

Get off the sinkhole in your software development

There are smart people all over the world. Also smaller companies can benefit from working with remote ones - but they can be afraid of own lack of experience and maturity. And indeed, processes may need brushing up - but because of bigger trouble..... As they may be sitting over the sinkhole.

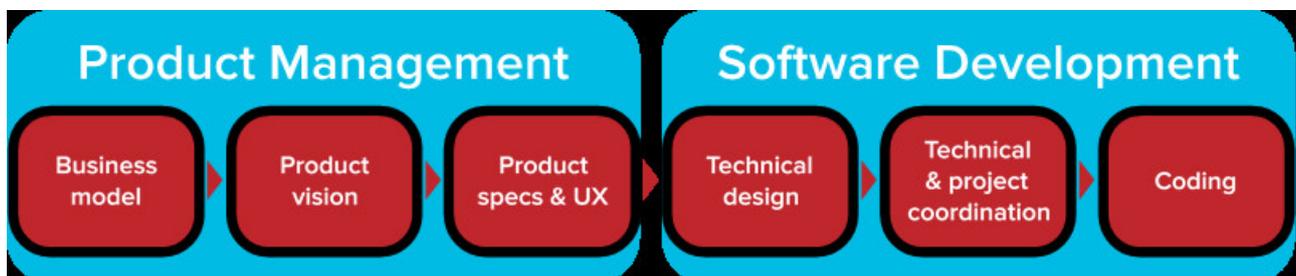
Over the past 4 years, we have helped partners across Europe to additional revenue in the millions of euro - by allowing them to focus on their products, not the recruitment or team integration.

The problem, we have solved for our clients, is critical: how to scale your software development capacity quickly and flexibly.

Honestly, most of these companies only started looking at distributed teams when they were really pressed for having enough talent to meet their product goals. And almost all of them had moments of doubt as they were preparing for working in a distributed manner:

- *Will our processes stretch across locations?*
- *Are our requirements precise enough?*
- *Can we remain agile with remote colleagues?*

What we are really discussing here is company and process maturity - in two areas:



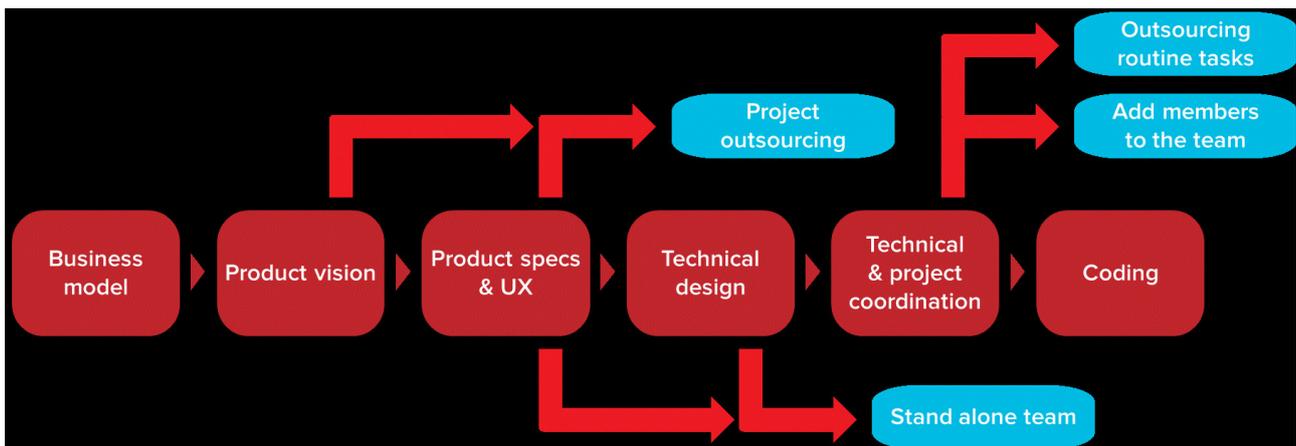
Within each area, we have defined 4 levels. The headings are the same:

Level 1 – Ad hoc	Level 2 – Managed	Level 3 – Advanced	Level 4 – Leading
Initial, chaotic	Deliberate, thinking	Process defined	Measure, optimize

Everybody starts out at **Level 1 – Ad hoc** - in both dimensions. If you focus on the quality of your output, it may take you to **Level 2 – Managed**. In this level, you notice what works well – and try to do more of that. To get to **Level 3 – Advanced** and **Level 4 – Leading**,

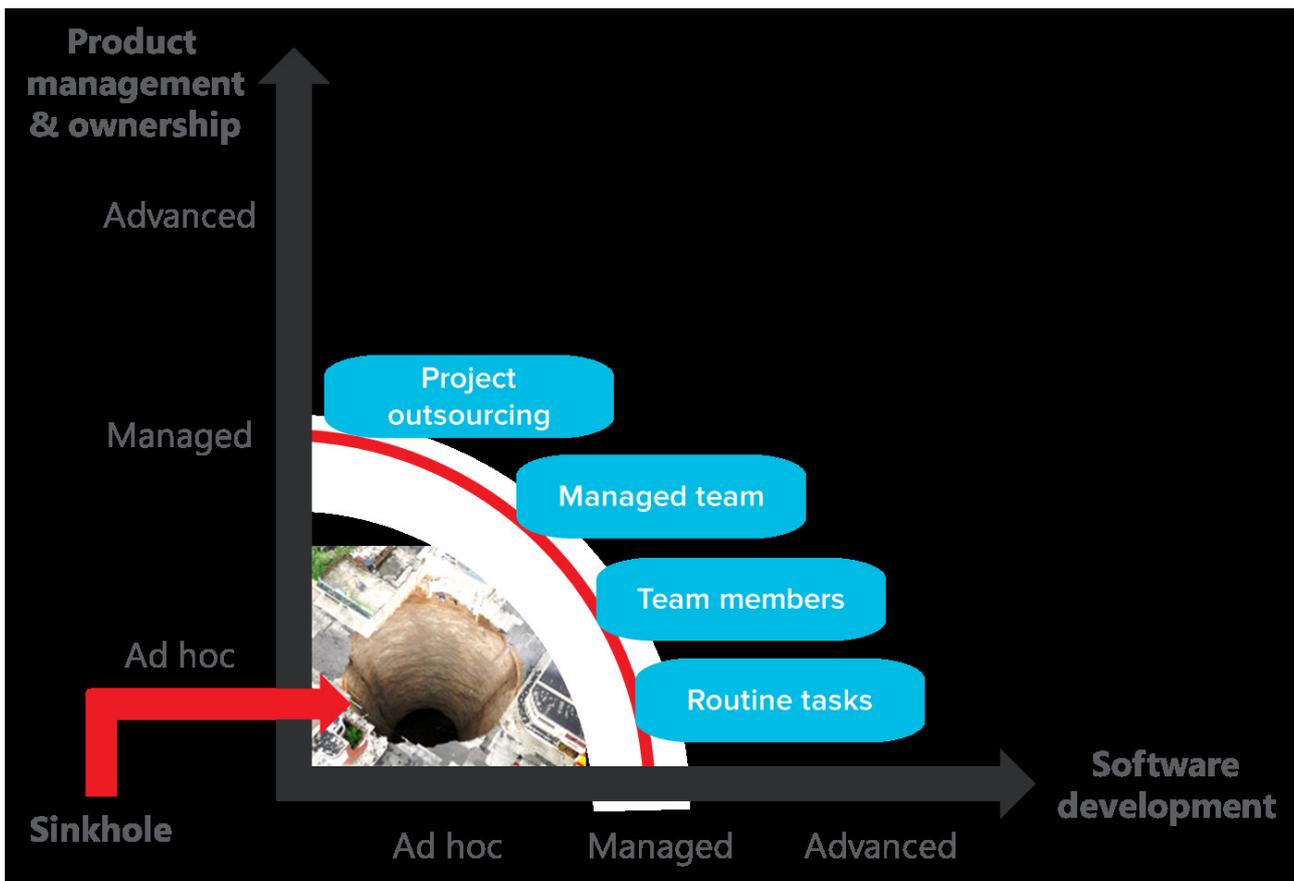
you build understanding of what works well and why. You measure performance and quality to give feedback to continuous process design.

Now combine this with four generic engagement models for using remote resources:



The suitability of each of these depend mostly on the maturity of your organization - in the two dimensions. And what we find is that if you are running in ad hoc mode in either dimension, you may get away with **partial outsourcing**. But you will not get to where the real value is generated - in the **strategic potential** of **managed teams** and **team extension** with remote **team members** (two models which technically are not outsourcing - as you are not outsourcing your problem but stay in control - which is a good thing if you want to remain agile).

If you do not know how to manage yourself and your tasks (Level 1 - Ad hoc), you are indeed unlikely to be able to do it for somebody sitting remotely. So, yes - it is indeed possible that you are not mature enough for using remote resources.



But it gets worse than that. If you in general are running your business based on ad hoc or non-existent processes, you will be **heading for trouble** when you need to **scale** your business, **launch** new products, enter new markets or perhaps the biggest challenge: **substituting key members** of your team. Maybe the guy who built your production platform and kept the non-SOA architecture in his head.

Running in ad hoc mode is what we call the **sinkhole**. And it is a bad place to be if you want to use remote resources in an agile manner – but also for the overall seriousness of your operation. Thus, if somebody is asking you to consider using remote resources or distributed teams - the sinkhole can give you ammunition to tell them off - or you can use it as the best incentive possible to move forward with yourself and your team.