sketch development

Better Teams // Better Software

Internal Data Group Shifts Mindset to Focus on Delivery Outcomes

After recently consolidating 3 different data teams under a single organization, the client came to Sketch for help adopting agile practices for these teams. They wanted Sketch to help build the operational model, as well as help determine individual skills and delivery practices necessary to become a product-driven organization. At the start, we identified Speed to Market, Predictability and Alignment as the most important outcomes to focus on improving.

> The stakeholders are very optimistic about the strategy we have developed with Sketch and they are anxious to see it come to life."-
>
> — **VP,** *Data Science*
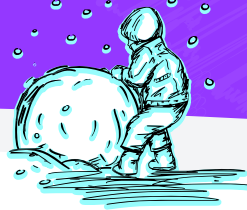
CHALLENGE

Before we got started, the client had shared many challenges they were facing:

- **Stakeholders didn't know where their requests were in the queue,** or when to expect them to be completed

- **Coordinating priorities for large efforts and small efforts was difficult** and prone to misalignment across individuals and teams

- Teams were focused on fulfilling requests and **had difficulty creating time and space to improve the client's product offerings**

- **Teams couldn't deliver work independently,** so members spent a lot of time in standups for coordination and visibility needs

- **Desire to better understand agile practices** as they would apply to a data organization

SOLUTION

Our approach was broken into phases (team structure, core team practices, cross-team planning and continue growth practices), to help the organization incrementally develop the skills needed to enable more advanced practices. Sketch also employed a combination of techniques in pursuit of the identified objectives, including:

- Agile bootcamps (training sessions)
- Team coaching for ceremonies
- 1-on-1 coaching sessions
- Facilitated workshops and working sessions
- Contract Scrum Masters from Sketch who filled the role on the teams
- Coaching for the leadership team
- Tool configuration (ADO) to establish consistent patterns for tracking and managing work
- Squad health checks using Waypointr to baseline team sentiment

RESULTS

To reduce the complexity of the challenges the client faced, we worked in each of the phases above. This allowed us to truly focus on each area that needed help before moving onto the next phase. Doing this resulted in:

- <u>Cross-functional teams aligned</u> to related business streams

- <u>Improved visibility into the work</u> they were doing, and improved stakeholder communication

- <u>Teams became more reliable</u> at delivering on stakeholder expectations

- <u>Teams set and delivered on objectives</u> with reasonable accuracy

- <u>Teams are now able to make meaningful commitments</u> for time spans and efforts larger than one or two sprints, which allows stakeholders to confidently build plans based around their delivery

- <u>Established a Product Owner Guild</u> which is the most effective guilds we have seen in an organization. The members continue to impress us with how they bring individual challenges to the group, provide feedback to each other and collaborate on solutions

- <u>The team was candid, transparent, curious and eager</u> to create an organization that people want to work for and although there are still challenges and improvement opportunities ahead, when we left the engagement, we were fully confident that the client built a group that will continue to overcome and thrive.