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Proven Method for Keeping Your Software and App Development from Derailing

Software and app development projects have a bad rap in the tech world - because tech projects like these are known for missing deadlines, going over budget, and going beyond scope. And it's no wonder. Software and app development involves so many moving parts and so many different teams of people. Frequently, new and unanticipated challenges come up that have to be addressed during the course of development. And before you know it, you've missed deadlines, you're over budget, and your project has to be redefined.

So what's the solution? **How can you plan for success when every tech or development project you start seems like it is inherently doomed** from the beginning, just based on the nature of app development?

With a **proven method for keeping your software and app development from derailing**, like the one we've developed at RTS Labs.

Jyot Singh, CEO of RTS Labs, describes the company's signature method for handling custom software and app development as building a small boat for someone. You strip the project down to its most essential parts and then build from there.

"We're under a lot of pressure when we take on these projects to get them right the first time - on time and within budget," Jyot says. "So, over the past six years, we've had a lot of experience, which has allowed us to perfect the art of finding an agile, iterative process that keeps us on track but gives us the flexibility we need to change direction and make fixes when we need to."

The RTS Labs method pulls a lot from agile project management. The agile methodology uses an incremental approach to developing software - and taking these kinds of projects one small step at a time is key to achieving a successful outcome.

If you want to avoid the mess and keep your next development project running smoothly, try using a methodology that allows for flexibility, scalability, and constant feedback and input from key stakeholders as your new software or app is being built.

This is how Jyot explains custom app development ...

First, build a really small ship

When clients come to RTS Labs with big ideas that involve lots of complex features, we start by stripping the project down to its simplest form. In other words, we build them a really small ship.

We ask, “What is at the core of this project? What is the minimum it needs in order to stand on its own legs and function?” What we’re looking for is something that in the product development world is known as a Minimum Viable Product (an MVP). What is the simplest product we can possibly create that will still have the most important features and provide sufficient customer value that early adopters will actually use this product? Creating the MVP will also help prioritize features along the way and keep the project focused. If we’re clear on the main purpose of the app we’re developing, then staying in scope is easier, no matter how many challenges or new shiny ideas are thrown at us.

Next, make sure it floats

Once the MVP is built, we make sure it floats and works. We look for bugs, check in with our clients, and run feedback tests so we can learn how to improve and prioritize the next steps.

There are multiple ways to test your MVP and ensure it floats. It really just depends on what you’re building:

- Beta programs get the product into the hands of users to find bugs and provide feedback after using the product for a set period of time.
- Focus groups allow you to gain direct feedback and insights from consumers. Sometimes the people in the focus group will have used the product and can give feedback afterwards. Other times, consumers will hear about what you’re trying to develop and they’ll give their feedback based on if they think they would use those features and benefits.
- Landing pages help gauge market interest and test interest based on pricing. They provide an easy way to measure responses, too.
- A/B testing is great for measuring users’ reactions to specific changes, such as the original design or feature of a product versus the new version.

Once we’re sure the ship floats, it’s time to build a bigger ship.

Finally, build a bigger ship

Once the MVP has been tested, we start to scale up and build the full version of the software or app we're developing. We continue to build features into our ship in "sprints". In agile, sprints are set periods of time that can range from one week to a month, depending on what the team or organization decides on. RTS Labs generally works in two-week sprints.

During each sprint, the project team says what they can do in the given time frame, thus breaking the project into manageable chunks. At RTS Labs, often the project team strives to build the next iteration of the product in that sprint. Each iteration must be complete, meaning the product could launch "as is" at the end of the two weeks. At the end of each sprint, the project priorities are evaluated, the product is tested, feedback is collected from the client, and the next development cycle is initiated.

Why this method works

- By starting small, we immediately weed out the must-have features and functionalities from the nice-to-haves.
- We maintain our focus on the core product.
- As we build, we learn what works and what doesn't.
- Developing this way helps us find bugs throughout the process rather than all at one time at the end.
- The team is better able to think through features that sound like a great idea at first but end up not being necessary or out of scope.

Getting a large scale tech project started is a huge undertaking. Finishing it is an even bigger one. Starting with a small ship first ensures you are focusing on the right things, paying attention to time and budget, and building something.

Need help planning out your large scale projects? [Drop RTS Labs a line.](#) Your initial scoping consultation is free, and there's no obligation. Just a great way to get to know us and even pick our brains a bit.

About RTS Labs

RTS Labs is a progressive software development firm trusted by leaders of high-growth companies to build their products and automate their processes, enabling them to achieve unprecedented efficiency.

We are VERSATILE

We can support every aspect of the software and product development life cycle — from feasibility analysis, user experience design, and prototyping, to development of scalable, winning solutions. Our data team goes beyond everyday reporting to mine, segment, and deliver game-changing insights for our clients.

We are PRACTICAL

Our approach is to “keep it simple and do what makes sense for our clients.” Even though we enjoy building complex software and web applications, we don’t recommend reinventing the wheel. We are all about helping our clients find, customize, and integrate best-in-class solutions that are readily available and affordable.

We are ITERATIVE

When it’s time to innovate, we like to achieve short-term milestones with your greater vision in mind. This way you can manage your technology investment as we flex to meet your changing needs along the way.

We are READY

Learn more at www.rtslabs.com or [GIVE US A CALL](#)

