Structural Integrity of Your Business Software by Aaron

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Recently, my wife and I have become hooked on home improvement shows. I love looking at the construction industry because in many ways it mirrors what happens in software development. What's even better is that it's an industry that's been around for thousands of years.

We can apply those time-tested lessons of what works and doesn't work in the construction industry to software application development, making custom software more affordable and software projects more successful. We hope this gives you food for thought for your next software project, whether itâ€™s a desktop application, web application development project, Appleâ€™s mobile iOS or an Android development project.

Even Small Projects Need a Little Design

Unless you're doing minor cosmetic changes, it's important to create a design first, which is then presented to the client. The client's feedback is used to make changes to the design BEFORE construction begins.

When a good plan is in place, the construction crew can work quickly and accurately because they know exactly what needs to be done. Changes made after construction begins are costly--work may need to be ripped out, crews remain idle, and new, possibly more expensive, materials have to be obtained.

Software application development is no different. With a well-documented design and plan, the build goes together quickly and easily and the end product is what was expected and on budget.

Existing Structures and Applications Have Hidden Issues

When remodeling an existing structure, surprises arise. Asbestos, faulty wiring, mold, water damage... The list goes on.

It's no different in software. No matter which technology was used--Java Development, .NET, PHP, etc.--when you upgrade something built many years ago, you inevitably run into hidden problems that must be fixed.

Expect the unexpected--and be prepared to do what needs to be done. A good estimate includes a cushion to absorb some of these smaller unexpected issues. If something big comes up, it's addressed with the client openly and honestly right away.

DIY Can Lead to a Never Ending Project

Many people start do-it-yourself projects because they want to save money. Unfortunately, most quickly find that they're in over their heads. The work takes too much time, unexpected issues demolish the budget, or they simply don't have the expertise needed for the job.

A lot of construction projects on TV involve homes where the owners have spent the last 2 - 5 years living in a construction zone. Other shows have the homeowners pitching in to save money, and so often they say, "I never knew it was this much work to..." What seems simple on the surface is actually a lot of complicated work.

As software experts, we often see similar situations. Our clients have tried to get something done on their own, wind up tearing their hair out, and then turn to us so they finally get software they love and can use.

Excluding Trained Experts Can Lead to Disastrous Results

On the show Holmes Inspections, homeowners find themselves living in nightmare situations because of bad construction and inspectors who didn't know--or didn't care--about the problems in front of their eyes. Expert contractor Mike Holmes comes in and quickly diagnoses those problems, such as improper seals in attached garages that can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. He then produces solutions that make the house safe, durable, and what it was meant to be--a dream home.

It's no different in the software world. Whether you're dealing with desktop applications, database applications, or Android apps, software development is highly complex. Not having highly trained professionals can lead to huge complications, such as gaps in security that are as dangerous to your business as holes in your garage are to your family.

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