development**



**Technology Stack**



**Product Lifecycle (PDLC)**

You do not have to be technical! But if you understand these critical software development concepts, you'll be able to make better decisions and avoid the traps that lead to failure of so many projects.



# RUN A "BACKGROUND CHECK"



## REPUTATION

Reputation matters. A lot. Look for testimonials. Check online reviews. Ask for references. Trust, but verify. Are the companies delivering the feedback comparable to you? We like the term twinsumer – finding reviews and reviewers that sound like you. Note, reference conversations are a special request that should be reserved for serious diligence, not when kicking the tires.



## CERTIFICATIONS

If you've already chosen your technology stack, ask about relevant certifications. Competent custom software development companies are often known among their technology peers, which can earn a variety of 'badges'. If you haven't already chosen your platform, ask what vendors specialize in and seek their credentials in that world. Credentials aren't a guarantee of ability, but they can be helpful in vetting someone's expertise.



## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

If you hired a contractor to remodel your home, would you want to be his first customer? Probably not. On-the-job training isn't the best strategy for high-stakes projects. Look for deep experience with technology platforms. If you're building a SaaS product, look for a software developer who has SaaS in their portfolio. If your application will be in the cloud (it should!), look for a vendor who builds modern applications. And if you're in a particular industry, it can be helpful to choose a development partner that has relevant experience. For example, if you're building medical or financial software, you'll want someone who knows a great deal about HIPAA or PCI standards.

# AVOID BAIT & SWITCH PRICING



A common ingredient of failed software development projects is cost overruns. Developers don't have accurate crystal ball forecasts, but some development teams are actually devious enough to offer "sweetheart" deals, knowing fully well that you'll face significant additional fees as the project unfolds. Put simply, many application development vendors write a low bid to win the contract, misleading the client into ultimately throwing good money after bad...

Odds are that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. It's best to solicit more than one estimate (3-4 if possible) so you can compare the approaches used for budgeting and managing your project. Reputable development firms will "show their work" on how they arrived at their estimate.

You get what you pay for. Yes, some outsourcing shops overcharge and others are fair - but a low estimate may indicate what you're really going to get.

# GOOD • FAST • CHEAP (PICK ANY 2)



The **"IRON TRIANGLE"** of software development has not wavered over the years. Set realistic goals for your project in terms of scope, timeline and budget. If you're getting good, fast, AND cheap in a vendor's estimate, it's probably bait & switch or a recipe for failure.

# PROCESS > PRODUCT

When evaluating vendors, ask about their internal and customer-facing processes.



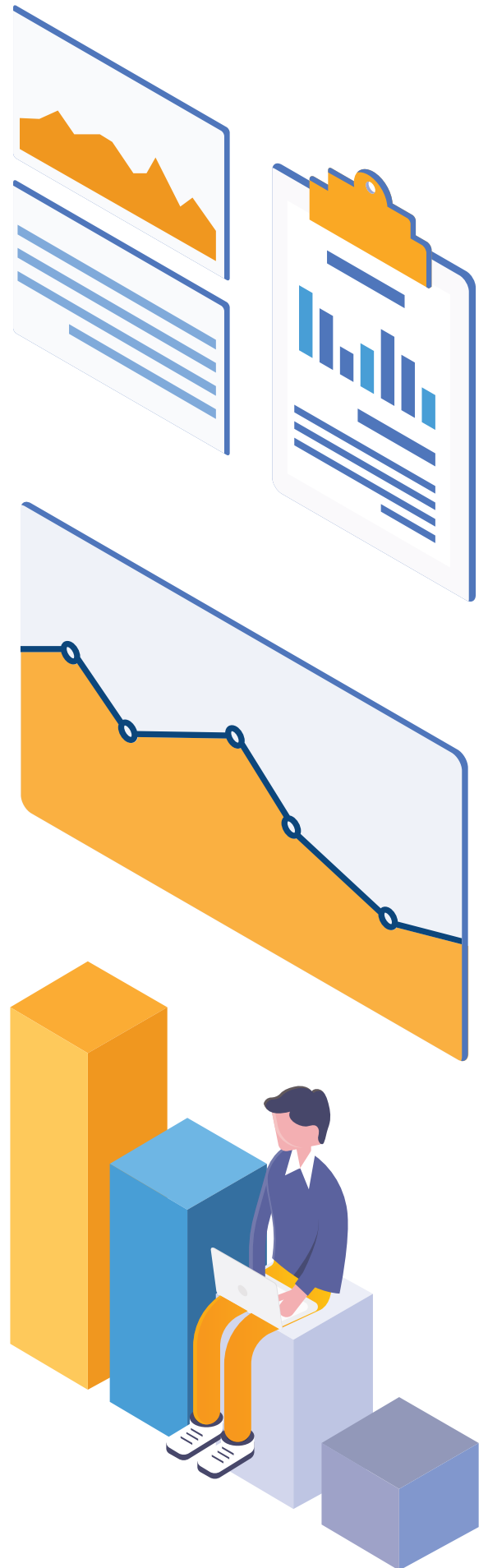
- How do they staff their team?
- Where (geographically) are team members located?
- What methodologies do they use for project management (e.g., agile, waterfall or a hybrid)?
- How do they test?
- How will they communicate project updates with you?
- How do they manage change requests?

The more of these answers that sound well thought out, the more likely the vendor can deliver a quality SaaS product. This area is one where you DO want to know how the sausage is made!

# PLAN YOUR PRODUCT STRATEGY

YOU are responsible for explaining your product strategy to vendors. What do you need now? What will you need in the next quarter or next year? Have conversations about degree of difficulty, priority of availability, and dependencies.

Don't dive into application development without a roadmap - or you will waste significant time and money. Document everything with words and images (or have your vendor do so)





# INVEST IN USER EXPERIENCE



Many SaaS applications fail because of the user interface and a poor user experience. Ask for samples of previous project work to see if the vendor makes attractive, functional systems. Ask how they create wireframes and prototypes. Ask what tools they use (best answers will include software like Balsamiq, Figma, Sketch, InVision, and comparable visualization tools).

**5.1x**

Revenue growth of CX  
leaders over laggards

**4.5x**

Willingness to pay a price premium  
of customers who have excellent  
versus very poor experiences\*

# TEST TEST TEST



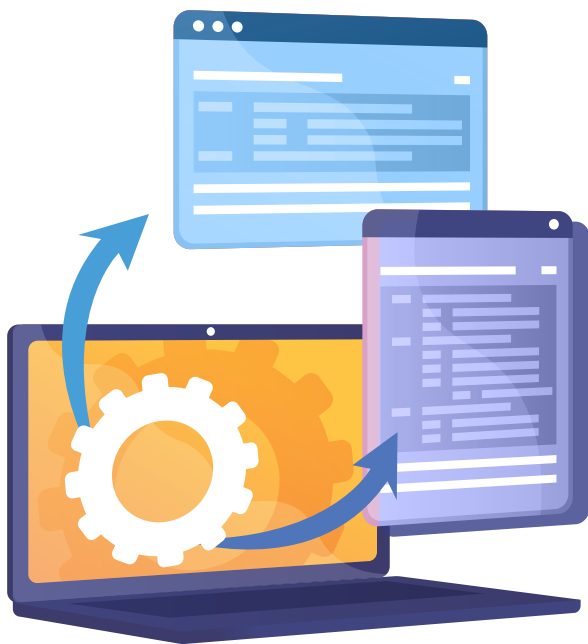
Touched on briefly in #4 is the concept of testing. Drill down to understand if the vendor has a robust testing method. In the end, you'll get higher quality, easier to use applications. Yes, bugs will happen, but you want to minimize them by having a repeatable, adaptive test plan. And make sure there are appropriate resources (time & money) allocated for testing and iterating. Quality SaaS developers will mention things like automated unit testing, user acceptance testing, DevOps and CI/CD

# DON'T FORGET DOCUMENTATION

We've outsourced to external software development teams too, and we know how poor their documentation can be. Make sure you don't let documentation slip through the cracks. Start with requirements documentation and roadmap, then continue with functional specifications, and ultimately user & developer guides. Failing to do so creates long-term technical debt. And you'll pay that debt for a long, long time.



# EMBRACE CHANGE



Every project faces change. Software is never complete. And software is never perfect. Requirements are dynamic based on business needs, markets, users, and technology. Your plans should include resources to review deliveries, verify requirements are met, and define changes over time. Software development itself is unpredictable.

SaaS products need ongoing care — so retaining help for maintenance is essential.

# WEBAPPER BRINGS EXPERIENCE & INSIGHT TO SAAS APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT.

Our comprehensive application development process means you get SaaS products that can convert, scale, and thrive. When you need additional development resources, it can be more efficient to use an outsourced development team. We've designed our SaaS application development service specifically for businesses like yours. You'll work with a dedicated team of SaaS application development professionals who are experts in SaaS product development.



## Product Mindset

We have already built products that delight users around the world.



## Innovative Thinking

We drive digital innovation with design thinking, rapid prototyping, and iterative development.



## Exceptional Talent

Our team can capture your product ideas and build the best possible product for you.



## Broad Technology Expertise

We bring full-stack expertise to every system we design and develop.



## SaaS Sales & Marketing Experience

We understand how important it is to deliver a good customer experience from inquiry through onboarding and maintenance.



## Cost Effective

Save valuable time and money by outsourcing. Scale your team to meet changing needs

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