
No Risk, No Reward.

All project opportunities are not created equal. Most entrepreneurs are not ready to accept this as a part of growing a new business. Without a clear vision and the discipline to work with your ideal client, there are major risks at every turn. CultureFit had the opportunity to meet and interview one Chicago based tech firm that just learned this lesson, – SnapMobile, an application developer. According to Andy Mack, co-founder, “...making the decision to re-structure our sales plan to target only projects that meet specific value criteria was the hard part. What we learned is the perceived risks were replaced by immense gains that had unanticipated benefits that expanded beyond financial practicality”.

4 Years of Shifting – Without Abandoning the Core Service

The original idea behind SnapMobile was to be the fastest, simplest, and most affordable mobile application developer in the greater Chicagoland area. The approach generated a modest amount of traction, but fell short of the founder’s goals, so like every good entrepreneur they shifted – widening their services to a more traditional agency model. The expansion was engineered to help clients understand the tangible value in developing an application that would have an immediate operational expense impact. The change was significant, but still short of what the founders and teams were ultimately seeking – a sustainable business model that not only generated

the necessary revenue, but also positioned SnapMobile as a business partner vs. a disposable “one and done” vendor. Andy provided some background on their evolution, “Over the course of 3 and half years, we learned our best projects were backed by companies willing to make a continual investment in technology innovation providing the solutions would drive measurable business results – for these companies, their entire culture is based on working smarter, and beating the competition to market with the next great idea. There’s never an “off” button with organizations like this, and this is where we saw SnapMobile thrive.” This anecdotal

evidence provided the foundation of their next great shift - a more radical approach, with potentially more risk –

for this team, it was a risk worth taking - the “Value Agreement” was conceived.

The Gateway for Future Growth – A 5 Point Litmus Test

The Value Agreement is a roadmap to SnapMobile’s sales strategy, but it’s also a glimpse into how innovative this team solves almost any challenge that crosses their desk.



Although SnapMobile refers to “The Value Agreement” as a noun, we learned it’s also their own innovative and custom crafted sales strategy, used to determine if a project meets very specific, pre-defined standards before a new project is added to the SnapMobile roster. Not all project opportunities are able to meet the strictly adhered to criteria, and Snap respectfully declines the opportunity of anything that falls short of the well thought out criteria. Andy explained, “The premise behind “The Value Agreement” is all about the “why”- why are we doing this project? The answers ultimately help us determine the value of partnering with a company from both a short-term perspective as well as long-term growth.” SnapMobile outlined 5 distinct benchmarks applied as each new project is considered prior to acquisition:

1. Is it work the SnapMobile team will enjoy?

According to Andy, “answering this first question in advance ensures that the client will get the greatest innovative solutions with the highest quality.” Andy further added, “It’s human nature that we naturally deliver our best work when we really enjoy what we’re working on. For our team, they also gain the benefit of adding a project to their portfolios they’re proud of featuring. “

2. Client sees them as a partner

- Andy further explained, “...when a project is launched with a partnership framework vs. the traditional vendor relationship, there’s always a better

exchange of ideas and communication. The entire process takes on a more collaborative approach, and the final product/solution always exceeds expectations.” Andy added, “more often than not, this becomes the genesis of future projects which are usually out-growths of the originating project.”

3. Investment can be justified with the why (value agreements)

This benchmark provides a mutual gain to Snap as well as the partnering company. Andy provided additional clarity, “Like any good investment advisor, it’s our job to outline technology investments that deliver business returns. All of our work must be measurable and provide a tangible return to the client. It’s our obligation to outline the value of our partnership prior to any signed contracts or agreements. If we cannot mutually agree on a minimum 3-5x return on a technology project, we are not the right partner.”

4. Spend criteria – can’t put their best foot forward if the project has to be so lean that the quality doesn’t meet expectations

According to Andy, “while we once took pride in being a company who delivered work in a fast and affordable manner, this was not a sustainable model. Project budgets are relative and should be based on the results we create for the business, not the time it takes to deliver work. This is a radical approach but it’s a philosophy we believe the right clients trust and understand.”

5. The client values and seeks innovation.

This final measure has particular importance to SnapMobile, as they perceive this as the opportunity to create a great solution but also, it’s an indicator of future projects and future growth.

Although the Value Agreement is an innovative approach, it’s not for the faint of heart. SnapMobile recognized the **Value Agreement** is inherently risky respective to making the decision to walk on some projects – but similar to their approach to new projects, they intuitively know the best results are usually derived by breaking down traditional

boundaries and pushing to engineer what many may perceive as a radical and new solution.

Sustaining Growth in Chicago

Although, most would agree the Value Agreement is certainly innovative, it's also a 2-way agreement with their partnering clients; creating and delivering solutions that exceed quality and innovative expectations. It's a steep, self-imposed hurdle, that many similar companies would rather play dodge ball than take the risk of tripping. When we asked Andy how they're able to acquire or retain the type of quality of talent they needed to deliver such lofty standards, he pointed to 10 years of relationship building. Adding further, "...we love Chicago for a variety of reasons, but finding great talent is certainly at the top of the list. We haven't had to contend with this as a primary issue" – but Andy also added, "we have a heightened awareness of the competition for talent in the market. So we've worked hard to create an employment package and a culture that attracts highly skilled techs." Andy also referenced back to the Value Agreement as a big contributor to attracting the professionals that are constantly on the hunt for the next edgy project.



Does Risk Have Its Rewards? You bet.

Andy, his partner and the SnapMobile team have found the risks they've been willing to take on, pay-off with great dividends – for this young organization they we're acquired, by what Andy refers to as another perfect partnership. This acquisition wasn't based on a management take-over, or the idea of cannibalizing competition – it was an opportunity that perfectly positioned SnapMobile to continue doing what they do best - taking risks, pushing envelopes, and growing on a platform that's firmly entrenched on building and engineering the next great idea.

About SnapMobile



We're a Chicago-based team that helps clients to strategize and deliver digital transformations.

About CultureFit



CultureFit Technology Staffing has over 20 years of local, IT Recruiting experience and is entrusted to hire permanent and contract employees in Greater Chicagoland and nationwide. Each year, they're charged to recruit, negotiate, and place 100's of open positions with quality talent that meet skill set requirements as well as compliment an organization's culture. Their unique position has afforded them the opportunity to identify hiring trends from both the organization and the talent's perspective.