

SECURITY SOFTWARE PRODUCT COMPANY USES NEXUS™ FRAMEWORK

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CASE STUDY



THE COMPANY

A leading international security software product company delivering products globally.

The Business Challenge

In 2016, a leading security products company adopted Scrum to support teams working in complex product development, in order to make the organization more adaptive and able to react faster to change. It began with one Scrum Team of IT developers focused on mobile applications. Shortly thereafter, more Scrum Teams were formed to revamp its existing platform in a new contemporary stack, composed of new hires focusing on API development, mobile app development and integration services. There was one Product Owner who began struggling with managing multiple priorities across these teams.

At this point, the company brought in Professional Scrum Master Venkatesh Rajamani. Because of his experience in Scrum and Agile, he was asked to become a coach for the group and help the teams with Scrum and Agile. He noticed right away that the organization was only performing some of the Scrum events, but not all of them, which he believed was just part of the issue.

He began working with three teams in Chennai, India to help them effectively adopt Scrum. He found two main dysfunctions immediately. First, the teams were not cross-functional. Second, the teams did not challenge the Product Owner; since they viewed him as a boss, they did not function as a team. Ultimately, >

they needed Venkatesh's help to understand if they were doing Scrum, and if not, learn how they could improve. After his initial efforts, these teams were effectively practicing Scrum and served as a model for the rest of the company.

However, another challenge emerged: integration issues across teams. Working in two week Sprints (a time-boxed event of 30 days or less that serves as a container for the other Scrum events and development work), they found that in three to four months, they still were not producing an Integrated Increment across the Scrum Teams. While individually the Scrum Teams were doing really well, meeting their goals and improving their predictability, they faced alignment issues with some non-agile teams, composed of developer, QA, and DevOps roles, which slowed down overall progress. Because of these issues, the IT development team completes as much work as it can and queues the increments in its pre-production environment without releasing them for a large amount of time. Venkatesh, along with a director in Chennai, India, collaborated to solve these integration challenges.

Solution - The Nexus Framework

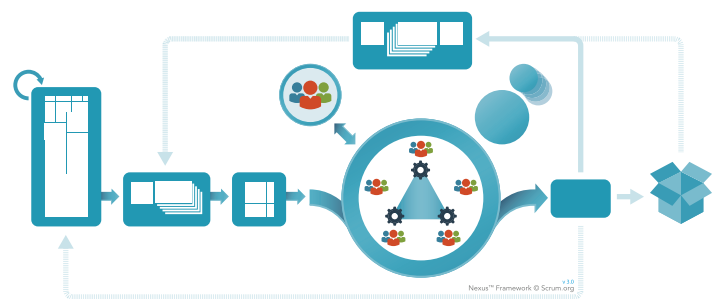
While the teams were working on one product and had one Product Owner, they suffered from being organized as component teams and dealing with cross-team dependencies. SAFe was not an option for them because they believed it was too prescriptive and had too many roles. They didn't have all of the roles and all of their teams worked on the same code base. Since many of the teams had already implemented Scrum, Venkatesh recommended Nexus as a solution, a framework that helps Scrum to scale by minimizing and removing cross-team dependencies and integration issues while elevating transparency.

Using the Nexus framework, the initial IT development team, along with the new platform revamp teams, formed a single Product Backlog

to build an Integrated Increment. There were many dependencies, organized with the various teams – database, API, mobile, third party, integration, security – which arose from the work of multiple teams collaborating to create a complete and "Done" Increment at least once every Sprint.

The multiple teams within the IT business unit started making the cross-team dependencies transparent for better inspection and adaptation, and ultimately, to minimize these dependencies across the multiple teams. They utilized Nexus Sprint Planning to coordinate the activities of all Scrum Teams for a single Sprint. They also ordered the Product Backlog so the Product Owner had a clear picture of all the integration and dependency pain points, which then enabled the Product Owner to work with the team to better optimize their efforts. The Product Owner then had the opportunity to inspect and adapt the dependencies and prioritize the Product Backlog to bring the highest value in the shortest period of time.

Figure 1, The Nexus Framework



Results

By using the Nexus framework, the Scrum Teams have been able to successfully deliver incremental releases, frequently, with minimized dependencies and better alignment across teams. Along with reorganizing by self-organizing into feature teams, they also used the retrospective events to address challenges >

that emerged, including eliminating the siloed work efforts which prevented the Product Owner from having an end-to-end view for the customer. This enabled him to update the release plan and identify future funding needs.

As a result of using Nexus, the organization has been more adaptive and faster to market than ever before. They now have an Integrated Increment from across six teams in the mobile security group that is potentially releasable every two weeks. The security products company continues to use Nexus to quicken software delivery while increasing the value they deliver to customers and the organization, helping them remain competitive. ◆

About Scrum.org

Based on the principles of Scrum and the Agile Manifesto, Scrum.org provides comprehensive training, assessments, and certifications to improve the professional of software delivery.

Throughout the world, our solutions and community of Professional Scrum Trainers empower people and organizations to achieve agility through Scrum.

Ken Schwaber, the co-creator of Scrum, founded Scrum.org in 2009 as a global organization, dedicating himself to improving the profession of software delivery by reducing the gaps so the work and work products are dependable.

Visit www.scrum.org/nexus for more whitepapers and case studies about the Nexus framework in action.

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