

GAP Enables Growth and Responsiveness with Outsource Software Development Service

Austin, Texas-based ScholarSelect has grown quickly since it was founded four years ago. As its name suggests, the company provides a highly valued service that automates and manages the application and selection process for student scholarships, grants, and other academic awards. With new clients quickly gravitating to the valuable service, the team at ScholarSelect soon recognized it needed more resources to meet the growing needs of its expanding client-base.

The company, which manages the relationship between the awards-provider and its applicants, removed paper-based man-hours from the application process. ScholarSelect's clients, who are generally non-technical, can easily and rapidly build custom online applications. ScholarSelect's clients then perform online evaluations and recommendations based on each client's unique criteria. Since the company is an on-line service provider, ongoing software development is vital to ScholarSelect's operation.

The growth of ScholarSelect's client base quickly exceeded its internal staff's capabilities. Yet the company needed software developers to continue to provide custom software solutions to its customers as a core element of its business model. Its choices? Hire more full-time staff or consider partnering with an outsourced software development company.

While hiring additional development staff was attractive, there were financial risks associated with adding full-time resources to the existing six-person staff. ScholarSelect decided it wanted to work with an outsourced partner that could provide a team of software developers without the fixed costs associated with full-time employees. However, local U.S.-based firms were in very high demand and simply cost too much, so ScholarSelect began looking for a partner with resources outside the United States, said Robert Davis, ScholarSelect's owner and president.

"GAP has a good management team, and they have worked with us on availability and hiring new developers. I have referred other companies to them and would continue to recommend GAP to others."

Robert Davis,
ScholarSelect's owner
and president.

INDUSTRY:

Application management service

PROFILE:

Based in Austin, TX, ScholarSelect is the premier on-line solution for managing the relationship between scholarship, grant, and award providers and their applicants.

CHALLENGE:

ScholarSelect needed to add additional software development resources without incurring the financial commitment and risk of adding full-time staff

SOLUTION:

After exploring numerous alternatives, ScholarSelect chose GAP for its outsourced software development partner

BENEFIT:

ScholarSelect was able to deliver the additional services its clients needed using a resource that was both culturally compatible and financially attractive

Davis had some prior experience with offshore outsourcing while working with another company. In his work with employees in India and East Asia, he encountered ongoing problems due to employees' poor command of English. Additionally, he noticed there was a great deal of confusion when he was not extremely specific about what he wanted.

"If I said, 'I want you to do ABCDEFG,' they would do that. However, if I said, 'I want ACEF,' they would only do that, even if that meant something obvious, like doing B along the way, would be missing," he explained.

After researching its outsourcing options, Scholar Select learned about companies that provide near-shore outsourced development. Near-shore development provides many of the cost-savings associated with offshore development, but because these providers are located close to the continental U.S., this approach eliminates many of the cultural challenges typical of offshore firms.

Davis eventually selected Growth Acceleration Partners (GAP), which has offices in Austin and a wholly-owned software-development facility in Costa Rica. The savings from GAP's Costa Rican operations alone made this an excellent choice, said Davis. GAP's cost is one-third to one-half the cost of similar, local firms, he said. Additionally, GAP's local presence in Austin and experience with other businesses in similar markets made GAP stand out from competitors, Davis said.

GAP was a major improvement from more distant outsourcing options for several reasons. Costa Rica was in the same time zone as Austin for half the year and only has a one-hour time difference for the remaining months. GAP's employees shared a similar culture and were proficient in English, which eliminated confusion and the need to explain every last detail of ScholarSelect's needs.

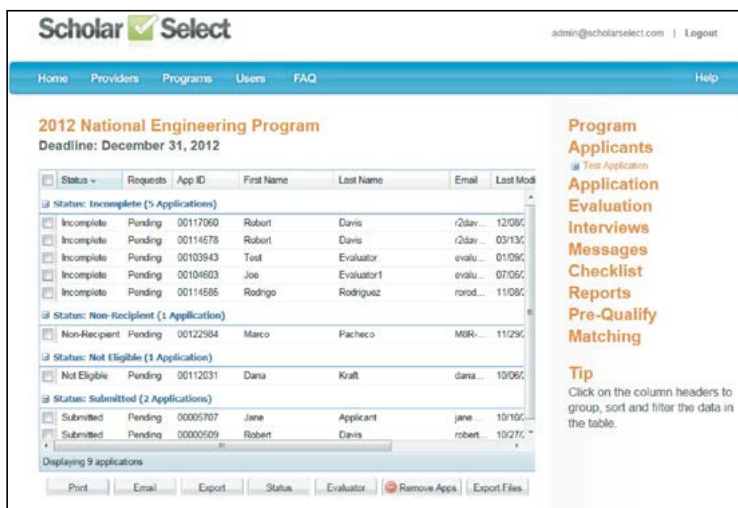
GAP also provides support and a customizable schedule for development and maintenance, and Davis liked that GAP could help his growing business with matters like cash flow and project management. "While not necessarily a core competency for outsourced software development, it's nice to know you have a partner that keeps your business interests in line," he noted.

"The people at GAP were more than just hired help. They got to know our company and our product and seemed to sense what our clients needed beyond just the technical requirements.

If something makes sense for us, they do it,"

Robert Davis,
ScholarSelect's owner
and president.

Over the last 18 months, GAP has become an integral part of his software development process. Now, ScholarSelect's capabilities can easily match and respond to the needs of its growing client base. Davis is pleased with the experience overall and the level of the technical abilities of GAP's developers. The relationship has enabled him to grow his business while adjusting his software development costs as business requirements dictate.



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2012 National Engineering Program
Deadline: December 31, 2012

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Incomplete	Pending	00117060	Robert	Davis	rdav...	12/09/12
Incomplete	Pending	00114678	Robert	Davis	rdav...	03/13/12
Incomplete	Pending	00103943	Test	Evaluator	evalu...	01/09/12
Incomplete	Pending	00104603	Joe	Evaluator1	evalu...	07/05/12
Incomplete	Pending	00114685	Rodrigue	Rodriguez	rorod...	11/09/12
Status: Non-Recipient (1 Application)						
Non-Recipient	Pending	00122984	Marco	Pacheco	MBR...	11/29/12
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Submitted	Pending	00005707	Jane	Applicant	jane...	10/10/12
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