The Challenge

Great news: Your engineering team has developed an online service, and every business unit in the company wants to use it. The bad news: Your organization is struggling to keep up with the demand, and feels trapped by the constant order-taking of customized services for each business unit. That's the situation we found when working with an IT shared services group providing digital technologies for a Fortune 100 company. They decided to adopt Agile practices to improve delivery and responsiveness to its business units.

A blueprint for success

To overcome the IT organization's challenges, Point B recommended a top-down, bottom-up approach to Agile. Our approach focused on the strategy by taking a portfolio view of the product and optimized how the engineering teams delivered.

Top-down product focus

Point B's Product Management experts worked with internal and external stakeholders to develop a strategic product plan. We analyzed key consumer, technology and industry trends; completed dozens of stakeholder interviews companywide; and assessed new solutions for the best fit with strategic focus areas. The results gave our client's product management team greater insight into its product with a better understanding of current market trends, a more customer-focused product vision, and clearly defined key success metrics.

In addition, we consolidated multiple roadmaps into a single view and introduced feature-scoring to aid in prioritization. This allowed an increased focus on investment decisions of strategic importance and delivered on the highest-value capabilities for business units.

Bottom-up delivery focus

The engineering teams had been following a waterfall methodology and were aligned in teams according to the layer of the platform architecture stack (front-end, middle-tier, or back-end). In order to better position all teams to deliver on the product strategy, our Agile experts introduced and transitioned the teams to Agile practices. The platform teams were restructured to cross-functional Scrum teams focused on delivering features across the full platform stack. Point B incrementally rolled out additional Agile practices such as backlog grooming, planning poker, and definition of done. Backlog grooming helped prioritize features, while the estimation complexity of features against one another was handled with planning poker. Clarifying the definition of done ensured that only completed features were released.

Delivering on strategy

The Agile approach enabled the IT organization to develop a well-planned product strategy that balanced the needs of product innovation and business units' feature requests. IT reduced overall delivery time by breaking work into smaller cross-functional development teams, gaining greater flexibility to serve the changing needs of the business units without compromising quality or cost.