



Getting Everything You Want in a Technology Solutions Partner

I want to tell you the story of a digital transformation at The Boy Scouts of America because I learned a lot from the experience and want to share those learnings with you. I've got a unique perspective to tell the story from, because for much of the transformation I was the National Director of Digital Experience for The Boy Scouts of America, and for the homestretch of the work I flipped over and took on the role of CMO for The Ksquare Group, the BSA's technology partner for the project.

It was overwhelming to think through all the different facets of the organization that needed a digital overhaul, and I don't mind admitting now that we suffered from Analysis Paralysis for a few days at the outset. We had diagrammed the entire transformation on the four walls of our war room and we sat in the middle of the room and the dry-erase scribbled complexities of the plan seemed to taunt us.





Finding a partner to match their vision & needs

Looking back, we definitely made our share of missteps and wrong turns over the past 5 years, but we did two crucial things really well, and I can trace our successful digital transformation at The Boy Scouts of America back to these two things:

1. We broke the transformation down into achievable bite-sized initiatives and arranged them in the right order.
2. We chose the right technology partner!

Eating the Elephant...

Do you remember those old 3-part carbon forms we all used to have to complete to buy something or join a club or organization? Well, to give you a feel, that's what we were still using as our primary customer data capture in 2016 – and that was just the tip of the iceberg. So, to say that we had a lot of work to do was an understatement.



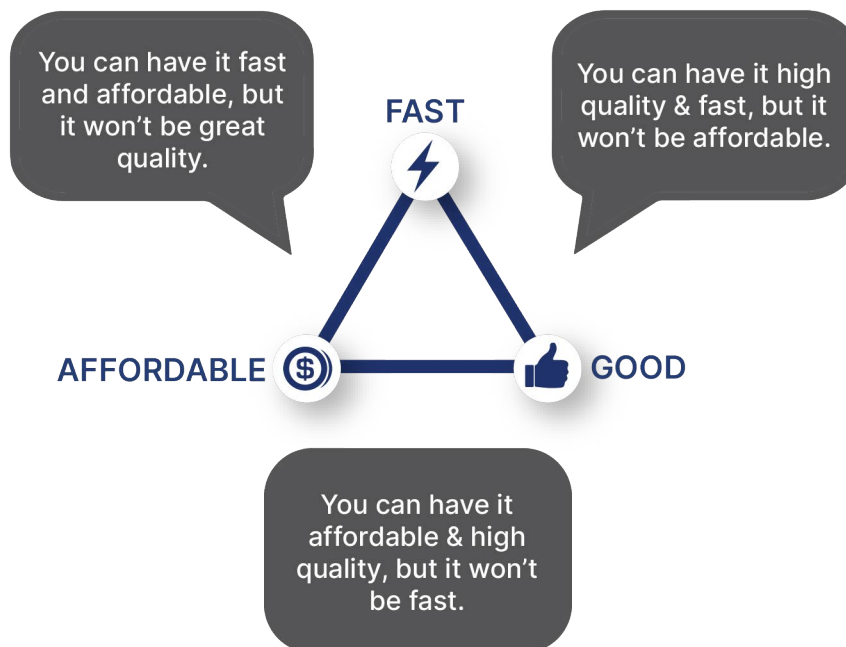
As luck would have it though, a guru in change management – Nathan Rosenberg, founding partner at Insignium – was in a volunteer national leadership position with the BSA at the time and he sat down with us and reminded us of the old saying - “there’s only one way to eat an elephant – one bite at a time,” So we knew we needed to break the project down into bite-sized pieces, but we also knew that the order mattered... a lot.

To help us discern the right order, Nathan took us through an exercise he called Merlin. The idea was to design a future state based on the future and not the past. So, we designed what we wanted the BSA to look like 5 years out, and then what it would look like 4 years out, and then 3 and so on. What we wound up with was an ambitious but achievable 5-year roadmap that was not bound by the past, but inspired by the future. And, practically speaking, an ordered punch list of projects we needed to tackle to deliver on our 5-year vision. Adjustments were required as we went, of course, but we stuck to the plan by-and-large and it was a huge contributor to our successful digital transformation.

Choosing the right partner

As a non-profit careful with every dollar we spent, historically we were do-it-yourselfers for building and managing IT and digital experiences. This practice kept us safely in the laggard position when it came to digital experiences. Now, our team knew that customers were demanding more and more from the brands they interacted with. It didn't matter that Uber and Amazon weren't direct competitors with us. Brands like these showed the world what good looked like and raised the bar for all businesses. So we were going to need to make radical leaps forward in the experiences we offered to remain relevant to our youth audience and their parents. It was going to take outside thinking from folks with an established track record for delivering these kinds of top-notch experiences, and an open-mindedness to new modes of operation.

As we began looking externally for help, we experimented with multiple outside technology partners, but struggled to find the perfect partner. One lesson we learned through this process was the truth behind the maxim about GOOD, FAST, and AFFORDABLE. Everybody wants all three, but you can really only pick 2. We'd find a partner that did great work and moved quickly, but they were too expensive. We'd find a partner that was the right price and able to keep up with our aggressive timelines, but the work itself lacked.

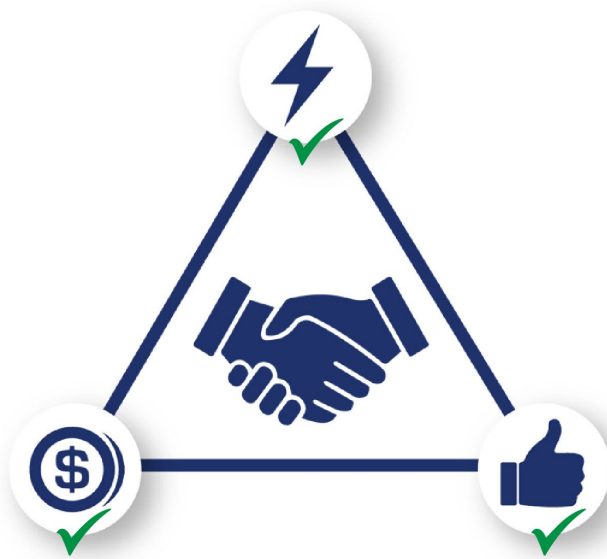


... most of the time you only get to choose two!

Then, in another twist of good luck our CIO, Vijay Challa, was referred by a friend to a technology partner in the DFW area called The Ksquare Group. We tried them out on a small portion of the digital transformation and they knocked it out of the park.... so our trust in them grew... and we gave them a little more responsibility...and they hit another homerun...so we entrusted them with even more responsibility.

What we found so special about The Ksquare Group was how passionate they were about our success. It really felt like we were in the foxhole together and our success every step of the way matter to them every bit as much as it did to us at the BSA.

The other unique aspect of The Ksquare Group we found during that time was that they had cracked the GOOD/FAST/AFFORDABLE code and were 5 stars on all three criteria for us! They were delivering amazing work, on time, for much less spend than we ever imagined.



Fast

We had gained buy-in and budget from our board to hard-charge after this digital transformation, but we knew we needed to win early and often to keep the confidence of the board intact. So, we established aggressive milestones and needed a partner who could deliver. And The Ksquare Group came through.

The Ksquare Group has speed and agility built right into its culture, so from the CEO to the newest engineers, across all 4 countries we operate in, we take extreme pride in setting aggressive deadlines and then hitting them. Over the years, drawing on the hundreds of projects we've worked on, we've also fine-tuned our processes and practices. So, when customers like the BSA partner with us, what they get is a well-oiled machine with an innate need for speed.



Affordable

The Ksquare Group supported the BSA digital transformation with both contractors and with services. In both cases, they were able to offer rates up to 45% less than what we were seeing for the same work and contractor rates from onshore shops. Their affordability combined with the increasingly competitive job market to hire technology positions made it a no-brainer to partner with The Ksquare Group rather than try to build our own team and capabilities internally.

The Ksquare Group's secret to offering such affordable rates without compromising quality or speed is the nearshore center of excellence we've in Merida, Mexico. By partnering with 5 local universities and the Yucatan government, and by opening our own accredited software engineering institute (itk.mx), our established a sustainable pipeline of well-educated, highly trained software engineers.

Quality

From those years at The Boy Scouts of America working on our digital transformation with The Ksquare Group, I was always so amazed at the quality of work they delivered. With every project we partnered with them to complete, we were enhancing the Scouting experience for millions of youth and their parents, and slowly beginning to improve the perception of the BSA. During those years I noticed that there were two key ingredients that led to consistently stellar work from The Ksquare Group.

Training and Retention Strengths

The Ksquare Group doesn't mess around when it comes to the talent they recruit, train and retain. The founder and CEO, Varma Buddharaju's, background is staffing and recruiting, so it's no surprise that The Ksquare Group has a core competency in hiring and retaining talented folks. What was amazing to me was just how talented everyone at every level of the organization was. Seniors and leads were tenured with hands-on and leadership experience at big brands like IBM, American Airlines, Salesforce, Macy's and so on. (In fact, their chief architect, Glenn Kohner, was the 10th CTA certified by Salesforce.). Mid-level team members come to the table with a lot of experience and are highly trained. And even junior level folks are savvy for their experience level – because The Ksquare Group attracts bright and ambitious graduates and then has very thorough training regime new developers go through before they begin to work on customer projects.

Culture

I've worked for and with dozens and dozens of organizations over my nearly 25 year career, and I can look you straight in the eye when I say that I have never seen a more vibrant and passionate organizational culture in all my days. The Ksquare Group fosters a spirit of optimism, accountability, service to one another and to our customers, and passion for learning and growing. This thriving and pervasive culture is what drives the teams to do whatever it takes to ship only amazing work. If we boil it all the way down, it's probably the key reason The Ksquare Group was successful in playing such a vital role in The Boy Scouts of America's digital transformation. And if I think about my own decision to take the leap and join The Ksquare Group as the CMO, the energizing, growth-oriented, customer-obsessed culture had almost everything to do with it.





I share this story and these learnings with you because I know we're all faced with the need to adapt and transform for our businesses to survive. Now that I'm on the partner side of the scene and I get to speak with a lot of different organizations, it's eye-opening to see just how many organizations still have catching up to do with the experiences they're offering compared to the experiences their customers expect.

I vividly remember at the BSA feeling like we were this rare and lonely bird that had allowed ourselves to fall so far behind, digitally. But now I know that the rare and lonely bird is the organization that's got it all figured out and is in lockstep with the modern customer's expectations.

So if you know you need to make changes but find yourself suffering from analysis paralysis like we did at the BSA, you're in good company. Remember to eat the elephant just one small bite at a time. Take the time to get your sequence of projects in the right order up front, and keep an open mind to bringing in help.

Seeing it from both sides, I know The Ksquare Group can help you like we did for the BSA. We specialize in platform implementations, software engineering, managed services and UI/UX Design.

If you need help in one of these areas just drop me a line. I know we can help.

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Have you been holding off from a technology migration?

We are excited to be a premier partner for **Apax Partners** and help other companies build the right technology foundation they need for continued growth and success!

If your technology stack is needing a migration, integration or implementation, make sure it's built to last!

Let's Schedule a Call!