Consulting Engagement Structures

The right model depends on how clearly the work can be defined, how frequently priorities may change, and which party should own delivery risk.

STRUCTURE	HOW IT WORKS	RELATIVE COST	RISK OWNERSHIP	BUDGET PREDICTABILITY	SPEED TO CHANGE	CLIENT INVOLVEMENT	BEST SUITED FOR
Time + Materials	The client pays for the time and resources used. Scope and priorities can evolve throughout the engagement.	**Low–Medium**	Primarily the client	Low–Medium	**Very high**	High	Discovery, evolving products, technical uncertainty, and work that cannot be reliably scoped upfront
Fixed Fee, Fixed Scope	CX.dev commits to defined deliverables, a delivery schedule, and an agreed price. Changes are handled through a formal change process.	**High**	Primarily CX.dev for the agreed scope; client for scope changes and dependencies	**Very high**	Low	**Low**	Well-understood builds, migrations, integrations, and projects with stable requirements
Retainer	The client reserves ongoing access to a defined amount of CX.dev capacity or expertise for a recurring fee. The client generally determines priorities.	**Low–Medium**	Shared, with prioritization risk primarily held by the client	High	High	Medium–High	Continuous improvement, advisory support, maintenance, fractional leadership, and predictable access to specialists
Managed Services	CX.dev assumes responsibility for an agreed product, system, or outcome — including prioritization and allocation of the people, budget, and technical resources required.	**High**	Primarily CX.dev within the agreed mandate and service boundaries	High	**High**	Low–Medium	Clients seeking outcomes without managing day-to-day delivery, staffing, and technical coordination
Agile Outcome Contract	CX.dev estimates an expected delivery period and agrees on a prioritized scope. Work is delivered incrementally, with the client able to reprioritize or exchange unstarted features of comparable effort. If the outcome is achieved early, the client can add work or conclude by paying an agreed early-completion fee.	**Medium–High**	Shared; CX.dev owns delivery performance while the client owns prioritization and timely decisions	Medium–High	**Very high**	**Very high**	Products where the desired outcome is understood but the best feature set will emerge through delivery and feedback

KEY TRADE-OFFS

Time + Materials — greatest flexibility, but the client carries more budget and delivery risk.

Fixed Fee, Fixed Scope — strongest cost certainty with low involvement, but changes are slower and the price includes a risk premium.

Retainers — dependable access and continuity, but unused capacity may not roll over unless the agreement says otherwise.

Managed Services — less operational burden, more accountability with CX.dev; requires a clear mandate and measurable outcomes.

Agile Outcome Contracts — balance flexibility and predictability; require an engaged client who can make timely product decisions.

info@cx.dev