

We all have questions.

Questions about how things work, where things are and why things happen. It's how we grow, learn and innovate.

Here at ThoughtWorks, we glorify the question, so much in fact, that we have devoted this entire page, not only to questions, but to answers as well. We hope this helps you understand what ThoughtWorks does and how we do it.

How do you ensure project visibility and transparency for clients on offshore projects?

Our process is based on understanding the business goals for the overall project, prioritizing by value or importance to the business and then delivering the application iteratively, showcasing what we have built every one or two weeks.

We try to ensure all of our processes are highly transparent and involve the business users regularly in activities such as discussions with analysts, reviewing the acceptance tests for stories, feature prioritization in the Iteration kick-off meetings, approving the newly built functionality and providing feedback in the iteration end showcases.

We conduct live demonstrations of working software for our clients every 1–2 weeks, so that we can gather rapid feedback. We have weekly calls to discuss overall project health with client project management teams. Daily stand ups and various other (visual) indicators ensure that project information is available for everyone to see. Our shared code repositories and issue tracking systems keep our clients informed at all times.

My business requirements and priorities are dynamic. How will your development teams ensure a quick and timely response to these changes?

It is important that offshore software development teams understand that business priorities can change and use processes that are tied to early and frequent delivery of business value and can easily embrace change.

Our approach delivers the most important features first, in short, frequent releases that allow for reprioritization at a release level. Within each release, bi-weekly Iteration kick-off meetings and software demonstrations give clients the opportunity to reprioritize requirements based on their changing realities.

Can offshore agile deliver with large teams and complex domains?

Yes. We have many examples of business critical, technically challenging and domain intensive projects being delivered successfully within tight budgets and timelines. You can access a few of these examples here: <http://www.thoughtworks.com/our-clients/case-studies/case-studies.html>.

How do you handle the increased complexity of multiple teams across multiple locations working on a single application?

The challenges of ensuring high-quality communication to and across offshore development teams are increasingly complex when the team is distributed across multiple locations. We have developed many practices to maximize communication across these teams such as ambassador visits, instant messaging, regular cross team showcasing and insist that one team is involved in all daily stand ups despite time zone differences.

All teams make optimum use of Agile practices such as Test Driven Development, Continuous Integration and automated regression testing which we have found absolutely essential for executing high quality development across multiple locations. We tackle integration as early as possible to mitigate the potential risks of software being developed by teams in multiple locations. Continuous Integration enables frequent automated integration of code across various locations and the various levels of tests ensure that the newly built functionality goes through multiple quality checkpoints with every one of these code check-ins.

How do your teams perform whilst working with geography, time and cultural challenges?

Regular demonstrations of software that include feedback from the business ensures we mitigate the risks of developing offshore. By adjusting our working hours so that we can have a greater overlap with client teams we increase the opportunities for regular communication. We have found it very helpful to use multi-cultural development teams and organize "cross-pollination" activities to help build and develop key relationships. These measures do not achieve the same levels of communication as you can with a single co-located team but they do help you to achieve an open, collaborative and trusting working environment.

How do you ensure that skilled and motivated people will work on delivering my requirements?

Our recruitment processes are rigorous and help us to ensure we hire consultants that are passionate about delivering on customer goals. Our staffing decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the business needs and project complexities so that projects have the optimum level of skills required. Developers want to work at ThoughtWorks and we are very proud to boast the lowest rates of attrition on offshore software development providers.

What are the available levels of escalation within ThoughtWorks? How accessible is your top management?

We encourage our clients to visit our offices and are free to work side by side with our development teams and talk to each and every member of those teams. We schedule weekly progress discussions with client management teams to discuss current status and the way forward. Our status reporting is candid about the current status and looks out for any items at risk. We are always open to embracing feedback and changes to meet our client's goals. We also offer a clear path of escalation up to our CEO but are please to say, we have never needed it.

ThoughtWorks is not assessed at any particular CMMI level of maturity. How then can I assure myself that ThoughtWorks delivers high quality systems?

Our entire development process places testing and quality at the core. Practices such as test driven development and continuous integration and automated regression testing ensure the highest quality of development. Regular "showcasing" with clients ensures what is being built is exactly what the business needs.

Pragmatic use of traditional and Open Source testing tools integrated into practices such as Test Driven Development and automated functional testing, provide thorough test coverage for critical business functions. Continuous integration and focus on automated deployment processes sets up the application for early system and non-functional testing in parallel with development. Our teams have extensive experience in the use of test automation throughout the lifecycle.

The end result is a software asset which is easy to use, evolve and scale.

My current requirement requires handling of extremely confidential company and customer data. How can I keep my data secure?

We understand the critical risks of handling confidential data. Our teams and processes are designed to provide appropriate security. While privacy requirements differ from customer to customer, we apply some generic approaches to provide standard security. If you'd like to know more and have more involved requirements, please contact us to discuss your unique environment.

Does ThoughtWorks support applications?

Yes. We offer support for all the applications we build and provide support that uses the same agile principles and practices we use in our development. This ensures quick releases of functionality and fixes while ensuring continued high level of quality and integrity of the overall system.