

HOW NET HEALTH SCALES SCRUM WITH THE NEXUS FRAMEWORK

FEBRUARY 2018



CASE STUDY



THE COMPANY



www.nethealth.com

The Company

Net Health is a leader in software solutions for specialized outpatient care. The company serves healthcare professionals in 98% of the largest hospital chains in the United States as well as private practices around the country – driving work flow in more than 3,000 urgent care, wound care, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, occupational medicine, employee health, and workplace medicine facilities each day. Net Health is a portfolio company of The Carlyle Group and Level Equity.

Net Health has a total of 300 employees with its corporate office based in Pittsburgh, PA, and regional offices in Altoona, Jacksonville and Brentwood. Its product development organization is spread across the country and is comprised of four departments: Software Development, Quality Assurance, Program Management, and Product Management.

Business Challenge

Net Health first adopted Scrum in 2014 to aid in the completion of two large software development projects and remove the burden of an exhaustive initial requirements phase, thanks to the iterative nature of Scrum. Prior to implementing Scrum, the company utilized a Waterfall Approach, which did not include iterative >

or integrated development. This led to inaccurate timeline prediction and fixed-scope releases, driving their need and desire to switch to Scrum. Net Health's Scrum adoption was initially slow because teams and leaders had to be educated about the value proposition of making the switch, then trained in the new process.

Once the initial adoption challenges were met, Net Health established five Scrum Teams, over time, all working on large scale projects. The teams were working in silos that didn't efficiently communicate or regularly integrate code, despite the fact that they were all working from the same code base. Each release required massive, complicated merges and significant retesting efforts.

In addition to these challenges, three years ago, Net Health made the business decision to port its four distinct products into a single platform. Because of this, they needed a way to ensure they were leveraging functionality shared across the products on the single platform. They also needed a way to scale the meaningful conversations they were having on individual Scrum Teams for individual products to the whole platform. To execute this, and to resolve the issues they were facing with each Scrum Team operating in a vacuum, they selected the [Nexus framework](#), an Agile framework built on Scrum. The Nexus framework drives to the heart of scaling by minimizing cross-team dependencies and integration issues

Solution

During the process of porting their products to a single platform, Net Health realized they needed to continually integrate, release, and deploy products together. One of Net Health's Scrum Masters discovered the Nexus framework from Scrum.org and brought it to the organization. After evaluating other options, Net Health selected Nexus as the best option for scaling

their product development and Scrum Teams compared to alternative scaling frameworks. "Because our teams were already familiar with Scrum, and we are big believers in self-organization, Nexus was our best option for successfully delivering on Net Health's business objectives," said Christopher Hayes, CTO and Board Director at Net Health.

Net Health's five Scrum Teams range in size from seven to ten Development Team members. Across the teams are six Scrum Masters: one for each of the five Scrum Teams and one Scrum Master that is specifically dedicated to the Nexus Integration Team.

The move to Nexus was not without its challenges. When Net Health moved to Nexus, they had separate teams of business analysts, with no single empowered Product Owner of their software platform for the Nexus, causing directional confusion. Initially the Scrum Teams weren't efficient and slow cross-departmental buy-in impeded progress.

However, once these challenges were met, the benefits of moving to Nexus came quickly. The Nexus has one empowered Product Owner for its platform. The Nexus reformed its Scrum Teams through a self-selection team formation exercise, and are now delivering integrated increments to their platform.

Results

Over the last two years, Net Health has seen additional teams coming together, more often, with an improved cadence of achieving "Done," and releasing at least one integrated increment at the end of each Sprint. The Scrum Teams in the Nexus increased the integrated increments to roughly one to three per Sprint. ➤

Thanks to the Nexus framework's focus on integration, code merges are frequent, low-risk, and straightforward. Plus, product increments are simpler to release into production. While all development processes require continuous attention and leadership, today, Net Health is seeing optimal communication and engagement across five Scrum teams. "Team members have expressed feeling empowered," said Nic Easton, Scrum Master at Net Health. "Everyone is speaking up readily and looking for ways to improve how the teams work, whether it's a business analyst or a developer on the Scrum Teams. We're building bottom-up intelligence in the Nexus so we can improve our way of working more quickly. With the ability to inspect and adapt at scale, Net Health's Scrum Teams are stronger overall thanks to the Nexus framework."

With Nexus, Net Health's Scrum Teams are addressing issues head-on through an agile approach, with inspection and adaptation. Everyone in the Nexus (and even beyond the Nexus) has changed the way they approach reporting, developing action plans, and even determining what gets valuable air-time in meetings. Teams now regularly evaluate (inspect) each process as they go, identifying those that are higher priority, and speed along only the necessary communications between all stakeholders during the execution of plans. This saves Net Health precious time to make quicker, high value releases and allows the company to respond faster (adapt) to the market. ◆

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.

Join a Scaled Professional Scrum training workshop to experience a case study hands-on, where you will learn over 50 practices to reduce complexity and dependencies at scale. Find a course at www.scrum.org/SPS

