

How to ORGANIZE OFFSHORE and nearshore collaboration

A Book Review by Jennifer Kumar



If you're looking for some motivation to encourage you to outsource or nearshore, the book *How to Organize Offshore and Nearshore Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Offshoring and Nearshoring* will not disappoint!

While the professionals who have collaborated in the book offer on an average 15 – 20 plus years of experience in IT, software and telecom outsourcing, don't let this intimidate you! The book, while it covers many different aspects of the business and soft-skills side of outsourcing, and is heavy in concepts, it is a quick read! It is informative, insightful and educational.

The three biggest lessons I take away from this book are what I like to call the 3Cs – collaboration, communication and culture.

Collaboration

Collaboration and "being on the same page" is important to the success of any

working relationship, and even more so in outsourced, multi-country projects, stress the authors. While we may be excited to jump in and start working yesterday, it's important to sit down and nurture a relationship with the other party. Learn about their company, company culture, work flow dynamics, models of delivery, and so much more.

This collaboration will start even before the first meeting, some authors suggest, by taking a proactive approach and

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doing research before the first meeting. It is not only important to research their company, but, more importantly, be thorough in your goals, long term plans, and timelines. The more groundwork we lay, the more successful the outcomes, stress many authors.

Communication

Collaboration cannot happen effectively before or during a partnership without clear communication. While authors share various strategies for providing a firm base for a communication strategy, I was particularly drawn to the suggestions given by Abhilash Chandran in his piece on setting up Agile teams. While some of the ideas are commonplace (assuring good internet connections for anytime connection), others are a bit more unorthodox in many traditional workplaces (installing a 24 by 7 webcam in both or all team rooms to see our colleagues in action), and others just make sense (schedule overlapping shifts over time zones and teams).

While those tips help in day-to-day communication in multi-location teams that have already started working together, other authors also stress the importance of written communication as a method for setting boundaries in the initial contract. While it is important to have a contract, Erwin de Bont stresses it is also important to realize that a contract should not be the be all end all. This point should not be left unnoted, as many outsourced and offshored projects come to India, where contracts are not viewed in the same way as they are in the West.

The 3 C's of Global Teams



Collaboration - Communication - Culture

Culture

Respected professionals from Canada, Germany, India, the Netherlands and Sweden have contributed to this compilation. With such a variety of voices and successful personalities who have had a role to play in offshored or nearshored teams, it is not a surprise that culture was touched upon by the authors.

While speaking the same language can save a lot of time, language misunderstandings often arise from mindset differences rather than grammar or syntax. Once we learn about why people act and talk the way they do, why they expect certain things, or don't expect other things, we can learn to work together more efficiently.

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BOOK Review

Lessons Learned in Offshoring and nearshoring

Conclusion

For those looking for positive and encouraging approaches to outsourcing and offshoring, this book will not disappoint. The overarching tone and feeling throughout all the way to the end is that the world is flat, culture differences can be overcome through exposure and learning, and we can indeed create successful teams and work environments across time and space.

How to Organize Offshore and Nearshore Collaboration: Lessons Learned in Offshoring and Nearshoring. Messer, et al, 2014. Available on Amazon in e-formats for global consumption. ■