The Challenge

A market leading international manufacturer of HVAC equipment in Germany was challenged with redesigning their online presence. Their more than 80 websites needed to be consolidated, redesigned, and implemented on a new content management system. These websites were for customer and installer services, big data analytics, and smart home services. The company commissioned their two internal online marketing teams, its own IT department, and an external digital agency with the project.

After about a year, the project had not made much progress and threatened to exceed the timeframe and budget. Their challenge to develop clear differentiation between brands caused the teams to compete with each other instead of working together. The agency divided itself into two teams, with each assigned to one of the online teams. Each of these resulting “parties” then developed its own requirements and specifications for each website, which were in many parts both redundant and contradictory. Due to the timeframe and pressure to be successful, there were many internal disagreements, causing further delays in progress.

The company then hired Johannes Geske to develop a solution. 
to successfully complete the project. They chose to work with Geske because of his deep agile experience and knowledge. Geske also has his Scaled Professional Scrum certification. After learning about the current situation, the project team and Geske determined the issues would not be resolved by revising the project plan and adjusting the budget.

**The Solution**

After mediating the internal conflicts, the project team and Geske worked with management to implement Scrum, which they then scaled over time by using the Nexus framework.

They started with a single Scrum Team which consisted of internal members only. This team then developed a microsite publishing toolkit within one two-week Sprint that enabled regional marketing teams to implement their own online operations in the more than 30 countries. In doing so, the Scrum Team was able to familiarize themselves with the technology, lay the foundation for the architecture, and regain self-confidence and trust with each other and with management. By the end of Sprint 3, the Product Increment was released to production for the first time and was immediately used to publish the first of many websites.

Over a short period of time, they scaled the four Scrum Teams, and then they began to use the Nexus framework to help them coordinate as a larger group. Within the Nexus, there was a single Product Owner who had the ultimate responsibility for the product being delivered. To be sure that the Product Owner had all that was needed to make decisions, he worked with a team of four people to support him, consisting of business analysts and user experience experts. The Product Owner and his team worked with the stakeholders (group marketing, national sales companies’ marketing, IT, sales, customer service, legal) to consolidate requirements of stakeholders from 30+ National sales companies before refining those with the Development Teams. The user experience experts provided style guides to the Scrum Teams to ensure a consistent UX across all features.

During Nexus Sprint Planning, the Development Teams pulled Product Backlog items for the Sprint. During these sessions, they visualized dependencies between the selected work on a dedicated Scrum board to use as their Nexus Sprint Backlog. The Nexus Integration Team members attended to coach the four Scrum Teams on visualizing and managing their dependencies. Throughout the Sprint, the Nexus Integration Team supported the Development Teams to ensure integration of each Product Increment into a single “Done” Product Increment. On a daily basis, at the Nexus Daily Scrum, they discussed progress, dependencies, and obstacles. In addition, each of the four Scrum Teams conducted their own Daily Scrum to communicate and adapt to any issues that were getting in the way of meeting their Sprint Goal. At the end of each Sprint, all teams participated in the Nexus Sprint Review where they shared the work delivered throughout the Sprint gaining feedback from their stakeholders. Based on any stakeholder feedback, the Product Owner worked to update the Product Backlog and adjusted to the product roadmap. After the Nexus Sprint Review, common challenges were identified, and improvements were suggested in the Nexus Sprint Retrospective. By continuing to use Nexus, they released new features to production after each Sprint and helped all of the national sales companies build and publish their websites successfully throughout the rest of the year.

“Before using Scrum and the Nexus framework, the project ‘team’ was really just three groups not collaborating towards a common goal,” said
Geske. “With Scrum and the Nexus framework, the group became a team and collaborated to reach a mutual goal. The Nexus events helped us focus as one entity.”

Results

By using Scrum and the Nexus framework to scale Scrum, the team managed to deliver the websites successfully and 3 months ahead of the initial 16-month timeframe, recovering from significant delays and conflicts at the start. The company was able to launch this at a major event and showcased new, modern and consistent websites and new online services.

The core Scrum Team formed for this particular project continues to exist today and develops and operates a large part of the now considerable digital ecosystem in the company using Scrum, Nexus and other agile practices to deliver continuously. “We can confirm that Nexus is a way to successfully complete complex projects without heavy-weight agile frameworks, but with teams of motivated and committed people working together to accomplish what many have declared impossible,” said Geske. “With Scrum and Nexus we have overcome many challenges. I thank this great team for an exciting time together and for one of the most educational projects we have ever encountered.”

Due to the visible success, more and more teams within the company adopted Scrum, and agile principles and practices became part of their way of working and delivering projects. 

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