

Tips For Outsourcing in The Philippines

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The Outsourcing industry in The Philippines is projected to be worth \$40BN by 2022. Consecutive governments have continued to develop and grow the industry for many years. The workforce is here, trained and ready to serve.

Meanwhile, many western businesses are experiencing difficulties due to factors such as changing market conditions and internet competition. Therefore, it is vital to streamline processes and costs. Outsourcing is an attractive option to all businesses small and large alike, however it is a cultural and operational minefield with severe implications for all involved if it goes wrong.

So to help you navigate this minefield we've put together this little collection of tips & tricks to help you outsource.



Cultural point: In the Philippines the expression "Have you eaten" or "Did you eat already?" is used in a similar way to "How are you?" in English.

Why not show cultural understanding by using this common greeting?



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Cultural point: Having a Filipino team means taking on very friendly and outgoing people. They jump at the chance to make new friends and include as many people as possible in social get togethers.

- Treat your Filipino team just like they are working in your office.
- Share your business' values, culture and vision.
- Warmly introduce them to all your onshore team members.
- Keep them in the loop with updates happening in the business.
- Turn up to meetings on time with your team members or communicate if you can't attend so they don't feel left out or ignored.
- Ask their opinions and ideas. They are shy to begin with, however if you persist, their confidence will develop and they will make a big contribution.

Cultural point: The concept of saving face is a big deal in Asian work culture. Filipinos can often go out of their way to avoid losing face or being embarrassed in a public situation. If you think your staff member is saving face then speak to them one on one.

- Engage with your team clearly.
- Ask questions slowly and clearly to begin with and give feedback regularly. Often, Filipinos who are not experienced working for Western clients will say "yes" to a question to save face. Make sure you are aware of this cross cultural issue.
- Ask questions that involve giving an explanation, rather than a "yes" or "no" answer.
- Ask your team member to repeat your instructions and clarify anything ambiguous.

Cultural point: Filipinos often shy away from confrontation and value their reputation. They tend to address their work superiors with a prefix such as "boss" or "sir/maam", enjoy this but don't let it go to your head!

- Make expectations clear from the start.
- Work with your Account Manager to make sure your new team understands their responsibilities and their KPIs.
- If possible, give them examples of expected deliverables.
- As they approach their targets or KPIs, give your team member a positive reinforcement – a little recognition goes a long way.

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Cultural point: Filipinos have extraordinarily strong family and traditions. Birthdays are a major event. Filipinos love singing, dancing and eating. In fact, they can't live a day without rice!

- Get clear on your reporting expectations.
- Your onboarding manager can assist you to set up reporting framework so that you know at all times what your offshore team are working on and how they are tracking on their deliverables.
- Give regular feedback and coach your team member directly to continually improve their results as you would your onshore team.

Cultural point: Filipinos take pride in their work and value building working relationships. They are instinctively hard workers but often require guidance in where to apply their efforts to be most productive.

- Set challenges.
- As your team member masters tasks, add some new challenges. Filipinos are quick learners and if they don't already know how to do something, will quickly find out.
- Partner up in coaching your team member.
- Add new tasks and responsibilities as your team member masters their primary tasks.
- You want them engaged and feeling like they are making a positive contribution. However, be aware of any potential signals that you may be overloading them and adjust their workload if necessary.

Cultural point: Filipino Offshore Workers can be found in almost every nation on the planet. Money sent home from Filipinos abroad is a significant part of supporting the nation - providing a larger % contribution to GDP than the entire outsourcing industry!

- Support the growth of your offshore team member's career just like your onshore employees.
- Make sure that all team members have a performance evaluation and development plan that identifies training required to help your team member meet their objectives.
- Actively encourage your team member to think big and support them to work towards their goals.
- Don't get frustrated, get involved. If you are experiencing frustrations, reach out to your account manager early on so they can address the issue immediately.

Cultural point: With understanding of its intricacies, working with a Filipino team becomes a rewarding experience for both you personally and for your company.