



A Guide for
Project Management in
**Captive Offshore
Development
Center**



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INTRODUCTION

Today, many companies move their IT development teams, offshore to reduce costs and increase competitiveness. This has given rise to a large number of captive offshore development centers in countries like India, where the cost of development is lower than western countries. Outsourcing development work – in all or in part – can greatly boost the profitability of an IT Project. However, running projects offshore is a different experience as many factors have to be taken care of, which includes but not limited to monitoring the progress of the development project.

Offshore projects need well tailored management and monitoring processes in place. This is essential, as you work with a development team that is remotely located and in a different time zone, thus having overconfidence could lead to a blind spot that could lead to a chaotic situation (sometimes).

You need to obtain status updates on the tasks assigned to the offshore team on a continuous basis as a prime requirement to keep the project on time and within budget. Project management and monitoring tools cater to this requirement, giving you a complete overview of the progress of your project and ensuring transparency. They help you to track your remote team's productivity and to check whether appropriate time is actually being spent.

IMPORTANCE OF TOOLS FOR MANAGING PROJECTS

When your development team is close and there's an easy flow of communication, you can have weekly status meetings, reports, project schedules and regular e-mails to ensure that the team is focused and carrying on their tasks in timely manner. However, offshore projects have teams spread across the world with different time zones, thus making it difficult to acquire a clear picture of the resource allocation across the projects, the tasks assigned and their status.

Project management tools  help you to drill down into specific projects and tasks to get an idea about the work allocated to each resource. They make the monitoring of progress and taking effective and speedy corrective measures easier. These tools also enable the team to share project resources such as files as well as their tasks, and assignments in one centralized place. Working for long hours however can't assure you of the dedication of your offshore team. Productivity monitoring tools thus play an important role in accurately tracking the time spent by the developers in various activities to ensure they are working efficiently.

Various Management and monitoring tools  available allow team members to report back on tasks and activities they are working on, throughout the project, without a face to face meeting and work productively. You get real-time information without relying on the review meetings conducted at regular intervals. This also saves a lot of time on gathering and assembling project information. A project management tool has dashboards and intuitive MIS reports like actual versus estimated hours, planned versus earned value and more. These tools are thus important to manage the project effectively and monitor employees' efficiency and productivity throughout the project lifecycle.

MANAGING YOUR PROJECTS IN A BETTER WAY THROUGH TOOLS

Project management tools make it possible for you to manage your projects easily and collaborate virtually from any corner of the world. Various such tools are available in the market like [ActiveCollab](#), [Asana](#), [BaseCamp](#) and [Insightly](#) to list a few, helping you manage your offshore projects successfully. Productivity monitoring tools on the other hand are used to increase the productivity of the teams to a higher level. Some well-known tools for productivity management include [Time Doctor](#), [Sapience](#), [Timely](#), [TickSpot](#) and [Toggl](#). Both Project Management & Productivity Management tools ensure a transparent and seamless flow of information between your offshore team and your headquarters.

Following are the ways in which you can manage your projects in a better way in your captive ODC with the help of tools:

Project Management Tools

- Through project management tools you can manage all the projects, with respect to the team availability to deliverable timelines and other matrices.
- You can get real-time status of your remotely located team members through these tools.
- Using project management tools will ensure completion of the offshore projects within the budget and on timely basis.
- You can collaborate across offshore projects and teams, create data-driven project schedules and get up-to-date project information.
- You can work seamlessly across devices and virtual teams and manage project tasks, approvals and team communication through a single tool.

- You always get to see the bigger picture, what's in progress, what's coming up next and who's in charge of what.
- You can simplify collaboration and prioritize tasks, thus helping your offshore teams focus on what is essential.
- You can get executive summary email daily that give you complete information of the tasks completed the day before, through these tools.
- You can define and delegate work to your offshore teams, establish deadlines, review work in progress and evaluate the incomplete tasks.
- As project management tools give you an idea about the resource allocation, various tasks assigned to them and tasks completed, you can even keep your stakeholders up-to-date about the progress of the project.
- Through Gantt charts you can measure the progress of the project in an easily understandable visual format. You can track your projects by setting dependencies of tasks over one another. You can even get to know the impact of delay in one task over the other one. Gantt Charts makes tracking project progress and planning things easier to take the project to the next level!
- By using project management tools  you can break down work into separate tasks, split bigger into smaller subtasks and set their start-end date to stay organized and keep tasks running smoothly.
- You can even assign tasks to more than one assignee, categorize similar tasks and define their status, priority and severity.
- To evaluate individual performance, you can set estimated hours and track time for each of the tasks through these tools.

- You can get complete overview of what went right and what didn't through reports in project management tools. You can analyze these reports and find out the ways for improvement.
- You can spot how much time the developers have spent on a project through timesheets. They help you to set estimates, log work hours and review time spent on each task. You can even create individual timesheets and easily plan every phase of the project.
- You can even manage your offshore project through your Smartphone's by staying in touch with your team when you are not in your office.
- You can stay in control of all the changes, activities and tasks being done in your project through activity logs in project management tools. You get to know about what tasks have been completed and who did the activity. You can access all such information under the activity log, and update on what is happening in your offshore project.
- You get instant alerts when an activity is carried out in any of the projects with the help of notification system in these tools and even stay updated with all the information you need without any hassles.
- You can collaborate with your offshore teams, brainstorm, share ideas instantly, stay in sync with the team using group chat and track project updates and activities via email.
- You can even track how much time developers have spent on a task through task timers in project management tools.
- You can analyze whether your offshore team can meet deadlines based on their performance. You get a better idea of the risks, poor estimates and single points of failures.
- You can visualize the work of your offshore teams, helping you understand where the bottlenecks are.
- Through milestones, you can highlight important dates in your project development schedule. You can use a milestone to set both short-term as well as long-term goals.

Productivity Monitoring Tools

- You can track the total time devoted in work by your team by using productivity monitoring tools and get a breakdown on how much time is spent on various tasks of your offshore project.
- You get an idea about the websites visited and the web applications used by your offshore developers and the active time spent on each of them. You also get information about the documents your team uses, the operations performed and the active time spent on each of them. The start work hour, the end work hour and overtime is captured by these tools to give you a clear picture of employees' productivity.
- These tools can even remind your teams when they get distracted from work. When your offshore developers spend excessive time on social networking sites or any other personal web browsing, the tools can remind them to ensure they are still working, allowing them to focus on important tasks without getting side tracked.
- You get detailed insights on how your team spends its time, helping you know their weaknesses and improving them.
- The productivity monitoring tools scan record application and internet usage for all developers during work time. You receive a weekly report outlining which websites and applications were used, and for how long, thus highlighting the scope of improvement for your team.
- You can identify productivity issues through the reports generated by these tools. For example, if your developers are spending only 10% of their time on development, you can see what's occupying the rest of their time and make adjustments to get them back on track.
- Some of these tools also integrate with other software and project management tools, thus making them a powerful tool to track time spent on projects and tasks from other platforms. You get an idea about the time entered in the project management tools for a particular task versus the time actually spent on these tasks. This can be really helpful to gauge the efficiency of your resources and take steps for improvement.

- A few of the productivity monitoring tools  also have the ability to take screenshots of the desktop screen your remote developers use every few minutes. These screenshots play an important role in reviewing work processes and improving productivity.
- You can receive daily & weekly reports of your offshore teams, including reports like poor time use report, time usage report and more, helping you get desired results by bringing improvements.
- You can even track time of your team from any location, using your Smartphone's through the mobile time tracker feature.
- You can get insightful information regarding the most productive hours of the day for your offshore team, time spent on core activities and collaboration and other non-core efforts. These insights are very useful to drive high impact changes in workload allocation and effective work practices.

CONCLUSION

To ensure your teams are working efficiently and delivering desired results, project management and productivity monitoring tools can really be useful for your captive offshore development centers. You gain better control over your developers and get an idea about the projects they are working on, the tasks undertaken by them and the actual time spent on the tasks.

You can assign the projects and tasks to them and monitor their day to day activities easily, to achieve better productivity results. These tools thus bridge the distance between you and your offshore teams, thus giving you complete transparency, allowing you to succeed in your offshore projects and achieving higher ROI!

THANKS FOR READING

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