



HOW FOUNDERS AND DEVELOPERS CAN WORK EVEN BETTER TOGETHER

Brian Gorman
Chris Rouw

OVERVIEW



IMPORTANT THINGS - FOUNDERS

- Solution that provides value or solves a problem for their customers
- Timeline
- Budget
- Usability and Quality
- Generate \$\$\$
- Ability to scale



IMPORTANT THINGS - DEVELOPERS

- Clear picture of the customer/user/personas
- Having a good understanding of the problem being solved
- Project constraints:
 - Timelines and budgets
 - Architecture
 - Legal and regulatory
- Having access to someone who acts as the Product Owner:
 - Defines clear requirements
 - Sets priorities
 - Responds to questions in a timely fashion



ANXIETY INDUCERS – FOUNDERS

- Project Related:
 - Not seeing results from development team
 - Not knowing status of budget and timelines
 - Lack of communication from developer
 - Expectations unclear or not set
- Business Related:
 - Pressure from investors & business partners
 - Wearing lots of hats
 - Having to balance lots of “projects” at the same time



ANXIETY INDUCERS – DEVELOPERS

- Project Related:
 - Unclear requirements and priorities
 - Changing priorities and scope
 - Not getting feedback from product owner in timely fashion
 - Impending timelines
- Technical Related:
 - Not having wireframes of designs to reference
 - Using or implementing unfamiliar or new technologies (e.g. a third party library or API)



HOW FOUNDERS CAN HELP DEVELOPERS

- Help the developer have a clear understanding of your business:
 - The business value and problem you are solving
 - Your customers/users/personas
- Communication!
 - Being available for weekly meetings/demos
 - Respond to questions from developer in a timely fashion
 - Provide consistent feedback:
 - Demos
 - From beta users
 - Things that aren't working well – be direct, but professional
 - Be involved, but don't "hound" the developer for updates
- Test early and often – with real scenarios/data (if possible)
- Empathy for the developer



HOW DEVELOPERS CAN HELP FOUNDERS

- Set realistic expectations
 - Estimates
 - Start and end dates
- Communication!
 - Provide consistent project updates:
 - Work done, in progress, and planned
 - Budgets and timelines
 - Frequent demos
 - Provide feedback for things not working well – be direct, but professional
- Transparency and Vulnerability (builds trust)
 - The work, timelines, budget
 - Owning mistakes
 - You are not the code
- Empathy for the founder



TOOLS, TECHNIQUES, & STRATEGIES

- Transparency – make the work visible
 - Source code
 - Pull Requests, commits, code reviews, discussions around the code
 - Code history
 - Can track change requests (via issues)
 - User Stories
 - Status: work done, work in progress, scheduled work, backlog
 - Priorities
 - Requirements / Acceptance Criteria
 - Estimates
- Tools
 - Project Management Software
 - Target Process, Trello, Jira
 - Source Code Repositories
 - GitHub, BitBucket, GitLab



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Communication – Instant Messaging
 - Why?
 - Doesn't clutter (like email)
 - Can view and search history
 - Can use various channels for various groups or topics
 - Can include individuals from multiple organizations
 - More responsive discussion
 - Tools:
 - Slack
 - HipChat



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Communication – Project Management
 - Why?
 - Centralized place for project documentation and notes
 - Discussion threads
 - Can include individuals from multiple organizations
 - Document Storage (with search)
 - Tools:
 - Basecamp
 - Monday.com
 - Trello



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Video Conferencing / Calls
 - Why?
 - Remote teams
 - Conversations are important
 - Being able to see each other – visual cues, builds rapport
 - Screen sharing
 - Tools:
 - Zoom
 - Slack
 - GoTo Meeting



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Schedule consistent meetings (e.g. weekly)
 - Product demos
 - Review work finished, in progress, and upcoming
 - Get answers to outstanding questions or upcoming work
 - Provide feedback to each other



SUMMARY

Top 3 tips for a successful working relationship between a founder and developer:

1. Communicate
2. Communicate
3. When in doubt, communicate



QUESTIONS?

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