EOLIS

How to Build a Future-Proof Digital Team.

Focusing on people, processes and sourcing.

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How to build a future-proof digital product team

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How to build a future-proof digital product team.

In today's whirlwind digital world, having a strong, adaptable digital product team isn't just a nice-to-have–it's essential.

Yet, many organizations find themselves struggling with the same old problems: teams working in silos, people not talking to each other, and everyone feeling confused about where their day-to-day tasks end and project work begins. If this sounds familiar, don't worry– you're not alone. Let's dive into how you can build a digital product team that's ready for anything the future throws at it.

The power of multidisciplinary teams.

One of the biggest hurdles companies face is the dreaded silo effect. Different departments doing their own thing, not really aware of what is happening at the other side of the hallway and rarely crossing paths until… something goes wrong.

You could compare this way of working to a massive cruise ship - comfortable, but slow, and not exactly built for quick turns. You will get where you need to be, but it might take a while and a lot of meetings and/or emails.

This is where multidisciplinary teams come to the rescue, breaking down barriers and bringing everyone together for the greater good.

This team can be compared to a speedboat: fast, nimble, and able to change direction at a moment's notice. That's the magic of multidisciplinary teams. By bringing together folks from all corners of your organization–product management, design, development, marketing–you create a team that's quick on its feet and ready to tackle challenges head-on.

But let's be real: it's not enough to just assemble a team and hope for the best. You need to create a culture where collaboration is the name of the game. Otherwise, even the best team will end up paddling in circles.

Key roles and composition.

When building your digital product team, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. The exact structure of your team will depend on your company's goals, size, industry... But a well-rounded digital team will typically span a variety of roles across marketing, creative, social media, data, IT and digital delivery. These categories ensure that your team isn't just functional, but strategically positioned to collaborate effectively.

MARKETING

A potential team structure could include roles in Marketing, such as Digital Campaign Managers, CRM Managers, or Loyalty Managers, to drive user engagement and growth.
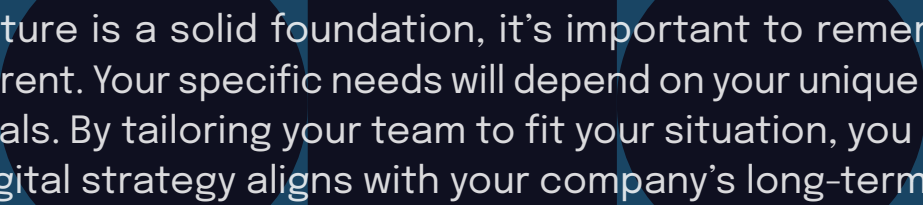
CREATIVE & MEDIA

Creative roles like UX Designers, Copywriters, and Web Designers focus on crafting engaging user experiences and content, while Media specialists (like Social Media Managers, PPC Managers, or Digital Media Managers) manage your brand's digital presence and paid strategies.

DATA & IT

Additionally, Data Analysts and Data Scientists offer critical insights from your data while IT professionals, from Software Developers to Solution Architects, bring your digital tools and infrastructure to life.

DIGITAL DELIVERY

When it comes to Digital Delivery, project managers, agile coaches, and scrum masters ensure your team stays on track and delivers results efficiently.

While this structure is a solid foundation, it's important to remember that every company is different. Your specific needs will depend on your unique business model, industry, and goals. By tailoring your team to fit your situation, you can ensure that your digital strategy aligns with your company's long-term vision.

Skills & structure.

Having the right roles is crucial, but what really makes a team tick? Skills and structure—how you work together—can make or break your success.

Soft skills
The glue that holds it all together

Sure, technical chops are important, but soft skills are what make a team truly gel. We're talking about communication, empathy, adaptability, and the ability to navigate tricky situations without blowing up the whole project. Too often, these skills get overlooked, but they're what turn a group of experts into a high-performing team. Invest in developing these skills, and you'll see the difference in how smoothly things run.

Hard skills
The technical backbone

Of course, you can't overlook the technical side of things. Each team member needs to be a pro in their area, but the real magic happens when there's some overlap. For example: A product manager who understands the basics of UX design, or a designer who is familiar with coding, can bridge gaps and keep everyone on the same page. The risk of misunderstandings between team members also decreases significantly. Continuous learning is key. So encourage your team to stay sharp and curious.

Team size: The two-pizza rule.

Apart from who should be in the team, we also need to address how many of those people should be in the team. You've probably heard of the "Two-Pizza Rule"–keep your team small enough that two pizzas can feed everyone. It's a good rule of thumb, but flexibility is key.

Sometimes you need more hands on deck, and that's okay. Just make sure your team is agile enough to stay coordinated. If your team grows, consider splitting into smaller, focused sub-teams that can tackle different parts of the project without losing sight of the big picture.

If you are in need of an extra pair of hands for a short period of time or for a specific project, hiring an external consultant could be an excellent solution. They bring a ton of experience from other companies and you can make sure your team size (and payroll) doesn't expand too rapidly.
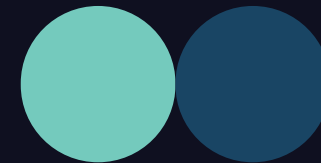
"Keep your team small enough that two pizzas can feed everyone."

Tailoring your team to your company's needs.

Now you know which roles, skills and structure you need in your digital team, there is just one more thing that you need to know before you go assembling your dream team. We mentioned before that not every company needs the same kind of digital team. The perfect setup for your business depends on a whole bunch of factors–your industry, company size, business goals, and even the kind of digital presence you have. Let's break it down with a few examples.

TECH COMPANIES VS NON-TECH COMPANIES

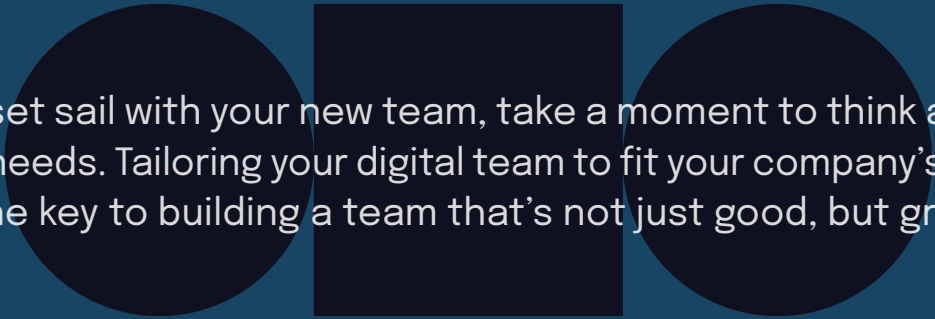Tech Companies need teams that are all about cutting-edge innovation. Think specialized roles like DevOps engineers and AI specialists. The focus here is on staying ahead of the curve. Non-Tech Companies might prioritize digital transformation, with teams focused on integrating digital tools to make existing processes more efficient. Here, digital marketing specialists and CRM experts are often key players.

STARTUPS VS LARGE ENTERPRISES

Startups usually have lean teams where everyone wears multiple hats. Flexibility is the name of the game, and generalist skills are a must. Large Enterprises, on the other hand, might have several digital teams, each working on different products or services. These teams are more specialized and might need to focus heavily on collaboration across departments to avoid the dreaded silo effect.

CUSTOMER-CENTRIC VS INNOVATION-DRIVEN

Customer-Centric Companies will have teams that obsess over UX and customer journey mapping, while Innovation-Driven Companies need teams ready to experiment and push boundaries.

So, before you set sail with your new team, take a moment to think about what your business really needs. Tailoring your digital team to fit your company's unique context is the key to building a team that's not just good, but great.

Conclusion.

Building a future-proof digital product team is about more than just hiring the right people–it's about creating a culture where collaboration and innovation can thrive. By focusing on multidisciplinary teamwork, clearly defining roles, and fostering the right mix of skills, you can set your team up for success in an ever-changing digital landscape.

Remember, the goal is to create a team that's as agile and responsive as a speedboat, ready to navigate whatever the future holds. Whether you're a large enterprise or an ambitious SME, investing in your team today will pay dividends tomorrow as you steer your way to digital success.

Ready to build a team that can hold it together during any storm?

At EOLIS, we specialize in helping companies like yours assemble and integrate digital product teams that are not just effective but also adaptable to change. Whether you're looking to strengthen your existing team or build a new one from the ground up, our consultants are ready to bring their expertise to your project and help you achieve your goals.

Let's chart the course together. Contact EOLIS today to learn how we can help you build a team that's ready for whatever the future holds.

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02 | Process

How to make strategic choices in talent acquisition.

Sticking to an agile process.

Team collaboration.

Realistic roadmaps.

Ready, set, build that product!

Optimizing digital product development for speed and impact.

In the digital world, time isn't just money–it's everything. The quicker you can get a product to market, the better your chances of beating the competition and capturing customer interest.

But let's be real: development cycles can often drag on longer than expected, turning what should be a sprint into a marathon. Rigid processes, endless backlogs, and missed deadlines can undermine team morale and hinder business outcomes. If this scenario sounds all too familiar, you're not alone. Let's explore some practical, down-to-earth strategies for optimizing your digital product development process, so you can speed things up without sacrificing quality or burning out your team.

Sticking to an agile process.

We hear "agile" thrown around a lot, but it's more than just a trendy buzzword. Done right, agile is a game-changer. It transforms the way your team works, helping you move faster and more efficiently while staying flexible enough to adapt to changes along the way.

CREATING MORE FOCUS

One of the biggest time-wasters in any development cycle is a lack of focus. If your team isn't crystal clear on what they're working toward and why, you'll end up with a lot of wheel-spinning and not much progress. The solution? Connect your strategy directly with the actions your team takes every day. This means aligning everything you do with your broader business goals and keeping the customer at the heart of your decision-making process. When everyone on the team understands how their work ties back to the bigger picture, they're more motivated, more engaged, and–most importantly–more productive. Focus isn't just about knowing what to do, it's also about knowing what not to do. By cutting out the noise and zeroing in on what really matters, your team can move forward with a clear sense of purpose.

INCREASING VELOCITY

Speed is the name of the game, but it's not just about cranking out features as fast as possible. To really increase your velocity, consider adopting an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) approach. By focusing on building and shipping smaller, more manageable pieces of your product, you can get something out the door sooner rather than later.

This approach allows you to introduce learning phases where you gather real-world feedback, make necessary adjustments, and iterate quickly. Instead of investing months (or even years) into a fully fleshed-out product that might miss the mark, you're constantly learning, tweaking, and improving. This not only gets your product in front of users faster, but it also ensures you're building something that truly resonates with your audience.

Another key to increasing velocity? Empower your team to make decisions quickly. Bureaucracy and lengthy approval processes can grind progress to a halt. By trusting your team and giving them the autonomy to make decisions on the fly, you can keep things moving at a fast pace.

STAYING FLEXIBLE

Flexibility is at the core of agile, and it's what allows your team to adapt to changing circumstances without losing momentum. Instead of sticking rigidly to a predefined plan, embrace the idea of building iterations based on the assumptions you want to validate. This means being open to change, whether it's shifting priorities, new customer insights, or unexpected challenges. Flexibility allows your team to pivot quickly when necessary, ensuring that you're not just moving fast, but moving in the right direction. It's about being responsive rather than reactive, and making sure that every step you take is informed by the latest data and insights.

Team collaboration.

In our previous article, we mentioned the importance of building the right digital team for your company.

"A well-functioning team is the engine that drives successful digital product development."

Because without strong collaboration, even the best-laid plans can fall apart.

Especially small, multi-disciplinary teams are so often seen as the gold standard in product development. When you bring together people from different disciplines–like product managers, designers, developers, and marketers–you create a melting pot of ideas, perspectives, and skills.

This cross-functional approach not only helps to break down silos, but it also speeds up decision-making and fosters innovation. However, be careful with involving too many people. Small teams also tend to be more agile by nature. With fewer people in the mix, communication is clearer, and decisions are made faster. Everyone is close enough to the action to have a real impact, and there's less room for misunderstandings or bottlenecks.

Plus, when team members are empowered to collaborate and contribute across different areas, they're more likely to take ownership of the product's success.

Realistic roadmaps.

To get the best out of your team it is important that they know where to go. That's where the roadmap comes into the mix. Both a blessing and a curse in the world of product development. A well-crafted roadmap can guide your team and keep everyone aligned, but a poorly conceived one can lead to missed deadlines, frustrated teams, and endless backlogs. Let's rethink how we approach roadmapping to set ourselves up for success.

Traditional, linear roadmaps assume that everything will go according to plan. Spoiler alert: it rarely does. When you map out every step of the process months (or even years) in advance, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. Things change, priorities shift, and unexpected challenges arise. A rigid roadmap doesn't account for these variables, which can lead to frustration, burnout, and, ultimately, failure to meet your goals.

Instead, consider adopting a more strategic approach to roadmapping–one that acknowledges the inherent uncertainty of the future. A strategic roadmap is flexible, iterative, and responsive to change. It's not about sticking to a predetermined path at all costs; it's about setting a direction and being willing to adjust course as needed.

Ready, set, build that product!

Optimizing your digital product development process for speed and impact isn't about cutting corners or sacrificing quality. It's about finding the right balance between moving quickly and making smart decisions that drive real value.

By sticking to agile principles, fostering strong team collaboration, and creating realistic, flexible roadmaps, you can navigate the challenges of product development with confidence and clarity.

Remember, the goal isn't just to get your product to market faster–it's to get the *right* product to market, at the right time, in the right way. By focusing on both speed and impact, you can ensure that your digital products not only hit the mark but also make a lasting impression. So, buckle up, keep your eyes on the horizon, and get ready to steer your team toward success.

Looking to accelerate your product development without compromising on quality?

EOLIS understands the pressures of today's fast-paced digital world. Our consultants are experts in agile methodologies and can help you streamline your processes, enhance collaboration, and deliver products that make a real impact—quickly and efficiently.

Let's put your project on the fast track. Reach out to EOLIS today and discover how our tailored approach to consultancy and staffing can help you optimize your digital product development for both speed and success.

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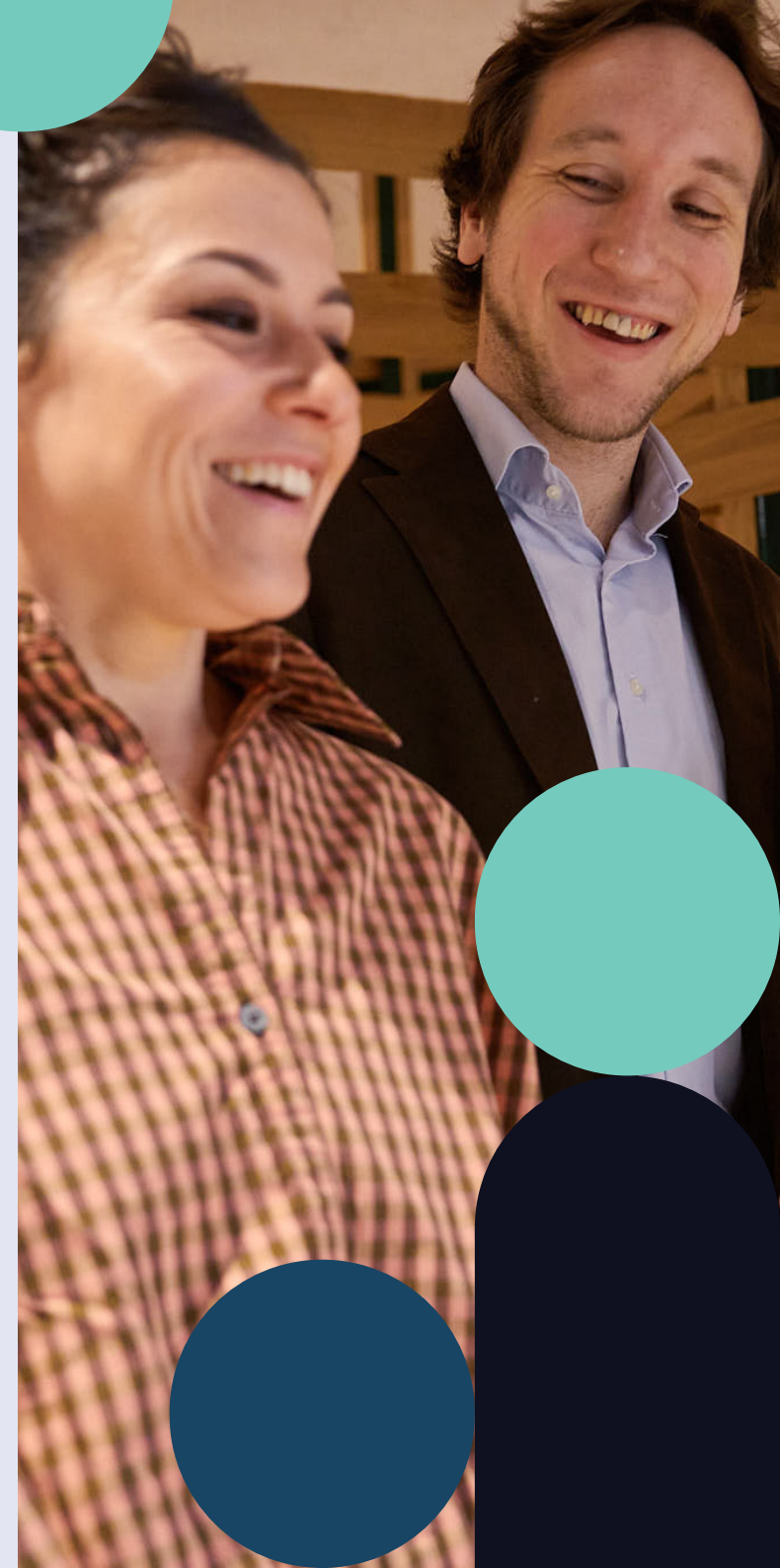
03 | Sourcing

Optimizing digital product development for speed and impact.

Assessing your internal capabilities.

Benefits and drawbacks: Internal versus external hiring.

Hybrid models: The best of both worlds?

Conclusion: Making the right strategic choice.

How to make strategic choices in talent acquisition.

In today's fast-moving digital landscape, building the right team can feel like putting together a puzzle with constantly shifting pieces. You need to balance speed, expertise, and cost-efficiency—all while ensuring that your team can adapt to the ever-changing demands of the market.

So, how do you make those strategic choices in talent acquisition? Should you focus on internal hires, bring in external consultants, or opt for a hybrid approach? Each option comes with its own set of advantages and challenges, and making the wrong choice can not only delay your project but also impact the morale and efficiency of your team.

Let's explore how you can make informed decisions that optimize your team's capabilities, leveraging both internal and external resources to drive success.
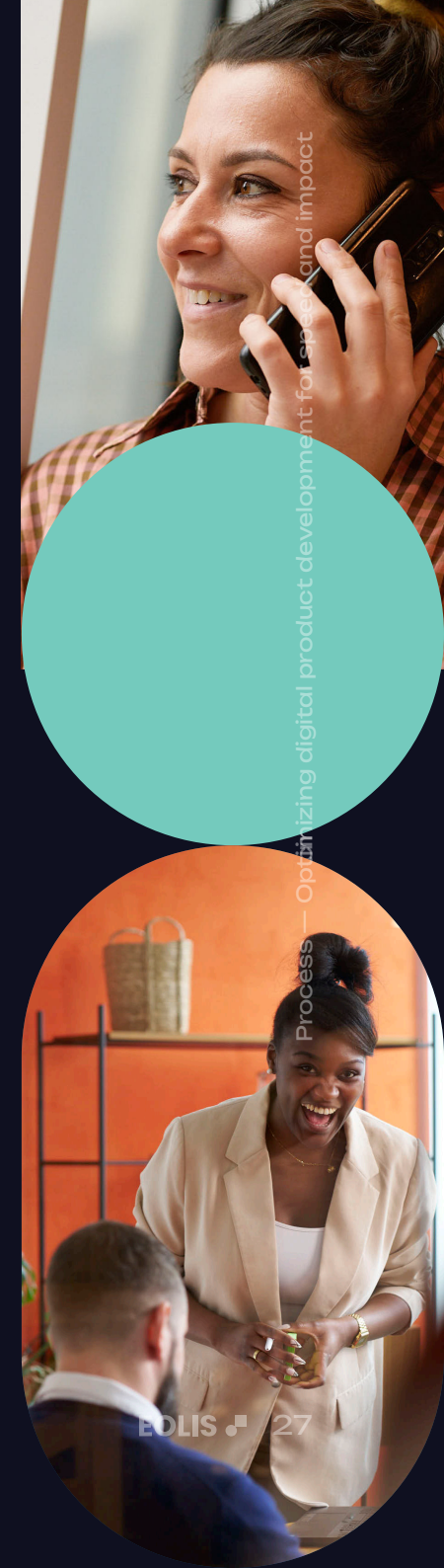
Assessing internal capabilities.

Before you start looking outward, it's crucial to assess what you already have within your organization. Evaluating your internal capabilities is about more than just taking stock of available talent. It's about understanding the strengths and limitations of your existing team and determining where external expertise might be necessary.

WHERE TO START

Start by examining your internal team's current workload and skill set. Are your key players already stretched thin with ongoing projects? Do they have the specific expertise required for your upcoming initiative? While your internal team might possess deep knowledge of your company's culture and goals, their availability to fully commit to a new, agile project could be limited.

THE REAL CHALLENGE

This is where the real challenge comes in: even if you have the right people on paper, their availability might be a different story. Agile projects require constant attention, quick decision-making, and the ability to pivot as needed. If your internal team is too busy, you risk slowing down the project or, worse, burning them out.

Benefits and drawbacks:
Internal vs external hiring.

Once you've evaluated your internal resources, the next step is to weigh the pros and cons of bringing in external help. The decision to hire internally or bring in consultants is not just about filling gaps; it's about finding the right balance that will enable your team to operate at peak efficiency.
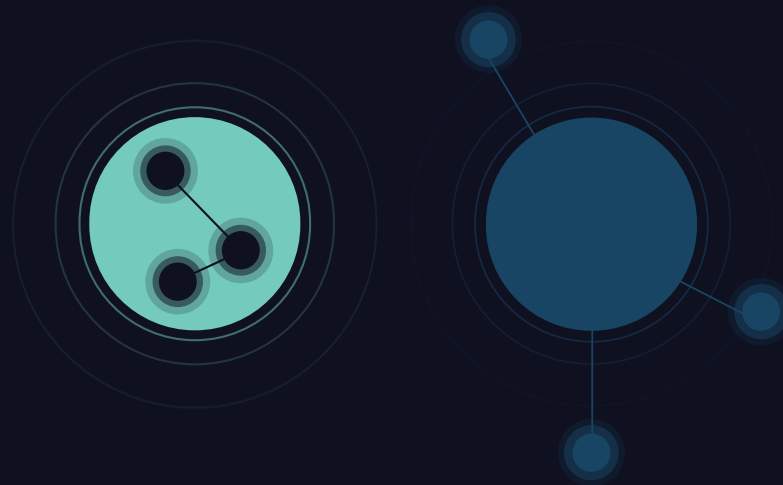
Internal hiring:
Stability with familiar faces.

PRO

The main advantage of relying on internal hires is the familiarity factor. Your internal team understands the intricacies of your company's operations, shares your organizational culture, and is already aligned with your business goals. There's also the added benefit of continuity—no need for a lengthy onboarding process or getting someone up to speed on how your company works.

CON

However, there are significant drawbacks to consider. Internal hires, particularly those who are already deeply involved in other projects, may not have the capacity to take on additional responsibilities without compromising quality. Moreover, even if your internal team has the right skill set, the time and energy required to manage a new, agile project could lead to reduced productivity across the board.

External consultants:
Fresh expertise with flexibility.

PRO

Bringing in external consultants offers a different set of advantages. Consultants can provide specialized expertise that your internal team may lack, and they're often able to hit the ground running, bringing valuable outside perspectives that can drive innovation. Additionally, consultants are typically accustomed to working on specific, well-defined tasks, making them ideal for projects that require a focused, results-driven approach.

CON

However, external consultants also come with their own set of challenges. One common concern is that consultants might be juggling multiple clients simultaneously, which could impact their availability and focus on your project. While this is a valid consideration, it's important to remember that the right consultancy partner will ensure their consultants are fully committed to your project, minimizing distractions and maintaining a high level of engagement.

External consultants:
Fresh expertise with flexibility.

Moreover, integrating external consultants into your internal team can be challenging. If not managed properly, this can lead to misalignment, communication breakdowns, and a lack of cohesion within the team. However, when done right, consultants can seamlessly blend into your team, bringing not just expertise but also a fresh perspective that can help challenge assumptions and drive innovation.

It's also worth noting that not all consultancy models are created equal. Companies like EOLIS focus on embedding consultants directly into your team, working on-site and full-time to ensure they're not just temporary fixes but integral parts of your project's success. This approach mitigates many of the common drawbacks by ensuring consultants are fully aligned with your goals and processes. Next to this, EOLIS foresees the option to hire a consultant for a long period of time or even hire them permanently. This approach allows consultants to become a true extension of your team and contribute to the long-term goals of your organization.

Benefits and drawbacks:
Internal vs external hiring.

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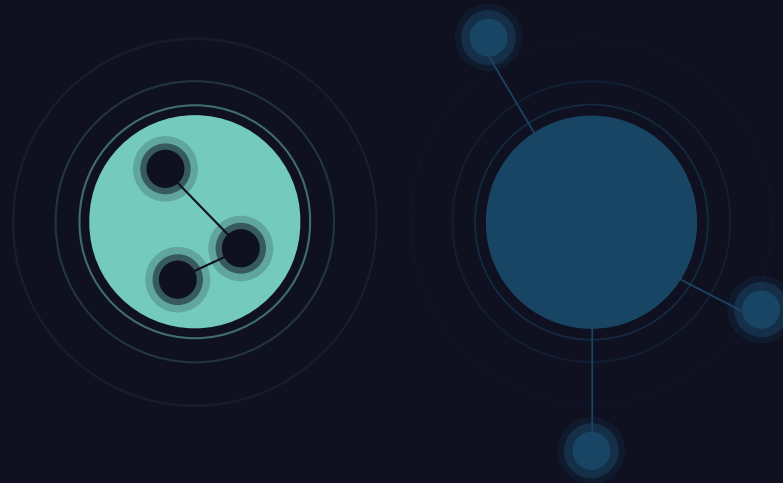
Hybrid models:
The best of both worlds?

Given the trade-offs between internal and external hires, many companies are finding that a hybrid model offers the best of both worlds. A hybrid approach allows you to maintain the stability and cultural alignment of your internal team while bringing in external consultants to fill specific gaps and provide additional capacity as needed.
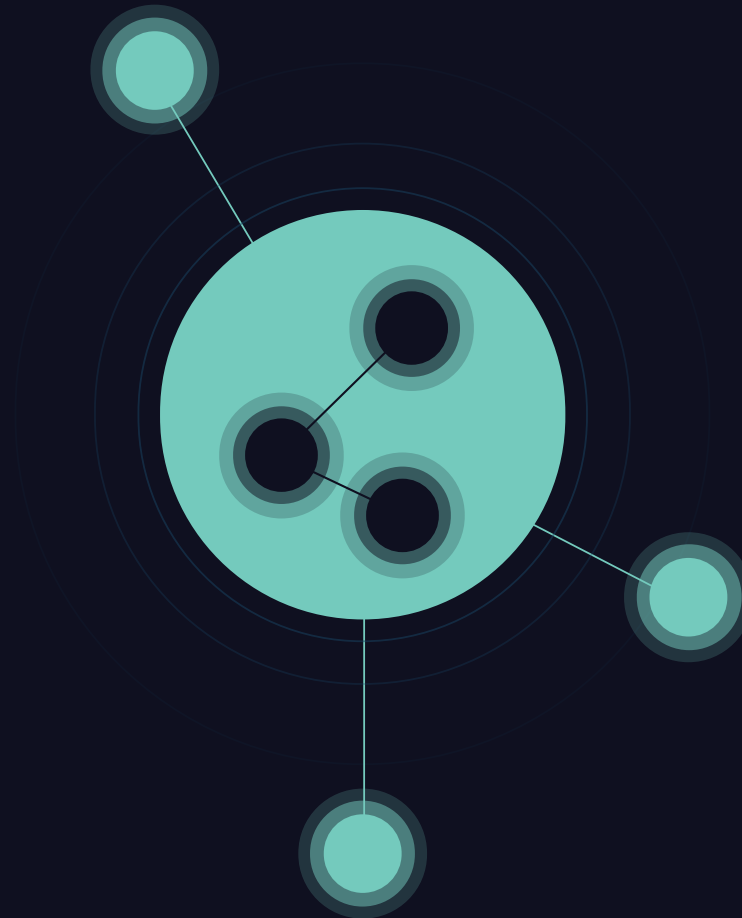
The flexibility of hybrid teams.

In a hybrid model, you might have a core internal team supplemented by external consultants who work closely alongside your in-house staff. This model offers the flexibility to scale up quickly when project demands increase, without overburdening your internal team. It also provides access to specialized skills and fresh perspectives, helping to drive innovation and keep your project on track.

Klaas Vandeputte, CEO of EOLIS, puts it this way: "The advantage of a hybrid model is that you can bring in external expertise on a temporary basis without disrupting your internal team's workflow. Our approach allows for a seamless integration of consultants into our clients' teams, where they work full-time on-site and become a true part of the team. This model offers the flexibility to adapt quickly to changing project needs, while also providing the continuity and cultural fit that comes from having a stable internal team."
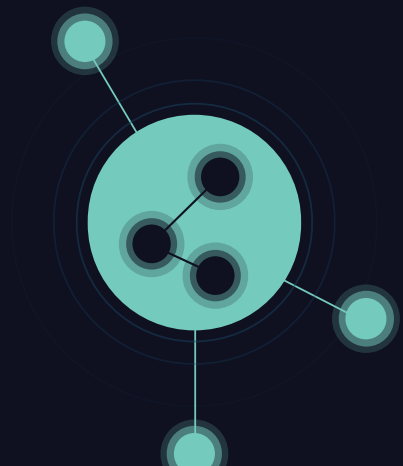
Potential pitfalls to watch out for.

However, the hybrid model is not without its challenges. Managing a team that includes both internal and external members requires clear communication, defined roles, and a strong commitment to collaboration. If these elements aren't in place, you risk creating silos or misunderstandings that can slow down progress and diminish the overall impact of the project.

To avoid these pitfalls, it's crucial to choose a consultancy or staffing partner who truly prioritizes seamless integration and ongoing collaboration.
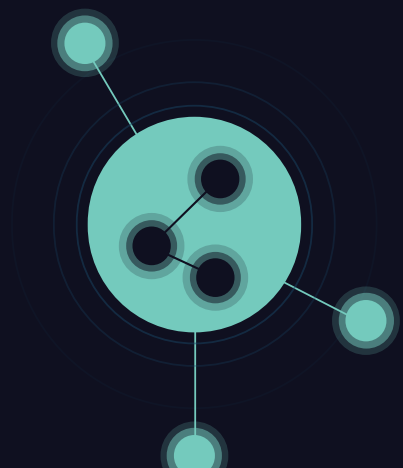
Conclusion: Making the right strategic choice.

This brings us to an important question. What is the best choice for my team or company? Hire externally or internally? When it comes to talent acquisition, there's no one-size-fits-all answer. The best approach depends on the specific needs of your project, the capabilities of your internal team, and the expertise required to achieve your goals. By carefully assessing your internal resources, considering the benefits and drawbacks of external consultants, and exploring hybrid models, you can make strategic choices that enhance your team's effectiveness and drive project success.

The goal isn't just to fill seats. It's to build a team that's equipped to deliver high-quality results, on time and within budget. Whether that means relying on your internal team, bringing in specialized consultants or finding a balance between the two. The key is to remain flexible and adaptable. In today's fast-paced digital world the ability to quickly adjust your approach can make all the difference between success and missed opportunities.

By embracing a strategic, balanced approach to talent acquisition, you can ensure that your team is not only prepared to meet the challenges of today but also positioned for success in the future.

Ready to take the next step?

If you're looking to build a digital product team that's not just effective but also adaptable and innovative, EOLIS is here to help. With our unique blend of consultancy and staffing expertise, we understand the challenges of modern digital projects and are committed to providing tailored solutions that fit your needs. Whether you need short-term support, long-term integration, or a hybrid approach, we're ready to partner with you to achieve your goals.

Let's start the conversation. Reach out to EOLIS today and discover how we can help you build the future-proof team your business needs to thrive.

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