manas.tech

How we work

This document outlines our methodology, based on the learnings of 19 years innovating and developing software.

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☺ Team size & composition

Our minimum team-size is composed of two full-time software developers. We have learned that it's key to avoid one-dev teams, for several reasons:

1. Good software requires careful analysis and discussion: even the most experienced software engineers benefit from reviewing design ideas, architecture, and code with peers. That results in a much higher code-quality, fewer bugs, code that is more maintainable and overall lower long-term costs.

2. We want to provide non-stop service to your project, but we also want our co-workers to be able to take time off when needed, such as sick days and vacations. A team with a minimum of two-devs guarantees that we always have someone that knows about your project and can solve urgent issues.

3. We strive to maintain a highly motivated and engaged team assigned to you. Working side by side with someone, having helped to unblock a problematic issue and merely sharing the load of making progress results in a more productive team.

Your team is hosted inside of one of our internal fixed-teams. That includes a team-lead, a principal engineer, a quality assurance engineer and a graphic designer. That internal team has been working together for several years; we don't pursue the common practice of hiring devs after signing a contract, but prefer working with a team of whose capabilities we are well aware of. That ensures, internally, a well-oiled and productive methodology and communication.

↻ Methodology

We follow a lean and agile methodology. You can read tons about that by simply googling those terms, but here are the key points of what that means for you:

- **Communication should flow, openly and often**
  We count on talking with you every week, during at the very least 30 minutes, where we will review the progress we have made so far and get your guidance on your next priorities, as well as details on what is being built.

- **The sooner the feedback, the better**
  We'll send you mockups of any new features that we have decided to build so that you can provide early feedback, detect misunderstandings and improve on the idea once you see it take shape.

- **Something you can play with, as early as possible**
  We will strive to build a functional version of whatever we are doing together, as early as possible. We believe that the sooner you have it running and can get your hands on it, the better the final product will be.

- **Estimates –and re-estimates– are provided periodically**
  We can (and like to) provide estimates of work items. When we have sufficient detail on the features that you need for your system, we would love to provide ballpark estimates so that you can make informed decisions on priorities and ROI.

- **Changes of direction and scope are expected and welcome**
  We don't expect you to know exactly every single need you will have for your product. We understand that building something as complex as a software system is a discovery process, that is informed by the very act of developing it.

⏱ Time tracking

We bill you **only** for hours worked, not for ideal-hours of assigned team members. To keep our organization working happy, productive and top-notch, we run internal trainings and talks, cross-team presentations and organization-wide retrospectives. That means that each of the developers assigned to your team will likely report less than the ideal 176 hours per month. That leaves room in the budget for the rest of the roles such as the team lead, QA and graphic designer. In the cases where some of the monthly hours did not get burned, we simply roll them over to the next month. We are happy to provide detailed reporting on any of this.

We keep track of all of this using a tool we have developed that is publicly available. You are welcome to use it if it's helpful for your team as well; feel free to reach out so that we can provide a free account for you.

ⓢ Hiring modes, fees and billing

There are two main ways of working together from a contractual perspective: **fixed-scope** or **Time & Materials**. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, and we of course have our views on the matter.

Fixed-scope

This type of contract requires that you have considerable understanding of what you want us to build, and a clear definition of what it entails, at the onset of the project: that will enable us to estimate efforts and budget.

If you still haven't worked out that level of detail, but you want to pursue a fixed scope nonetheless, we can conduct a **Product Roadmap Workshop** to reduce uncertainty and have a clearer picture of what lies ahead.

With that information, we can agree on a roadmap for your product, including the size and composition of the allocated team, and we will provide you with bespoke tools to follow the progress of your project as it evolves. We bill you the agreed amount at the beginning of each month, until the project is finished. Our invoices are NET 15.

Time & Materials

The alternative is to decide on a team size (the smallest team we allocate consists of two developers, and includes the rest of the roles previously described), that will be billed at the beginning of each month. That team will help you define your product as they build it, deliver periodic functional versions for you to interact with and provide feedback, and assist you in making decisions as new information becomes available. When you decide the product is at a stage that fulfills your needs, the project comes to an end, and you will only have paid for work done and delivered.

At the bottom of this document you will find our contact information. Reach out to us to get a quote for your project and know our fees. If you have different needs in mind, we are more than happy to work out a collaboration method that works for you.

📈 Ramp-up

Our commitment to deliver quality work and delight our clients is core to the way we do business. In that spirit, we try to build an orderly work pipeline: after hands have been shaken and an agreement has been signed, there's a 2-week-period (minimum) before we can start work.

Those 2 weeks make for a smooth transition: First, no one gets left behind and no work gets hurried. Second, we can assemble a team with care, looking out for each member's preferences and skills. In short, we've learned that things just work better when we check our engines before clearing for takeoff.

🔓 Open Source

We like to use and contribute to open-source projects. We hate re-inventing the wheel, so for standard problems, where free and open-source libraries are available, we'll suggest using them. We'll help you understand the licenses and make sure that it does not have any impact on your own licenses. Also, we default to solutions that avoid vendor lock-in,

unless you explicitly request us to use something that doesn't, in which case we're happy to use it. That includes not locking you to ourselves.

‹› Our open source contributions

Manas.Tech is the proud home of Crystal, a programming language we created and have been developing for more than a decade, that has received a ton of praise and attention, dubbed "the most promising programming language of 2018" by BlockVue's CTO, and forecasted with a "bright future" by TechBeacon, among others. With over a 1,000 repositories on Github, used on more than 4,200 environments, and with a vibrant community of 300+ contributors and over 2,600 subscribers, Crystal brought us a lot of joy, fun and clients.

We have also released several free open-source libraries and tools that you can check out here.

One of our longest-term partners is a technology NGO for which most of the work we do is open source. You can browse a long list of different tools in a variety of technology stacks that we have developed in collaboration with them, right here.

⌢ Your point of contact

The person with whom you have explored working together from the first day will be your point-of-contact during at least the first month and will be available later if needed. We don't have a sales team that then transitions to the production team. We feel it makes for a much better transference of knowledge and expectations when you have a continuation of service in that way. That initial point of contact will bring your product manager and team lead to the weekly calls as necessary.

Contact us to get started

Let us help you discover the fastest and safest way to scale

Nicolás di Tada
CEO & FOUNDER

✉ nditada@manas.tech

Martín Pettinati
CUSTOMER SUCCESS LEAD

✉ mpettinati@manas.tech

Nothing to lose

✓ We take confidentiality very seriously. Before any conversations start, we'll sign your standard NDA. Everything we create for you during this process is 100% your property.

✓ We will bill the first month only after we deliver the first version. What's most important, you don't have to pay if you are not happy with the result. All we ask for in return is feedback, so we can improve.

✓ Should you choose to work with us on any project within 90 days of this exploration, we'll discount its cost from your project.

✓ If you decide to work on your challenges internally or with other solution providers, you'll have excellent documentation to get your project started.