

## Outsourcing for Strategic Advantage

### Flexible Delivery Model Makes for Optimal Outsourcing

*With Gurvendra Suri, CEO of Optimal Solutions Integration, Inc., a Dallas-based enterprise-technology consulting firm. In the past five years, Optimal Solutions has grown its annual revenue more than 170 percent and increased staff from 65 to 275. Part of that huge success is the fact that Optimal Solutions offers a flexible delivery model that includes onsite, domestic rural and offshore options.*

**Question:** What is appealing to your clients about Optimal's flexible outsourcing model?

**Suri:** There is a lot of attention being given right now to "pure-play" offshore outsourcing. That is, to the traditional offshore model where application development or maintenance work is performed by a vendor based in India, China, Russia or some other foreign country. In this model, the outsourced vendor typically has little-to-no presence onsite with the client. Putting aside the hype, there are significant risks inherent with pure-play offshore outsourcing, most of which originate from a lack of accountability and translate into costs that must be absorbed by the customer. Scope creep, lack of security, and cultural and communications issues top the list of things that can derail pure-play offshoring.

At Optimal, we establish accountability as the stake in the ground from which everything else follows. All of our engagements begin with a team of U.S.-based consultants working closely onsite with a client to develop and articulate an overall outsourcing strategy which, when appropriate, utilizes our offshore and domestic rural development resources for maximum cost savings. This combination of onsite accountability and flexible, cost-efficient offsite delivery resonates well among CIOs who are looking not only for cost savings but also for an outsourcing partner they can trust to deliver critical IT initiatives on time and on budget.

**Question:** What are the benefits of this type of flexible outsourcing model?

**Suri:** The vast majority of our work focuses on designing and implementing complex, global enterprise systems for Fortune 500 companies and large government organizations. For projects of this magnitude, onsite expertise and regular, close communications with the client are absolutely essential. Our reputation for being able to quickly have a team of highly skilled, responsible and responsive consultants onsite is clearly a benefit and has served us well as a calling card for large companies and government agencies in need of this high level of expertise.

Our value proposition becomes even more compelling because we can complement this expertise with secure, cost-efficient development resources located in Bangalore, India, and throughout rural regions of the U.S. For a typical engagement using our blended, or hybrid, model, onsite consultants tackle complex business process mapping and systems architecting, and offsite resources handle the time-consuming but less skill-intensive development work.

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Most of our clients are global and have APAC offices and operations. Our ability to provide APAC regions advisory and high-end architecture services at a very appealing cost structure from our facilities in Bangalore, India, is a strong point of differentiation for Optimal. Our development center in Bangalore is designed with a focus on performance and security. It features state-of-the-art hardware and software, self-generated power facilities, and secure back-up and recovery capabilities. Stringent accountability and security measures, coupled with compelling cost efficiencies, make our offshore delivery stand out when measured against the risks of pure-play offerings.

**Question:** Can you elaborate on the rural outsourcing option in more detail?

**Suri:** For clients that prefer not to send work offshore but need comparable cost-savings — government organizations in particular — we can offer development resources located in rural regions of the U.S. We do this in partnership with Rural Sourcing Incorporated (RSI), an IT outsourcing organization dedicated to bringing economic expansion and high technology employment opportunities to rural regions in the United States. RSI and Optimal tap the wealth of technology talent graduating from well-respected universities in rural America that prefer not to move to metropolitan markets in order to find jobs. Our rural sourcing option delivers high-quality, cost-competitive, low-risk sourcing while bringing economic vitality to domestic rural regions. We are very pleased and proud to include this creative and innovative option as a component of our delivery model.

In all cases, the nature of the work determines the delivery option. When an offsite component is part of the mix, onsite consultants are always in place to serve as a single point of accountability and provide 100 percent visibility into all development processes and performance metrics.