Data from Thousands of Software Projects Saves the Day As Heuristic Solutions Puts SLIM-Estimate to Work

Company, Client Negotiate Larger Project Budget, after Comparing Industry Trend Lines to Heuristic's Own Experience

MCLEAN, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--When can an increase in project costs be a good thing? When it saves a company's business and meets project delivery dates at the same time. That was the experience of Heuristic Solutions, a custom Web applications development company based in Arlington, Virginia, which used SLIM-Estimate from QSM, Inc. (www.QSM.com), in working out a project estimate for a new business opportunity.

What made this project different was the fact that the original estimate was increased by two-thirds, and the company still got the job.

Based on intuitive expert judgment, Heuristic thought the budget for the project would be around $600,000. But, intuition in business decision-making can be suspect, and Heuristic decided that a more scientific approach was in order. This represented a very large opportunity, so they wanted to be sure their judgment was correct.

Up until then, their methodology for generating budget estimates relied on complicated spreadsheets that each member of the team would complete. For the new opportunity, they used project estimation software, SLIM-Estimate, from QSM. The outcome was eyebrow-raising, to say the least.

After sizing the project, Vaughan Moore, a Heuristic business analyst, was surprised to see that the projected cost would actually be more than $1 million, as opposed to the $600,000 they had initially budgeted. He wondered how his client would react to his findings.

Moore decided to show the client how the new estimate was generated, in fact using SLIM-Estimate during his final presentation. By pulling up the industry productivity trend lines from the QSM database, as well as their own historical data, he showed them the Heuristic team was actually more productive than the industry average. This evidence gave the client confidence the budget was in-line with industry standards and convinced the company that it was a good idea to grant Heuristic additional funds from their own "management reserve."

As a result, the client awarded Heuristic Solutions the first phase of the project. Without SLIM, Heuristic would have under-bid the project and missed deadlines trying to complete a project with unrealistic constraints. "When data is supported by credible research, reasonable business partners find it easy to accommodate the unexpected," said Moore. "A miss of this magnitude could put some companies out of business. With the larger budget as documented through SLIM-Estimate, we were able to hire more people which will allow us to stay on schedule."

ABOUT HEURISTIC

Heuristic Solutions, a custom Web applications development company based in Arlington, Virginia enables its customers to overcome IT challenges by helping them to make great decisions about their technology investments. Since 1996, Heuristic has been helping companies confidently think through their unique problems and issues, clearly understand the business and technical requirements they need to address, determine what technical solutions are available to address these issues, which of these solutions gives them the best return on their investment, and how to effectively manage these solutions through deployment and production.

They focus first on helping customers make good decisions about where to invest in technology. Then, they assist customers in the process of selecting or building software to meet identified needs. A technology-neutral partner, Heuristic is more interested in helping its customers become efficient and self-sufficient than in promoting any single technology or platform.

ABOUT QSM

Founded by software engineering pioneer Larry Putnam in 1978, QSM's goal is to help clients become world-class software developers and reduce the overall expense of software development projects. QSM's SLIM software tools and consultative approach capture the management numbers that enable organizations to effectively estimate, track, and benchmark their software development and maintenance projects. The company is based in McLean, Virginia, with offices and affiliates in Massachusetts, France, The Netherlands, and the U.K. Additional information is available at www.qsm.com.

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