

Financial services organisation

A model improvement

“Our client wanted to engage new delivery practices which would allow them to adopt a more business and customer-centric engagement model”

THE ISSUE

Our client is a business unit within a large NZ financial services organisation employing approximately 120 permanent and contract staff. The business unit comprises business subject matter experts and technology specialists with a focus on developing and supporting the wider organisation.

The team had existed for a number of years, but in October 2009 a new team structure was put in place specifically to enable the delivery of projects using Scrum, an Agile development method for software delivery.

Our client wanted to engage new delivery practices which would allow them to adopt a more business and customer-centric engagement model.

Our client wanted to explore opportunities to:

- + Be more adaptable and flexible within the programme
- + Improve the speed-to-market of products and services
- + Embed a quality focus throughout the delivery lifecycle
- + Move from technology-led to business-led development
- + Set up a framework enabling customer-driven development
- + Provide more transparency of the programme work to aid management of the business portfolio
- + Agile development was adopted because it could deliver these benefits effectively and efficiently

KEY RESULTS

- + Scrum teams are delivering zero known defects at the end of sprints and ultimately into production systems
- + Project delivery is achieved in shorter time frames (including mainframe development and testing)
- + Teams are more energised and seeing transparent and continual results
- + A cultural shift to continuous improvement has occurred with an on-going focus on process improvement

“Business is now at the centre of project delivery through embedded product owners”

THE SOLUTION

The agreed solution was to use an Agile development framework. This could support a step change in delivery capability and capacity that the client’s team was striving to deliver for their customers.

The Innovation Delivery team at Assurity was engaged to facilitate, organise and coach the client’s team through the transition from a traditional Waterfall SDLC to an Agile SDLC. The implementation used a combination of training, full-time Agile coaches and technical practice coaches embedded into the client’s team.

The client’s Agile implementation was delivered using a top-down approach that started with the initial engagement with the COO and CIO. 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). It was within the context of this next step that the

Agile development pilot was established in early 2010. The Assurity team consisted of an Agile project management coach, Scrum and Agile methodology coaches and technical practices coaches, most of whom were embedded in the client’s team.

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

- + High-level education of the whole business unit prior to training
- + Just-in-time Agile development training
- + Embedding Agile development coaches on-site to work full-time with the teams
- + Reviewing development team technical practices
- + Assigning technical coaches to work as needed with the delivery 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 Assurity coaches

THE RESULTS

Some of the highlights achieved by the client were:

- + Business is now at the centre of project delivery through embedded product owners
- + Scrum teams are delivering zero known defects at the end of sprints and ultimately into production systems
- + Project delivery is achieved in shorter timeframes (including mainframe development and testing)
- + Teams are delivering partial but acceptable value-add solutions to clients (minimum viable proposition) before the final release
- + Teams are more energised
- + 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 a shared responsibility for success
- + There is increased customer interaction and satisfaction
- + There is an on-going focus on process improvement