A Guide to Doing More with IT Outsourcing
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The tech environment is constantly changing, so it's critical for businesses to keep up with the updates in the IT industry to provide sought-after solutions to their customers. Outsourcing is considered a viable solution for achieving critical objectives without being scattered throughout too many tasks or sacrificing the quality to get everything done in time. Software development outsourcing is an effective way to significantly increase the company's performance and achieve better results without spending a fortune.

If you've been looking for a solution that will help your business skyrocket and give you a first-mover advantage, IT outsourcing is your perfect choice. In this guide, Qubit Labs will cover the nitty-gritty of this approach to help you make a deliberate decision that will have a beneficial effect on your company.
Software development outsourcing implies transferring specific parts of the project or tasks related to it to the technology partner. In this way, the companies get access to the expertise of their outsourcing vendors and work with top-notch employees who charge much less compared to the local developers with equal skills and experience.

For example, a US-based company outsources certain parts of its project to an independent provider of software development services in Ukraine (or in Poland, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan). The company requires qualified specialists for its team but can't afford the high rates of the local developers. Therefore, it reaches out to the outsourcing vendor located in one of the mentioned countries and requests developers with specific skills and expertise.

Once the outsourcing partner finds the right employees, they become responsible for delivering specific services the company assigns to them. In this way, the business significantly reduces the load on its in-house developers yet still achieves all its goals and provides sought-after solutions to its clients.
What Companies Can Benefit from IT Outsourcing?

Some businesses decide to outsource their IT operations because of budgetary concerns, specific requirements, or the desire for faster tech integration. While some organizations consider all sides to the question, there are several cases in which opting for IT outsourcing is a go-to solution for them. These are some clear examples of businesses that need to think about outsourcing their software development services:

Companies in which IT takes too much time

When you have some core business tasks you expect to achieve within a certain period, there's not enough time to disperse attention to all IT tasks. The more time you spend on your software development objectives, the harder it is to focus on primary business goals. But when outsourcing IT, you get a full-fledged team capable of delivering high-quality results. In this way, you'll transfer a bunch of tasks to the remote employees and avoid giving up quality in pursuit of the quantity.

Companies that experience growth and skills gap

Companies that experience growth and skills gap. Usually, filling in the skills gap requires a lot of time, but many businesses don't have enough capabilities to do so. And that's when IT outsourcing steps into the game. It allows you to attract employees with the required skills and experience and significantly reinforce your time the moment they join the project.

Companies that would benefit from refocusing their IT staff toward innovation

Often, IT outsourcing makes companies face a discussion about how this solution will affect the business strategy and the budget. Although it might put additional pressure on the budget, it's the business strategy that gains you a competitive
Companies that aim for a short time to market

Hiring employees locally and onboarding them takes significant time that could have been spent on project development. Cooperating with external talent is the right move in such situations, especially if short deadlines are involved. When attracting outsourcing vendors, you significantly reduce hiring time and get the opportunity to finish the project faster than your competitors launch a similar product. So, if you want to get the first-mover advantage, software development outsourcing is your choice.

Companies with high turnover

Companies with high turnover. Human resources require constant attention, but if you don't have enough time or resources to focus on them, you're likely to face the consequences of continuous turnover. That's why many companies decide to hire outsourced developers to take their businesses to a certain amount of profitability and only then hire in-house specialists.

Companies with projects that require niche expertise

If your project focuses on specific technologies, like artificial intelligence or blockchain, it's often good to outsource it to the specialists experienced in the mentioned spheres. In this way, you'll get access to high-qualified employees without having to spend a fortune on their services. Besides, it will reduce the load on the in-house developers because the specialists who already have the required experience will handle such tasks without breaking a sweat. Remember to look for proficiency, not money, because you'll end up saving costs either way.
Why do Companies Decide to Opt for Software Development Outsourcing?

Around 54% of all companies in the world work with third-party support teams when working on their projects. Meanwhile, by the end of 2023, IT outsourcing is anticipated to exceed a spend of $1.3 trillion. Also, about 65% of the organizations plan on increasing or maintaining IT outsourcing in the next 2 years.

However, all the companies have their specific reasons for outsourcing their software development tasks. Yet, there are several common causes prevalent among a bunch of businesses that opted for cooperating with IT outsourcing vendors. These reasons are the following:

**Cost reduction**

Around 70% of companies that opted for outsourcing mentioned they did so because of financial reasons. This happens because of lower labor costs, cheaper infrastructure, an advantageous tax system, and laws stimulating foreign companies to hire developers abroad.

**Access to the skills that aren't available locally**

About 40% of businesses outsource software development because of flexibility. Resources that are scarce in your city can be found abroad. Why limit yourself to the local choice of employees if you can hire top-rated developers from all over the world?
**Improved usage of internal resources**

The statistics mention that about 24% of SMBs outsource to improve efficiency. When third-party employees handle some business processes, your in-house team members can focus on more meaningful tasks or get valuable knowledge from external specialists.

**Acceleration of business processes**

Having a top-performing remote team at your hands is a notable advantage that will prevent you from wasting time on mundane tasks and allow moving forward with core business goals.

**Globalization**

When delegating certain parts of the project to a third-party organization, you also transform responsibility to them. So, once remote developers embark on your project, they are the ones who need to take care of all the issues associated with it in order to meet your expectations.
Pros and Cons of IT Outsourcing

Clearly, IT outsourcing isn’t a silver bullet for each company because there are many factors that determine the effectiveness of this solution for the organizations. Yet, we can point out some pros and cons of software development outsourcing to help you decide whether this approach is worth your attention.

### Pros

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cost-effectiveness</strong></th>
<th><strong>Access to a global talent pool</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced expenses come as a significant benefit for any company because it means you can allocate your resources more efficiently. When outsourcing to a country with lower production costs, you pay lower salaries yet receive top-rated services without giving an arm and a leg.</td>
<td>Sometimes, it's hard to find the required specialists locally because either their salaries are too high or they all are already engaged in various projects. Meanwhile, IT outsourcing allows reaching professionals that are unavailable locally and having the opportunity to choose the best of them instead of taking pot luck.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Cons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time differences</strong></th>
<th><strong>Language barriers</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This can be considered equally a curse and a blessing because, in some cases, it might significantly hinder communication. Yet, it's possible to eliminate this disadvantage by sticking to communication tools to ensure continuous synchronization.</td>
<td>Miscommunication and wasted efforts might become the consequences of a language barrier. If the vendor and the partner don't understand each other, they won't achieve any results unless they have at least one language in common.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant time savings

Creating a job description, advertising, posting, reaching out to potential candidates, looking through applications, selecting the CVs, and onboarding new employees are time-consuming processes that might take months. Meanwhile, IT outsourcing vendors stay in contact with skilled specialists whom they can hire for your company within a couple of weeks. Also, these employees will embark on the project without delays because the vendor will make sure to inform them about all the details.

Oppportunity to upscale fast

If you have additional human resources, you can work with new clients and launch new projects.

Smooth workflow

Usually, there are several working hours overlap between the in-house team and the outsourcing team. In this way, your business will function round the clock, and the performance will stay at the highest levels.

Different working cultures

In some countries, there are entirely different working cultures that might harm performance. Some people might be used to taking frequent breaks, while others get away from their monitors only during lunch. That’s why it’s critical to discuss the terms of work in advance to avoid such issues.

Long distances

In case you’re planning frequent business trips, long distances might turn them into tiresome and expensive experiences.
Outsourcing is a frequently used umbrella term that encompasses several other definitions. For example, nearshoring or offshoring are the terms that are often used as a substitute for outsourcing. However, they’re not exactly interchangeable. So, let’s take a quick look at the definitions that are often associated with IT outsourcing.

**Types of IT Outsourcing**

**Offshore Development Center**

ODC is a type of outsourcing that implies a company locates its employees abroad to get access to a larger talent pool and leverage lower labor costs and taxes. Despite having the team members in a foreign country, the company still maintains complete control over the work process. Yet, it’s better to establish an ODC with an experienced vendor because it will assemble the workforce and handle all the administrative routines for you.

**Nearshoring**

This option is similar to the previous one except that it implies transferring software development services to the company located near your country. Usually, the vendor is in the same time zone, or there’s a couple of hours difference. One of the main advantages of nearshoring is smooth and timely communication that eliminates misunderstandings and makes cooperation more effective.

**Onshoring**

When onshoring software development services, the company delegates specific tasks to the vendor located within national borders. Yet, this destination usually has lower labor and operational costs. Also, this option implies looking for talent in alternative locations, overcoming the talent shortage. A clear
example of onshoring is when a company from California hires IT specialists from Georgia.

**Dedicated Team**

Hiring a dedicated team is a suitable option for clients seeking long-term cooperation. In this case, the vendor builds a team that includes all the required specialists and takes care of hardware, software, and other office supplies. Often, it also means that there will be an HR specialist who will take care of your employees’ salaries, retention, social packages, and a bunch of processes related to employee wellbeing.

**Staff Augmentation**

If your company needs to fill in skill gaps, staff augmentation will help you hire top-rated specialists for your project. They can work both on long- and short-term projects, while you won’t have to hire new full-time employees. Also, these specialists are hired by the vendor that handles all the costs and time-consuming processes like job posting and recruitment. Once staff augmentation is complete, new employees will join your team and act as your employees. You’ll manage, lead, and supervise them.

**R&D Center**

Want to come up with a unique service or product or upgrade the one that already exists? Then opt for establishing an R&D center. This approach allows companies to scale their services and reach new markets. Such a center will help you win customers' loyalty and interest by presenting unique features and innovative developments before the competitors do. An R&D center comes as a long-term investment that guarantees an increased revenue after a while.
Choosing a pricing model is critical because it considerably affects the overall impression you’ll have after cooperating with a vendor. Usually, the companies choose from these pricing models:

**Time-and-Materials (T&M)**

This pricing model is popular in the IT outsourcing field because it means that the client only pays for the hours the developers spend working on the project. It's popular because of its flexibility and ability to change the requirements anytime without paying additional fees. You can adjust goals, requirements, and features whenever needed, and this is the most significant advantage of T&M.

**Fixed-Price Model**

This model implies that the client pays a fixed sum for the project that has to be completed under a certain deadline. If you opt for a fixed-price model, you can’t change any requirements unless you pay additional fees. This model is popular because you agree on a certain sum, and the vendor is responsible for delivering the project that meets clients’ requirements without taking a longer time than expected. But even if the specialists need extra time to finish the project, you won’t have to pay any additional costs.

**Hybrid**

This pricing model comes as a combination of the advantages of the ones mentioned above. It means that you only pay for what is possible to do without sticking to a fixed budget.
How to Develop an IT Outsourcing Strategy

Qubit Labs believes that coming up with a detailed blueprint for how the client wants to approach IT outsourcing will considerably help the company ensure smooth cooperation with its remote employees and the vendor. The primary goal of creating this strategy is to ensure it coincides with the business development goals. In this way, IT outsourcing will benefit the organization’s growth and increase its capabilities.

These are the steps to building an IT outsourcing strategy:

1. Clarify Outsourcing Goals
2. Set the Expected Budget and Allocate Money for Unexpected Expenses
3. Select Outsourcing Model that Fits Your Requirements
4. Eliminate Outsourcing Risks
5. Keep an Eye on the Outsourcing Progress and Be Engaged
6. Focus on Establishing Strong Communication
1. Clarify Outsourcing Goals

A company that clearly understands what outcome it wants to see once the cooperation with the outsourcing vendor is over is already one step ahead of the competition. The companies that have a specific vision of the collaboration will be in a better position when selecting the outsourcing model. They’ll have better opportunities for assessing the pros and cons of each cooperation and pricing model to choose the one that will bring tangible benefits.

Besides, it’s critical to understand why exactly you need IT outsourcing. For example, you have to know whether you want to adopt this solution because you’re preparing for the next phase in product development or have several projects that need additional attention. Or, maybe, you’re considering outsourcing because you require additional technical expertise.

You’ll get the most out of software development outsourcing only if you clearly understand the goals you want to achieve with it. And when you figure this out, you’ll increase productivity, save money, and scale up your business.
2. Set the Expected Budget and Allocate Money for Unexpected Expenses

When calculating the expected monthly, quarterly, and annual budgets, consider the current staff augmentation needs. Yet, make sure to allocate a budget for the unforeseen expenses, such as employee turnover or new requirements, the adoption of which implies additional fees.

Also, the companies that have already leveraged IT outsourcing suggest you should also identify the hidden costs in advance to avoid facing them in the middle of the project. If you have everything set, you’ll establish a perfect balance between the affordability and high-quality results as well as quickly increase or decrease the number of remote developers when needed without digging into the purse.
Each outsourcing model comes with its strengths and weaknesses, so the company has to understand how these factors might affect its performance. Besides, a business looking to transfer non-critical parts of its project to a vendor will probably be interested in a different type of outsourcing than an organization that needs to fill in its skills gaps for a short-term project.

If you choose the suitable engagement model at the outset, you will see an increase in performance right away without wasting time or resources. Also, you won’t have to cut down on productivity because having additional human resources in your team implies achieving the existing goals and having a chance to embark on new projects.
4. Eliminate Outsourcing Risks

Everything has its flaws, and IT outsourcing isn’t an exception. By understanding the risks this solution might bring, the company can reduce its financial exposure and increase the efficiency of the outsourcing model it selects.

For example, software development outsourcing sometimes poses trust and control issues, but this risk can be eliminated by speaking with previous clients, checking the vendor’s portfolio, and signing NDAs.
5. Keep an Eye on the Outsourcing Progress and Be Engaged

It’s critical to have clear KPIs because they’ll help you understand whether the outsourcing models you’ve selected fit your company. Your outsourcing vendor should offer multiple indicators based on the objectives you want to achieve to make the cooperation more efficient. These might include, but aren’t limited to:

- Comparing outsourcing expenditures and productivity.
- Measuring the output and productivity of various augmented teams against the expected outcomes.
- Benefits and progress of the selected outsourcing engagement model.

Also, remember to monitor the results and check the reports about KPIs actively. In this way, you’ll understand whether the cooperation with the vendor meets your expectations and whether the selected cooperation model helps your company achieve its objectives.
6. Focus on Establishing Strong Communication

A vendor that shares similar working culture is a vendor with whom you can expect to have striving cooperation. It’s critical to have similar approaches to work, corporate culture, and communication protocols because these will ensure transparent and professional working relationships.

Make sure to share the details about your internal business culture with the vendor and tell about the specificities of how your team cooperates. In this way, you’ll establish a ground for good communication and company-specific solutions. If the vendor is aware of your organization's approaches to work, it will predict and adjust to your needs.
What Software Outsourcing Locations Should You Consider?

**Eastern Europe**

Eastern Europe boasts a perfect working culture, and time zones overlap. It has a bunch of software development outsourcing advantages and often outruns other regions in various rankings. This is a go-to location for the companies looking for high-quality services at considerable cost and the opportunity to cooperate with top-rated specialists.

Top-rated outsourcing locations in Eastern Europe are the following:

- Ukraine
- Poland
- Romania
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic

*You can read our guide about IT outsourcing to Eastern Europe to decide whether this location is the right fit for you.*
Asia (+ Caucasus)

Asia boasts several thriving tech hubs with a large number of software development specialists. Many locations within the region are gaining momentum in terms of tech development, attracting thousands of foreign clients and hundreds of global companies.

The region boasts a vast talent pool and affordable software development rates. Yet, Asia is often associated with a rather low project quality because of the cultural differences and time zones disparities. However, the region is suitable for short-term projects or non-core tasks.

Popular outsourcing locations in Asia and Caucasus are:

- The Philippines
- India
- Kazakhstan
- Georgia
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
The most notable advantage of outsourcing IT to this region is the negligible time difference, which comes in handy for North American companies. Also, Latin America boasts low software development rates that don’t hinder the quality of the final product. This is the most convenient outsourcing destination for business owners that prefer meeting their teams in person because you only need a couple of hours to get to the region.

Sought-after destinations for IT outsourcing in Latin America include:
- Argentina
- Mexico
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
What Countries are the Worst for Software Development Outsourcing?

Choosing a pricing model is critical because it considerably affects the overall impression you’ll have after cooperating with a vendor. Usually, the companies choose from these pricing models:

- **Corruption**
  - Bogotá, Colombia
  - Juarez, Mexico
  - Johannesburg, South Africa

- **Unsecured Networks**
  - Bogotá, Colombia
  - Bangkok, Thailand
  - Kingston, Jamaica

- **Weather/Climate Threats**
  - Kingston, Jamaica
  - Manila/Cebu/Makati, Philippines
  - Bangkok, Thailand
# The Average Software Developer Salaries in Popular IT Outsourcing Regions

**Java Developers**

**Monthly Salary Rates by Country (USD)**

## Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>$980–1,500</td>
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<td>$2,400–3,410</td>
<td>$4,000–5,600</td>
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</table>
## Java Developers

### Monthly Salary Rates by Country (USD)

#### Part 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Senior</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>$700</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PHP Developers
Monthly Salary Rates by Country (USD)

Part 1

Ukraine
Junior: $1,000–1,300
Middle: $2,400–3,200
Senior: $3,500–4,500

Poland
Junior: $1,100–1,500
Middle: $2,760–3,500
Senior: $2,700–5,000

Belarus
Junior: $1,100–1,400
Middle: $1,600–3,100
Senior: $3,400–4,500

Romania
Junior: $1,200–1,500
Middle: $1,800–3,200
Senior: $3,200–4,100

Bulgaria
Junior: $1,000–1,300
Middle: $2,400–3,200
Senior: $3,500–4,500
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>$5,600–6,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>$1,250–1,700</td>
<td>$1,875–2,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>$900–1,300</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
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</table>
## Front-end (React, Angular) Developers

### Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

**Part 1**

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<td>$1,400–2,500</td>
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<td><strong>Belarus</strong></td>
<td>$800–1,000</td>
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<td>Argentina</td>
<td>$800+</td>
<td>$1,200+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Part 2**
Node.js Developers
Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

Part 1

**Ukraine**
- **Junior:** $900–1,100
- **Middle:** $2,025–2,800
- **Senior:** $3,000–4,000

**Poland**
- **Junior:** $2,100–2,600
- **Middle:** $2,800–3,800
- **Senior:** $3,900–4,500

**Belarus**
- **Junior:** $900–1,100
- **Middle:** $1,200–2,200
- **Senior:** $2,300–3,200

**Romania**
- **Junior:** $1,000–1,200
- **Middle:** $1,700–2,100
- **Senior:** $2,500–3,100

**Bulgaria**
- **Junior:** $1,200–1,500
- **Middle:** $1,900–2,500
- **Senior:** $3,000–4,000
# Node.js Developers

## Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

**Part 2**

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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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</table>
Unity Developers
Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

Part 1

Ukraine

Junior: $1,100–1,500
Middle: $2,000–2,500
Senior: $3,300–4,000

Poland

Junior: $1,100–1,700
Middle: $2,000–3,500
Senior: $3,600–4,100

Belarus

Junior: $1,200–1,500
Middle: $1,700–2,600
Senior: $3,000–5,200

Romania

Junior: $1,100–1,800
Middle: $2,500–3,500
Senior: $3,700–4,200

Bulgaria

Junior: $1,000–1,600
Middle: $2,000–3,400
Senior: $3,500–3,900
## Unity Developers

### Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

#### Part 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>$3,100–4,100</td>
<td>$4,200–5,800</td>
<td>$6,000–7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>$2,200–3,300</td>
<td>$3,500–4,200</td>
<td>$4,500–5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>$900+</td>
<td>$1,500+</td>
<td>$2,500+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>$800–1,500</td>
<td>$1,800–2,500</td>
<td>$2,700–3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Python Developers
Monthly Salary Rates (USD)

Part 1

Ukraine
Junior: $800–1,000
Middle: $1,500–2,900
Senior: $3,900–5,000

Poland
Junior: $2,100–2,900
Middle: $3,700–5,200
Senior: $5,500–6,690

Belarus
Junior: $2,000–2,900
Middle: $3,300–4,000
Senior: $4,500–5,500

Romania
Junior: $800–2,000
Middle: $2,600–4,000
Senior: $4,200–5,000

Bulgaria
Junior: $2,500–3,000
Middle: $3,300–3,900
Senior: $4,000–5,500
### Python Developers

**Monthly Salary Rates (USD)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>$3,400–3,800</td>
<td>$4,200–4,920</td>
<td>$5,100–6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portugal</strong></td>
<td>$3,000–3,500</td>
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<td>$5,000–6,000</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Malaysia</strong></td>
<td>$1,800+</td>
<td>$2,600+</td>
<td>$3,300+</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Indonesia</strong></td>
<td>$1,000+</td>
<td>$1,400+</td>
<td>$2,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 2**
The Average Rates of IT Outsourcing Companies in Top-Rated Regions

These are the approximate rates of software development outsourcing companies in the mentioned regions because there’s a bunch of factors affecting them. Yet, you can consider them when selecting the destination for hiring remote software developers.

Asia
$15-$50

Eastern Europe
$25-$80

Latin America
$20-$75
How to Choose a Vendor? Characteristics You Should Pay Attention To

Qubit Labs came up with a quick checklist on selecting an IT outsourcing vendor to help you achieve the desired outcomes. The steps are the following:

1. Evaluate the vendor’s location and check the advantages of the selected destination
2. Trust only independent international ratings when choosing an IT outsourcing partner
3. Decide on the pricing model and look for the vendor that is used to this model
4. Check the company’s portfolio and LinkedIn profile
5. Pay attention to the developers’ experience and choose specialists with a suitable tech stack
6. Emphasize the communication and discuss the synchronization tools you’ll be using
7. Discuss the requirements and ask whether the vendor is ready to adjust them in case the project will need specific updates
8. Check the vendor’s English proficiency, time zone, and overlap hours
As you can see, IT outsourcing is now considered a must for the companies aiming to increase their professional capabilities, save money, and fill in the skills gaps. Selecting a vendor that will positively contribute to your company's growth is a critical task that requires considerable attention, so it's better to have a checklist at hand to put the “checks” for each point.

Qubit Labs is an experienced outstaffing company that has already cooperated with many businesses in different industries. We handle all the HR-related activities of our clients, ensuring top-notch performance and taking care of their employees.

If you've been looking for a reliable software development outsourcing vendor that will help your business grow, don't hesitate to reach out to us to discuss your ideas and requirements!