Scaling Agile to Help Increase Speed to Value

To meet today's business demands in the application economy, organizations need to be nimble, finding new tools and approaches to support the increasing rate of change in the business landscape. Due to the need to identify and deliver value at a much quicker pace, many organizations have turned to agile techniques. The benefits of agile techniques include increased team collaboration and productivity, which result in improved product delivery speed and increased customer value in less time. However, implementing agile execution techniques within an enterprise requires direction and forethought to make sure the agile teams are all aligned in the same direction.

Agile and Lean: Less Waste, More Value

Lean, agile organizations focus on the highest priority items first. They understand what end-users want most, determine the most important items, and eliminate waste so that they can deliver the highest value to the customer or the business in the shortest amount of time.

Rapid Iterations and Increased Collaboration

When you focus on high value items, and deliver smaller releases with quick release cadences that involve end-user feedback, it helps you stay nimble in a rapidly changing application economy. This requires you to foster continuous collaboration between your organization and your customers.

As a result, you can reprioritize, alter, or eliminate features based on feedback, and prioritize uncovered customer needs sooner. This should result in less rework, further eliminating waste, and allow you to deliver value in a shorten timeframe.
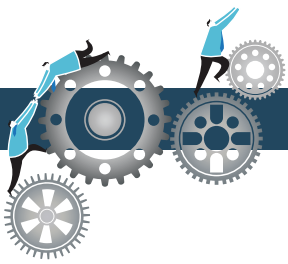
Speed to Value Is the Goal

The theory that agile increases development speed is a misconception. It's really about speed to value, where agile allows you to deliver the most important items to customers sooner. This is important because business value isn't achieved until customer value is.

Agile and DevOps: No More Handoffs

DevOps helps eliminate the issues around simple handoffs of code from development to operations. Instead, it's best to foster collaboration between development and production IT as well as support, and remove separation of team responsibility and disciplines. As a result DevOps creates an integrated development and deployment team — hence the name.

Collaboration and Teamwork

The result is a single release train where all the issues and tasks needed to bring the release and its value to the customer are included. Cross-team release ceremonies are an effective way to create a common vision for each release and to help foster teamwork to implement a true DevOps approach.

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Deployment Consistency

DevOps also creates consistency with each release by ensuring environments have synergy. This includes matching development, integration, QA, and production systems as much as possible in terms of hardware, and almost exactly in terms of third-party software such as databases and application servers. The end result is long-term stability regardless of release frequency, which has great value to both the customer and your business.

Process Automation

Tools that support agile and DevOps provide the automation needed to replace manual, error prone, release procedures such as run books with tedious manual instructions. The result is a less error-prone and much more efficient release process that remains stable even with a high rate of system releases and deployments.

Create a Strategic Agile Mindset

Organizations practicing agile and DevOps today have had success at the team level. Sprints provide a lot of value and efficiency, but it's only a slice of what the organization requires. You need to consider the bigger picture. A scalable agile process requires optimization and direction setting beyond the team level. It requires strategic planning that drives overall direction.

Create a Strategy and Maintain the Vision

If there's one pitfall teams fall into with agile, it's becoming too agile, where they lose the "big picture" view. To avoid this, create a strategic plan with epics (long running agile stories or tasks) where higher-level business goals and architecture work is updated and reviewed. This also feeds into the process to help you adjust to changes in the market and technology.

Overall strategies need to include a feature focus, market sensing, and competitive activities, while tracking and predicting overall technology trends. Related epics should be completed before sprint planning is resumed. And of course, teams should continually adjust their release plans according to what's learned.

Agile End-to-End: Scaling Beyond the Team

Agile execution techniques are only a piece of being agile, and they focus only on teams and a slice of what organizations do. However, when you implement agile approaches at all levels of the business, everyone, including executives, maintains a view of larger work items and business problems (the big picture). In turn, business owners react more quickly and properly to market changes, changing business dynamics, and newly discovered opportunities. When you take all of this into consideration, you maximize delivered value. Using the right enterprise tools is a good starting point.

Get Started and Execute Your Plan

CA PPM helps orchestrate agility in your organization. With it, teams can extend agile beyond stories and tasks to also plan and execute strategies that go beyond just the development cycle. Business and marketing teams can also integrate project and portfolio management (PPM) tools to define a corporate-wide strategy and eliminate waste end-to-end. PPM helps set direction for agile teams to deliver work, as well as overall guidance on business and financial goals, providing transparency in terms of budgets and constraints.

CA PPM helps promote all of these activities across the organization, beyond just development, to include tasks such as technical writing, marketing, and customer sales and support that move beyond the scrum team. CA PPM orchestrates and coordinates all aspects of value delivery. Above all, the right tools from CA help you enable collaboration throughout your organization, collect user feedback, enable the automation of tasks, and integrate all of your activities with the company's goals. As it helps you increase speed to value for your customers, you'll see increasing value to your business.

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About CA Technologies

CA Technologies (NASDAQ: CA) creates software that fuels transformation for companies and enables them to seize the opportunities of the application economy. Software is at the heart of every business in every industry. From planning, to development, to management and security, CA is working with companies worldwide to change the way we live, transact, and communicate – across mobile, private and public cloud, distributed and mainframe environments. Learn more at *www.ca.com.*