cprime

SAFe® for Business Agility—A Cprime and Silicon Valley Transformation Partnership

Company Details

Industry: Cloud Communications Platform as a Service

Company Size: 8,000 employees

Location: Silicon Valley, USA

Products: Cloud-Based Customer Communications, Customer Relations Management, Marketing Communications, Messaging

Cprime Services: Agile Transformation, Lean Portfolio Management Training, SAFe® Transformation, Value Stream Management, Jira Implementation

Overview

With a rich suite of API tools, this Silicon Valley-based Cprime client is a communications facilitator. They provide a cloud-based communications platform that helps their customers enhance their customer engagement processes and ensure their communications stay contextually relevant.

Clients can use the platform's development tools to embed SMS, messaging, voice, and video directly into their customer-facing applications. Vendor-agnostic and easily integrated within any application or CRM, the company's technology empowers personalized interactions. An emphasis on leveraging engagement data further improves its clients' communications and customer outcomes.

The cloud communications provider employs 8,000 people and operates in 180 countries worldwide. It currently provides services to over two million registered developers.

The Problem

This client was struggling with a history of siloed work, where everyone worked on everything. This worked as a startup, but as the organization grew, this approach didn't scale. This Silicon Valley startup turned to Cprime and SAFe® to improve its business agility.

Challenge: Aligning Non-Technical Business Units for Efficient Growth

The communications provider realized early on that to remain competitive after it transitioned from startup to public company, deliver innovation, and provide seamless customer service, it needed to improve its operations at scale. Atypically, however, the platform wasn't directing its transformation goals at its technology or engineering units. Instead, the communications software provider wanted to improve agility within their business groups.

"The focus was the company's account executives (AEs) working in its CRM space," explains Kyle Dukes, SPCT and Cprime Portfolio Coach. "They had technology supporting them, but they centered more on supporting their modules and creating workflows—amidst a technical organization, they were not a technical group."

The business unit needed to align with the company's engineering teams. The goal was to eliminate duplicated or wasted effort and costly information silos.

"We were operating in a chaotic environment. Our team was burning out, and we had no visibility into their full workload," says the company's Director of Business Alignment and PMO." Each person was working independently on their own projects — often tackling the same problems without realizing it."

"The fundamental business problem was that the business group was operating like a one-man army — everyone did everything and planning suffered," explains Kyle. "As they prepared to shift from startup to public company, they realized that approach just wouldn't scale."

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After just one program increment, we saw an immediate improvement in our team's organization and efficiency. People have clearer roles and responsibilities. They are working in teams instead of individual silos. Our business team has full control over their capacity. They are feeling more job satisfaction because they now know how their work aligns with strategic priorities.

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— Director of Business Alignment and PMO

Selecting Cprime—a SAFe® Agent of Change

While many organizations prefer a hybrid approach that incorporates aspects of multiple scaling frameworks, this company decided that, rather than creating their own method, SAFe® was the way to improve ways of working, customer relationships, and time to market. Approaching Cprime was a decision driven by a sponsor within the company leadership who had first-hand knowledge of both Lean-Agile transformation and how Cprime approaches it.

"Our sponsor had prior SAFe® experience," says Kyle. "With their encouragement, the company learned the value that Cprime and SAFe® would provide going in — that gave us a big leg up when it came to buy-in from the rest of their organization."

Creating custom tools

With the executives on board, Cprime began the business unit's transformation by implementing Jira, the Atlassian project planning, tracking, and management tool. Jira helps teams manage work using Lean-Agile methodologies. Working with the platform's AE teams to define their workflows and processes, the Cprime team delivered a heavily customized Jira instance specific to their requirements.

"They hadn't worked with an Agile lifecycle management (ALM) tool before Jira, so Cprime worked with them to spin it up. We integrated Jira with their Salesforce CRM, suggested custom fields, and implemented add-ons to support Agile and lean portfolio management (LPM)," says Kyle. "We gave them a tool they could put all their work, stories, features, and epics into."

Practical experience for real-world scenarios

With Jira in place, the Cprime team moved ahead with the transformation. First, Cprime coaches worked with their sponsor to form a Lean-Agile Center of Excellence (LACE) to oversee the transformation. Next, Cprime conducted virtual trainings via Leading SAFe® and Implementing SAFe®—customer-centric business agility and SAFe® Program Consultants—for the business unit's change agents.

To provide the AEs with a strong background in working in an Agile Release Train (ART), the Cprime coaches also ran SAFe® for Teams. Additional coaching around LPM rounded out the communications platform's SAFe® toolkit.

In keeping with its core tenet to provide practical and actionable skills rather than certifications based solely on theoretical coursework, Cprime created multiple custom workshops. The topics included Product Owner and Product Manager, Epic Prioritization, Vision and Roadmap Creation, Value Stream and ART Identification, and Backlog Management. Each subject area aligned with the teams' current workloads to give the training real-world context.

"The big milestone for Cprime was when the company launched its first ART. We prepared content to support their PI planning, identify their value streams, and prepare them for how the ART would look," says Kyle. "It was really cool watching them learn and grow because sometimes clients push back. These teams were fully on board with the new way of working."

Putting cross-organizational alignment up on the radar

In an effort to accelerate time to market, the Cprime team also facilitated both an AgilityHealth Team Radar assessment and Business Agility Assessment from leadership. The aim was to ensure a clear flow of information across their continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipelines and alleviate the disconnect between sales and engineering. Introducing and evaluating the use of Lean-Agile principles across the tech and business disciplines also provided the communications platform leadership and Cprime with a baseline to measure future improvements using Agile outcome, flow, and competency metrics.

Throughout the transformation, the Cprime team supported the process by suggesting tweaks and offering guidance.

"Looking at their metrics, Cprime made recommendations for improvement," says Kyle. "That included creating an innovation deck so the company, as a team of teams, had a roadmap to changes that removed some of their impediments and further streamlined their workflow. It was all about improving how quickly they could go from a new feature request to getting that feature into the customer's hands so it would generate revenue."

Engaged Teams and Increased Revenues

Despite hurdles like hiring challenges, transitioning to a fully remote work environment, and a decline in the economy, the communications platform's transformation has shown many positive results.

"In just over six months, we were able to fully transition our AEs to SAFe® ways of working," says the platform's Business Alignment and PMO Director. "Cprime helped us stay the course by coming up with creative ways to work around our hurdles, and set and stick to milestone dates."

After the transformation, the company's organic revenue for the year is up 33%; total revenue is up by 41%. The number of developer subscriptions rose from 240,000 to 275,000.

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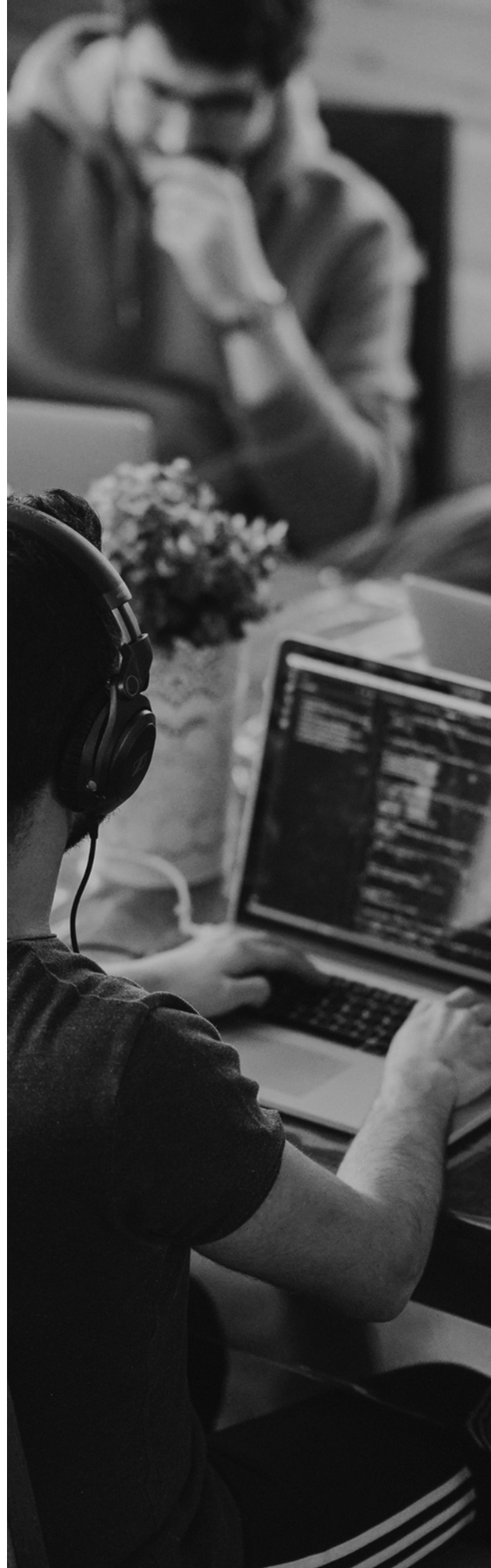
A change for the better

In cultural terms, teams are more engaged and have a better understanding of the organization's goals. The company also remedied the disconnect between disciplines by opening up the flow of information between its AEs and DevOps. With improved metric tracking, management also has greater visibility into each value stream's performance and can adjust their plans accordingly.

"After just one program increment, we saw an immediate improvement in our team's organization and efficiency. People have clearer roles and responsibilities. They are working in teams instead of individual silos," explains the Director. "Our business team has full control over their capacity and is feeling more job satisfaction because they now know how their work aligns with strategic priorities."

Creative Flexibility

In addition to the business benefits delivered, the Cprime team impressed the platform's leadership with their flexibility in tailoring the training to meet uncommon and client-specific use cases.

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If you'd like to see similar results for your organization, talk to a SAFe® Transformation expert today.

Cprime Partnerships

With over 50 partners, Cprime is committed to growing mutually beneficial alliances to deliver more value across all of Cprime's Trainings, Products, and Services. [View All Partners](#)
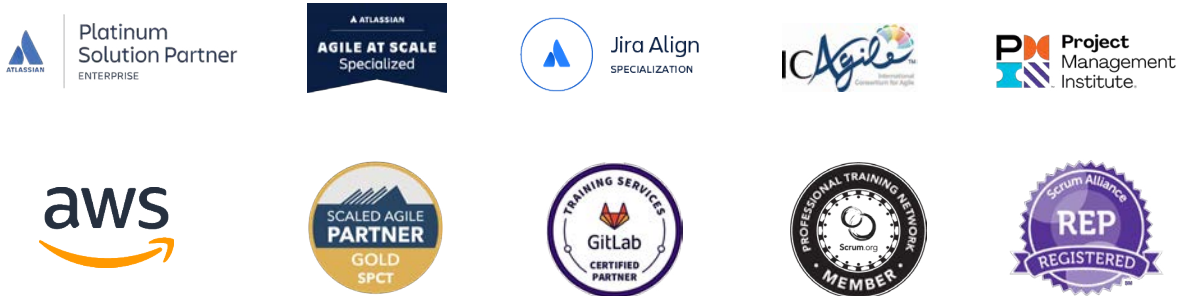
About Cprime

Cprime is an industry-leading, full-service global consulting firm with a focus on providing integrated and innovative solutions around digital transformation, product, cloud, and technology. With over 20 years' experience, we provide strategic and technical expertise to businesses across more than 50 industries. Our team of advisors and technical experts have the know-how to meet organizations where they are to develop actionable solutions and solve business challenges. We also collaborate with our expansive network of partners to design, deploy, and harmonize technology stacks across organizations. Our mission is to empower visionary business leaders and teams to reimagine the future of work to achieve better outcomes.

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