Agile management of development on a large-scale data project

Education – Agile Project Management

Education – Implementing Agile management on a large-scale data project

Agile project management allowing for clear goal-setting and transparency of progress on a large-scale data project

PROBLEM

This education provider engaged exposé to implement a large data platform to leverage, manage, govern, and report on their data ecosystem. An existing Data Warehousing solution was already in place, so methodologies and business rules were important to maintain.

Due to the size, scope of data, and the number of data-producing applications, there were several challenges in the management of the project. As with any large data project, there was a significant amount of infrastructure, architecture, and process needing to be developed, and continual value being realised was of importance to stakeholders.

This presented issues of both visibility and value. It was vitally important that the workloads be completed in timeframes allowing for effective change to be made, and that backend work was surfaced to holistically track progress. One of the core tenets of this project was the integration of the existing organisational teams, and picking strategic entry points for different groups and skill sets was a risk to both the project team and existing employees.

SOLUTION

Exposé presented Agile Project management as a method to both increase rate of development, and provide critical transparency into the project - better allowing for strategic business decisions to be made.

By aligning with short sprints and clear objectives, the infrastructure and development teams have been better able to provide continual wins, without being overwhelmed by the scale of the project. Agile Methodology has allowed for business priorities to be established and communicated, and clear outcome-based focus on development tasks realised in short timeframes.

Additionally, the Agile Methodology in partnership with DevOps has provided unprecedented visibility over project status and created continuous opportunity for team integration throughout. The development lifecycle has been reduced from (potentially) years (as can be the case in traditional waterfall development) to just weeks, prompting rapid delivery of outcomes to the business.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

The business benefits of adopting Agile Methodologies on this project have been numerous and continue to provide value.

The visibility of project status, development velocity, and pipeline has allowed for clear expectations of work product timelines to be set and tracked. Partnering Agile with DevOps means strategic decisions can be informed by data, which takes the guesswork out of resource management, delivery timeframes, and team integration entry points.

Additionally, Agile has allowed for development work to be specifically business-oriented. By engaging with the business to inform, prioritise, and enable outcomes, work products have improved in accuracy and time-to-deliver.

A project of this size always has the risk to be overwhelming for development teams. By implementing Agile to break the workload into smaller, more manageable sections, teams have been more engaged, highly collaborative and more performant.