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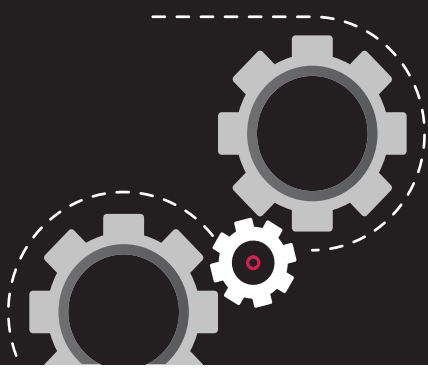
EVOLVING TO AGILE: SOFTWARE COMPANY IMPROVES ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY WITH CPRIME

Case Study
Software Company

COMPANY DETAILS

Industry: Software

Company Size: 300+ employees

Location: California, United States

Products: Automation software

Cprime Services: Training/Coaching, Expert Consultation Services

Highlights of Engagement: The Cprime team tailored an organization-wide Agile training program to speed up the company's software development cycle and improve management efficiency.

A TIME FOR CHANGE—IDENTIFYING IMPEDIMENTS

With a client list of over 1 million users, staying ahead of the curve is critical to the continued success of the company and its clients. It was time for a change, and the CEO saw an opportunity to make transformational and organizational changes—to get things moving faster.

Caught up in the waterfall

Reducing the protracted and testing-intensive development cycle was the core priority of the company's newly-formed Excellence Team. Exacerbating its development bottlenecks, the company was also maintaining a legacy code debt while trying to innovate and expand its products without compromising the quality workflow automation tools it was known for.

"We were on a waterfall method with a yearly cadence, and that was proving to be too slow for the level of responsiveness we wanted to have to the market," the Executive Sponsor summarizes.

The silo effect

Another issue that the company needed to address was the limited flow of information, especially between different departments within the organization. "We were pretty much operating in silos," the Executive Sponsor said about the communications bottleneck. "Marketing did their thing, and engineering and sales did theirs." This led to barriers between functions and no real collaborative framework.

With the CEO providing the impetus for change, it was the perfect time for the company to pursue Enterprise Agility and see how they could incorporate it into the whole organization to deliver best-in-class solutions for their customers.

"Cprime's goal was to give the company's product managers the tools they needed to take really big ideas and work on them in the right order so that, at any point, they could easily pivot. We wanted to emphasize the idea that Agile is not just about process... it's about mindset."

- Devin Anderson, Product Visionary and Strategist, Cprime
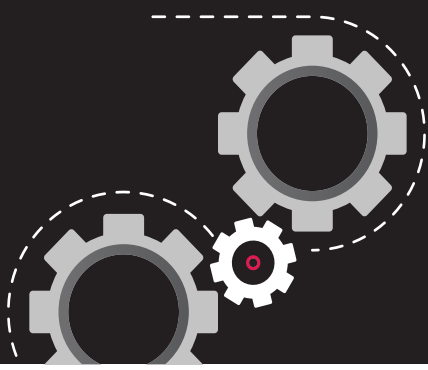
EMBRACING AGILE AND MOVING FORWARD

The company began the shift to Agile by gathering teams of engineers and having them put together a presentation on why they should make the move. "We gathered the leadership and we said, 'These are the benefits. This is what Agile is. This is where we are now. This is where we can be.' When we were done, everyone bought into it," recalls the Executive Sponsor.

With a move towards a more Agile process unanimously identified as the way forward, the company's team began putting together a strategy to make it happen. Although they had several vendors under consideration, they turned to Cprime.

"We had used Cprime in the past and, in the end, they offered exactly what we were looking for—availability, workshops at the executive level, and the ability to scale to our needs," explains the Executive Sponsor. "I got in contact and we set up training."

ENGAGING WITH CPRIME

"The company wanted to become more nimble and move toward Agile processes to shorten their long release and testing cycles, but they also had to deal with the concerns of their sales channels and partners and bring them along on the journey," recalls Devin Anderson, Cprime Product Visionary and Strategist.

To identify and address the company's needs, Cprime first met with the executive team during their corporate offsite. "We spent half a day discussing their mindset, and why they wanted to move to Agile and what it would mean for each of the departments," Anderson says.

"After that," he adds, "we facilitated assessments across the whole company that resulted in a roadmap consisting of training, workshops, and coaching."

As a result of the assessments, the training was focused in two key areas: Agile for Executives and Product Discovery and Delivery with the coaching tailored to offer the greatest benefit to each area of the organization.

Going all-in—eyes wide open

With the executives on board and the recommendations from Cprime in hand, the company went all-in.

"Even at the executive level, they were just eyes wide open, and super engaged," Anderson says. "They even made a very strategic hire when they brought in a new VP of Engineering. He had experience with Agile and was completely on board and a great champion for the process."

"We started the training with a session of thirty engineers and product managers, and then the next month, another session of thirty," explains the Executive Sponsor. "After we had all of Engineering and Product trained in Agile, we started rolling out to the other departments like marketing and sales."

A global effort

Creating organization-wide change is no small task—the whole company was involved in the transformation—they even had teams in the UK and Japan who went through the training.

"Cprime engaged engineers, product managers and product owners," explains Anderson. "We worked with the company at every level and across all of its different organizations. Coaches worked with sales and marketing to help them run agile practices within their teams—and adapted the principles to fit their requirements."

SEEING RESULTS WITH AGILE

At this stage in the program with Cprime, the company is seeing many benefits. With Agile tools like Confluence and Jira in place, and a clear understanding across the company of how to use them effectively, the Executive Sponsor is pleased with the results. "Now we have teamwork. We're more aligned and it's happening earlier in the process. It has eliminated the silos altogether."

The information cascade

Information exchange at the company has also improved—everyone from the top down has much better visibility into what they are working on. Like most companies, they wanted better cross-team communication and that's really improved because of the frameworks Cprime provided for cross-functional collaboration.

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Streamlining the decision-making process

Shifting responsibility down to the team level has also contributed to a more streamlined development and management process at the company. "All of our teams have their regular stand-ups," says the Executive Sponsor. "We're keeping up to date with each other on things, and if there are impediments, we try to make decisions to resolve them at the lowest level. We're working faster and releasing on a more regular cadence, and our teams feel empowered."

The commitment of the executive team has played a large role in the change. The shift to an agile mindset is being led from the executive level. From the top down there is alignment and focus on the strategic initiatives. And the alignment and focus is not just in Engineering. It's in all aspects of the business.

The next steps

Transformation on an organizational scale is never complete. Despite the headway the company has made, the Executive Sponsor understands the company is still in the early days of its Agile journey.

"We're trying to get the process all ironed out and we're in transition right now. There is still redundancy in the meetings—like who attends them and what is discussed—but the meta scrum and the product owner cycle are helping us eliminate that."

Beyond improving and expanding upon the processes they have in place, the company is improving their planning and reporting mechanisms. They're working on defining exactly what metrics they want to track and further increasing their transparency. After that, they'll move on to release planning.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While the numbers aren't in yet, the foundations are in place and the company is seeing improvements across the board. Reflecting on her interactions with the Cprime team, and the outcomes, the Executive Sponsor is happy with the decision to partner with Cprime:

"It was really easy to work with Cprime. They're genuinely experts in Agile methodology and, more importantly, the Agile mindset. I felt comfortable reaching out to them whenever I needed something and they were always there to help and answer questions."

- Executive Sponsor from the Software Company

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MENTIONED CPRIME TEAM MEMBER

Devin Anderson

Product Visionary and Strategist, Cprime

As a strategic product coach for Cprime, Devin helps organizations be more strategic with their product teams. He has coached and instructed companies across multiple market segments including security, hospitality, finance, government, software development, healthcare/pharma, education and many more.

ABOUT CPRIME

An Alten Company, Cprime is a global consulting firm helping transforming businesses get in sync. Cprime is the partner of choice for Fortune 100 companies looking to achieve value and agility. We help visionary business leaders compose solutions, execute implementations, and exceed against business goals. With our key partnership recognitions, including Atlassian Platinum, AWS Advanced, and SAFe® Gold SPCT partner, our industry-leading software and services work in synergy to deliver transformations.