

Agile Implementation in a IT Services Company

SolutionsIQ (I) team helps and guides a services company in implementing agile practices in their development and support teams.

BACKGROUND

Our client is an IT services company providing world-class solutions in consulting, cloud technology and IT infrastructure, working with clients and diverse teams across nations. In one such engagements there was a need felt to align their development teams with the client processes in the US.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

Once the client's vision and strategy was defined, the Agile roll-out spread to a wider team of programme managers, project managers, the project team (architects, developers (Java and mainframe), testers, BAs and UI designers). The SolutionsIQ team consisted of an Agile project management coach, Scrum and Agile methodology coaches and technical practices coaches.

GOALS

- Transformation of the delivery and development teams to Agile practicing teams
- Establishing transparency in Scrum execution
- Coaching teams to communicate better and earlier on project risks and progress
- Coaching teams on engineering practices to help them achieve better quality
- Improve coordination between teams and individuals working in different locations
- Improve transparency in work progress, with customers, between teams.

CASE SNAPSHOT

Client: An IT services company providing world class solutions in software, cloud and infrastructure

Objectives:

- Align delivery and support teams to Agile
- Better communication and coordination
- Reduce delays
- Improve Estimation

Our Approach: Agile Coaching and Implementing XP practices for development and support teams through Scrum Coaching

Results:

- Improvement in quality, timing and planning
- Improved coordination across locations

OUR APPROACH

The approach to the Agile development roll-out and support was developed jointly. It comprised:

- High-level education of the whole business unit prior to training
- Just-in-time Agile development training for teams using XP practices
- Embedding Agile development coaches on-site to work full-time with the teams
- Reviewing development team technical practices
- Assigning coaches to work with the support teams
- Reviewing other technology delivery processes to enable faster delivery of projects
- Ensuring that, over time, the team was able to work sustainably without the need for SolutionsIQ coaches
- Suggest and implement corrective measures as required

PHASE I - INITIATION

CHALLENGES

- Teams were skeptical about Agile approach and its benefits
- Concerns on practicality of Agile execution due to confusions around estimation

ACTIONS

- Trained the teams on fundamentals of Agile values & principals
- Explained the Scrum framework in detail along with the benefits of each scrum practice and oriented teams towards Scrum values
- Clarified confusions around planning and estimations
- Suggested teams to start their next sprint with better Scrum practices including:
 - ◆ Team Working Agreement
 - ◆ Transparent Information radiators like Visual task board, Burn-down chart, Waste snake (to identify wastes in the system)
 - ◆ Definition of Done to build quality into the system
- Introduced and implemented XP practices

PHASE II - FOLLOWUP

CHALLENGES

- Difference in the understanding of agile/ scrum between India teams and stakeholders at US
- Removing Duplication of artefacts

ACTIONS

- Had one-on-one conversation with every team members including ScrumMaster and gathered their pulse of fresh agile journey
- Held separate retrospectives for Team1 and Team2 since their context and nature of work was different
- Conducted coaching sessions to a few members on "convincing skills & facilitation skills"

- Clarified confusions around "core working hours" with all team members available, without external disturbances
- Discussed strategies with ScrumMaster to remove impediments like planning/ estimations challenges, better collaboration between PO & delivery teams, deciding on Agile tools, etc.
- Coached support team members on how to track their planning and know their velocity on a daily basis using Kanban board and basic lean principles.

BENEFITS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Project delivery is achieved in shorter time frames (including mainframe development and testing)
- Teams are delivering partial but acceptable value-add solutions to clients before the final release
- Teams are seeing transparent and continual results
- There is an increasing cultural shift towards continuous improvement and learning
- There is an increased focus on quality delivery
- There is increased customer interaction and satisfaction
- There is an on-going focus on process improvement

ABOUT SOLUTIONSIQ

SolutionsIQ offers a full spectrum of services to develop software and fulfill technical talent needs, while improving your Agile knowledge and capabilities. Clients include AT&T (Cingular), Amazon, Corbis, Expedia, Federal Home Loan Bank, Infospace, Key Bank, Nike, Nordstrom, Regence Blue Shield, Safeco, US Bank, and Washington State University. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, SolutionsIQ is also a member of the Java Community Process, Scrum Alliance, Software Association of Oregon, and Washington Technology Industry Association. Learn more at www.solutionsiq.com www.solutionsiq.in