

SOFTHOUSE  
**CASE  
 STUDY**  
**#2**

NEWSPAPER  
**Softhouse News**

**Softhouse delivers despite budget cut**

**NITA:** THIS is how WE should run ALL our projects

Softhouse delivered a record 100 projects in 2008, despite a 10% budget cut. The company's success was due to its focus on high-margin projects and its ability to manage risk.

The firm also expressed concern that the rise in energy prices will lead to new spending on energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure.

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**Flexibility**

Warning that higher inflation and weaker economic growth could be in store, that is keeping a close eye on the subprime mortgage crisis and recent spike in oil prices.

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**Danish IT and Telecom Agency builds mobile services**

In his testimony, he said that the "act as needed" in order to make sure that it can keep inflation under control as well as maintain "sustainable economic growth."

**Money & Crisis**

Company	Revenue	Profit	Market Cap
Softhouse	100M	10M	100M
Telecom Agency	200M	20M	200M
IT Services	150M	15M	150M
Mobile Services	120M	12M	120M

# Challenge

In January 2009 Denmark's National IT and Telecom Agency (NITA) approached Softhouse with a request to demonstrate the potential of mobile services. The aim of the project was to build on the infrastructure that already existed and to develop new services for the public sector; e.g.:

**1. MapService** is a map application with information about public services. With just a few clicks you can find your nearest hospital, plan your trip to the nearest civic offices, or find and call the children's school.

**2. PollService** makes it easy for you to get feedback. By using a simple voting ap-

plication, you can quickly collect data from fans, customers, employees, etc.

Softhouse's mission was to work with NITA to create the concepts, then design and develop the services and ensure their continued operation. The time frame was tight as the launch would take place only eight months later!

The first task was to analyze the basic requirements, so as to be able to deliver something that NITA could evaluate immediately after an initial short sprint.

# Solution / Approach

NITA and Softhouse were both aware that success would be dependent on certain pre-conditions:

- The project must start as soon as possible because of the fixed delivery date.
- The Softhouse team must work fast, be self-sufficient and deliver rapid results.

- NITA's product owners must communicate their vision and have full authority to make decisions.

To manage the risks a very deliberate strategy was formulated in terms of both project initiation and working process.

**Why did NITA choose Softhouse as a supplier?** Project and product owner Christian Vindinge Rasmussen explains:

- Softhouse could offer super-productive agile teams from day 1, i.e. there was no need for initial training or education.
- Softhouse could deliver a full Scrum team, including Scrum Master.
- Softhouse has in-depth knowledge of other agile methods, in addition to Scrum.
- NITA did not want to be dependent on a

single supplier and already had two of Denmark's largest suppliers on board. By engaging Softhouse, they would be able to compare their current suppliers with a new player.

- Softhouse is not Danish, and NITA wanted to try working with a foreign partner.
- Softhouse's skills cover the entire creative process, from initial analysis to final implementation – skills that would very soon prove beneficial to the project.

# Adaptations

Three weeks into the project, NITA's project office declared that "[they] had never seen a team deliver as quickly as Softhouse". The team had even worked so effectively that the backlog for the first service was soon completed. At the same time new obstacles meant that some earlier concepts had to be rejected. With the help of part of the team, NITA's product owner quickly drew up new guidelines while the rest of the Softhouse

team completed the remaining requirements. The next big change was that the project budget was cut by 33%. Since the Softhouse team had delivered fully functional increments, they could respond to this change without jeopardizing the whole. The result was that NITA received two of the three services completed and delivered without additional cost, despite the reduced budget relatively late in the project.

## Results

On September 1st, a month and a half before the original deadline, NITA was able to launch its three services to the Danish public: a map service, a voting service and a mobile portal (the mobile portal [m.borger.dk](http://m.borger.dk) was developed by another project). Source code and documentation were released as open source at [Digitaliser.dk](http://Digitaliser.dk), and the services were made available for general use.

Both parties are extremely satisfied with the way the collaboration worked, particularly the way Softhouse has been able to offer support throughout the process, from initial development of concepts, through analysis, development and implementation. Moreover, both sides worked in an agile and flexible manner which was able to cope with a budget reduction of 33% without compromising the project!

**T-1 week:**  
briefing &  
team-building.

**T+0:**  
project  
initialization,  
installation of development  
environment.

**T +1 week:**  
first delivery,  
a mobile  
application;  
NITA carry  
out tests  
and give  
feedback.

**T+2 weeks:**  
case backlog  
and goals  
ready for  
service 1.

**T+3 weeks:**  
the team is  
strengthened,  
the work starts.

**T+8 weeks:**  
delivery of  
the finished  
product.

## PROJECT FACTS

### Customer

Denmark's National IT and Telecom Agency – working to secure the country's IT infrastructure.

### Problems

In just eight months, three mobile services for the Danish general public were to be developed, from concept to finished product and implementation.

### Solution

Softhouse supplied a complete Scrum team that could work at full speed from day 1 and support the customer throughout the development process.

### Technology

ASP.NET, Symbian S60, iPhone, Android, Java ME

### Development Tools

Cruise Control / SVN (automated builds)  
TDD / BDD with automated tests (NUnit)  
Selenium (automatic acceptance tests)  
GeoServer 1.6.5 (geospatial data)

### Process / methodology

Prince-2, Scrum, XP  
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team



## ARE YOU OUR NEXT PROJECT SUCCESS?

- Are you looking for a project team that can deliver immediate and complete functionality?
- Would you like to be able to modify specifications during the project without incurring extra costs?
- Are you looking for control over your project?

## What SoftHouse Offers

### Software development

We develop software for our customers and offer everything from hour-based consulting services to whole delivery teams working with agile methods.

### Business improvement

We work on improving our customers' operations so that they can provide more customer

value. The improvements are often a matter of introducing agile methods or improving processes according to Lean principles.

### Education

We regularly offer training courses, workshops and conferences, providing both an introduction to and specialization in Lean and Agile.