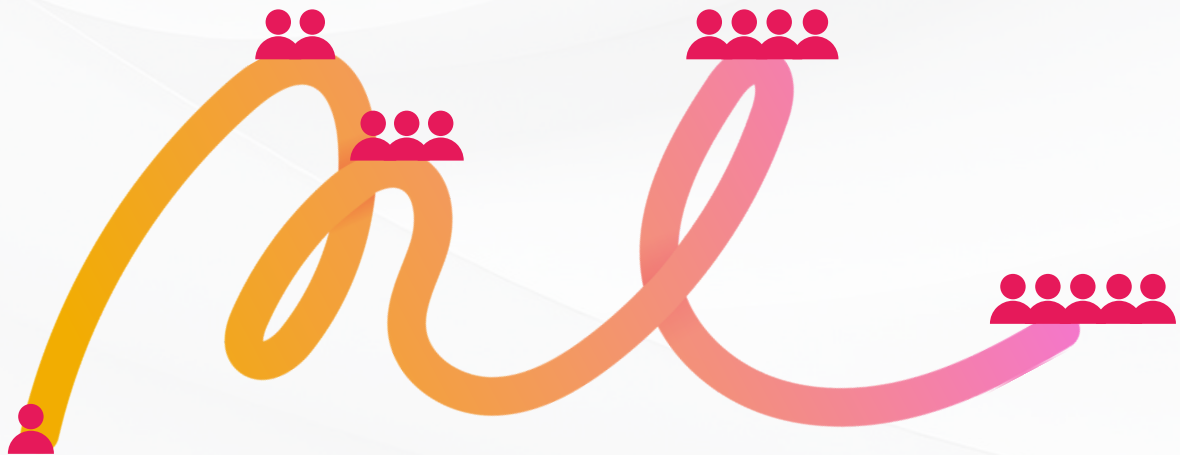


A GUIDE FOR NORDIC SOFTWARE & PRODUCT LEADERS

5 Decisions To Get Right Before You Extend Your Software Engineering Team



Written for CTOs, CIOs, Product Owners and Heads of Engineering scaling an in-house team across Sweden, Norway & Denmark

The five decisions that determine success

Each is made before a contract is signed and each would be better to get right now than to correct at engineering rates six months in.

01 Diagnose your business problem first
Is our real constraint capacity, capability, or strategy?

02 Treat partner selection as a strategic hire
Would this partner survive the same interview bar as a senior in-house hire?

03 Define ownership and shared commitments early
Are escalation paths and decision rights written down before kick-off?

04 Resolve legal, IP, security & compliance upfront
Can the partner show ISO-aligned data handling and IP terms before signing?

05 Design for integration, not delegation
Will this team sit inside our rituals and culture, or wait at the other end of a ticket queue?

1 Diagnose your business problem **first**

Most leaders reach for an Extended Development Team when the symptom shows up on the P&L: delivery falling behind growth, costs rising faster than revenue, backlogs that no amount of sprint planning seems to clear.

The actual cause usually sits one layer below: **Unclear direction, vague requirements, fragmented processes, weak product ownership, or misalignment between Business objectives and engineering on priorities.** A partner cannot fix those problems. It will inherit them, scale them, and make them more expensive.

THE MISALIGNMENT PROBLEM, SPECIFICALLY

A disconnect between business goals and technical priorities can lead to wasted effort, delivery delays, and developer burnout. This usually happens when leaders respond to short-term market demands while engineers focus on long-term technical excellence, without a shared context. Therefore this is an important consideration for leaders to address prior to team augmentation.

KEY TAKEAWAY?

Sort the underlying alignment first. Then bring a partner in to accelerate what's already working, not to absorb a strategy gap at engineering rates.

2 Treat partner selection as a **strategic hire**

Choosing on cost alone is the most common reason these engagements underperform. Lower rates draw attention, but the saving disappears fast when domain and technical expertise are thin, delivery consistency wavers, or cultural fit is off. Apply the rigour you'd apply to hiring a senior engineering leader:

- Domain and technical expertise
- Delivery track record
- Engineering maturity
- How naturally their working style fits your internal team

Talk to existing clients, particularly ones operating in markets close to yours.

KEY TAKEAWAY?

The right development partner is one that your in-house team works with, not one that works for you. NetOnNet, a Swedish e-commerce retailer, selected Creative Software exactly this way: **Prioritising IFS Applications expertise and team integration.**

Ask yourself: Would this partner survive the same interview bar as a senior in-house hire?

3

Define ownership and shared commitments **early**

When ownership is unclear; Decisions stall, Accountability gaps appear and quality goes down on both sides. The Roles, Escalation paths, Decision rights & the responsibilities of each party need to be agreed in the beginning not negotiated when something goes wrong. Extending a team **is not about handing off a problem.**

The client side has commitments too:

- Properly scoped requirements
- Domain training during on-boarding
- Clear business context

Are what let an extended team deliver to your standards.

KEY TAKEAWAYS?

Structure ownership as a two-way contract from day one. Internal teams provide context and direction; the extended team provides execution, technical judgment, and continuity.

Pressure-test: Are escalation paths and decision rights written down before kick-off?

4

Resolve legal, IP, security & compliance **upfront**

NDAs, Data protection terms, IP ownership and Compliance frameworks **cannot be an afterthought.** Once development begins exposure is live and retrofitting these agreements is far harder than getting them right at the start.

For Nordic companies the bar is higher than most. Expectations around Data residency and clear IP assignment all need to be locked in before kick-off. A serious partner already has mature frameworks (NDAs, Secure development practices, Role-based access controls) and welcomes the conversation rather than treating it as friction.

KEY TAKEAWAY?

If a prospective partner is being vague on Data Residency, IP Assignment or Data security, that vagueness is the signal. Being mature here is a proxy for maturity everywhere.

Pressure-test: Can the partner show GDPR-aligned data-handling and IP terms before, not after, signing?

5 Design for integration, not delegation

The biggest predictor of long-term value is how you frame the relationship from the start. If you treat the team as a vendor receiving tasks, You'll get vendor-level output. Treat them as an extended arm of your own engineering organization **by sharing Context, Goals, Rituals, and Culture and the partnership compounds with every sprint.**

There's a practical advantage beyond performance: Integrated teams retain domain knowledge. After 12 or 18 months your extended team becomes one of the most valuable repositories of product context you have.

KEY TAKEAWAY?

Continuity is what turns an extended engineering team from a delivery arrangement into a strategic capability. Wint, a Swedish accounting platform, built its scale-up around this principle and described the partnership as "the key to our growth."

Pressure-test: Will this team sit inside our rituals and culture, or wait at the other end of a ticket queue?

What good looks like

When the five decisions above are made well.
The model stops feeling like a risk and starts behaving like an asset.

The best teams are not the most complex ones. They are the most consistent.

oneflow

SWEDEN - Contract Lifecycle Management platform

Starting with a team of four developers, and scaled rapidly as the engagement consistently delivered.

That team is now an integral part of Oneflow's in-house engineering organisation, independently developing and maintaining their entire integrations platform.



CtrlPrint

SWEDEN - Corporate Reporting Platform

Extending their team with a group of full-stack engineers and QA specialists led by a dedicated Technical Team Lead, they work alongside their Stockholm product managers and engineers daily.

The integration was designed for continuity from the start.



The pre-engagement **checklist**

Go through the below checklist before you shortlist a partner, and again before you sign. If you can't tick a box with confidence, that's the work to do first.

01 BUSINESS PROBLEM

- ☐ We've identified whether our real constraint is capacity, capability, or strategy, and confirmed it isn't a problem a partner would simply inherit and scale.
- ☐ Product direction, requirements, and ownership are aligned before we add capacity.

02 PARTNER SELECTION

- ☐ We've evaluated Domain expertise, Technical Depth, Delivery Track record, and Engineering Maturity, not just hourly rates.
- ☐ We've spoken to existing clients, ideally ones in markets close to ours.
- ☐ Cultural and working-style fit with our internal team has been assessed directly.

03 OWNERSHIP & COMMITMENTS

- ☐ Roles, Escalation paths, and Decision rights are documented before kick-off.
- ☐ Our own commitments are defined: scoped requirements, onboarding domain training, and clear business context.

04 LEGAL, IP, SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

- ☐ NDAs, IP assignment, and data-protection terms are agreed before any code is written.
- ☐ GDPR data-transfer rules and data-residency expectations are locked in, and the partner has mature frameworks (RBAC, secure development) to show.

05 INTEGRATION

- ☐ The team will work inside our sprint ceremonies, communication structures, and engineering culture, not at the end of a ticket queue.
- ☐ We've planned for knowledge retention and team continuity over 12–18 months and beyond.

If more than two boxes are still open, the gap is on your side of the table. Close those first. A partner brought in over an unresolved gap will scale it, not solve it.

Pressure-test the decision before you make it

We've built our partnerships with Nordic software companies around these five principles, because we've seen what happens when they're skipped, and what's possible when they're not. If you're evaluating an Extended Development Team for your roadmap, we'd be glad to help you work through whether the model fits your situation.



Talk to Mikael Stattin

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[Book a 15 minute chat →](#)

Creative Software is a Swedish-led software engineering partner with a proven 26-year track record and a managed team of over 700 engineers. Fully ISO/IEC 27001 certified, the company builds trusted, long-term partnerships with leading clients such as NetOnNet, Wint, Mediq, and Oneflow.

