

# Trimble

## Joining a global Scrum



*“Clarus Scrum training paid for itself within three weeks...  
They could double their prices and still deliver massive value”*

### THE ISSUE

Trimble is a billion dollar revenue company that leads the way in GPS technology, developing position-centric solutions to address some of the world’s most complex challenges. To do this, it engages in a number of joint venture projects. In 2008, it entered into a second joint venture with large vehicle manufacturer Caterpillar to integrate the product design and software development expertise of both companies to create information-rich worksites that enable customers to more efficiently and safely manage their fleets.

The VirtualSite Solutions (VSS) project involved a development team of under 100 staff geographically spread across India, the USA and New Zealand. Several months into the project, the NZ-based team was struggling to adapt to the dynamically changing business priorities. Jeff Tait, Product Manager for Trimble NZ, says that the main cause of the problem was that the teams were not aligned and they were left trying to hit what was often a moving target with masses of dependencies. “The only way we knew was to try to heavily lock the project down and try to resist change. Four months prior to a customer release, we would freeze change and initiate a mad dash to meet our deadlines” he says.

### KEY RESULTS

- + Saved on average 74 hours per sprint on unrelated project activity
- + Training paid for itself in three weeks
- + Significant improvement in the team’s ability to deliver products
- + Visibility of issues in advance of them occurring
- + Improved risk mitigation
- + Better alignment with other VSS teams in the US and India
- + Entire team understands what they should be doing and where they are at on the project timeline

## *“What we got was a hands-on practical orientation of Scrum that allowed us to apply Scrum immediately”*

To achieve parity, the Trimble New Zealand team recognised it needed to adopt the Scrum Agile framework to better align with the Colorado team which had already successfully adopted the process. On the back of a recommendation, they approached Clarus (Clarus was acquired by Assurity in December 2012) to help them use Scrum to effectively plan releases and increase predictability and project visibility.

### THE SOLUTION

Clarus founder Edwin Dando led the Scrum implementation backed by software testing professional Ian Ross. The combination enabled for hands-on customised training backed by coaching and mentoring through the first couple of sprints. They focused on including practical exercises that provided a context for the Trimble team as to what worked, what didn't work and why. It was pragmatic to the point that the team were learning off their own project findings.

Raymond Wilson, VSS Engineering Team Leader, explains: “We were originally expecting to do a two-day course based on one-on-one directional learning and to absorb enough to stumble our way onto our first sprint. What we got was a hands-on practical orientation of Scrum that allowed us to apply Scrum immediately” he says. “The training could have been very dry but the enthusiasm and experience of the Clarus team made the course extremely engaging and fun.”

It was also really important to the team that Clarus delivered a total immersion approach from the outset, with stand-up meetings, retrospectives and sprint planning meetings integrated into the training itself. “It allowed us to get the most from the training. This really became obvious as we started applying Scrum. If one of us were to misapply it, others can correct them... I can't stress how valuable this has been.”

### THE RESULTS

According to Jeff Tait, you can read all the books you like, but you don't realise how powerful the process is until you do it for yourself. “It is quite funny to look back on how Raymond and I used to communicate as team leader and manager” he says. “We used to have the standard one-hour weekly meeting which frankly has about one percent the usefulness of the communication we now get from Scrum daily.

“Before Scrum, the usual problems on projects would occur, but we never saw them until it was too late. With Scrum, we now have the visibility that allows us to address issues or factor them in. Our ability to deliver products has now significantly increased, along with our ability to mitigate risks.”

*Clarus was acquired by Assurity in December 2012.*