



## **OFF SHORING – ENSURING A STRATEGIC RETAIL FOCUS**

**Offshore solutions offer far more than cheap and reasonably cheerful software development. Adopt that position and the whole basis of an offshore solution is wrong. The result is often a poorly managed operation that does not deliver effective solutions, has difficulty in finding the right skill set and a constant management problem.**

Retail systems experts PMC operates an India-based subsidiary PMC India (PMC-I), to offer retailers an offshore service designed to drive out the problems and inefficiencies of traditional offshore solutions. The difference is PMC-I combines retail industry specialisation with offshore cost savings to provide a practical proposition for medium-sized retailers.

Paul Mason, CEO of PMC believes in today's financial climate taking the offshore option is the right solution and the sensible option for many retailers. However, he argues that success is down to finding an effectively managed, focused solution.

"Traditionally, retailers were wary of offshore solutions because most lacked any retail focus. Also many retailers suspected the quality of software was questionable. If there is any truth in the suspicion it lies in the way the process was managed and controlled rather than the concept itself."

"The argument that offshoring results in poorly delivered software has its roots in the generic offshore approach and the belief that generic code is fit for all purposes," states Mason. "Of course, there are instances where that works, but rarely in a retail environment. Off shoring is more than a cheap tactical solution. It is strategic and must be based on an integrated, strategic approach built on detailed understanding of the retail environment."

"Additionally, successful offshore solutions need joined-up thinking and execution. It is not a 'fit and forget' solution. The link between the UK and the offshore country must be process driven, integrated and joined front to back, only then can you expect the solution to work."

By definition, most offshore solutions are thousands of miles away, especially if you consider the most popular offshore destination, India. You cannot simply export control of their software development or support to India and expect it to work. You have to control it from the UK and manage it accordingly.

Mason continues: "To gain the cost advantages you must approach the concept in the right way. Recruit technically excellent people but – and this is important – teach them to be retail experts as well. The result is people who understand IT and its retail market application. Retail customers expect their service providers to have intimate knowledge of the retail business, the retailer's needs and the solutions to answer those needs. If you expect to get that from a generic offshore operation think again. That's because most operate to cut costs rather than deliver against specific needs."

Traditionally, cost reduction is the driver in off shoring, but retailers need high performance software and the added advantage the right offshore provider can bring. And that's the key point – partnering with the right provider - one that understands the offshore culture and environment, and understands the retail market. That point is far too important to ignore yet many offshore providers offer generic solutions not the solutions retailers need.

Mason states: "The important point to recognise is PMC's approach. To paraphrase a well-known catchphrase – 'it's something completely different'. It's a UK retail systems business building a retail-focused offshore service in India. It's not an Indian business exporting a generic service to the UK. It's a business delivering strategic retail-focused solutions from a retail-based understanding. That's the difference."

**To find out more about PMC's Offshore Solutions and Services please visit [www.paulmasonconsulting.co.uk](http://www.paulmasonconsulting.co.uk) or contact PMC on 01235 521900**