

# Cortexo

## Powers up with Scrum

**cortexo**

*“Scrum training with Clarus has been critical to our success – and that’s not me just being nice – it’s true”*

### THE ISSUE

Cortexo is a specialist provider of energy monitoring solutions. It provides hosted monitoring solutions across the energy supply chain, from transmission and distribution companies through to consumers.

It has its own software development team that operates to Agile principles. But, according to Cortexo Technical Director Jonathan Wilson, they needed to put more structure around what they were doing.

“We had some big projects coming up and we needed to hit the ground running” he explains. “We were lacking formal frameworks and came across Scrum which appeared to be the ideal solution.”

### THE SOLUTION

Cortexo is a small company with limited funds, so a Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment High Performance Working Initiative to trial Scrum through the Canterbury Development Corporation was a timely opportunity.

Clarus (Clarus was acquired by Assurity in December 2012) was the elected provider for the scheme and its Scrum 2+2+2 package delivered two full days of training for the entire team, plus two sprints of coaching and mentoring.

### KEY RESULTS

- + 158% improvement in team productivity in the first six weeks
- + Greater efficiency. Higher quality product in less time
- + Dramatic reduction in bugs
- + Improved team morale. Management sets the course, developers figure out ‘how’ to get there
- + Improved accuracy. Quotes are now ‘spot on’
- + Developers now work as a cross-functional team, minimising risk and offering real work variety
- + Strongly recommend involving the entire company in Clarus Scrum 2+2+2 training

*“In four weeks, we had a fully operating Scrum system without any of the difficulties other companies experience”*

According to Jonathan Wilson, they were basically straight into Scrum from day one. “There was a huge benefit from having all our team – seven developers and two managers – involved in the training, as we didn’t have to convince anyone of the benefits and it was important to have that view across the whole company when it came to implementing our first sprint.

“Having a Clarus mentor there for the first couple of sprints was a big help. Their experience of the process was enough to get us up and running straight away and stopped us from forming any bad habits along the way. They mentored us through any problems that arose and gave us great feedback and analysis on where we could improve.”

## THE RESULTS

After just three sprints of two weeks duration each – so six weeks in total – Cortexo noticed a big improvement in quality with zero bugs recorded during the third sprint and a 158 percent improvement in team productivity overall. “One of the big projects we were working on at the time was the Meridian Energy portal – our first major customer-facing solution” says Jonathan Wilson.

“We have had very good feedback on it and I doubt that we would have been able to achieve the same result if it hadn’t been for the training and mentoring from Clarus. We now have a total focus on quality, on how we test and how to improve what we are doing when there are problems. Clarus’ training and mentoring was a key factor in us being able to deliver that quality feedback loop so quickly.”

Jonathan pinpoints a number of other direct benefits attributable to their Scrum 2+2+2 training. Team members are now encouraged to be cross functional, where they had previously worked in silos. “Typically, team members work on different jobs each sprint,” he says. “This not only improves their work variety, but lowers the risk for the company as everyone can cover for each other.”

He also notes a big change in attitude, as while management still drives the direction, the team is now entirely responsible for ‘how’ things are done which he sees as incredibly empowering. “Previously we had preconceived ideas from the top on how to do things. Now the prioritised backlog ensures that the team is working on what adds most value, that they have a very clear view of what has to be done and can be left to work out the best way to do it.”

From a management perspective, the statistics Scrum provides has made quoting easier and Jonathan reports that they now have a real expectation that what they quote will be spot on in terms of time taken and value delivered.

“Our throughput is higher, the quality of our product has increased, reworking is reduced, plus we have gained efficiency as well as quality while expanding our staff numbers” says Jonathan Wilson. “Scrum really helps Cortexo as a team to support and encourage each other and that has been very important to us.”

*Clarus was acquired by Assurity in December 2012.*