

QUESTERS COMMUNITY

in collaboration with...



Steve Newland

Associate Director
JAVELIN GROUP



What **Javelin Group** found in Bulgaria was not just a wealth of talent but also a remarkable similarity to the British work culture, ethos, and sense of humour. It did not take long to establish a small team of 4 exceptionally talented developers and the firm has not looked back since.

Questers, a UK headquartered company, is a market leading Technology employer in Eastern Europe with development centres in Bulgaria and Serbia. In 2007 we pioneered an alternative to conventional outsourcing, our AsONE platform.

Since then we have employed over 500 technology specialists for partners across the UK, Europe and the US, making Questers an 'employer of choice' for Bulgarian IT professionals seeking to work in an international setting. This allows us to attract and retain the best talent from the local labour market in a wide range of technologies.

Questers Group | 25 Sackville Street, London, UK | +44 207 643 22 14
www.questers.com

Questers 

TEAM SUMMARY

Team Size: 70+

Technology: Java, QA, etc.

Date of reference: 2014

COMPANY PRESENTATION

Client: Javelin Group

Presentation: Javelin Group is Europe's leading – and largest – specialist firm of retail strategy consultants.

Industry/Sector: System Integrator and Consultancy - Retail

Website: www.javelingroup.com

Head Office: London, United Kingdom

The Situation

Steve joined Javelin Group in 2007 and is now an Associate Director.

He leads the Development team, and is responsible for development methodologies, best practices, and the implementation of multi-channel projects through delivery management.

In 2008 the demand for Javelin Group's systems integration services was growing, but there was a need to reduce rates without compromising quality in order to remain competitive.

So Javelin Group set out to establish a remote development centre. The search was guided by the principle that the team could only deliver to Javelin Group standards if it was fully integrated with the Javelin Group team, which meant that it should operate at the same time as its London counterpart, feel part of the company, and share its culture.

This philosophy immediately ruled out outsourcing where individuals are, ultimately, governed by another company with its own culture and ethos. It also narrowed the search to Europe where the overlap of working hours is considerable.

Javelin Group engaged its own consultancy team to conduct a feasibility study of potential cities using the PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technology, Legal, Environment) assessment method. This provided a short list of locations, including Sofia, which were explored further.

What Javelin Group found in Bulgaria was not just a wealth of talent but also a remarkable similarity to the British work culture, ethos, and sense of humour. It did not take long to establish a small team of 4 exceptionally talented developers and the firm has not looked back since.

The Solution

Initially the developers were brought in to bolster systems integration projects led from London, but the talented people who were hired soon progressed and it was not long before Sofia had its own Lead Developers steering major client projects.

With the success of the Development team, Javelin Group branched out to set up a Technical Support team based entirely out of Sofia, and other roles, such as QAs and infrastructure engineers were introduced to further support projects.

Six years on and Javelin Group has a team of 70 people across a variety of disciplines and offices in both Sofia and Plovdiv.

What Javelin Group discovered quickly was that clients do not mind where team members live; what they care about is how they are looked after. Javelin Group recruits very carefully - employing only those who extoll the company's values, and, as a result, the service provided to clients remains consistent (but at a lower cost).

The set up challenges were relatively few with Questers providing key support to help Javelin Group comply with local laws and regulations and overseeing recruitment campaigns - but that's not to say there wasn't a lot to learn along the way...

The voice of experience

"Integrating a distributed development team into the main office requires considerable time and effort on both sides." Admitted Steve. Here are his advice:

- Ensure staff travel regularly between offices. Monthly managerial trips are essential even when there are established local managers. Employee visits are always beneficial as they foster understanding and relationships between parties.
- Align infrastructure between offices so all employees can work in any office. This will encourage travel and reduce IT overhead. Use the same colour scheme and corporate branding so the surroundings are familiar and recognisably part of the same company.
- Invest in a quality video conferencing set-up and encourage its use over skype or similar, so employees can see each other on a regular basis.
- And, finally, to ensure the distributed team feels like part of the company, treat them like they are part of the company. As far as possible align the benefits and perks, give them equal respect and equal opportunities. Include them on company updates (whether formal or social) and herald their successes which, hopefully, there will be many.