PROOFFICE GRUPPEN **- Case Story**
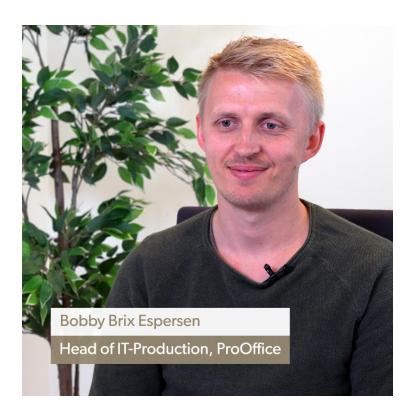
ProOffice Group is a B2B company primarily revolved around the B2G sector. They provide training in Office products

Location:
Skopje, North Macedonia

Bobby Brix Espersen

Head of IT-Production, ProOffice

"

In the last couple of years, we've really built a good team; an efficient and high performing software development team that is now consisting of 20 people, with a good range of different experiences and good people. So, we wouldn't have been where we are today if we would only go by trying to recruit in Denmark.

Bobby Brix Espersen
Head of IT-production | ProOffice Group

20
Developers

8
Technologies:
VB .Net, C#, .Net Core, React, JavaScript, Azure Cloud, JQuery, MS SQL

9
Years with INSCALE

"It is not just a person that will **'sit and do coding'** that you employ."

About ProOffice

ProOffice Group is a B2B company primarily revolved around the B2G sector. Since 2001, the ProOffice Group has been engaged in Internet and Software Development. They provide training in Office products as well as major administrative systems, such as electronic case and document management. Over the years, they have gained great expertise from the thousands of users who have received their training, used their e-learning and software tools.

In this case, we meet Bobby Brix Espersen, the head of IT-production at ProOffice, who will principally talk about Plan2Learn, which is one of the subsidiaries of the ProOffice Group. Bobby explains, that "Plan2Learn specifically is very much revolved around software development and creating a platform for rolling out educational material and learning activities". Plan2Learn stems from the great expertise and professional experience that characterizes ProOffice's entire history.

The Challenge – Finding qualified IT resources in Denmark

In 2014, ProOffice started a dialogue with INSCALE, due to a need for software resources: "we needed, I would say, more high-level software engineers than we could attract here in Denmark", Bobby Brix explains. However, for ProOffice it wasn't just about finding an experienced person, but also: "someone with the right kind of personality. We needed someone who could be our future country lead, we needed someone who could be our ambassador; and help also attract local software engineers in the future.", he continues. A need for a partner that could help establish a tech-

hub outside of Denmark due to pay and salary pressure in the Danish market, and as Bobby says: "the fact that it's hard to find qualified IT resources in Denmark", made ProOffice look outside of Denmark and towards "an outsourcing country, and that happened to be Macedonia with INSCALE.", Bobby explains.

Needing the full package

Looking towards North Macedonia as a potential location and INSCALE as a potential partner, the first candidate proved the most challenging because, as Bobby justifies, "we needed the full package so to say, for our first candidate down there". With Plan2Learn being cobbled to the Microsoft technologies, ProOffice needed software resources that could develop within "C# and .Net Core as the primary framework", Bobby clarifies.

The Solution - Scalable team of 4 developers in North Macedonia

Having 6-7 developers in Denmark at the time, ProOffice decided to jump into a tech-hub solution in North Macedonia: "We tried it out with INSCALE and for the first 3-4 years we were in the range of 2-4 developers at INSCALE. I don't think we were ready as an organization to scale it up further, but once we got closer to what we needed to do as an organization, but also INSCALE learning about us and our needs, it kind of took pace and began to scale a lot faster way than in the early years. In the last 4 years we've gone from 5 people to 20, and we have a solid foundation to scale even more if we want to", Bobby Brix tells. However, being challenged along the way because "we were a very inexperienced company in terms of software development, especially abroad, so we didn't know what we were going into back then", finding the full package candidate proved successful: "we started out with a couple of developers that we believed in, one of those developers is our country lead today".

North Macedonia satisfying needs

Bobby explains that the country can satisfy a Danish client's needs: "because a lot of them are well educated in Macedonia, so the English is typically very good. They are also in the same time zone, they work the same hours as we do in Denmark, maybe a small thing but a very important thing. Culturally it may be a bit different in terms of a hierarchical management style, that they practice in Macedonia, than we do in Denmark where we are very open minded and equal, and 'the boss' door is always open'. But they seem to thrive in that environment as well. So, I would say it's a good place to be, but it's tough, but I believe almost all markets to get IT resources is tough".

Beyond the storm

Learning along the way and fighting through challenges as an organization, ProOffice is "now at a place where we are comfortable having people working outside of the Danish office. But it is a lot of tough work, a lot of obstacles in the early years where you must build the organization for it, it's not just about 'buying an IT resource', if you want to maximize their skillset and their potential, you really need to work with it, and give them the opportunities to excel", Bobby explains.

The Result - A robust team scaling from 4 to 20 developers

Commencing the partnership with 4 people, today, ProOffice has 20 software developers with INSCALE: "I would say that it has helped a lot and improved our service a lot. We wouldn't have been where we are today without INSCALE and our Macedonian employees. They've been a huge part of our journey and process, the last five years especially. We spent some years in the beginning getting our footsteps right in Macedonia, and

learning how to be an organization that outsources, and have people who speak English daily, where you must communicate in a different way than you would normally do. But, in the last couple of years, we've really built a good team; an efficient and high performing software development team that is now consisting of 20 people, with a good range of different experiences and good people. It's really the experienced ones that bring something to the table when we talk IT and software engineering. So, we wouldn't have been where we are today if we would only go by trying to recruit in Denmark. So, INSCALE brought both skill and experience, but they also brought speed to our scaling", Bobby explains, while giving advice to other companies considering sourcing for the first time: "I would advise them to think hard about what they expect of the people they will employ. It is not just a person that will 'sit and do coding' that you employ. You need to be very tough on the communication skills because it is paramount that you guys understand each other when you try to express a message. If you are not able to get that kind of connection to an employee, you will fail", Bobby advises.

Communication is key

He also points out, that documentation and task management is of utmost importance: "Before we started, we were a lot of start-ups, small development houses doing the documentation and task descriptions, which was a bit unstructured; mails, word documents, maybe not everything in English and so on. When you outsource and you are not in the office with people all the time, there is a lot higher demand for well written documentation, and very clear directions for the people. The spoken English, the communication and your approach to work structured with the tasks that you need to have done, are paramount.", Bobby concludes.

INSCALE

Our Model

Insourcing and Scaling – in short "INSCALING". We do strategic insourcing, delivered through an unconventional and scalable captive model. INSCALE is neither a traditional outsourcing nor body "shop" for project needs. The dedicated development team with INSCALE is an integral part of your organisation and work exclusively for you. We never share resources amongst our clients. What you see is what you get! We call our model Build, Operate and Transfer – with a transparent pricing structure.

CONTACT OUR SALES DEPARTMENT

Scaling your business starts with one conversation

📱 **+351 96 285 8385**

✉️ **sales@inscale.net**