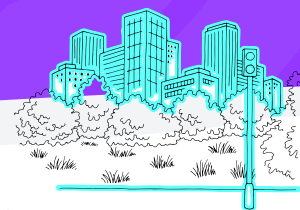
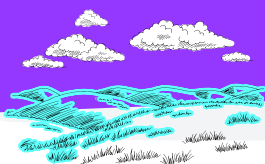


Late-Stage Security Startup Transforms Operating Model

A newly established Infrastructure and Network Security company leveraged an initial prototype to gain funding and grow the company quickly. With their rapid growth and focus on time to market, they stacked up a lot of tech debt. With a recommendation from one of their developers, they engaged Sketch to help bring Agile into their fast-paced environment so they could develop at a sustainable pace and improve predictability.

Our coach from Sketch did a great job bringing our team up to speed on the tactics, techniques, and processes necessary to make an agile transformation. He was a personal confidant during this time and helped coach us through a typically difficult transition. I would highly recommend not only him, but Sketch in an agile transformation."

— Chief of Staff



CHALLENGE

Growing a company quickly is one of the best problems you can have, but only if you have the right tools in place. Our client had many challenges in their way which included:

- The team did not understand the application to a degree that they needed to
- The Product Owner's priorities were continuously shifting
- Stories were being planned, but they only had a 55% chance of being completed
- They had 6 developers working on different parts of the application at different times which lead to a lack of testability and feedback
- The team was getting work done, but the software was rarely in a shippable state

They needed to upgrade their automated testing strategy in a way that would be scalable, and to make sure that everyone would be able to work within their system in the future.

SOLUTION

Sketch started by delivering a 2-day Agile Bootcamp, followed by a high-touch coaching engagement that would help them improve their ceremonies, finalize team roles and responsibilities, and measure goals until a level of predictability and scope churn were established.

During this time, Sketch focused on:

- Pairing and internal team coaching to set goals
- Facilitating interpersonal and team discussion to keep executives caught up with team updates
- Outcome focused story mapping
- Capacity planning and prioritization to understand the applications
- Keeping product owner priorities consistent and protecting the sprint so that plans only changed if necessary.

Allowing these new plans to be put into place would help the team in both the short and long term.

RESULTS

Once the team was able to spend more time in their codebase, light bulbs went off. **With Sketch's help, the team began to focus on the size and value of their stories. Learning how to vertically slice their stories resulted in more realistic and consistent estimations. Roles became more defined**, which allowed them to know where they needed to get involved within the team. The product owner began to rely on their team to carry out the plans of each sprint, and they finally took an honest look at how much tech debt they had accrued and took steps to reduce it instead of hoping it would work itself out. Bringing in an agile framework and reworking the structure of the team allowed for new projects to be carried out with greater ease. It also allowed for more open discussions between clients and teammates about how tasks would be completed.

CONTINUED WORK



Overall, many achievements were made as we shifted the way this team worked. We were able to move the needle further in this engagement due to leadership's ability to take constructive feedback and be transparent and honest about what was going on in their organization. But with any agile project (or technology project, for that matter), change is inevitable along the way, so we identified a few areas to continue to improve:

- Finding a balance between building new features and remediating tech debt
- Implementing an automated testing system to ensure faster testing
- Downsizing large batches of work to deliver