

Making the Transformational Shift to Scrum



Meeting Market Demand

Choosing the right software development methodology for your product can dramatically improve business results, but it isn't as simple as just changing your chosen methodology. Transforming an organizational culture to one that embraces and succeeds with that new methodology is essential. Loft9 supported a software company in doing just that by helping drive the transformation of its software development methodology from Waterfall to Scrum.

The company found that its time to market for product delivery was not allowing it to keep pace with industry innovations or to capture new market share. To ensure that the company stayed competitive, its senior leadership team was determined to shorten the company's product release cycle from 12-18 months down to 3-6 months.

Working alongside the organization, Loft9 reviewed the business problem, and concluded that changing from a Waterfall development methodology to a Scrum development methodology would help the company to achieve its goals.

Waterfall vs. Scrum

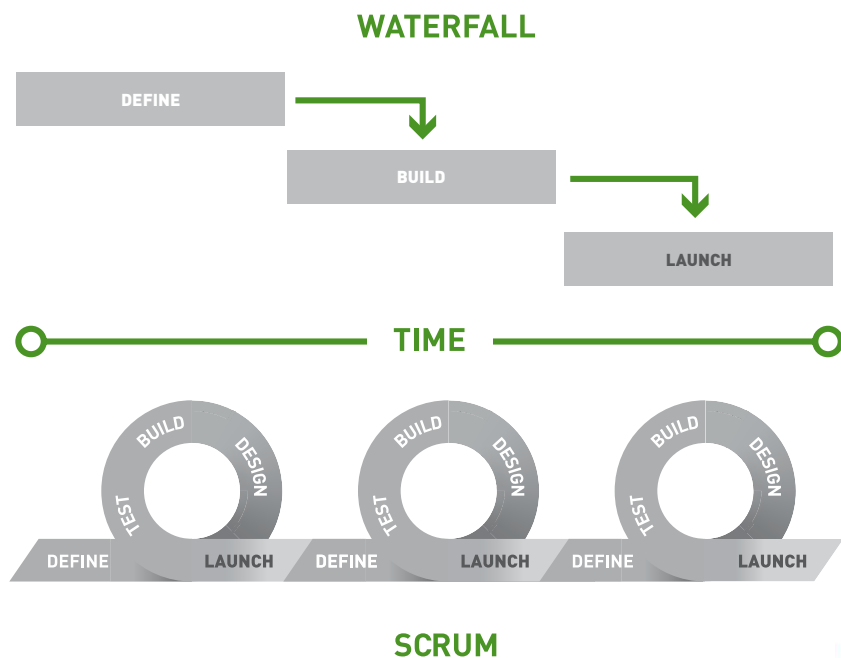
Waterfall methodology can be useful in identifying and resolving issues early in a development process so that costly fixes can be avoided. However, the up-front time spent capturing and fixing issues carries the cost of a longer time to market.

In contrast, Scrum requires the software development team to deliver a shippable product nearly every two weeks. Rather than waiting for all requirements to be met, a company releases improvements incrementally as new features are built.

For this company, Scrum had the potential to shrink the length of the software company's development release cycles from more than a year to just a few weeks.

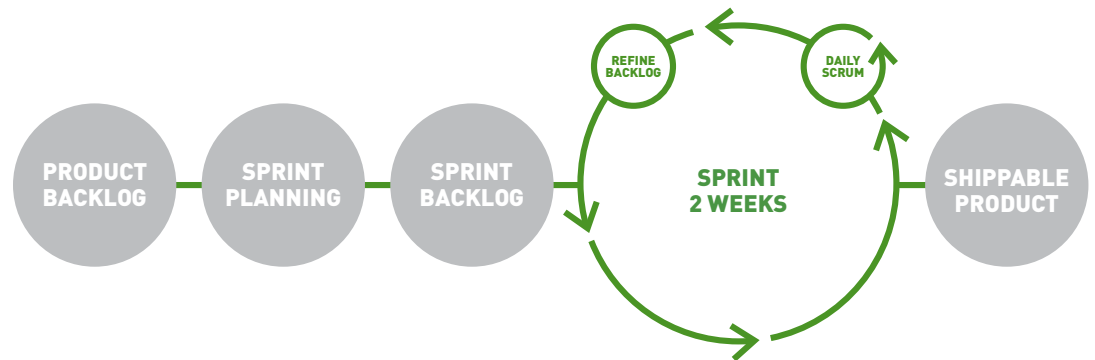
Transforming an organizational culture to one that embraces and succeeds with that new methodology is essential.

Scrum had the potential to shrink the length of the software company's development release cycle from more than a year to just a few weeks.



The Scrum process, in brief, is as follows:

1. The team adds product requirements to the product **backlog** - the list of requirements not yet met.
2. The development team prioritizes the requirements and decides which ones to complete during the upcoming **sprint**. A sprint is a predefined time period, usually 2 weeks.
3. After each sprint, the team performs a review with product stakeholders to confirm that all requirements have been met. If the stakeholders approve, then the product work from that sprint is considered **shippable**.



Organizational Transformation

Implementing Scrum can be a major culture shift for a software development team. When managing any transformation, support from key stakeholders is essential. Further, involving everyone in the team who is impacted by the change ensures the broader support that is required for success.

Involving everyone in the team who is impacted by the change ensures the broader support that is required for success.



DESIGNER



PROGRAMMER



TESTER



DOCUMENT WRITER

By working with the support of executive leaders, and by engaging the team, Loft9 associates created a transformation plan to implement Scrum. We identified the key resources and deliverables, and mapped out a timeline for the transformation. Crucial elements of the plan included:

1. **Building expertise** – Identifying and providing the appropriate training reduces resistance and builds a sense of competence and engagement within the team.



2. **Running a pilot project –**

Running a pilot project allows the team try out new procedures without affecting other critical work in progress. Pilot projects also give the team an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the new methodology and to identify how existing processes may need to change to meet business objectives.

3. **Telling the story –**

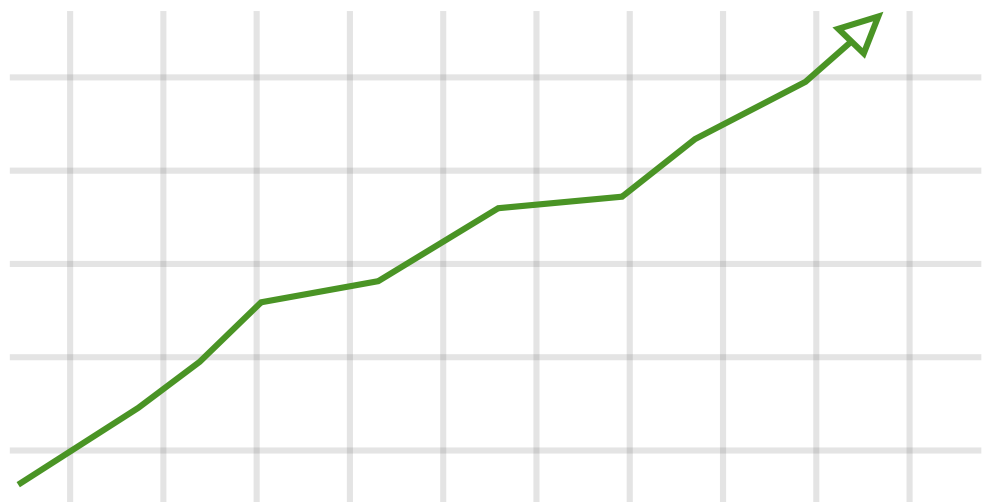
Including the team in the transformational journey as changes are rolled out to the larger organization facilitates a high rate of acceptance.

After the team learned, practiced, and assessed the new methodology, they adapted it to work for their unique business processes. They implemented some modifications:

1. Sprint cycles were lengthened to three weeks to allow Scrum teams adequate time to complete user stories and provide feedback to stakeholders in a timely manner.
2. Scrum teams were comprised of four team members representing the technical knowledge and skills required. This team included a designer, a programmer, a tester, and a document writer.
3. A few previously unanticipated needs drove other minor adjustments to processes.

Results Exceeded Expectations

Our clients surpassed their business goals as a result of the transformational shift to using Scrum methodology. Though the company had set a goal of reducing the time between fix releases to three months, it began delivering releases in as few as three weeks.



Though the company had set a goal of reducing the time between fix releases to three months, it began delivering releases in as few as three weeks.



The company experienced additional benefits over the course of the eight-month transformation, including:

1. **Higher customer satisfaction –**
The client's customer satisfaction increased as software releases were delivered in a timely manner, allowing the organization to stay relevant and competitive in the marketplace.
2. **More frequent customer engagement –**
The client received valuable, regular feedback from customers due to increase in release volume and frequency.
3. **Improved morale –**
Teams thrived with increased responsibility and collaboration, and team members held each other accountable to their commitments.
4. **Progress transparency –**
The project status was visible in burndown charts for sprints and in product backlogs.
5. **Improved sales quoting –**
The company used story sizing and delivery velocity data to estimate cost and profit margins for each team and to generate more accurate statements of work.



The Loft9 Story

Loft9 is a management consulting firm that guides clients through organizational, operational, and business technology transformations. We provide the strategic planning, execution, and ongoing operational support required across, and within, business functions for a practical solution that demystifies the transformation journey.

Our clients see the value of a practical transformation model that is not shrouded in industry jargon, but built upon a shared understanding of their culture and unique business needs.

For years, Loft9 has helped our clients achieve successful transformative changes through our unique collaboration of **Consulting Services** and **Managed Services**.

We started our journey to create a different kind of consulting firm – one that is steeped in a rich culture of collaboration, learning, and growth. Those are the things that get us up every morning, invigorated and ready to take on new challenges.

Our culture is brought to life by every associate. Loft9 is the only consulting firm that combines a **Co-Delivery** model with the best available talent, enabling us to provide customized teams to address our clients' unique needs.

We are in an intensely competitive industry where many firms strip out organizational values. Not at Loft9. Not when we started. And not now.

If you like what you've read, we invite you to meet with us. We'd like to tell you more about how we help our clients transform their businesses.

And we want to hear your story.