

Matching Agile Practices and Organizational Culture: The MEMIC Experience

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MEMIC

Agenda

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Introduction

- Caroline Lienhardt, Manager, Quality Assurance at MEMIC
 - Previously worked at IBM and UNUM
 - 18 years in QA
 - Certified PMI PMP and ScrumMaster
 - Worked as a tester, test lead, PM, acting ScrumMaster, manager
 - Always striving to learn more and achieve that perfectly smooth dev/test experience with minimal defects

Background

- MEMIC: nearly 400 employees, apprx. 50 in IT including Dev, Test, Ops, Infrastructure, BAs, and PMs
- Growing company, provides WC to 65-75% of Maine businesses.
- Development teams (web & AS400), small test team
- Business teams initiated and drove project
- Business would provide paragraphical narrative descriptions of what they needed, this was used by dev and test as the requirement(s)
- One small team, vendor driven, followed a modified Agile process
- CRM development was driven by a single business area

Changes

- Starting in 2016 new CIO made changes: added a PMO, PMO Director, PMs, BAs, fortified QA, QA Mgr and Dev Mgr, general re-org
- We've been building new processes across the new areas, following an ITIL service model and establishing PMI processes to project implementation, and more industry standard development/test approaches
- Implementation of test management tools
- IT began taking over projects previously initiated and run by the business

Changes to Agile Approach

- PM took over the Agile CRM project, a BA was introduced
- CRM Product Owner was introduced to represent all business areas
- Stories were captured by the BA, in formal story language “As a user, I need X so I can Y”, use cases were introduced
- The entire team was educated with a standard Scrum process presentation, and the business was introduced to the same in the project kickoff
- Introduction of Kanban board with stakeholder visibility
- Business stakeholders no longer able to edit stories within a sprint

Challenges

- Difficult for the business to relinquish control, follow more industry standard approach
- The business users, particularly the more technical users, felt it was a takeaway vs a process enhancement
- Little trust in the process and in QA to understand their needs
- Business stakeholders still wanted to sit with the developer to review directly before any changes went to QA
- Wanted to be able to edit stories in the sprint backlog during the sprint vs only the product backlog

Additional Challenges

- Operations team members are not part of the Scrum team
- No Continuous Integration makes timing of UAT tricky: because of environment moves and the involvement of Ops to move items UAT, we are unable to move code to UAT as soon as it is tested
- Business stakeholders did not want to wait to see changes during UAT
- Regression: no automation yet so the timing of regression became problematic

Compromises

- No specifically defined ScrumMaster. PM is acting ScrumMaster
- Two week sprint banked by one week on each end so one month delivery period
- Business stakeholders have a review with Dev prior to code moving to QA, this ensures their confidence and ultimately does reduce defects. But is this the best approach?
- UAT is in final week of 4 week delivery period
- Regression is limited and logical based on impact analysis of changes
- The original business stakeholders now have to share the development time with other business areas starting to use CRM, and Product Owner needs to ensure changes work for all

Moving Forward

- Wait and see on ScrumMaster role, we only have one Agile project
- As team matures, move more of the activities and ceremonies occurring outside the sprint into the sprint (backlog grooming/prioritizing, add/improve sizing methods, retrospectives, UAT)
- Building trust with stakeholders is always ongoing, as successes build, so will trust
- We are starting the automation of test cases now, most common regression and highest risk areas first
- Implement continuous integration method combined with test automation, which will allow UAT to occur within the sprint (no need for Ops resource)

Sharing

- Ensure message to stakeholders highlights the positives of the Agile approach, something isn't a take away if it is provided in a better way
- Limited regression can be successful if a impact analysis is performed. There is however risk to be assumed with this approach
- Starting slow has worked for us, but the nature of our business has allowed us to be cautious
- Building trust with stakeholders is more important than adhering to a strictly defined process

THANK YOU

ON BEHALF OF THE MEMIC GROUP

The MEMIC logo is located in the bottom right corner of the slide. It consists of the word "MEMIC" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The background of the slide features a large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping, slanted rectangular shapes in shades of blue and grey, creating a sense of depth and movement.