HOW HALO MOBILE BUILT A PIONEERING IOS APP
ON TIME AND ON BUDGET,
WITHOUT THE TYPICAL RISKS OF OFFSHORING
This case study investigates how HALO Mobile utilized Venice Consulting Group’s Hybrid Nearshore project management model to build an innovative, high-quality, consumer-facing iOS mobile app while cutting costs, maintaining close communication with remote developers and driving business growth.
Tech Start-Ups Can’t Afford to Compromise on Product Quality

Technology start-ups seeking to develop MVP cloud and mobile apps often struggle to deliver a quality product without going over budget and past desired timelines. Many choose to offshore costly development work, only to incur the risks and frustrations of language barriers, cultural disparities, and differences in time zones. The benefits of outsourcing are sometimes heavily outweighed by misunderstandings and missed milestones that negatively impact outcomes. While waiting on product development, business growth is at a standstill, and competitors advance.

The quality assurance and timesaving benefits of a Hybrid Nearshore Model ultimately make it the most cost-effective choice for product-centric organizations. Companies may save up to 70 percent off the typical costs of a full U.S.-resourced team when offshoring to India or China, but they sacrifice some control over product quality and risk falling behind schedule. Nearshoring to Latin America typically saves 50 percent and minimizes schedule risk because everyone works in the same time zone, but product quality may still suffer. A Hybrid Nearshore Model saves organizations 40 percent and employs a local stateside project manager to ensure excellent communication and the highest quality results.
TO BECOME AN INNOVATOR, HALO MOBILE NEEDED CREATIVE, EFFICIENT MOBILE DEVELOPMENT

HALO MOBILE IS A LEAN, SELF-FUNDED technology start-up helmed by a father and son team. They conceived and designed Halo, a hardware diagnostics mobile app for iOS 6 and iOS 7, designed to test the functionality and performance of the main hardware features of the user’s mobile device.

HALO Mobile knew that their app had the potential to be highly useful and valuable to consumers, but only if it was exceedingly well-built, reliable, and easy to use. HALO Mobile required highly-skilled development work in order to discover and execute creative and efficient ways to accomplish a wide range of diagnostics without being intrusive to the user.
HALO MOBILE DIDN’T CHOOSE BETWEEN COST SAVINGS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, THEY CHOSE BOTH

WITH JUST FOUR PEOPLE ON STAFF to design the app, manage its development, deliver it to market, and run a scalable business, HALO Mobile was looking for a strategic, efficient, and location-independent partnership to assist them in making their vision a reality.

HALO Mobile was concerned that building their dream product would be too costly. They knew they could slash costs by outsourcing development to the lowest bidder, but the risks of outsourcing posed even greater concerns. To bring a high-quality app to market on a start-up budget and tight timeline—and get it right the first time—they needed several assurances from their developer relationship:

► A budget conscious fixed-fee structure with a high benefit-cost ratio.
► Trustworthy, carefully vetted project managers and developers.
► Frequent, efficient, and easy communication with all team members, near and far.
► Experienced iOS App Development for Apple devices.

HALO Mobile chose Venice Consulting Group (VCG) for the quality assurance of the Hybrid Nearshore Model, which brings the benefits of offshore mobile development closer to home, partnering with handpicked Central and South American teams who share North American time-zones and communication styles.
THE BENEFIT OF CHOOSING the Hybrid Nearshore Model is access to the most qualified resources across US and Latin America, and that translates to having the best of both worlds: excellent communication all the time, since our time window is very close to the customer’s, and of course, cost reduction.

— Jake Ryan, VCG Engagement Manager
ASSEMBLING THE OPTIMAL HYBRID NEARSHORE TEAM FOR HALO MOBILE

VENICE CONSULTING GROUP WAS hired to assemble a qualified team at an affordable rate. VCG gathered a scaled-down team with the necessary skills and competencies at a fixed rate HALO Mobile was comfortable with.

► The Nearshore Mobile Developer
VCG personally vetted multiple nearshore developers and presented HALO Mobile with several options. HALO Mobile chose the best fit for them: the services of Truextend, a software engineering company with headquarters in both Bolivia and Silicon Valley. They began working closely with a highly self-motivated Bolivia-based developer who is fluent in English and experienced with nearshore working relationships. The Nearshore developer managed the project and led all development efforts.

► The L.A. Based Engagement Manager
VCG’s stateside Engagement Manager met locally with the client team before and after the development project. The manager worked to create a direct relationship between the Truextend nearshore developer and the HALO Mobile on-staff tech person in order to minimize its own intermediary role and any communication delays.

► The Nearshore Quality Assurance Manager
A part-time Nearshore QA Manager assisted with testing the application and worked to validate and document the development processes, and catch and resolve any problems before the product’s release.

This small, customized group delivered the quick and efficient workflow that HALO Mobile needed at its particular stage of start-up growth.
NEGATING RISKS WITH CLEAR, EFFICIENT NEARSHORE COMMUNICATIONS

VCG ensured HALO Mobile had excellent communication with all its Hybrid Nearshore team members. The mobile developer held weekly meetings with HALO Mobile, characterized by a friendly, professional exchange of information and feedback. These consistent meetings utilized WebEx technology, allowing participants to share audio, video, as well as their screens. The mobile developer was able to give HALO Mobile over-the-shoulder views of the development process so they could directly contribute to solutions and ongoing improvements to their app.

Outside of these web conferences, the developer provided fast, regular email responses to the HALO Mobile ongoing questions and feedback.

Since HALO Mobile and the Hybrid Nearshore team were collaborating in similar time zones, with shared language, business culture, and communication technologies, the challenges of working remotely were negligible and simple to overcome.

“We chose VCG because of their approach towards long-term, strategic partnerships and the value proposition with their Hybrid Nearshore Model. We had a local engagement manager to work through the application development process with us, while we took advantage of cost savings from the outsourcing model. And, we couldn’t be more pleased with the quality they built into our product. We would give VCG our highest recommendation.”

— Joel Hecht, CEO HALO Mobile
THE TRUST BETWEEN OUR TEAM and HALO Mobile was built through a strong commitment from both parties to accomplish the release schedules. This involved clarifying requests in a timely manner, and also taking into account the feedback from our team to make a better app.

— Norman Zarate, nearshore mobile developer for HALO Mobile iOS app
The very concept of an automated diagnostics app that is unnoticeable to the user is innovative. As an ambitious, one-of-a-kind iOS app, Halo presented multiple challenges:

**Accomplishing hardware diagnostics without using private APIs.**

HALO Mobile developers needed to find creative and efficient ways to accomplish hardware tests from the app while avoiding the use of private APIs, since Apple is prone to reject the apps that do so. For example, when building Halo’s iPhone button test, there was no pre-defined way for the developer to know whether the Power and Home buttons were pressed simultaneously. Our mobile developer overcame this challenge and created a nonintrusive way to accomplish each hardware diagnostic while meeting Apple standards.

**Developing Diagnostics With Great User Experience**

When creating a method for testing the quality of iPhone, iPad and iPod speakers, the app designer and developer did not want to limit users to running the test in a silent place, or irritate the user with obtrusive noise. The team worked together to discover a way to carry out the test in a noisy place without interfering with the user’s activity.
Accomplishing Compatibility with Multiple Versions of Apple iOS

The Halo mobile app is supported by both iOS 6 and iOS 7. To accomplish this crucial versatility, the developer came up with a distinctive method to allow compatibility with both versions of the operating system. This enabled the app to test and assess features available in iOS 7 that are not available in iOS 6, and vice versa.

Testing and Simulating the App Across Apple Mobile Devices

Halo was tested extensively in software simulation and across a wide range of actual iPhone, iPad, and iPod models in both iOS 6 and iOS 7. Through this testing process, the developer ensured that the app would run reliably and without bugs on all Apple devices that a consumer might want to test.
KEY TAKEAWAYS: HALO MOBILE EXPERIENCED 3 KEY ADVANTAGES FROM THE HYBRID NEARSHORE MODEL

VENICE CONSULTING GROUP built an extremely positive working relationship with HALO Mobile, both parties look forward to working on phase two of the app in the near future. VCG significantly reduced pain points and increased efficiency in the development process in three key ways:

LESS PAIN: VCG delivered a synchronized team of experienced and motivated professionals in the same time zone. No more midnight calls, crippling email delays, or broken video conferencing with teams halfway around the world.

REDUCED COSTS: VCG’s Hybrid Nearshore Model saved HALO Mobile up to 40% compared to a full US-resourced team. Plus, they altogether avoided hidden offshore expenses like distant travel, midnight conference calls, and re-work.

ELIMINATED RISKS AND FRUSTRATION: The shared business culture of the Hybrid Nearshore Model meant fewer misunderstandings and more on-time and on target deliverables. VCG’s own U.S. based project manager provided personalized oversight and face-to-face meetings when needed.
LEARN HOW HYBRID NEARSHORE OUTSOURCING CAN WORK FOR YOUR COMPANY

THE HYBRID NEARSHORE MODEL is scalable and highly customizable, making it an excellent option for North American organizations of all sizes. Visit our website to read more about the Hybrid Nearshore Model.

If you are managing a nearshore outsourcing project or managing any displaced team, be sure to also download our “10 Point Checklist for a Successful Nearshoring Project”.
ABOUT VENICE CONSULTING GROUP

VENICE CONSULTING GROUP is an Internet + Mobile application development company specializing in user experience and process optimization. With a valuable combination of regulated industry experience and technical expertise, VCG applies the latest proven technologies to meet our clients’ current objectives and improve their bottom line. VCG offers high-value and low-risk cost savings through its Hybrid Nearshore Model.

The firm has deep industry experience that cross many regulated markets from healthcare to media & entertainment to financial services. Some key firm clients include: AFTRA, American Express with Solver USA, FOX Broadcasting, Pontiac with Digitas, Sony Connect, The California Endowment & TeamOne Advertising for Lexus.

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