HOW TO UNLEASH INNOVATION

Elevate Your Business with Strategic IT Outsourcing Solutions

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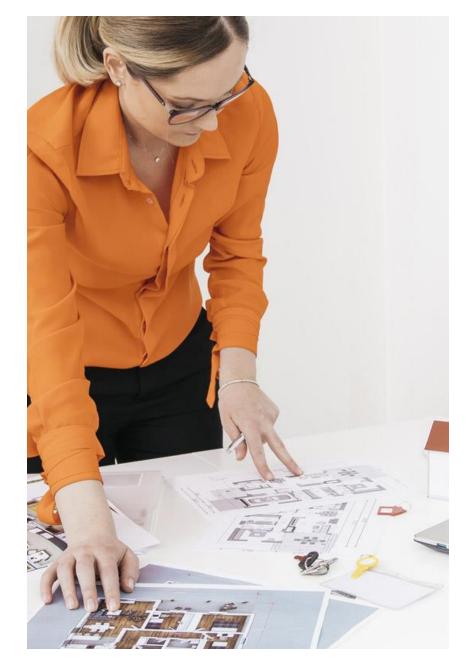
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the new **GUDRUNXpert**

About client

Gudrun Xpert is a leader in residential and non-residential real estate valuation in the Belgium market, successfully operating for over 40 years. Their business is very delicate: their valuation affects many people and companies in the complex process of real estate trading. To top that, exceptionally large banks and insurance companies rely on their valuations to perform risk analysis of loans and mortgages.

Project

External IT Department

Understanding client's challenges

Gudrun Xpert built a network of top experts throughout Belgium to improve the quality of their services. This way, clients in every region can rely on someone who knows the local real estate market and its prices inside and out. Over the years they formed Helpdesk, Marketing, Sales, and HR departments, but the IT department did not develop as Gudrun Xpert wanted. It is not like they did not appreciate the value of an IT department, but in the last decade, the IT industry simply exploded. Changes were happening at the speed of light, and it was not easy even for IT companies to keep up with them. Recent technologies, versions, frameworks, and libraries appeared quickly, so employees in the IT industry had to make a huge effort to learn and use them. In other words, the IT industry's progress was so great that non-IT companies could not keep up with it.

Furthermore, Gudrun Xpert faced the main pain point of the IT industry in Belgium. It is a lack of available IT experts. It is difficult to find IT experts, the recruitment process is long and uncertain, negotiations are arduous and the price for hiring them is quite high. Not to mention how hard it is to replace a leaving team member and onboard a new one.

So, what should such a company do, to properly apply their extensive domain knowledge into an innovative IT solution? The answer is simple - hire an IT company and transform it into an external department.

Solution

The answer is simple, but turning this into practice - is not. It is never easy to hire an external IT company to do a delicate task. Especially if this is not a one-off task but a long-term engagement. Furthermore, it is necessary to synchronize numerous factors such as timing, availability, specific knowledge, and team structure and to establish mutual trust and understanding. Not to mention, data confidentiality and cost matters are particularly sensitive and important.

The negotiation process started at the end of 2016, and the first joint project already started at the beginning of 2017. After it was successfully implemented and an "initial victory" made, mutual trust grew. That caused the projects to follow one after the other. As we got to know their domain, processes, and industry over time, we have been entrusted with additional responsibilities and granted expanded permissions. That is how a real partnership is built. We did not develop only Front-end Apps, but we helped Gudrun Xpert to move from on-prem infrastructure to Azure cloud infrastructure. This extremely complex and sensitive project lasted for about a year and a half. Our dedicated team merged so well that you could not tell we were not an in-house department. We formed a team that provides full-time IT support and development. Most of the time, our team had three front-end developers, one QA, one Scrum Master, and one Solution Architect/Team Lead. Since we use Agile and Scrum, the Product Owner is their CTO who has been successfully leading technology development for years. Timely planning and adjusting the size and structure of the team to Gudrun Xpert's needs enabled our partnership to endure to this day.

Technical insight

Our cooperation is constant, so many technologies have been introduced over the past 7 years. Top-notch technologies with the latest versions must be used. We developed a dozen pixel-perfect Apps by using AngularJS, Angular 2+, JavaScript, TypeScript, NodeJS, CSS, SAAS, LESS, HTML5, Protractor, Playwright, and so on.

Business value and benefits

Establishing a successful external department for IT support and development turned out to be an incredibly wise decision for Gudrun Xpert because they achieved several benefits. Gudrun Xpert was able to compensate for the lack of IT experts in Belgium, relieve HR from a long and uncertain recruitment process, and enable easier replacement for a leaving team member.

By hiring an external IT department, in addition to reducing HR costs, Gudrun Xpert also reduced the excessive fees of purchasing hardware, equipment, and software licenses by 48% annually.

We have not only reduced the obligations and costs for Procurement and the HR department but also created a solid foundation for strategic decisions and future expansion. Due to our expertise and knowledge of the latest technologies and computer engineering, we enabled all applications to be connected and communicate through fast data exchange in a reliable Micro-Frontend environment. The interface which is used daily is modern and easy to use, and even new employees notice it, whose onboarding period has shortened. Additionally, a well-structured Micro–Frontend environment and the latest technologies versions allow ease of maintenance, upgrade, and adding new features which introduced a maneuvering room for top management.

Their estimators in the field no longer had to calculate manually, but instead received a powerful digital tool and connected the entire automated system which increased the number of calculations by 10%.

Due to the long-term cooperation, our commitment to getting to know their processes and business needs, and the common desire for success, Gudrun Xpert got us as a reliable associate. All these benefits enabled a true business value. It is the vision of running a business, constantly improving one's services, which are fully adapted to clients' needs, and maintaining a competitive advantage and leadership position on the market.

"AVS Solutions' skills have allowed internal team members to focus on their own expertise, enabling them to deliver high-quality solutions. The team is professional, responsive, and functions as a true partner."

- Jerry Gielis, IT Director Gudrun Xpert