Case Study

Loyalty card organisation

Introduction

The organisation is focused on the development and management of customer reward programmes and providing data analysis services to companies worldwide.

The Challenge

A new Agile programme had been initiated for a new product and was their first project to be run using Scrum, however there were a number of obstacles:

1) The Agile principle of "co-location of teams" was broken by having a UK based Scrum master and business with Indian based developers
2) Existing testing resource and expertise were not available
3) The project was high risk, high value and high visibility in the organisation

The challenge to Experimentus was to ensure that the deadline for the launch date was met with least cost and that the Agile project processes result in a high quality deliverable from their first project onwards.

Our Solution

Through the questioning of key stakeholders and assessing their aims and objectives, a detailed understanding of their situation was determined, which led to the creation of two distinct elements of the recommended engagement. The first was to create an Indian based test team that would be co-located with the development team. The second element was to provide mentoring, support and test approach guidance, from the UK, using an Experimentus Test Architect. The recommendations were approved without modification.

An experienced team of Experimentus test analysts in India were introduced to the client and co-located with the existing development team. To ensure that early sprints would be successful, a series of formal and informal activities were run to enhance communication and understanding between the team members in order to create a single cohesive Agile team. The test team were productively involved throughout the sprints, working with the business representative to challenge and understand requirements, together with working with developers to enhance unit tests and also create and run tests (including the regression pack).

The Experimentus Test Architect, embedded a strong, quality focus within the whole SCRUM team and focussed on:

- Designing the most appropriate approach to testing and embedding it into the team
- Challenging practices that could damage the quality of the product
- Implementing ongoing improvements to test and development approaches based on evidence and experience
- Creating a common understanding and system for how to communicate issues and their impacts, to enable speedy resolution by the project team
- Mentoring the testers when they came across situations where support was needed in software quality management and testing
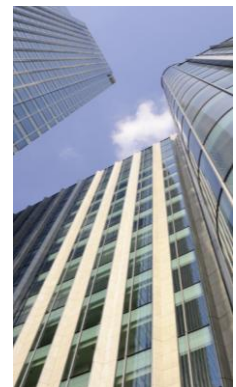
*"The team is working really well together and the project is set to deliver on time and to budget."
Systems Delivery Manager*

The Result	The activities resulted in embedded testing practices that could reliably deliver within a distributed Agile project. Software quality management and testing went from being seen as a secondary consideration, to an equal partner in the SCRUM activity delivering:

- Well structured testing, employing the most appropriate testing at the right time, with a balanced approach to regression testing
- The identification and quick resolution of emerging problems
- An up-skilled, well trained and integrated test team
- A significant move towards test driven development with testers working closely with the developers

The team, having achieved a high level of software quality management and testing confidence, enabled the Test Architect to withdraw as planned, leaving them self sufficient.

The Benefits	The new product launch met the tight deadlines with the quality and reliability required, all within budget.

Agile projects were increased as it had been demonstrated that a low cost could be achieved, despite running from 2 locations.

The project is now used as a standard against which other new product launches are benchmarked and compared for time, quality and budget.

There was a marked increase in the quality of the development teams' output.

The SCRUM teams are self reliant, self improving with testing having an equal standing.

Other projects in the organisation were positively influenced by the importance demonstrated of software quality management and testing on deliverables, when appropriate industry good practices are used.

Experimentus solutions provided
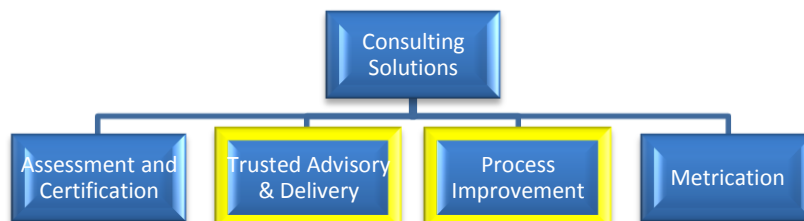
For further information on how Experimentus can help you optimise your Software Quality Management and Test processes, please contact us:

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