# RefineM Rescues a Multi-Million-Dollar Project

When a software development project starts to slide off the rails, certain "symptoms" are common: missed milestones, more defects than anticipated and unproductive finger pointing. For one assistant VP of software development for a national insurance firm, [names withheld in respect to corporate policies]  red flags began flying when his project—a multi-year, multi-million-dollar effort to bring an outsourced function in-house—was about six months away from the implementation date.

The project involved three locations, an outside vendor and a deadline that the sponsors were anxious to hit to avoid re-contracting with the previous vendor—at a substantial price. The stakes were high. "There was a sense that critical aspects of the project were notbeing covered. Business executives were very concerned," said the VP.

He looked no further for project management help than NK Shrivastava, the CEO and Founder of RefineM. "We've worked together on perhaps a dozen projects. NK has a body of knowledge, experience, and processes that he applies succinctly. He cuts through things," he said. "He is not abrasive in any way, but if something needs to be brought up, he will bring it up. If something doesn't need to be dealt with, he moves on. He's very focused."

Shrivastava took over as lead project manager, working with the two in-house project managers. "NK worked hard to determine the remaining work and to institute metrics to get a handle on defects which enabled the vendor to get a good picture of the quality they were delivering," said the VP. "He just really grabbed the reins. There were a number of parts of this project that were off track, and he focused on several things in parallel and brought the project under control in short order."

As one example, he held daily meetings to clarify responsibilities and hold each of the three involved teams (in three different locations) accountable for the work of the day.

Though the project was back on track, NK's planning revealed that the project deadline still would not be met. It had been believed that failure to implement the new system on time would require the company to re-contract for a full year with the current vendor. Then Shrivastava asked a question that had not been explored before: Was there an alternative?

Shrivastava led a team to develop a manual process to cover the company for the three additional months it would take to get the new system into production. In the end, the stop-gap solution resulted in a cost savings of 95% vs. the alternative the company had anticipated, an outcome that pleased the sponsors.

"NK really changed the business executives' outlook," said the VP. "He gave them a much higher level of confidence in the project. Some had worked with him before and knew his reputation. Others had not, and he quickly won them over. For me, once I had NK on board, I didn't worry about things anymore. I knew he'd get it taken care of, and he did."

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- Assistant Vice President of Software Development

**Client Results Summary**
Frustrations were running high when a large, complex software project went off the rails. RefineM took over the project management, instituting best practices that put the project back on course to its successful completion. Though it was too late to hit the delivery deadline, RefineM developed a stop-gap solution to cover the company until the new system under development went into production, at a cost savings of 95% vs. the alternative the executives had anticipated.

**About RefineM LLC**
RefineM helps organizations turn their project management capability into a competitive advantage by carefully listening to needs, helping to implement highly optimized project processes, deploying simple but effective tools and techniques, and training and mentoring project managers and project teams.

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