Introducing Agile into a large Middle Eastern bank

Helping build high-performance software teams to recreate the organisation for the future
Executive Summary

The Challenge
Create self-sufficient high-performing teams that could advocate and educate other development teams in Agile ways of working, and demonstrate to senior leadership that Agile was possible within both cultural and regulatory constraints to the bank - all in an environment that was sceptical of another change to the way of working.

The Outcome
High-performance teams able to sustain their own continuing improvements, executive level support from both the software development subsidiary and bank for continuing support of the initiative, and agreement within the organisation to continue supporting the coaching and training.
Client Profile

Large Middle Eastern bank with branches across Europe

Key Information

- $10Bn in shareholder equity
- $86Bn in total assets
- Top 100 of the “The World’s Biggest Banks”
- Top 500 of Forbes Global 2000
- Operates over 1,400 branches across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa
- 25,000 employees
- Over 100 subsidiaries

The bank operates in countries across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa
Challenge
The bank was suffering catastrophic failures of key systems

The bank was suffering from poor performance in not only software but also the supporting infrastructure. Systems were suffering multi-day downtime due to poor architecture and hardware unable to support the demands made of it. Not only was revenue being lost but also key information due to manual processing of urgent data.

Previous initiatives had already introduced Agile working into the organisation with little impact to the development team’s productivity. Due to these previous failures senior leadership of the bank was already sceptical about Agile as a suitable method of working for the business.
Engagement

Agile was seen as a key approach to fixing the problem

As part of a complete programme to bring all aspects of the technology departments up to date in both tools and methods we were engaged to introduce Agile ways of working, predominantly Scrum, and coach teams from key initiatives across the business.

The goal of the short engagement was to create several high-performing teams, working in an Agile way, within the software development subsidiary and coach them to reach a sufficient level where they could not only maintain their momentum from continuous improvement but also act as advocates to other teams and help them recreate the same levels of performance.
Approach

We trained people to ensure common understanding...

To start the engagement we needed to give all those involved or impacted by the Agile initiative a basic level of understand and ran a one day introduction to Agile training for 70 people at an offsite campus.

During the engagement gaps in knowledge were that could be best filled through further education, including:

- Introduction to Scrum,
- Behaviour Driven Development,
- User Stories, and
- Agile Testing
Approach

...then supported via coaching and mentoring

Overall 16 teams were supported, using a rolling wave approach, across two cities and four different campuses.

Coaching and support consisted of assessments to gauge where interventions would have greatest impact, coaching conversations with key influencers across the organisation to help with the required shift in thinking, and expert facilitation of key events in the team's development.
Impact

Significant KPI increases were seen in pilot teams...

Question to be answered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Measure at start of engagement</th>
<th>Measure at end of engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Test Coverage</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Code Quality</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>~60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Team Satisfaction</td>
<td>~2.4%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Velocity Trend</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Velocity Predicatability</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What percentage of the code is covered with unit tests?

How many percent have we adhered to the coding guidelines?

How do the teams assess their satisfaction with the new approach?

How many percent has the number of completed story points increased per Sprint?

How many percent has the accuracy of predicted velocity improved?
Impact

... as well as strong foundations in Agile ways of working

Mature
The practice(s) are fully embedded, and used effectively, across all teams.

Advancing
Most Teams have a strong grasp of the practice(s) and see the value of it.

Practicing
Some teams are using the practice(s) fairly well, there is room for improvement.

Adopting
Some evidence of teams beginning to use the practice(s) but they are in the minority.

Mobilising
Teams are aware of the practice(s), there is little evidence of it being used in the teams.
Next Steps

The bank are now continuing with internal experts supporting

During the coaching and mentoring wave key influencers were identified, trained and coached in the Scrum framework and Agile ways of thinking and working. This means the bank is now able to continue with the adoption of Agile using its own transformation team of internal change agents.

One of the teams involved in the pilot went on to win an internal award in recognition the positive impact they had made on the business with the new way of working.
Thank you