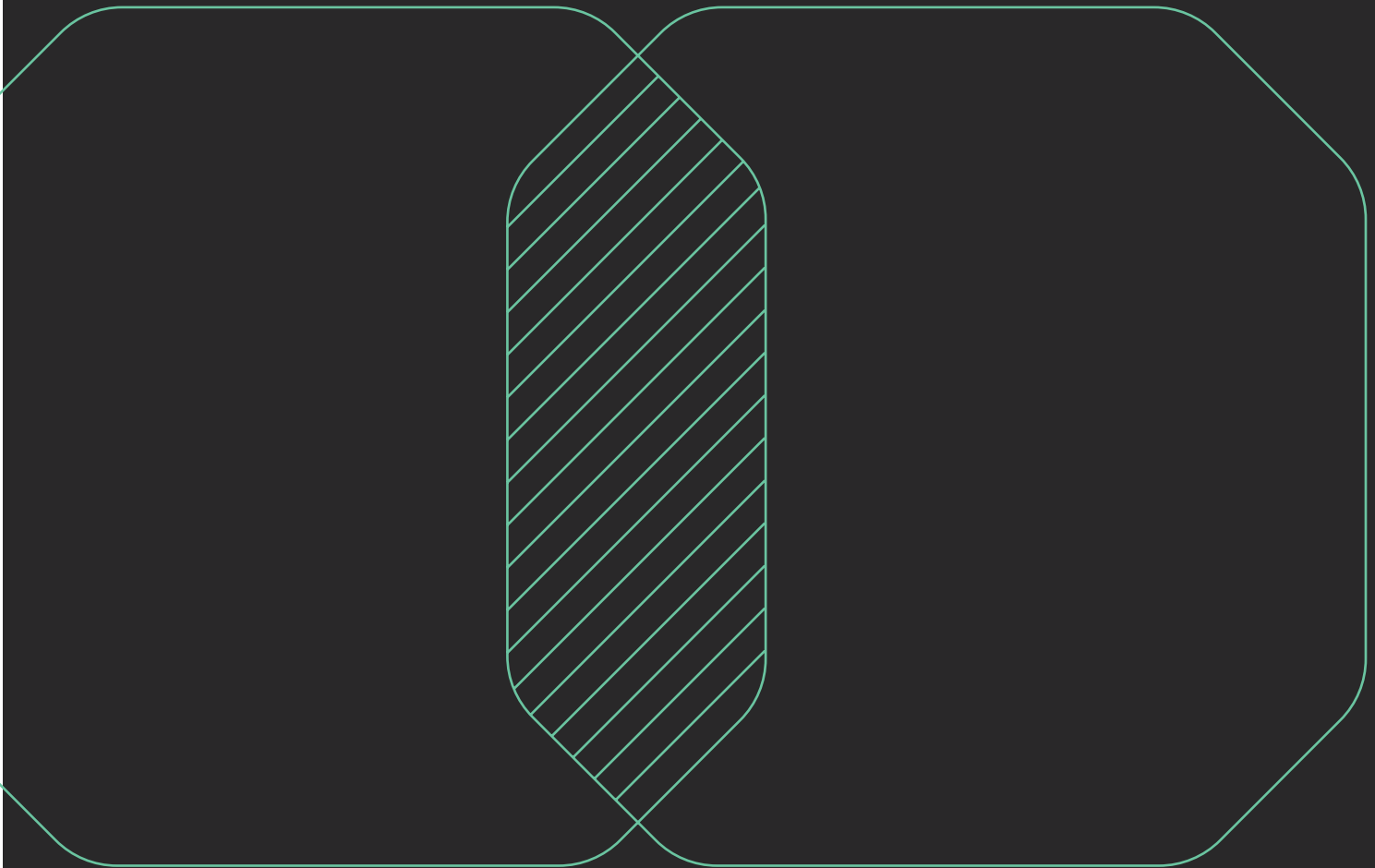


The ROI of Partnership

The power of collaboration
in software development



genui

Partnership

Great software is one of the defining differentiators of our age. It can help you empower employees, streamline operations, win and keep customers, and deliver new and innovative products and services to the market. It's also evolving so quickly that even the savviest companies often encounter challenges and roadblocks along the way to a viable digital offering.

When companies find themselves in this situation, they can take one of two distinct approaches. They can choose to develop it internally using the employees and tools you have. Or they can partner with a company that specializes in developing the types of solutions they need.

At many companies, the default choice is to “go it alone,” even if that means reaching significantly beyond the expertise and skill sets of those already in the organization. Technical teams justifiably take pride in their skills and ingenuity, and may be (at least initially) excited about the possibilities of learning new things. Often, budget rules and processes make it more challenging to procure outside help, especially in economically challenging times. And many simply underestimate the challenges they will encounter along the way.

But there is risk in “waiting for the point of no return” to engage outside expertise. When done properly and with the right projects, bringing in an outside partner can be one of the most impactful ways you have to drive ROI, and an investment that should pay dividends far beyond what you spend. This article discusses some of the benefits of shifting your mindset from “development consulting is a cost we should avoid” to “development consulting is an investment we should maximize.”

Creativity

Competitive advantage today is not won or lost on the basis of incremental improvements, but game-changing insights and innovations. Organizations that start from scratch are at a significant disadvantage because they will still be learning as they go rather than standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before.

An experienced partner can look at risks and opportunities from different angles which, combined with your team's deep experience in the business, can lead to new, creative ideas.

A partner who has kept current on the state of the art in software development will be in a position to suggest modern approaches that deliver substantial business value. And with that partner, you can get to those disruptive solutions faster than you might have on your own.

Performance & Satisfaction

In theory, tackling a new technology should be exciting. However, the reality is often much different. Internal IT teams are assigned to existing tasks and projects. New efforts require taking resources from other initiatives or adding to their burden—all in an environment of “do more with less.”

If your team is starting from scratch with aspects of the software stack, they're going to spend a lot of their time figuring out the basics. Cloud-based solutions in particular can involve a lot of configuration, plumbing, and testing. The right partner will have automation and pre-built architectures to speed the process.

If what you are building dovetails with the skills already present on your team, the process can be a lot easier. On the flipside, however, people will be limited to what they already know rather than bringing the diverse perspective of an organization that continually works with a broad range of the latest technology. That perspective can mean the difference between success and failure when attempting to break the mold and do something new and exciting.

Speed & Agility

Organizations often dramatically underestimate the time it will take to build something new. This has become even more true with the advent of the cloud, which promises to remove many of the traditional complexities of procuring, deploying, and managing hardware. These promises can be hollow if you get bogged down in the early stages of cloud-based projects. Frequently, companies get stuck trying to figure out the basics of the technology or trying to apply legacy approaches to a cloud operational environment.

A good partner will already know how to implement modern engineering practices such as continuous integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD), DevOps, and containerization. And they should have a proven track record of rapid, high quality delivery and the ability to demonstrate how they achieved it.

This can dramatically accelerate time to value, meaning your business can begin reaping the rewards of your technology investment earlier and get the jump on competitors.

Cost

Cost is often cited as a reason for keeping software development projects in house. And while hiring an outside agency may seem expensive, it's important to consider the business case more broadly when deciding what a reasonable level of investment might be:

- What will it cost your business to shift existing resources to a new project?
- How will it affect employee morale and retention?
- What are the risks of taking on new technologies for a critical project, and what is it worth to mitigate those risks?
- What is the opportunity cost of delay or failure?
- What potential ROI increase could you achieve by improving the scalability, performance, resilience, and user experience of your solution?

If you choose well, the right partner will understand the business outcomes as well as the technical underpinnings of what you're proposing, and deliver returns far beyond what you spend.

Technical Quality

This is where the rubber meets the road. The less experience you have with a set of technologies, the more likely you are to encounter technical hurdles that suck up time and budget and can lead to a lower-quality finished product.

For example, if your team has never configured storage buckets in the public cloud, they will have to learn the best practices for doing so from documentation that may not apply to your specific use case. If they do it incorrectly, it might put important data at risk.

A typical software development project includes hundreds or thousands of such decisions, all of which can affect the success of the product. Your chances of success increase when you choose a partner with expertise in the technologies you have selected. They will instinctively understand the foundations and know the best way forward for your specific business outcome. The result? More time spent on designing and deploying advanced capabilities rather than on getting the basics right.

Security & Compliance

When it comes to data and software, the trust of your customers and your ability to comply with regulations are at stake. With increasingly sophisticated cyber threats and a growing tendency for data to traverse multiple systems, getting security right from the beginning is not optional.

If you are in a regulated industry or work at a publicly traded company, you will have significant compliance needs, as well. An organization who has worked with industries similar to yours is likely to have insight into the best ways to solve these challenges and ensure your IT remains secure and compliant.

Maximizing the value of the consulting relationship

Achieving these goals depends on the quality of the partner you choose. It starts with a shared vision of where you're going. Knowing who you are and what you want is as important as knowing what you seek in a partner.

And timing is crucial: the sooner you embrace the benefits that will come from having a partner, the sooner that partnership can start to pay off.

Here are a few best practices we believe help to get the most out of a working relationship:

Embrace the expertise

Lean into your partner's skills. Rather than giving them the minimum level of responsibility possible, freely share information and experiences that can help them succeed. Let them complement the skills your team already brings to the table, finding reward in their added knowledge and bandwidth, and helping your team maximize success.

Align values

Skills can be augmented, but values rarely change. Trust, authenticity, empathy, and honesty are key parts of a successful working relationship. Every consultant has a different culture and a different approach to relationships and problem solving. It's appropriate to use your own culture as a deciding factor between partners who demonstrate the same domains of technology expertise.

Prioritize

Your partner should be able to help you create a coherent project plan that helps you achieve quick wins while building toward greater value. Agree on and solve the most essential problem first before you move on to the next. Everything else will follow.

Collaborate early and often

If you choose a great partner but treat them as an outsourced commodity, you could be wasting time and money. Go beyond check-ins. See your partner as an extension of your team and regularly collaborate to gain consensus and alignment. Their enthusiasm for this level of engagement should be a clear indicator of whether they are worth your investment or not.

Test & learn

Work closely and swiftly to get ideas out and in front of others. Take in feedback and use it to your advantage to strengthen the next release.

Partnership is our Passion

We offer these tips because we know the impact that amazing digital software products and solutions can deliver for businesses and people today.

If your projects involve new or unfamiliar technology, a need for diverse and innovative thinking, a rapid development timeline, or a high risk factor to the business if not done correctly, it might be a good time to consider an expert partner.

The potential ROI on the right partner is hard to overstate. Look for:

- Proven approaches and tools tested through long experience.
- A commitment to creativity and innovation in the service of business results.
- Deep technology expertise demonstrated through a proven track record of scalable, performant solutions that delivered beyond expectations.
- People you connect with and get along with.

At GenUI, we judge our partnerships by all of these criteria. If you're considering how to best move forward on an important project, let us show you how we can help your investment deliver the results you seek.

[Contact us](#) or send an email to hello@genui.com.