

THE PROJECT

## Software Development for a Toy Company

 Custom Software Development

 Confidential

 June 2018 - Ongoing

### Project summary:

Umbrella IT developed an online catalog for a franchise business, enabling stock tracking and monitoring. They worked on the software development and QA testing.

THE REVIEW

"Their quality, expertize, and attention to detail is very high."

AUG 31, 2018

5.0 

Quality: 4.5

Schedule: 5.0

Cost: 5.0

Willing to refer: 5.0

### Feedback summary:

The software is soon to launch for its users and the business expects to see its positive impact shortly. The project was managed well throughout, with the team communicating effectively, adhering to best practice, and becoming increasingly confident in sharing their ideas.

Minimize Review 



THE REVIEWER

IT Director, Toy Company



 Consumer products

 London, England

 Phone Interview 

 Verified

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## BACKGROUND

### **Introduce your business and what you do there.**

I'm the IT program manager for an iconic toy shop.

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## OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

### **What challenge were you trying to address with Umbrella IT?**

We're recently focusing on enhancing our franchising and wholesale solution, expanding across multiple locations around the world, with over 120 stores. We have systems in place to transact with our franchisees and wholesale partners. However, a lot of this process is manual.

The challenge was to design an automated system that would facilitate transacting tracking stock and servicing our wholesale franchise business. I designed a solution and we were developing it in-house. Due to the scale of a deficit in the business and the timescale in which I had to deliver it, I had to look for an outsource partner.

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## SOLUTION

### **What was the scope of their involvement?**

I provided them a prototype for them to develop. We're running an agile scrum project and they're developing the software and doing the testing.

It's an online catalog for franchisees and wholesale partners to purchase stock. A huge part of it is the QA, in terms of test certifications to ensure that a product is legal and suitable to be shipped to certain territories. There's a lot of logic behind the functionality to quickly and easily enable a franchise partner, but also handle merchandise and determine its suitability.

There's also a product information management side of things, in which we extract data from our merchandising system, consolidate various attributes, and display it on the site for our franchise partners and our merchandisers.

### **What is the team composition?**

They have a project manager in charge of two developers and a QA tester. I initially spoke with Stas (CEO & Founder, Umbrella IT).

### **How did you come to work with Umbrella IT?**

I looked on sites like Upwork and stumbled across a few profiles, then contacted them directly. Initially, I gave them a simple task to check out the quality of their work and communication. I was very satisfied with the response, which is why I gave them more and more work.

### **What is the status of this engagement?**

We started working together in June 2018 and the work is ongoing.

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## **RESULTS & FEEDBACK**

### **What evidence can you share that demonstrates the impact of the engagement?**

I expect to see an impact within the next two weeks. We're opening up to users for business acceptance testing very soon.

### **How did Umbrella IT perform from a project management standpoint?**

They're very professional and their communication is very good. The level of their project management expertise is very high and uses best practices. The method I like to use is scrum agile and they're very in line with that. Early on, I worked out the velocity and agreed upon principals of development and scope.

We use Teamwork with Kanban style boards, as well as Teamwork Chat. We also use video conferencing every day. I have a standup with them in the morning and throughout the day we're in contact via Teamwork, email, and chat for more urgent questions.

### **What did you find most impressive about them?**

Their quality, expertise, and attention to detail is very high. I've worked with many developers and companies and they rank amongst the best over the past 15 years. I'm pleasantly surprised by the quality of their work.

### **Are there any areas they could improve?**

They could be slightly more confident and forthright with their opinions and giving feedback to improve the product and the processes. They were quite reluctant to do that initially. It was more instructional. I did speak with them about wanting their feedback and the fact that we're a team, regardless if they're offshore. More recently, they've been a lot more responsive in that sense, which I appreciate.

## Do you have any advice for potential customers?

Be very specific with your requirements. There's going to be a language barrier, but it hasn't had much of an impact on us as the person I deal with speaks fantastic English. We brought her and the CTO over for a week, which was very helpful.

Creating a prototype also helps speed things along. I definitely recommend doing that because it cuts down on documentation and unnecessary requirement gathering. It allows them to go ahead and do what you need them to do.