Agile Development Helps Leading Foodservice Innovator Transform IT Operations and Improve Business Processes Positioning Optimization as a Strategic Imperative to Drive Value

The Client

The company is a leading supplier and solutions provider to the foodservice, in-store bakery, and retail markets. Their products are sold in more than 100 countries, and they employ 10,000 staff across more than 50 locations spanning six continents. Since its inception, the organization has remained committed to developing solutions that raise the bar on quality, convenience, innovation, and efficiency in support of customer growth.

The Business Challenge

The company was facing several IT challenges as a result of its current software development process, including, high operations and maintenance costs, slow speed-to-market for its internal/external client solutions, and individual silos that caused planning and resource issues across its IT teams. These issues had ramifications across the entire business. To address them, the client decided to adopt an Agile software development framework and engaged CTG to support this transformative initiative.

They identified the following as measures of success for the engagement:

- Manage changing priorities across all levels of the organization
- Increase team productivity
- Improve project visibility
- Enhance software quality/minimize rework

The CTG Solution

CTG's team of Agile subject matter experts (SMEs) partnered with the company's products team to establish a strong foundation for the transition to Agile from a traditional Waterfall software development lifecycle approach, and identified the following goals:

- Establish base Agile capabilities on three Information Services development teams (Knowledge Management, Plant Systems, Business Intelligence) by planning and executing a pilot project for each
- Evaluate the impact of a widespread Agile transformation on the organization and obtain recommendations for modifications to the process, procedures, and documentation involved in the Agile migration, including:
  - Work intake and IT fiscal governance framework and release management processes
  - Establish an internal Agile Center of Excellence

Leveraging our Agile Transformation offering, CTG used the following customized three-step approach, which positioned the company to obtain a solid understanding of Agile and gain best practices for continuous improvement and organizational sustainability.

In Their Words

"I would like to thank the CTG team for their guidance on implementing the Agile process on this initiative. Adhering to the Agile process allowed us to execute more effectively and provided further collaboration between the IS team and the In-Store Bakery team."

Programmer and Analyst, Scrum Master for Project

"We have attempted application development projects like this multiple times in the past. In almost all cases we were late on our deliverables and there was a lot of churn along the way. This project had all of those traits but the outcome was drastically different. The SCRUM methodology was applied in the execution of this initiative from the start. It was night and day different in terms of the progress made and the team's engagement along the way. I feel safe in speaking for the team that they truly enjoyed working on this initiative."

Development Manager

Step 1: Built the Foundation

This critical initial step established the engagement and team structures, project management protocols, and roles and responsibilities. CTG developed communications to raise awareness of upcoming Agile pilot projects and held educational sessions for business and IT stakeholders on Agile terms, roles, and ceremonies (i.e., regular, daily stand-up meetings, weekly backlog grooming sessions, and "end of sprint" demos and retrospectives), and metrics reporting. Additionally, CTG assigned Agile members and roles for each of the three IT pilot teams (i.e., Scrum Master, Product Owner, and Solution Lead). CTG also defined expectations for the Agile Steering team and established remote collaboration capabilities.

Step 2: Established and Mentored Teams

CTG identified Agile frameworks for each pilot team and began daily meetings to review status, issues, and areas for improvement. CTG helped each team to determine the appropriate Agile framework (i.e., Scrum, Kanban, and Hybrid) and reach a consensus on Ready and Done definitions. Work was defined as Ready when it met specific criteria (i.e., all detailed requirements complete) for the team to begin working on a deliverable. Done meant work met specific agreed upon criteria (i.e., Product Owner approval) before a deliverable could be marked complete. As the leadership teams matured under CTG's mentorship, Agile technical practices were gradually introduced, such as pair programming and continuous integration.

Step 3: Inspected, Adapted, and Scaled

The final step helped the client identify pain points in the Agile transformation process and create an organizational improvement backlog and mitigation strategies. CTG streamlined and created a more effective project/work intake process by completing the following:

- Implemented a portfolio Kanban, a visual tool, to track the progress of work.
- Implemented an Agile fiscal governance framework with budgeting based on Lean methodology.
- Identified opportunities to optimize the client's release management process.

The Results

CTG's deep IT knowledge, technical strength, and the Agile transformation SMEs' effective collaboration with the client's leadership and IT and business teams, allowed the organization to transition from its current Waterfall software development lifecycle practices to Agile, a more efficient and consistent framework that supports its commitment to continuous innovation. This new framework addressed the challenges faced by the client and met the goals set at the onset of the project, resulting in:

- Reduced cycle time from feature ideation to production delivery, with an overall improvement in quality
- Reduced overall concurrent project time, increasing speed-to-market
- Reduced redundancy by shifting from a project-centric to a team-centric approach, resulting in a focus on developing client prioritized products and avoiding time investment in deliverables that were ultimately not used
- Increased employee morale within the IT department through ongoing recognition of achievement and business stakeholder satisfaction obtained through immediate feedback on completed work

In Their Words

"This initiative, set out to be global in scope, aimed at gaining divisional and regional alignment to build an application providing product data and content to many audiences. It gave our IS team just enough clout to walk into the marketing leadership team and present concepts for show we should create, store, and distribute content leveraging the scale of our organization as opposed to the typical divisional silos. It also allowed us to bring to light the importance of the accountability of managing product data and digital assets to enable the mature, digital future that we want to have. Both concepts resonated with the MLT. While we have a lot of people and process work to have an organization that is fully "mature" in this space, we've got a path forwards, the first steps were shown with this development effort."

Development Manager

"Fantastic job by you and your team to deliver this successful project even as the team worked through the initial bumps in the road. The result of the project will no doubt make our sales team more efficient and effective. In addition to all the Agile benefits laid out; our Business Partners enjoyed working with IS in a true partner fashion; a sentiment echoed by the ISB team during the last MLT meeting. The presentation to the MLT on the architecture behind ISB RED enlightened many members to what is possible AND what is necessary to truly unlock our potential."

Business Relationship Director

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