

# Study of Client Experience in Digital Development



2024. Analytical report

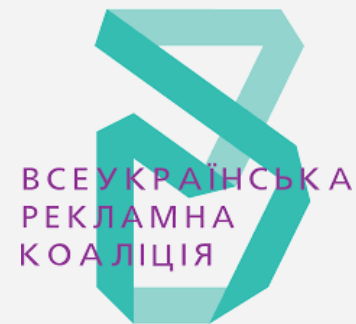
Prepared by Factum Group in partnership with Digital Developers Committee, VRK  
Ukraine and IAB Ukraine

The study was initiated by the Digital Developers Committee with the support of the research company Factum Group, All-Ukrainian Advertising Coalition (VRK) and IAB Ukraine

**to assess the experience of cooperation with digital developers,  
understanding the needs and challenges faced  
by companies when working with developers**



DIGITAL DEVELOPERS  
Committee



## Commentary from the initiators and analytical partner of the study



We are pleased to present to you an analytical report on the research of client experience in digital development. This study, the first of its kind in Ukraine, was initiated by the Digital Development Committee to assess the experience of cooperation with digital developers, understand the needs and challenges faced by companies when working with them.

Digital development is one of the important and strong points of the Ukrainian economy. Our projects and products are highly competitive in the global market. Every year, technologies and innovations are improving, projects are becoming more complex, which in turn requires the development of project management skills, management and process understanding not only for developers but also for clients.

Research and systematisation of customer experience is extremely important for the development of the digital development market in Ukraine. Only by understanding current trends, expectations, and challenges we can create conditions for improving the quality of services provided and strengthening trust between clients and developers.

Our research has shown that success in this market is only possible if all participants are involved in the process - both clients and contractors - actively cooperate. By working together, we can create an environment where every project is successful and our clients are satisfied. Our committee is launching a series of measures aimed at improving this interaction, and I believe it will soon yield tangible results.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this study. I hope that the results will be a useful tool for all of us, and we will continue to work on improving our services.

**Mushtina Irina**  
Head of the Digital Developers Committee



Numerous studies by Factum Group show that digital is becoming dominant in all areas and is the main driver of business growth. Crisis periods not only transform the digital user experience, but also give impetus to its increasing penetration into all areas of life.

Given this trend, customer experience research in digital development is particularly important. It allows you to gain an understanding of customer needs and expectations, identify key moments of interaction, and improve the quality of the final product.

This research provides us with valuable insights that help us improve customer satisfaction and create competitive digital solutions that meet today's market demands.

**Petrova Olena**  
Factum Director



# METHODOLOGY

## Target audience of the study:

Representatives of companies that have experience of having contractors in website or mobile app development projects. A detailed profile of the audience is shown on the right side of the slide

## Method and sample:

Online survey,  
Sample=90 respondents,  
Survey duration: ~ 10 min

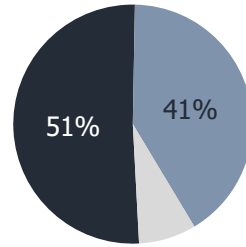
## Survey period:

March - April 2024

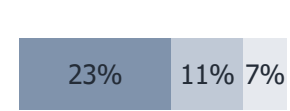
## Approach to analysis:

To understand the current trends in the digital development market, the study focuses on analyzing the client's most recent experience with developing a website or mobile application. The profile of the latest project is shown on the right side of the slide

## Audience profile

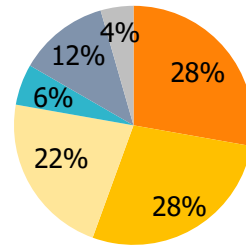


- Big corporate business
- Other companies
- Did not specify a company



- Small and medium-sized businesses
- Governmental and NGOs
- Agencies

**Big corporate business:** marketing directors, other representatives of marketing departments and executives of companies that are regular participants or jury members of the Effie Awards Ukraine, as well as advertisers who participate in the annual industry research of the VRK, namely Best Marketing Teams and Advertiser's Choice



- Owners/partners/CEOs
- Brand and marketing managers
- Other positions

- Marketing directors/executives
- Digital
- Did not specify a position

## Profile of the latest project



- Website development project
- Mobile application development project
- One project where there was development of both a website and an application



- Development is still in progress
- Development completed within the last 12 months
- The development was completed more than 1 year ago
- The development was completed more than 2 years ago

# CONTENT

1



## STEP1. Search for a partner

- Which developers to work with?
- Where to look for information about developers?
- By what criteria to choose a partner?
- What about timing and pricing?

2



## STEP2. Interaction

- What is the level of satisfaction with the result? How is communication with the developers rated?
- Did they meet the timeline and budget? What problems were faced?
- How is data security and protection ensured?

3



## STEP3. Support

- What documents, statistics and analytics were provided after the development was completed?
- What support was offered and were there any difficulties in updating or modifying the digital product after its launch?

4



## BAD EXPERIENCE

- What does the most unsuccessful experience of interaction with development companies look like?

5



## PERFECT EXPERIENCE

- How do customers want the process of cooperation with development companies to work in the future?

# Step 1

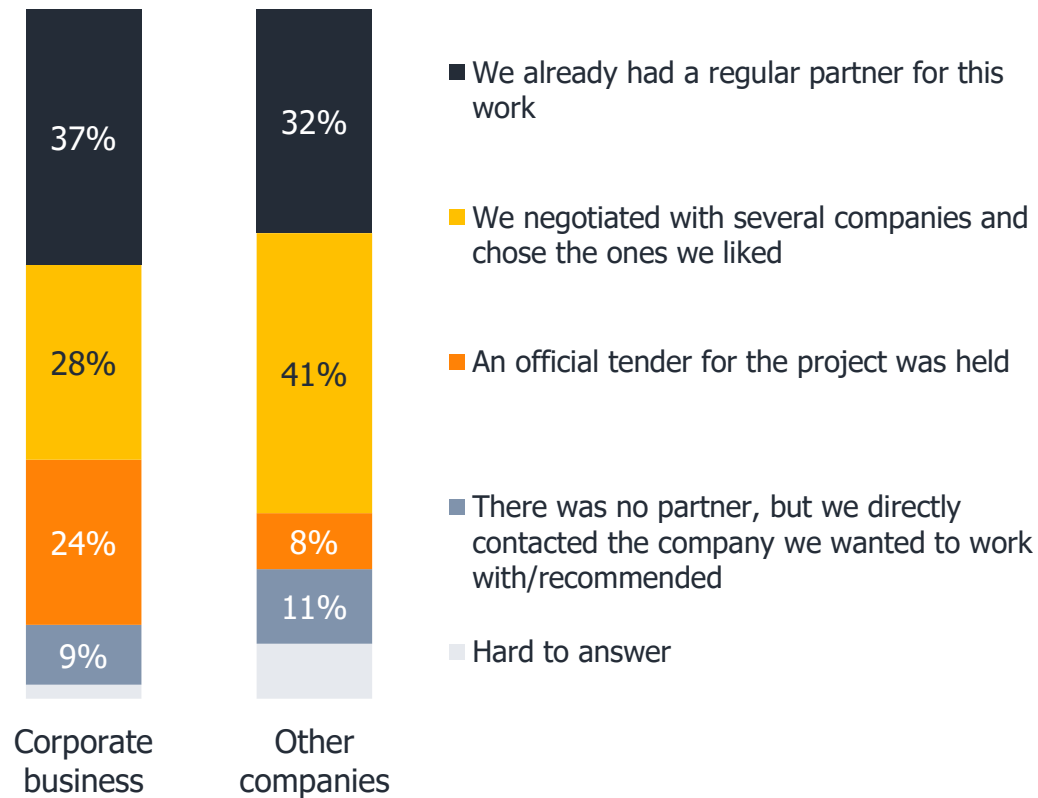
## Searching and selecting a partner

- Which developers to work with?
- Where to look for information about developers?
- By what criteria to choose a partner?
- What about timing and pricing?



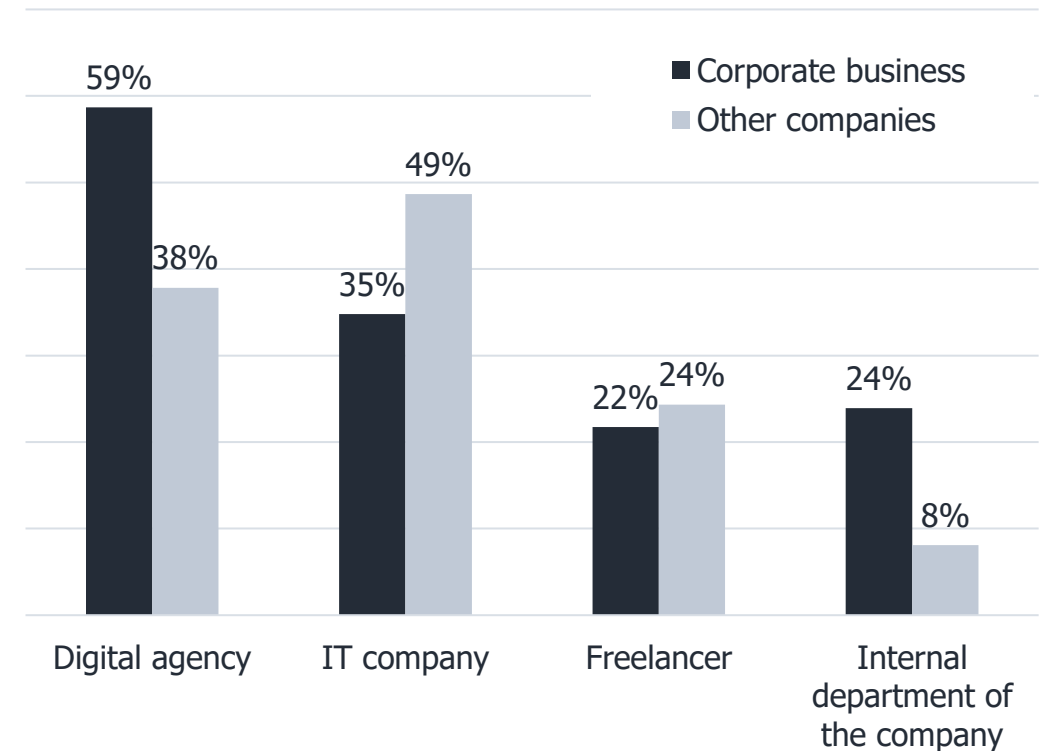
## How a developer is selected

In one third of cases, when a digital development task arose, procuring entities turned to a regular partner with whom they had already cooperated in this area. In other situations, when they do not have a permanent partner, customers negotiate with several companies, with the share of formal tenders being relatively small, especially for smaller companies. Large corporate businesses most often cooperate with digital agencies, and somewhat less often with IT companies. It is worth noting that freelancers are also used quite often (up to a quarter of cases).



Corporate business, N=46  
Other companies, N=37

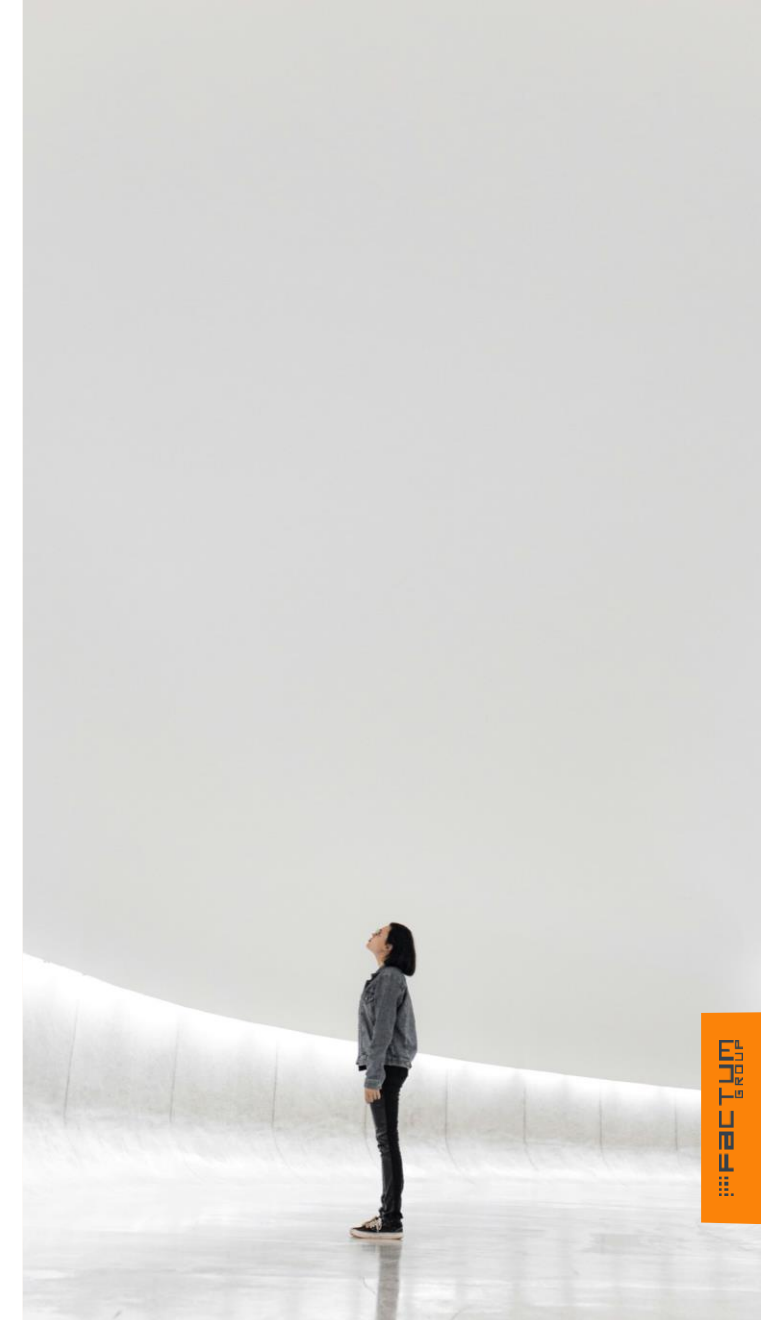
## Who carried out the development



Question: How did you choose a development partner for this project? Who did you work with in this project, i.e. who was directly involved in the development?

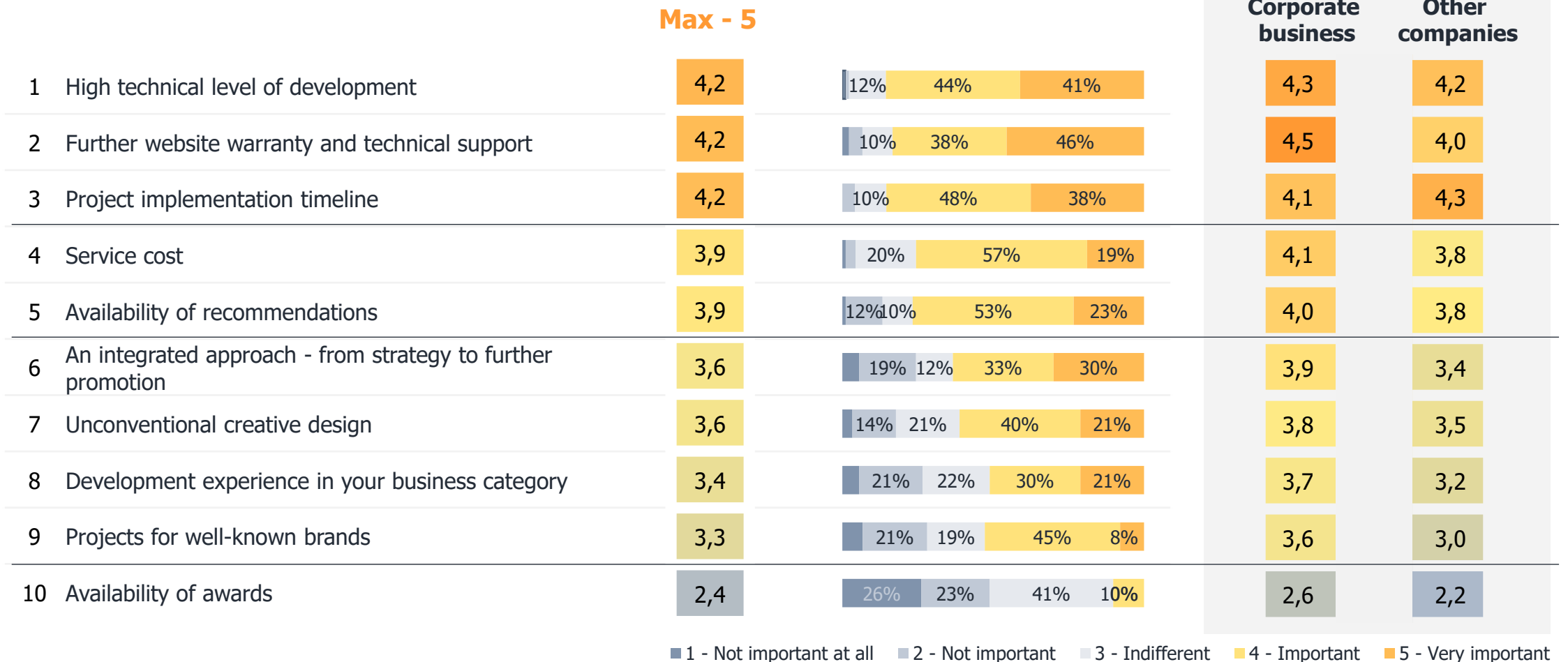
## Where information is sought

Recommendations from market colleagues are key sources in the search for development partners. About a third of corporate customers say they generally follow the development market and focus on relevant cases. The peculiarity of corporate business is that they use more sources of information on average and less often contact developers through personal acquaintances.



# What are the criteria for choosing a developer

In addition to references, the top 5 criteria for choosing a developer include: high technical level, further project support, timing, and cost of services. On average, corporate businesses consider more criteria when choosing a development partner: the availability of projects from well-known brands, relevant experience, non-standard creative design, and an integrated approach from strategy to further promotion.



# Approach to calculations and deadlines

In most cases, the budget is not provided in a generalized way, but with details for each stage, or even with additional details within each stage. As for the timeline, it is quite common to just provide a general timeline for the project.



- Detailed timing with an understanding of the duration of each stage
- General timing of the project, without detailing each stage
- Timing was not discussed/hard to answer



- Detailed budget with a clear pricing structure for each stage
- The budget is provided in stages/blocks, without significant detail within
- Total project cost provided
- Hard to answer



## Pricing features

In terms of pricing, the fixed cost per project is somewhat prevalent. Hourly rates are also common, but not for the project, mainly for individual tasks. In general, the pricing system is clear to customers and does not raise any questions.



■ Fixed price per project   ■ Combined system   ■ Hourly rate



- Everything is clear and understandable in terms of pricing
- Rather clear pricing
- Rather, it is not clear - there are questions about pricing
- Hard to answer



## Step 2

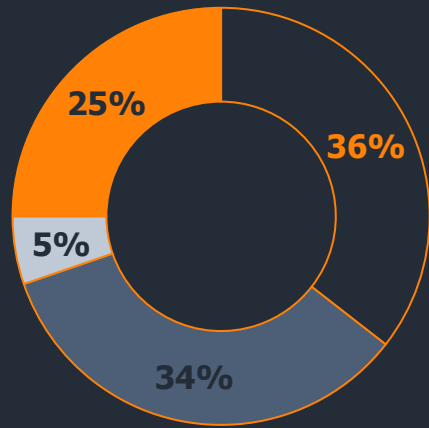
# Interaction with contractors

- Are you satisfied with the result?
- How is communication with the developer rated?
- Did they meet the timeline and budget?
- What problems were faced during interaction?
- How is data security and protection ensured?



# 75%

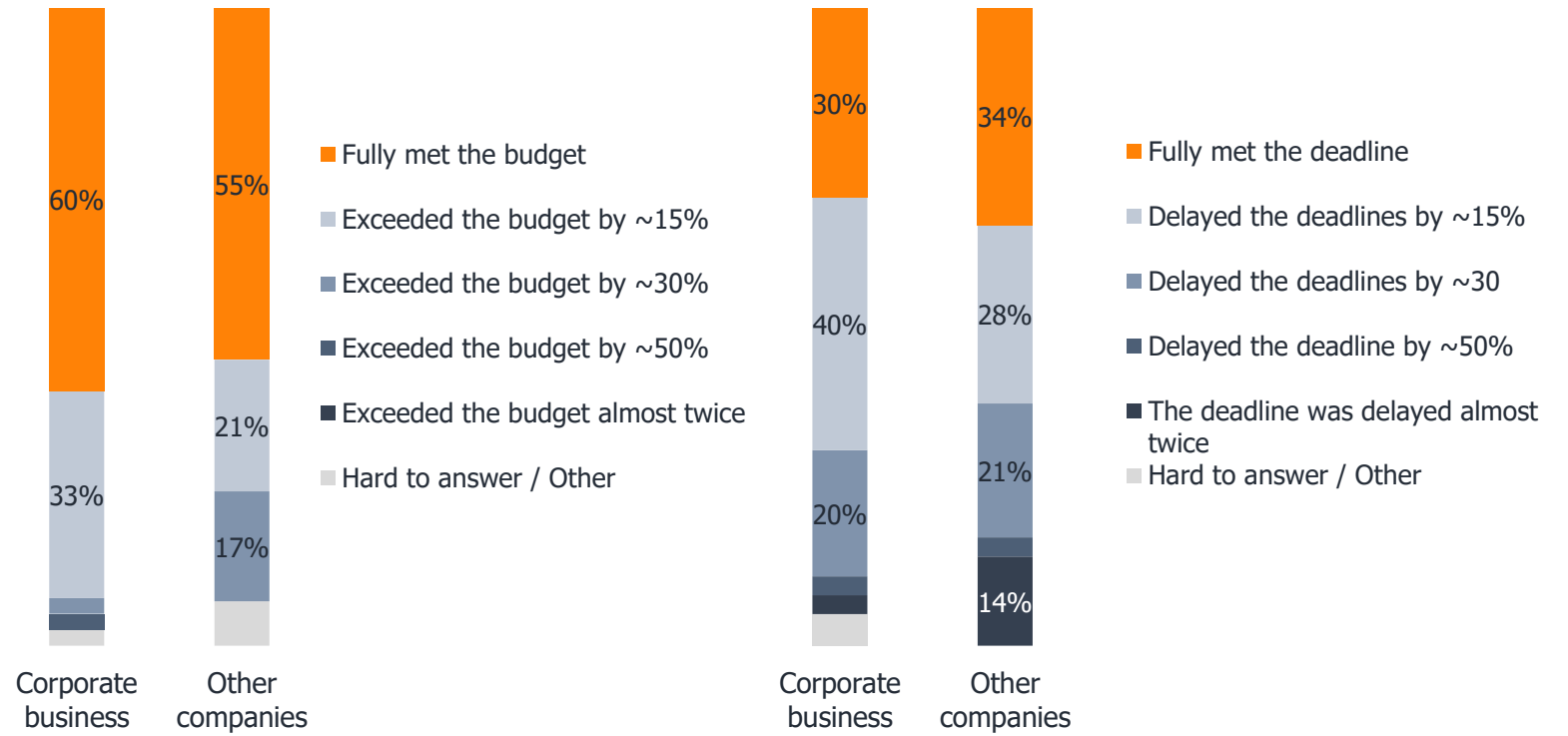
did not meet either the planned timeline or the budget



- Did not meet the budget or the timeline
- Did not meet the deadline
- Did not meet the budget
- Fully met the budget and timeline

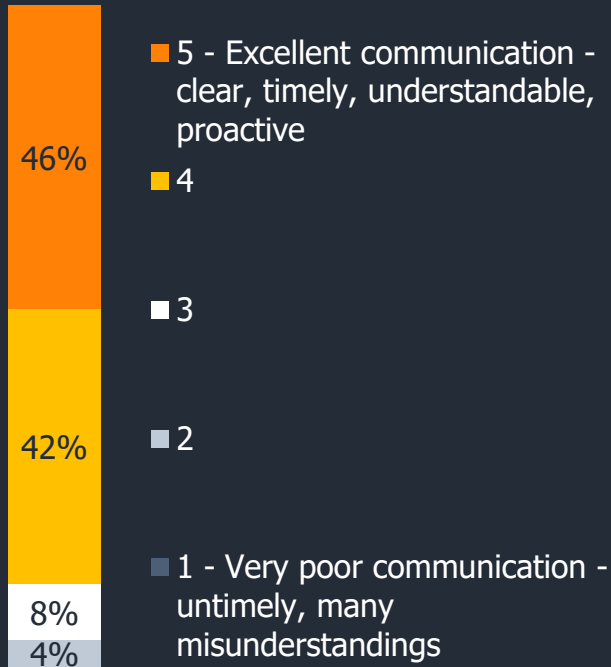
## Meeting deadlines and budgets

In most cases, project implementation lasts longer than the previously agreed upon timeframe. Budget overruns are less common. Significant budget overruns are more common for smaller companies than for corporate businesses.



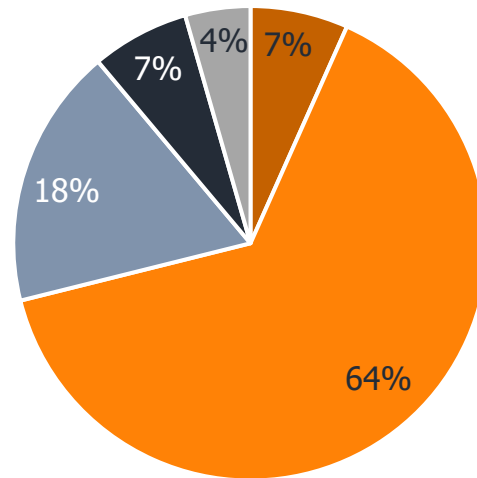
# 88%

are satisfied with communication with the developer



## Satisfaction with the result

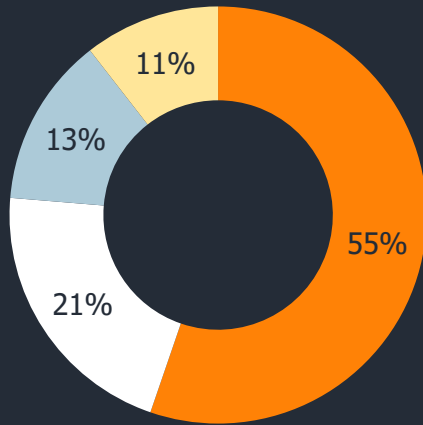
In most cases, the development result met the customer's expectations, sometimes even exceeding them. In a quarter of cases, customers were not satisfied with the result. The next slide shows the technical and design challenges faced by the clients



- The result exceeded expectations
- The result met my expectations
- The result is slightly worse than I expected
- The result was much worse than my expectations
- Hard to answer

# 21%

have experienced  
technical issues



- There were no design/technical issues
- Technical issues
- Design issues
- Management issues

## Technical problems



### Bugs, speed and other errors in the site's operation

Customers who encountered technical problems mentioned such difficulties as bugs, problems with filters on the website, difficulties with indexing in search engines, slow speed, lack of tests, problems with adaptation on different gadgets, etc. In general, technical problems were quite specific in each case.



"Improving the work of various forms, layout, content system, search engine optimisation"



### Integration problems

Among the technical challenges, the issue of system compatibility and integration, which has been repeatedly raised by various companies, is worth highlighting.



"Compatibility of integrated systems"

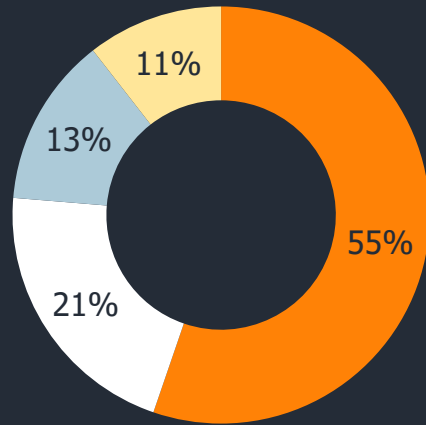
"Integration with third-party systems, but everything is solvable"

"Connection with the company's internal systems"

"Linking new and old architecture"

# 13%

have encountered  
design issues



- There were no design/technical issues
- Technical issues
- Design issues
- Management issues

## Design problems



### Didn't like the creative solution

Part of the audience faced a situation when they did not like the website design at the output, for example, too minimalistic, template, without a wow effect or did not match the style of the brand/company

“They promised cool animations, an unconventional approach, but the results were pretty standard”

“Understanding the depth of design that the business required. Business is not standard”

“Lack of understanding of the visualisation style» , « very minimalist design”



### Difficult to implement the design due to technical limitations

Separately, design problems included situations when a certain creative solution could not be implemented due to technical limitations or when the chosen design affected the website's performance (e.g., speed, user friendliness)

“A certain design solution that was proposed for the news illustrations proved to be difficult to implement. If I had foreseen this point at the beginning, I would have insisted on a different design solution”

“The proposed design of the main page was actually difficult to implement due to technical limitations”



## Problem solving

Most customers had not encountered any technical or design problems. In general, every third participant mentioned the presence of technical or design problems. As for the ways to solve problems, three scenarios are distinguished:

1. **The most common scenario:** problems were solved in a working mode, without complications

### Less common:

2. Due to the problematic situations, a conflict situation arose, but the problems were resolved
3. The problems were never resolved, which in some cases led to the termination of the cooperation and the change of developer

In addition to design and technical problems, some respondents mentioned problems with management, communication, understanding of the specifics of the business and the terms of reference. Read more about the problems faced by customers in the section «Bad experiences»



“They responded quickly enough and offered solutions to the problem”

“It was quite open to new needs and changes. As for the problems, it's hard to say, because there were no major ones”

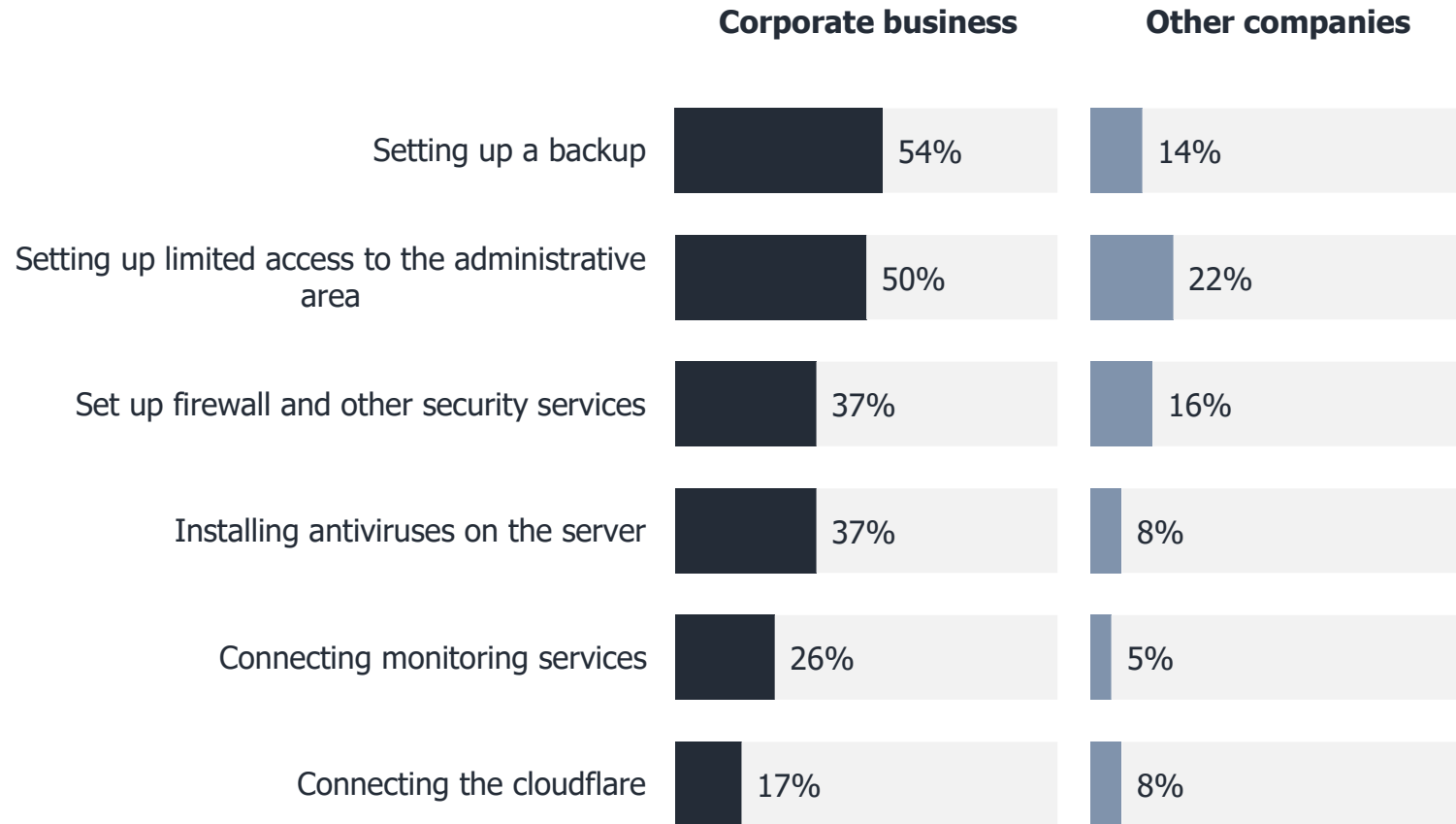
“It adapted to the style of our company. But we paid for all the alterations, ideas, and long approvals”

“They tried to help, but generally did not admit their guilt and were not very active in helping to resolve the issue”

“They said: ‘You misunderstood’ + terminated cooperation with the manager who promised something different from what was delivered”

# Security and data protection

One of the key differences between development for corporate businesses and smaller companies is the number of steps taken to guarantee the security and protection of data in the project



## Step 3

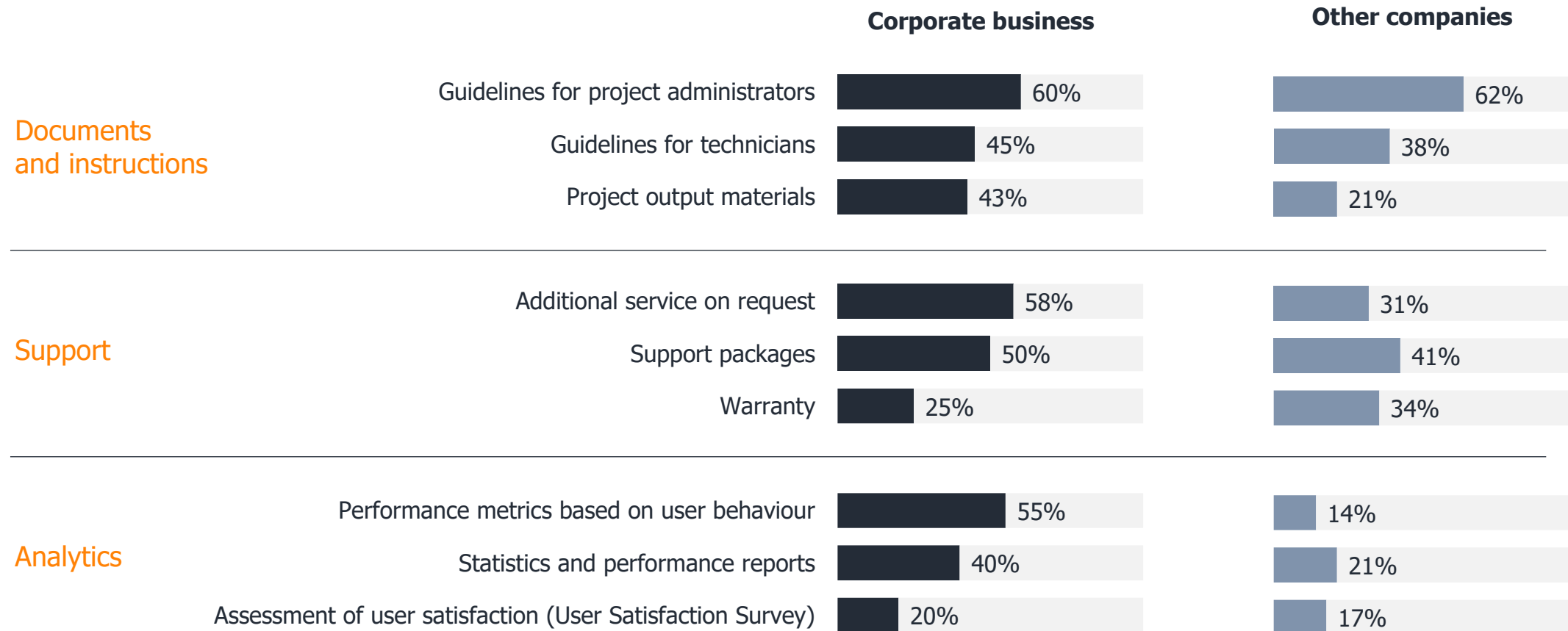
# Post-project support

- What documents, statistics and analytics were provided after the development was completed?
- What support was offered and were there any difficulties in updating or modifying the digital product after its launch?
- Was a User Satisfaction Survey conducted?



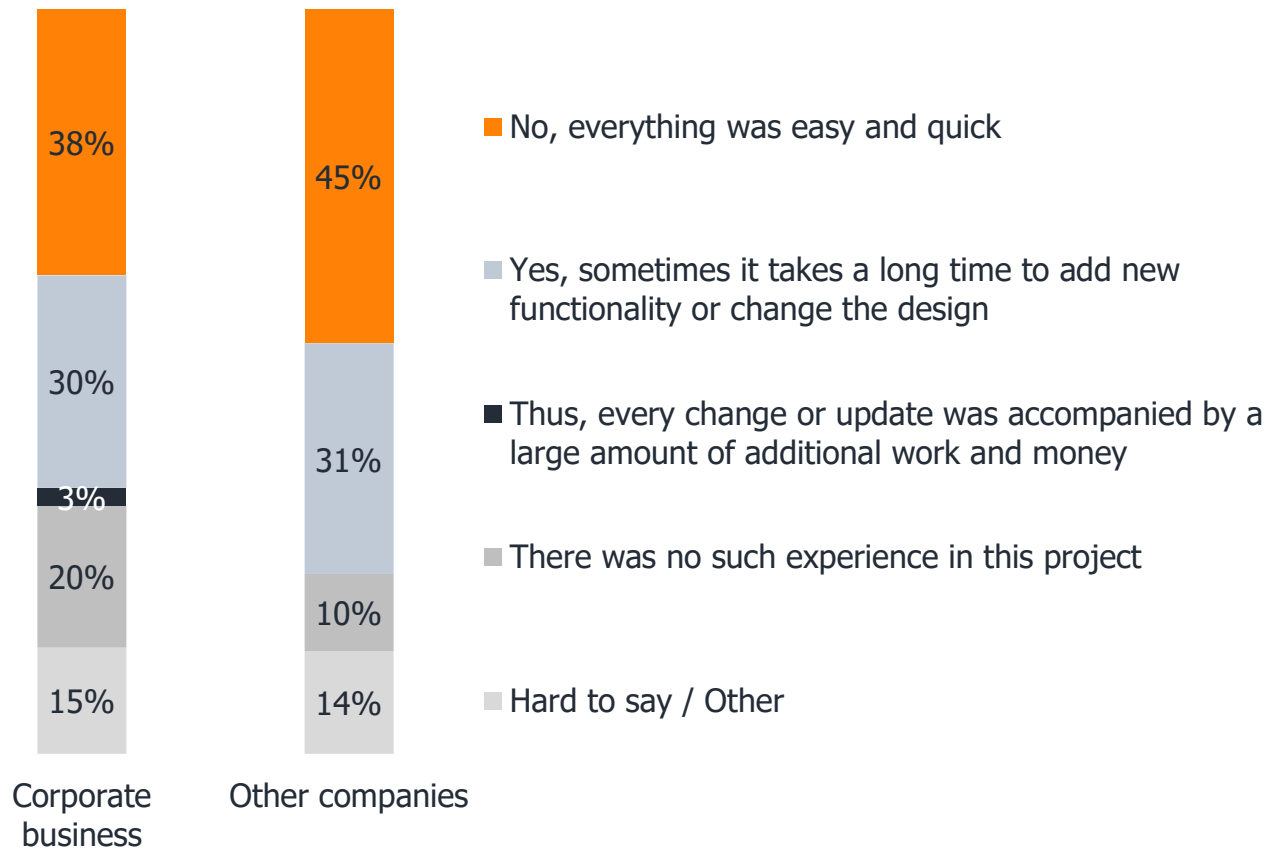
## Post-launch processes

Another significant difference between development for corporate businesses and smaller companies is the post-launch processes. This is especially true when it comes to providing analytics: performance metrics and productivity reports. It is worth paying special attention to the assessment of user satisfaction - only 1 in 5 projects was accompanied by such analytics (including corporate business)



## Post-launch updates and modifications

Among the companies that had to update or modify a digital product after its launch, either they say that it was easy and quick, or that certain changes took a long time. Situations where changes were accompanied by a large amount of additional work or money are rare



“There were difficulties from time to time, but the agency was in touch almost 24/7”

“Follow-up support was more difficult than we expected, and there were no instructions to ensure that we could safely transfer information to the new contractor”

## Specifics of working with different developers

Although the study is aimed at identifying general trends in the field of digital development and has a limited sample, it allows us to trace certain patterns in terms of interaction with native contractors. The specifics of interaction in projects, considering who exactly was the developer, are discussed in more detail below:

### Digital agencies:



Digital agencies are somewhat more likely to choose companies for which an **important selection criteria is the availability of projects for well-known brands**. In addition, projects implemented with digital agencies have **more active post-launch processes**, such as statistics and performance reports, analytics in terms of user behavior, and user satisfaction surveys.

### IT companies:



IT companies are somewhat more likely to choose those companies for which an **important selection criteria is a subsequent website warranty and technical support**. In projects implemented with IT companies, **a warranty and post-launch support package were more often provided**.

### Freelancer:



While working with freelancers is generally very similar to working with digital agencies and IT companies in terms of contractor selection criteria or post-launch processes, there is a pattern **that projects completed by freelancers had the lowest completion rates on time and on budget**. Also, **a smaller proportion of clients rated the result as meeting their expectations**. It is worth noting that although work with freelancers is rated lower on average, the success of a project largely depends on the professionalism and competence of a particular partner.

## Bad experience cases

- What does the most unsuccessful experience of interaction with development companies look like?



# 80%

have had problems/ bad experiences in digital development at least once



Only **20%** have never had a negative experience

## Bad experiences faced by customers

1

### Low-quality product at the output

- incompetence of developers
- failure to fulfil agreements
- unfinished product
- requires large-scale improvements



"The project for 3 months was delayed for 3 years, and at the end was simply buried"

"The site turned out to be too complicated for users, which led to a number of improvements"

"The developed product was difficult to implement or required significant investment to maintain"

"The worst thing is when a contractor promises and then fails to deliver/excuses itself"

2

### Negligent management

- misunderstandings, poor communication
- failure to meet deadlines
- change in the team of key developers
- problems with document flow



"Communication. The account manager can not have understood the specifics of the development and the deadlines"

"When a key developer drops out of a project"

"When the developer motivates the change by saying that "they are award winners and know how to do it"

"There was a case when a company took advantage of our lack of experience in website development, communication was not transparent, deadlines were stretched, and the price was ultimately too high for this project"

Question: Speaking not about this particular project, but about website and mobile app development in general, what was your worst experience or challenge that you faced? (open-ended question)

# Bad experiences faced by customers

3

## Problems of follow-up support

- lack of instructions
- difficulties in transferring the project to a new contractor
- difficulty and sometimes impossibility of improvements or any changes



“Termination of relations after the product launch and the absence of the development company as a permanent partner for support and further development. Problem with finding a new contractor to support/develop a ready-made product developed by other developers”

“The follow-up support was more difficult than we expected, and there were no instructions to hand over to the new contractor”

4

## Technical problems

- complexity of integration with other systems
- lack of cybersecurity
- problems in the operation of individual elements/modules



“The inability to upload heavy multimedia content to the site without interfering with size and weight optimization”

“It’s hard to set up analytics without “killing” the mobile app”

“Partial impossibility of combining third-party systems with our development. This is reinforced by the inability/unwillingness of the developers of such systems to change anything in their systems. This makes it impossible to get 100% of the result”

5

## Problems on the customer's side

- changes in goals, terms of reference
- insufficient level of technical knowledge and development process
- long approvals with the internal team



“We are a very complex client. So, rather, the companies’ experience of working with us was unsuccessful))”

“All the problems were on our (the customer’s) side”

“Lack of in-house technical knowledge and understanding of the development process”

“The biggest problem is when I’m responsible for website development, my customer is an internal client, and they can’t decide what they want”

Question: Speaking not about this particular project, but about website and mobile app development in general, what was your worst experience or challenge that you faced? (open-ended question)

# Perfect experience

- How do customers want the process of cooperation with development companies to work in the future?



# Understanding the client's business

Customers often emphasise that successful project implementation requires developers **to be more involved in their business, understand the client's business processes**, and sometimes even emphasise the integration of the development team into the customer's company or the involvement of a business analyst on the part of the developer. After all, this will facilitate better coordination, mutual understanding and achievement of the desired results.



"For the contractor to understand my business and look at the website through the eyes of my client"

"Greater understanding of the business process on the client side"

"I would integrate the partner's team into our business for the duration of the project"

"Expansion of the project team by the development contractor to include a separate Business Analyst position"

"In my opinion, it is important to fully immerse the development team in the context of the project, analyse the brief/tasks from the developers' point of view, followed by expertise, recommendations, analysis"



Question: Based on your experience, how would you like to see the process of cooperation with development companies work in the future? What would you like to improve? (open-ended question)

# Quality project management

In addition to the fact that customers want developers to understand the specifics of their business, it is quite common to wish for **more effective project management by the developer**. They relate to the organization of work, reporting, as well as responsibility and compliance with plans. The main goal is to ensure transparency, structure and responsibility in the process of implementing projects, which makes it possible to clearly outline at what stage the project is, what are the next steps and whether everything corresponds to the initial agreements.



"Understanding the goal, each part, priority, one person is responsible for the final product and its further life and development"

"Better plan-actual analysis of project progress"

"Transparency at all stages, expert assessment and assistance with the indication of all threat factors and options for solving problems from the developer company"

"A clear understanding of the terms of reference, questions asked before starting work. Adherence to deadlines and budget"



# Meeting deadlines

Meeting deadlines is another aspect that was repeatedly mentioned by the study participants in their wishes for improving the digital development process. **Realistic project deadlines** also depend on the customer, as noted by some participants. After all, changes to requirements, delays in providing the necessary information or decision-making can affect the implementation timeframe.



"High-level project management, proactive communication with global support, adherence to project timelines"

"In general, everything is fine. But like everywhere else, sometimes it is inconvenient/not on time/not as planned. But everything can be solved"

"Working under deadlines. More recommendations"

"Basically, the problems were more on our side, because there are SOOOOO many people making decisions and approving the project. It's always a \_team vote\_. There is not the one person who can make a strong-willed decision to coordinate work with the contractor. All this significantly affects the timing and, consequently, the cost"



# High quality development

In addition to the previously mentioned aspects, the wishes regarding digital development relate directly to the quality of the development itself, in most technical aspects (but also to the creative component):

- Competence of the contractor on the technical side
- Sophisticated system for integrating and digitising indicators
- Developing a post-project manual
- Ensuring cybersecurity
- Improved design and visual solutions
- Individual approach

Some companies, especially those that have already had negative experiences, stressed the importance of being more careful in choosing a development partner in future projects



“Choose more professional agencies, and when conducting a tender, be guided not only by price criteria”



# High quality development. Quotes of respondents

“To improve the creative component, namely design and visual solutions”

“It is important for me:

1. so that the contractor understands my business and looks at the site through the eyes of my client,
2. to select CMS according to site task
3. to understand what a funnel is and how to create it through content
4. Meeting deadlines
5. ensuring cybersecurity”

“It is difficult to talk about improvements when you do not understand how the process should ideally take place. For example, I read about the post-project instructions for the first time in the previous questions and now I understand that this is a very important story”

“The project should have clear steps in terms of budget and implementation stages with key metrics that are important to the user and be based primarily on this”

“The system of integration and digitisation of indicators was immediately thought out”

“According to the survey, there were not enough ‘post-launch’ processes. Also, the next time you launch a large project, you need to hire SEO for at least a year as a package, so that the contractor can work with what he has written =)”

“Good calculation. Warning of all risks. Constant communication and transparent project progress. A non-standard approach, not a template. Analysis and understanding of the client, his product, expectations from the project”

“Now I have the experience of working in two-week sprints with clear meetings with results every week - I'm happy with that”

# Clear communication

Speaking of project management, clients pay special attention to communication aspects. They **ask for high-quality, clear and prompt communication**, especially regarding technical aspects of development, using clear language to explain technical details. It is important to maintain quick feedback, be proactive in discussing the project, and warn about all possible risks in a timely manner.



“Explain technical options and capabilities to me as a customer. In simple non-IT language”

“Fast communication is important to me, as well as adaptation to my business area and the needs of our company”

“For people to read each other's minds and magic to happen”

“...Warning of all risks. Constant communication and transparent project progress...”



**Thank you for your attention!**  
**Keep working. Stay together** ❤️



**DIGITAL DEVELOPERS**  
Committee

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