

SideStep

The Customer

SideStep (www.sidestep.com) is one of the most popular travel sites on the web. Millions of people use it to find the best deals on air fares, car rentals, hotel stays and vacation packages. Founded in 1999, SideStep is one of the pioneers in web based travel search and planning, and it has won numerous awards and considerable media recognition for its innovative approach. SideStep is a mid to late stage venture backed company, with considerable funding and cash flow.



The Problem and Folio3's Solution

SideStep had a strong engineering team at its head of office in Silicon Valley that developed the initial technology to search and gather information from airline websites. However, it wanted to outsource vendor integration to an offshore partner, so that its team could focus on new feature and product development. SideStep had tried working with two partners without a great deal of success before it decided to try out Folio3.

Starting cautiously with just one engineering resource working on its airline 'adaptors', SideStep quickly expanded the team to five engineers who started handling the bulk of the work on the airline vertical. Impressed with the quality and thoroughness of the work delivered, SideStep then gave Folio3 responsibility for the Car and Hotel verticals as well. The team soon evolved into a well rounded unit, with five developers (including a Software Architect), two Quality Assurance engineers and a project manager.

The SideStep team's responsibilities were twofold: to develop new adaptors for new vendors that SideStep's business team identified and signed up, and to detect and immediately fix any breaks in information gathered from vendors that were already integrated. Since a lot of the adaptors



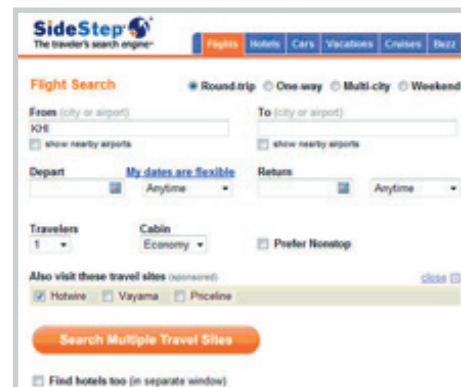
were based on software robots collecting information from websites, adaptor breaks could occur when the website structure changed. The team at Folio3 set up mechanisms to identify breaks and to fix them quickly by recoding the robots. Folio3 was responsible for either developing or maintaining about 250 airline adaptors, and over 50 hotel and car adaptors each.

The Project Manager at Folio3 communicated daily with her counterpart at SideStep, during which a current snapshot of all development and maintenance efforts as well as key metrics was exchanged and discussed.

SideStep has been a Folio3 customer for about 2 years.

Technologies Used

Java (J2EE), Junit for unit testing, XML, Web Services.



Development Methodology Used

Folio3's offshore team started with using Agile Development methodology, sharing the code base with the US team using source control software. Bugzilla was used for bug tracking, change requests and enhancements.

“Folio3 has been a reliable and effective development partner for Sidestep. They have helped us manage and execute the bulk of the engineering work necessary for integrating with our partners in the Airline, Car and Hotel verticals. I recommend them highly.”

Stewart Kelly
 Founder & CTO, Sidestep