

AROBS Transilvania Software

Outsourcing Services

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Info

What are AROBS' registered name, registered address, fiscal code and registration code?

Registered Name: SC AROBS Transilvania SRL

Registered Address: Str. Donath, Nr. 11, Bl. M4, Ap. 28, Cluj-Napoca, 400301, Judetul Cluj, Romania

Fiscal Code / VAT: RO 11291045

Registry Number at the Chamber of Commerce: J12/1845/1998

When was AROBS established?

AROBS was founded in 1998 as a software house focused on outsourcing projects based on Java and Microsoft technologies.

Who owns AROBS?

AROBS is a limited liability company with two shareholders. Voicu Oprean, the company CEO, owns 90% of the shares and Berling Capital the remaining 10%. Berling Capital is a Finnish investment fund.

How big is AROBS now (number of developers, per year US\$ revenue)?

AROBS relies on over 160 full time programmers with extensive experience and various degrees in IT (Bachelor of Science, Master Degrees or PhD), on skilled sales agents and on marketing and sales experts schooled at Romanian and foreign universities to embark on challenging offshore software development projects. We usually hire our people right upon graduation. Most of our programmers come from one of the three Universities in Cluj-Napoca that are offering degrees in Computer Science. Cluj is the most important academic center in Transylvania and provides a bountiful supply of talented programmers each year. Besides permanent, full-time employees, we are also keeping several programmers on a temporary, part-time or project basis. At the end of a trial period, these specialists can be offered permanent positions, depending on their performance. As for the revenue, we expect to make around 10 million dollars this year (2011).

Please describe AROBS' organizations structure.

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The company's organizational structure includes the following layers:

- Layer 1: CEO
- Layer 2: Project Managers, Business Development Manager – Outsourcing Division, Human Resources Manager, Financial Manager
- Layer 3: Team Leaders, Financial Officer
- Layer 4: Developers and testers

Each Project Manager has decisional power in most matters concerning the group (s)he coordinates.

Can you briefly describe AROBS' creative and development philosophy?

Creativity lies at the heart of our activities, all AROBS employees being encouraged to and rewarded for contributing with ideas that prove beneficial to the company. Ongoing market research, individual study, idea sharing through idea data-banks stored on the company Intranet, brainstorming sessions, and focus groups are but a few of the creativity inducing activities we rely on.

Our development philosophy is employee focused, which means we invest in training the developers and make considerable efforts to offer permanent positions in the company only to the ones with great potential or with a proven track record at AROBS. We also prefer the Agile methodology, which we consider the best suited for all iterative processes, which take the lion's share in software development.

Can you provide solid infrastructure (local machines, network, etc.)?

This is a prerequisite in our business. We wouldn't have reached the current size without meeting this basic requirement. You would have the contact information of the IT support group, which react swiftly to all requests.

Please describe your company culture.

Dynamism and value are the two main pillars of our culture. We embrace change and react swiftly to it. To achieve our goals we rely mainly on over-achievers. The desire to challenge one's limits is an important selection criterion during recruitment, as are the professional and inter-personal skills. These key ingredients enabled the company to identify and exploit niche and emerging markets with great efficiency, leading to a healthy, sustainable growth, which placed AROBS in the Deloitte Central Europe Technology Fast50 ranking for each of the last 3 years.

What company culture would you like your customers to have?

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With a 12+ year experience in software outsourcing and a very long list of customers, it is difficult to pinpoint a certain Client Culture as our favorite. Flexibility is a prerequisite to success in our line of business and our achievements illustrate a remarkable ability to adjust to any client culture.

How does Romania's culture compare to those of the Western world?

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Romania has made efforts to rediscover its pre-world war 2 identity. Based on the current status of the economy and on the country's membership to the European Union we can say we are on target. While communist ideas still haunt the old generations, our youth and most middle age people behave very much like their German or British counterparts. We share communication etiquette, attitudes, and even religious holidays with the Western world.

Our Western Europe and North America face no cultural barriers when working with us. We are result driven and would never say "Yes, we can", when in fact we know for sure a deadline is out of reach. Our customers get exactly what they have been promised.

Convenient Location, Direct Flights to Major Cities

How accessible is AROBS' location for travel?

The international airport in Cluj is 10 minutes by car from our office and offers easy access to many European cities as well as the major Romanian cities. The airport in Cluj is the largest regional airport in Romania after the international airports in Bucharest. There are direct flights from Cluj to a constantly expanding list of European cities that includes London, Barcelona, Valencia, Budapest, Viena, Frankfurt, Dortmund, Munchen, Stuttgart, Bologna, Ancona, Bergamo, Milan, Florence, Rome, Treviso, Verona.

How big is the labor pool in Cluj for software projects?

The brief fact list presented next allows you to make an educated guess:

- Cluj-Napoca is a major academic center, with a high concentration of very good technical universities and colleges;
- Cluj has the highest number of students per 1000 inhabitants in Romania;
- The city has experienced a significant economic boom lately, which is expected to accelerate in the near future;
- The population of Cluj is growing rapidly, most forecasts indicating 1 million as the most likely number of inhabitants for the year 2015.

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Well Educated, Creative, and Goal Driven Specialists

What level of education do your software developers usually have?

All our software developers are graduates from or students in terminal years computer science and electrical engineering departments of Romanian universities/colleges.

How would you describe your staff's fluency in English?

To be offered a software development position in the company, a candidate must meet our high standards of English proficiency. The job interview includes a long oral interview held in English, followed by a written task which requires each candidate to prepare a brief resume in English. The English proficiency test is conducted by specialists with an excellent track record as English tutors and copywriters.

Employees with barely acceptable English skills will undergo rigorous training for a period of 6 to 12 months, until they reach the desired level.

How do you group your personnel according to their experience?

Based on experience and efficiency, we have split our personnel into the following four main categories:

- Trainees: employees with good theoretical and programming skills, but without any hands-on experience. The trainee status lasts 3 months, period during which the employee is only allowed to do QA tasks for customers;
- Experienced juniors: employees who have completed the AROBS training program and are ready to do programming tasks for real-life projects;
- Developers: specialists with comprehensive work experience and skills. We do not regard the number of years as the key factor in promoting a developer from junior to developer, but rather the depth of expertise, the results achieved and the professionalism shown while working on AROBS projects;
- Senior developers: specialists that have both a broad expertise and leadership skills. It is from this group that we select team leaders, project managers and architects. There is no limit as to the minimum number of years a developer has to spend at the mid level before becoming a senior. A star developer can reach this status in 2 years, while the average one might need 7 years.

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What certifications do your employees have?

A comprehensive answer to this question is provided [here](#).

What retention initiatives have you implemented at AROBS?

The retention initiatives in place at AROBS include:

- career planning and management;
- talent management;
- objective based management of individual performance;
- quality supervision for all employees;
- a flexible schedule;
- opportunities for people to share their knowledge via training sessions, presentations, and the mentoring program;
- performance feedback and appraisal, employee recognition;
- teambuilding events, traditional company events (the Summer and Christmas parties, annual company meeting, paintball, bowling);
- open and clear communication of goals, roles and responsibilities (induction plan, periodic evaluation);
- transparency (we never do window-dressing, as we consider it fair for each employee to know the real situation we are facing at any given time).

Modern and Cozy Work-place

How would you describe the AROBS work-place?

Over 90% of the AROBS development center is housed in a four floor building owned by AROBS, while the rest occupies a floor in a rented space located nearby. Both buildings are modern, air conditioned, well lit, fitted with modern, elegant, and ergonomic furniture, conference rooms, balconies (the smokers' paradise), and parking space. The offices can accommodate anywhere from 6 to 15 people. We have intentionally designed the building to provide us with flexibility as far as team size goes. We prefer to have the specialists working on a certain project share the same office space.

What common facilities do your office spaces have?

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There are three meeting/conference rooms in our main building where teams have their SCRUM meetings and we organize phone/video conferences with our customers and prospects. There are balconies with great views of the surrounding area on all floors, which are the main gathering place for both smokers and non-smokers. We also have a bar, where employees can get snacks, coffee, and refreshments, part of them covered by the company.

What is the typical hardware configuration an AROBS developers gets?

There is no such thing as a typical configuration. Our people get what they need to provide quality services to our customers, whether this is a top of the line desktop, a Mac, or an iPad.

Work Arrangements for Offshore Software Development in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

What types of work arrangements does AROBS offer for offshore software development in Cluj Napoca-Romania?

Depending on your specific requirements, we can employ any of the following arrangements for software outsourcing:

- the project-based approach, in which you are providing all the project details and we are doing all the work on our premises;
- the remote team approach, in which you lead a team made of the number of AROBS specialists you require. This team is also working on our premises.

When working on a project basis we need to agree on the project specifications, which would be thoroughly analyzed by one of my senior developers. Based on her evaluations, we can then offer you a price quote and an estimate for the project duration. We would also set milestones and agree on any aspects regarding delivery. Upon project completion we can do the installation, support and maintenance as convened upon.

When the remote team approach is employed, we fully allocate the team to you and your projects. Keeping the team busy would be your responsibility. I recommend this approach mostly for vaguely defined projects, as well as for projects that require a lot of field-related and/or specific knowledge (e.g. specific knowledge about admission procedures followed by private hospitals in England). In such cases, the specific knowledge is rarely made public and even if it were, the programmers would continue to do what they know best: programming based on customer specifications.

Can AROBS tackle large offshore software outsourcing projects?

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The answer is YES. While we do not possess the resources demanded by large offshore software development, the cluster of companies to which we belong will certainly find all the man and machine power required.

AROBS is one of the founding fathers of a major business conglomerate that brings together the most important providers of IT&C services from Cluj-Napoca. With over 500 specialists at its disposal, this cluster can handle almost any type of IT&C requirements.

Even if your project seems to go beyond our capabilities you can still write to us and we will forward your request to all members of the clusters.

Is it possible for you to develop only a part of my application in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?

We can develop whatever you require us, as long as we or the IT cluster we belong to possess the necessary resources. To do so, we need comprehensive and clear specifications. These specs will also become part of our contract and actually define our contractual obligations to you.

What type of specifications do you need for to run an offshore / nearshore software development project entirely in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?

Preparing the perfect specifications is easier said than done. If you have already put the specification together for your project, just send them to us and we will request any additional details on an as needed basis. With the specifications complete, we will prepare a contract and have it signed. We are willing to make slight alterations to the specs while working on the project, as long as these changes are fully justified.

If you have no specifications, the situation can become somewhat... sensitive. To put it simply, you would have to hire us to prepare the specs for you. This process requires face-to-face meetings either at your site or at our headquarters. Meetings you would have to pay for...

Can you take over unfinished tasks as nearshore-offshore software outsourcing projects?

YES. This kind of work is more suitable for project-based contracts. We will be able to provide you with the estimated number of hours required by this project. This estimate can be adjusted as the specs evolve.

Operations

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What is AROBS' preferred operational model?

AROBS has been involved only in software development as an offshore development center. The company has supplied outsourcing services to other companies either on a project basis or using the time and material pricing model.

AROBS is committed to providing its customers with reliable and repeatable operational services. SLA are carefully established with the customer to create a common understanding about services, priorities and responsibilities. Based on the SLA, service adequacy is periodically assessed and adjustments negotiated.

The process flow in the offshore development center is often established by the customer, as we work mostly with software houses that prefer to manage the work themselves.

Please explain the process flow followed in a typical outsourcing partnership

As previously stated, this process is usually defined by our customers. Even so, the following general steps are almost always parts of the process.

A) Time and Materials Arrangements

- The two parties sign the Non Disclosure Agreement.
- Preliminary discussions are scheduled with the prospect, that touch the following aspects: type of help the prospect needs (services, technologies, level of expertise), types of projects they have in the pipe line (industries, solutions, sizes), the prospect's prior experiences with outsourcing, our rates (per project, per person, per team member - blended), scaling up / down (the prospect's typical needs & approach; notice time they would commit to, etc), language for communication / documentation - English is the only prerequisite for our specialists, work procedures (communication, NDA, contracts, specifications, team coordination, travel). The prospect is invited to ask any questions (s)he might have.
These discussions are mostly business oriented and attended by our company executives (Key Account Manager, Business Development Manager, CEO).
- Some prospects send us comprehensive Requests for Information, which tend to take a lot of time to fill out. As we have invested a significant amount of time putting together the FAQ section on this site and the site itself, we kindly invite our prospects to examine this information first and then tell us if there is anything else they wish to know.
- The prospect visits the AROBS office. This step is taken by most companies interested in establishing a long term partnership with us, as it is well known that a small business run from an

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apartment block can easily pose as a large company and in fact rely only on freelancers to handle projects. Making sure you get what you are promised can never hurt.

- The two parties negotiate and sign the contract, which covers all the areas of the collaboration that are considered important. Some customers prefer to use their own contract templates while others opt for ours.
- AROBS sends CVs to the customer for validation.
- The prospect schedules interviews with the selected specialists.
- Collaboration starts.

B) Project Based Work

- The two parties sign the Non Disclosure Agreement.
- The prospect sends us the project specifications.
- If necessary, we schedule phone/Skype conferences to discuss technical aspects of the project.
- The AROBS specialists prepare the time estimation and price quote.
- The prospect accepts or rejects the offer.
- If the offer is accepted, a framework agreement is prepared, which includes the general terms of the collaboration. All project specific details are laid out in additional acts to the agreement. The project based payment terms are also specified in additional acts. The framework agreement is meant to simplify the procedures and save some trees.
- The parties negotiate and sign the framework agreement and the additional acts.
- Project kick-off.

Can the AROBS staff travel to the customer's offices?

Yes, this is something we are normally doing and charging separately from development. The extra costs include travel and lodging expenses, as well as a daily allowance.

Is it possible to subcontract AROBS specialists to work at our premises for several consecutive months?

Regarding the place where development takes place, we are often restricted by our employees' reluctance to live abroad or in other Romanian cities than Cluj for long periods of time. Most of them have strong ties to Cluj (family, life partner), who cannot accompany them at the customer site.

Up to four weeks at a time at the customer's office over a period of 6 months usually works, but

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anything above a month tends to cause troubles with middle and senior developers. Juniors are sometimes less reluctant to work abroad, especially if they are single.

We normally suggest our partners a hybrid model, in which AROBS' developers spend as much time as necessary at the customer site (usually no more than a month) at the beginning of the project and then do the bulk of the work at the AROBS development center in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Does AROBS have experience in multi-site projects?

AROBS works both with software houses and final clients.

When software houses are involved, they usually interact with the final client and gather the rough project specification. We then refine these specifications into detailed specifications and implement the code accordingly. We also do the application design based on the rough specifications. In these arrangements one team is on the software house's side and one team on our side. The same can be true when we work with end customers.

Can AROBS temporarily increase the size of the assigned team in case of emergency?

Yes, this is usually possible with internal resources. Our policy is to have some of our developers work on internal projects so that they can step in when emergencies occur. When your staffing requirements exceed our possibilities we can rely on subcontractors. Overtime from AROBS developers is also an option, as our specialists sometimes agree to do extra hours on a temporary basis.

Most of the times there are ways to meet your most critical and unexpected needs with a notice of approximately one month.

How do you handle technical support for software outsourcing?

Our support team is made of people with excellent linguistic skills. They have either spent a long time in countries where English, German or French is the native language or studied and practised these languages thoroughly in Romania. General communication for support purposes is done via e-mail. Each message gets sent to the following persons:

- the developer assigned to the task;
- the expert in the field (i.e. database expert, GUI expert, business module expert, etc);
- the project supervisor.

Each type of mail has a specific response time interval (i.e. production bug: 1 hour, design analysis: 2 days). If unusual situations occur in which the person contacted to handle the issue cannot reply in the time agreed upon, the project supervisor intervenes to check the reasons for the delay in response and takes immediate action to ensure that the customer receives the answer in the shortest time possible.

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The Communication Process We Use in Offshore Software Outsourcing

Can you please describe the way you typically communicate with the customer in an offshore software outsourcing project run in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?

During the initial stages of the project conference calls and management meetings are planned relatively frequently to address the most pressing project management issues. Later on, the frequency of these meetings can decrease from one per month to one per quarter, depending on the project size. We do not bill you for these meetings.

For planning, monitoring and control we use issue trackers like JIRA throughout the project.

We like to have all the communication recorded in electronic format (typed). Even on Skype we prefer to type, so that we can transfer all the relevant information into tickets in the Issue Tracker application. The team leader we assign to the project acts as the AROBS spokesperson for that project.

Do you usually communicate directly with the end customer in a nearshore-offshore software development project?

When working for a software house we rarely communicate directly with the end customer. The foreign partner works on project specifications and speaks with the customer. This is probably the best approach if you do not want the customer to find out the work is done abroad.

Is there a way to see the software developers assigned to our projects without coming to your office in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?

We have a video camera installed in the meeting room that allows you to see the person you speak with.

How can I check the status of my offshore / nearshore custom software development project?

We will keep you updated:

- through weekly reports sent via e-mail, phone, or Internet phone;

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- by sending you the last versions of the programs being developed. Normally we do this by-monthly, but we can reduce the time interval between two consecutive "deliveries" if the circumstances require it;
- by means of the time sheet reporting system. Programmers access this system online to record all the time they spend on projects. You can also access the time sheets based on a user name and password we supply to you

Managing the Customer Account

Who are the key members involved in the account?

Voicu Oprean, the company's CEO, usually negotiates the terms of the contract. He is the only person in the company authorized to sign contracts.

The Business Development Manager of the Outsourcing Division provides assistance in any marketing related issues and can also act as liaison between the customer and the AROBS project manager(s) assigned to the account. The same role is sometimes assumed by the Key Account Manager.

The AROBS project manager(s) assigned to the account coordinates all the AROBS developers that are solving the tasks issued by the customer. All our project managers have extensive experience in coordinating big teams of developers working on Java, Microsoft, PHP, Embedded C++, Embedded Linux, Apply, Symbian, iPhone, Android, Windows Mobile, and Blackberry projects.

How can we reach the senior managers at AROBS?

AROBS has a relatively flat organizational chart and the people you really need to reach are the ones most interested to react swiftly to your requests (CEO, Project Manager, Business Development Manager). Messages conveyed by email, phone, fax, Skype are all promptly handled and acted upon.

Can we have an AROBS account manager assigned to our account?

To tell you what criteria we would be using in choosing a dedicated account manager or how we would allocate such a person we should define the role first and the allocation requirements (the exact tasks assigned to the person, number of hours per day, for example). We have specialists who can act as account managers, but we need to get a clear understanding of your needs to elaborate on this topic.

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What is the minimum level of experience of a specialist AROBS might assign as account manager?

To respond accurately to this question we must clearly understand what you need from the AROBS account manager. We have people at several levels that can assist you with tasks like order taking, invoicing, call/meeting scheduling, requirement definition, or reporting.

Preferred Methodologies and Approaches in Project Management

What are your preferred development methodologies?

We recommend the Agile development methods, which are in line with the recent shift in project management methodology towards flexible and responsive development practices. Unlike the outdated methods of the waterfall model, a correctly implemented Agile development offer visibility, control, and the possibility to quickly adapt to changing requirements in any software project. Furthermore, we would also take specific steps to address one of the perceived flaws of Agile, which is the relative lack of documentation, by providing JavaDoc style code documentation as well as architecture and design documents.

Please describe a typical interaction between AROBS and a customer during a software outsourcing / near-shoring endeavor.

The items discussed, the sequence in which problems are tackled, and the communication method(s) used depend on the project. In a typical software outsourcing project the interaction with AROBS takes place in steps, as shown below:

- a) You send us the initial information about the project in the form that is most suitable to you. This might even mean sending us the complete specifications of the product.
- b) We study the information and based on it we send you a set-price. This price takes into account the number of programmer-hours required.
- c) We allocate the programmers in such a way as to meet your deadlines.

Important Note:

We recommend you to have us prepare the specifications based on your requirements. We are always granting this process maximum attention to avoid any misunderstandings.

Before elaborating the specifications, our project manager makes sure that all the technical details and requirements of the software outsourcing project are clearly defined. Whenever necessary, we can send our project manager to your site or you can come to our headquarters.

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It often happens to have some important issues clarified only when the project is already on its way. To deal with such occurrences we rely on all our communication skills and do our best to redefine and meet your requirements.

Do you prefer to manage the projects yourselves?

We have been exposed and adjusted quickly to many approaches. It is no problem for us if we only do coding for one customer and business analysis, requirement gathering and project management for another.

Would you agree to use our project management application?

No problem with that. We can use any application, as long as it does the job.

How do you manage project risks?

Among the key risk factors we see in any software project we outline a few that might significantly affect the final outcome:

- Use of inappropriate or unclear methodology
- Lack of project management practices
- Project complexity
- Requirement volatility
- Insufficient communication with customers

While completely excluding all risk factors might be neither successful nor practical, controlling and reducing these to manageable proportions has to be the goal of a successfully executed project. By applying the right formal project management methodology and adapting it to the project scope and complexity we are targeting successful project completion with measurable progress indicators as well as clear and transparent management processes that are regularly communicated to and reviewed with the customer.

To get things going we recommend having a project start-up (or kickoff) discussion that would address a number of topics ranging from strategic and business issues to project organization, size and scope, planning, pre-implementation and implementation related questions.

The main goals of this discussion are to identify the best ways to interact with our customer and to present our methodology in detail to them. Addressing these issues early in the process can spare us time and effort later on and increase the chances of a highly successful cooperation with the customer.

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Quality Management

What guarantees do you provide for the quality of the written code?

All our programmers must follow strict internal procedures and guidelines when working on software outsourcing projects. For example, when it comes to database projects we write automatic programs that deal with all the aspects of the logic. (database normalization, integrity, etc.).

Delivering outstanding quality at affordable rates is AROBS' main goal. We do our best to ensure that the client gets a bug-free software. Furthermore, we provide support for our software for the time agreed upon in the contract (usually three to six months). This warranty offers the customer the opportunity to use the software in the field and report any potential problems to us. We guarantee that we will solve all of them in the shortest time possible. Over the entire warranty period, AROBS will fix any glitches in the software that are not related to inappropriate usage. Any failures owed to the improper use of the product can also be fixed for the price specified in the contract. Upon the expiration of the warranty period, the client can have it extended for the sum previously agreed upon.

During the support period, AROBS fixes the problems within the agreed response time (normally no more than one working day).

What strategy does AROBS employ to ensure quality in its software offshoring / near-shoring services?

We regard quality as the most important aspect of our activities. Hence, we take all the necessary steps to ensure we deliver products of the highest quality possible. To do so, we rely on a testing department which we can scale up or down, based on customer requirements. We are committed to providing you with a bug free code. This is not an easy feat, but our experience with software development projects and the high involvement of the management team produced excellent results over time, leaving our customers highly satisfied.

How does AROBS monitor the quality of the services being provided?

To monitor the quality of our services we rely on:

- Regular customer feedback, done on a weekly basis for long term projects and more often for small projects. The feedback allows us to identify any potential departures from our quality standards in their infancy and to swiftly correct the problems
- Code reviews, done by senior members of the team as often as necessary.
Daily scrum meetings of the project team to take incremental corrective actions to ensure quality remains on track.
- Rigorous manual and / or automated application testing.

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How does AROBS address customer concerns on the service quality, when such concerns occur?

The periodic customer surveys we conduct enable us to predict potential concerns before they escalate into serious problems. The moment we foresee a potential problem with our service quality we take preventative actions based on the collected customer inputs. These actions include:

- ensuring the company communication protocols have been used properly;
- identifying potential errors in requirement interpretation;
- identifying any skill mismatches for the specialists allocated to the project;
- solving confirmed skill mismatches by cross training, with the participation of AROBS specialists not directly involved in the project or of independent consultants.

If concerns escalate into real problems we take corrective actions, which include addressing the resource allocation issue and adjusting communication protocols.

Is your company experienced with Service Level Agreements (SLA)? If so, are SLAs used in client environment?

Our partnerships with a significant number of software houses that are proficient with SLAs taught us excellent lessons on this issue.

When dealing directly with end customers we sometimes manage their expectations with SLAs, which we draft in time, together with the customers. Such a negotiated agreement creates a common understanding about services, priorities and responsibilities.

Preparing SLAs is a resource intensive and long term process, taking anywhere from 2 to 4 months, which makes us limit their use to long term projects and partners.

Our SLAs incorporate service elements and management elements.

The service elements define customer expectations by communicating such things as:

- the services provided;
- service standards, such as the time-frames within which services will be provided;
- conditions of service availability;
- the responsibilities of both parties;
- cost versus service tradeoffs;
- escalation procedures.

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The management elements focus on such things as:

- how service effectiveness will be measured (the metrics used);
- how information about service effectiveness will be reported and addressed;
- how service-related disagreements will be resolved;
- how the parties will review and revise the agreement.

IP & Security

Who owns the copyright for the product and the source codes upon project completion?

All the rights to the product and the corresponding source code belong to you, unless we specify otherwise in our contract. If you wish, we can eliminate all the information referring to AROBS as a producer from all the materials.

How do you handle confidential information during software outsourcing / near-shoring projects?

During the term of our Agreement and for up to 6 years afterwards, AROBS will use reasonable care to prevent the unauthorized use or dissemination of any confidential information you provide us with. Reasonable care means at least the same degree of care we use to protect our own confidential information from unauthorized disclosure.

Confidential information is limited to information clearly marked as confidential, or disclosed orally and summarized and identified as confidential in a writing delivered to us within 15 days of disclosure.

Confidential information does not include information that:

- we knew before you disclosed it;
- is or becomes public knowledge through no fault of us;
- we obtain from sources other than you and who owe no duty of confidentiality to you or we develop independently.

Please describe your policies for Intellectual Property protection.

AROBS treats intellectual property protection with special care and therefore takes comprehensive measures to protect intellectual property and trade secrets. First, we define intellectual

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property/trade secrets with the customers/partners, then we document them, establishing policies, roles and responsibilities, set up process-level controls and procedural, physical and technical controls to minimize risk to a level acceptable by management, educate employees, customers and partners about intellectual property/trade secrets and the measures taken to protect them.

Intellectual property and trade secrets are all subject to strict security guidelines within the company, in both electronic and printed format. Sensitive documents in printed format are stored in secure places and accessed only by authorized personnel. AROBS complies with the Romanian legislation when handling sensitive information. We will never disclose any confidential information to third parties unless required by the Romanian governing law.

All of our staff are strongly deterred from violating IP regulations by signing non disclosure agreements with AROBS and sometimes with the customer too.

How does AROBS protect customer data?

Customer data is protected according to the provisions of the AROBS data protection policy, which states that the information managed by the company shall be appropriately protected against the consequences of breaches of confidentiality, failures of integrity, or interruptions to the availability of that information. The scope of the security policy includes

- Information, data, in any form such as printed paper, digital, video, and audio formats;
- The computing hardware and software systems which access and manipulate information;
- Mobile devices and teleworking;
- The physical work environment;
- The network systems;
- Personnel awareness, education, and training.

Each employee and service provider working for AROBS signs a Non Disclosure Agreement with the company which is as restrictive and specific as those provided by some of our most demanding customers.

Access to any company data and information is limited through physical and access rights. Our off-site backups are frequent and data is stored in a secure location. Only key personnel have root access to any system.

This policy shall be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate from the point of view of any relevant changes to the law, organisational policies, or contractual obligations. AROBS will establish and maintain appropriate contacts with other organisations, law enforcement authorities, regulatory bodies, and network and telecommunications operators in respect of its information security policy. A process of risk assessment shall be carried out for each system to identify the probability and impact of security failures to determine the appropriate levels of security measures applied.

How do you ensure security when connecting to client is necessary?

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We connect to customer systems using VPN and firewall restrictions. Only the VPN client is installed on the developer's computer. No VPN access is allowed in the AROBS network to protect all the data that is subject to non disclosure agreements.

How do you handle shared information?

We share project related information on File Server or Source Control and give read or write permissions only to the specialists involved in the project.

Please describe your local security.

Our local security consists mainly of:

- a strict control of the in/out access through Firewall;
- well defined permissions for each user role in ActiveDirectory;
- a centralized Antivirus which runs on all workstations and on the server;
- a data backup plan;
- the mandatory and automatic updating of the operating systems with the latest security patches;
- the mandatory use of complex passwords;
- the automated locking of workstations that have not been used for 3 minutes;
- video surveillance using the camera mounted at the office main entrance;
- card based access to the offices.

Staffing and Subcontracting Issues

Please describe AROBS' staffing policy.

Whenever possible, we allocate only AROBS personnel to a new account. To avoid the need for outside contractors we recommend our Customers to ramp-up the team gradually, so that we have enough time to re-assign specialists from projects where demand for resources is decreasing or even hire new personnel when the in-house resources are insufficient. In rare cases, subcontracting is unavoidable.

On average, how long does it take AROBS to allocate a new specialist to a project?

Up-scaling a team can take anywhere from a few days to several good weeks, depending on the time of the request, the type of resource requested, and the allocation period. When hiring new specialists is the only way of meeting the request, finding the right person and getting her / him on

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board takes a long time. The duration of the recruitment process depends on the level of expertise required (junior, mid level, senior), the skill set sought (iPhone, Java, architecture, development, etc), and on timing. Some times of the year are better for recruiting than others. On average, it takes at least 6 calendar weeks from the moment we advertise a position until an experienced specialist who passes the interviewing process can join AROBS. According to Romanian legislation, a notice of at least 15 calendar days is required from anyone who wishes to leave her / his current job. For specialists in managerial positions a 30 day notice may be required.

Under what circumstances does AROBS subcontract work?

AROBS subcontracts work only if the contract signed with its customer makes it clear this practice is allowed. All stipulations regarding subcontracting from the agreements between AROBS and its customer take precedence to any existing agreements between AROBS and its subcontractors. The subcontractor makes guarantees to AROBS that at least match the guarantees made by AROBS to the customer.

Can you provide any guarantees for team stability?

AROBS commits to not reassigning allocated Specialists with which the customer is happy to other Customers insofar as this is possible. We understand that customers want to establish good, long-term work relationships with specific allocated specialists and will therefore do all that is possible to avoid reassigning them. While this is almost always possible for team leaders and project managers, fresh graduates and students in terminal years are prone to changing jobs in their first years of employment.

When such situations occur we will provide the Customer with a 15 day notice for any planned change or removal of the specialist. According to the Romanian laws, an allocated specialist must give a 15 calendar day notice before terminating his/her contract with AROBS. Under such a circumstance the allocated specialist can only be available for a maximum of 15 calendar days since the date of the notice and the Supplier provides a replacement to meet the 15 day notice provision.

We guarantee to provide you with an appropriate replacement for any specialist leaving the team and do any knowledge transfer required to keep the project running smoothly at our cost.

How do you handle explicitly requested extra hours (e.g. weekend or extraordinary project situation)?

The way we handle such requests is stipulated in the contract signed with each customers. Our employees are ready to accept over-time with some positive reinforcement. Some of them opt for overtime pay, while others for flex time. Whether or not they agree to do overtime is up to the employees, as we cannot coerce them. So far, our specialists have always reacted in the most responsible manner possible to emergencies.

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The AROBS Pricing Policy

How would you describe the value/price ratio for your services?

Some of our customers had been paying Indian companies about half of our rates prior to switching to AROBS. Unsurprisingly, they are much happier with the value/price ratio they are getting from AROBS than with those from our Indian counterparts. We rely on talented and hard working developers, who are producing accurate code quite fast.

What are the driving factors of your prices?

Contract length, team size, project continuity (the fewer the slack times between projects the better the rates), the level of expertise required, the team structure, the ramp-up model (the slower the change in structure, the better for us) are the most important factors that drive our rates.

What pricing models are you using?

We prefer the time and materials approach, since specifications are rarely precise enough to justify using the fixed pricing model. Furthermore, we have almost never dealt with specifications that suffered no change throughout the project lifetime.

Do you accept to work on a fixed price model?

We do fixed pricing based on clear specifications. When the Scrum methodology is applied, we prefer to stay away from fixed pricing, unless we are guaranteed that specifications will not undergo major changes. Any time we do fixed pricing we expect change requests from the customers whenever changes with an impact on our effort are needed. Based on the request we will redo the quote. Whenever the customer doesn't have an exact picture of what he wants we prefer to work on a time and material basis.

How long are your rates valid?

We only make rate adjustments at the beginning of the calendar year. For any project that is completed in a single calendar year the rates initially agreed upon remain unchanged.

Do you offer discounts from your standard rates?

Long term projects reduce our costs and risks, making them the main candidate for discounting. Gaps between projects that leave developers without paid work bring us significant losses. Companies that book resources permanently get the best rates. Gradual ramp-ups can also bring discounts. It is significantly easier for us to assign 2 developers to a 1 year project than 6 developers to a 4 month project. If we only have 2 developers readily available out of the 6 required for the project, we must bring new people on board, without any guarantee there will be any work for the newcomers when the project ends. If the project team is increased slowly, we usually have enough

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time to find new customers and thus minimize the risk of significantly (and abruptly) increasing the number of developers not involved in paid projects. Change forecasts for your resource requirements, provided a few months in advance, are also very helpful.

The Invoicing Process

The invoicing schedule for project based work is agreed upon in the contract or an additional act to the contract. The total payment is typically divided into payments for each accepted milestone delivery if the project duration is less than two months. If the project duration exceeds two months, each month will be billed in arrears and the final month, when Go-Live or User Acceptance Testing (UAT) occurs, will be paid after acceptance, which is no more than two weeks after Go-Live or UAT begins.

Each invoice will show only the total charge per person and period or per project. The standard invoicing period is one calendar month and payments are prorated. Invoices will be issued during the first 10 days of the month for work performed during the previous months.

For time and materials work, the invoices are issued per employee, for the number of hours specified in the work order and an additional document to this contract.

The terms of payment are 14 calendar days net from the invoice date and payments are made by bank transfer.

All payments are to be confirmed by an email that includes the SWIFT record.

Controlling and Optimizing the Client's Budget

Please describe AROBS' experience and capability in controlling and optimizing the client's budget.

AROBS has extensive experience working on large, long-term projects, which are subject to tight budgetary constraints. We address these constraints:

- through effective project planning;
- by limiting the investment in knowledge transfer through gradual project team ramp-ups;
- by limiting the time spent at the customer premises to the minimum that ensures a smooth project implementation.

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What would AROBS consider an acceptable variance in the monthly budget?

If your question refers to the budget for your project, than we can answer after having agreed upon the allocation schedule accepted. The acceptable variance depends not only on the budget for the project but also on the number of developers simultaneously allocated to the project. Please make the question clear.

Can you handle the quarterly account invoice reconciliation?

Yes, we have a financial department that can meet this requirement.