



Gatesix Web Development and CRM Engagement

Gatesix is a highly experienced, client-centric Internet Strategy and Technology Services agency. Two of their six core competencies are the custom development of web-based software and designing highly interactive, dynamic websites.

The custom internet strategy and technology solutions they create help their customers maximize their performance and achieve key business initiatives. The company delivers large, complex software development and web design projects in very short timelines.

President and Founder of Gatesix, Manish Mamnani, wanted to raise the bar and provide even greater value to their customers by improving the company's current delivery of software development and website design services. As an added benefit, they would also be able to improve their customer relationship management in the process.

The following project improvements were identified:

1. The Off-Shore Development teams would benefit from clearer requirements for their development tasks. The On-Shore Technical Leads needed the ability to create an accurate requirements analysis document in what was many times a very short time line.
2. Clearly documented requirements would make it easier for the teams to accurately estimate project hours.
3. Some changes to the project management processes would make it easier for the development teams to meet tight deadlines. Increasing feedback and communication with the customer would positively impact customer satisfaction.

Discovery results

Lighthouse Consulting Services was initially hired to provide project management services for some Web Design projects. Mr. Mamnani quickly determined that in addition to the project management services, he wanted more assistance from Lighthouse. Mr. Robert Cody; CTO and Owner of Lighthouse Consulting Services; was brought in as Director of Web Solutions.

After Lighthouse Consulting completed the initial discovery phase it was determined to implement the project improvements the Gatesix team needed to:

1. Shorten the time needed to analyze and document the details of the customer requirements and ensure the off-Shore Development Leads understood the project requirements and agreed with the project time lines.
2. Create project estimates and timelines that more accurately reflected the times needed to complete development tasks.



3. Closely manage the development work and the customer relationship during the project lifecycle.

The right solution for Gatesix

Working with the Web Solutions Technical Leads, Sales team and the Development Leads off-Shore, Lighthouse was able to identify many areas that would positively impact time to production and the accuracy of the estimates being created. The solution presented focused on 3 activities:

1. Requirements and Estimation

Working with Project Leads, Lighthouse created a fast and easy to use requirements template. A template was prepared for each project by the on-Shore Technical lead listing requirements and details in bullet item format. This significantly shortened the time needed to gather, analyze and document the customer's requirements for the web design projects.

Working with the Project Leads and the Sales team, Lighthouse created a project estimation spreadsheet. This Excel spreadsheet included values for pre-defined project activities such as Requirements Analysis, Database Implementation, Code Implementation, Testing and Project Management as a percentage of total project time. The percentages were created based on the combined experience of Lighthouse Consulting Services and a senior development lead at Gatesix.

Using the estimation spreadsheet, the Gatesix team enters values for total project hours and costs and the hours allotted to each specific activity are automatically calculated. Based on the calculated values the team leads determine if sufficient time had been allotted for a particular task. Changing the value for a specific item causes the entire estimate to be recalculated.

2. Project Management

After working with the team leads it was identified that if some small Project Management processes were put in place, project scheduling would be improved. Lighthouse worked with the team leads to create project schedules that would meet both Gatesix and their customer's needs. The project schedule is now shared with the customers and status against the schedule is communicated on a regular basis.

3. Customer Relationship Management

While working with the team leads, it was apparent that everyone was focused on delivering quality work to their customers. But, it was determined part of the process that could be improved was Customer Relationship Management. With help from Lighthouse, the team incorporated scheduled contact points with their customers into the project plan and allowed time for the development teams to implement the client feedback they received.



Result

Because the requirements being given to the development teams were more concise and easy to read, they were able to provide superior product deliverables to the customer the first time. The frequent milestone deliveries gave the customer opportunities to provide feedback early in the development process saving both time and money. Also, the scheduled client contact points, in conjunction with the added feedback opportunities, resulted in an increase to the already high customer satisfaction levels at Gatesix. According to Manish Mamnani, “The end result was faster development turnaround times, satisfied customers and a boost to our bottom line. “