



Sun Microsystems
(NASDAQ: JAVA)
Santa Clara, Calif.
<http://sun.com>

Founded: 1982

Employees: 33,904

Annual revenue: \$13.873B

Products: computer servers,
workstations, storage
software, and services

“The best compliment I can give to ScrumWorks™ is that my staff doesn’t think about it. It is intuitive and respectful of the Scrum methodology, and easily becomes a very natural extension of the methodology.”

-- Dan Butzer, Sun Microsystems

Situation

It makes sense that Sun Microsystems — the company that reinvented application software development with its Java platform — would be right at home with a radical paradigm shift. Certainly, Sun’s forward-thinking culture, which has long championed open source software, would be more receptive to Scrum’s tenets of transparency and personal responsibility than other organizations. But the sheer inability of waterfall development to respond to shifting business realities made Sun's Network.com team's Scrum adoption an attractive option.

“The space that Sun works in is incredibly dynamic,” says Dan Butzer, Senior Director of Sun’s Network.com platform engineering team. “We realized that there are two ways to deal with it. You can either fight the fact that conditions are constantly evolving. Or you can embrace that volatility and learn how to adapt to it.”

For Butzer, Scrum’s inspect-and-adapt lifecycle was precisely the way to “embrace that volatility.” After all, even if long-term conditions were unpredictable, he could create a stable work environment for his team within the parameters of a two-week sprint.

Application

Once Sun's Network.com team determined to implement Scrum, Butzer’s first goal was to educate the senior members of his staff who attended training together. During the ScrumMaster certification and Agile estimation training, the instructor mentioned that some prefer to employ an online Agile tool to overcome a lack of collocation. One highlighted tool, ScrumWorks™ Pro (hyperlink: <http://danube.com/scrumworks/pro>), appealed to Butzer for its extensive reporting capabilities, and the team decided to deploy ScrumWorks Pro within its own Network.com infrastructure.

A number of members of the team were familiar with Scrum and some members had previously experimented with ScrumWorks™ Basic (hyperlink: <http://danube.com/scrumworks/basic>), so the team decided to forego any formal tool training. Instead, they created a “sandbox” within ScrumWorks Pro, a virtual testing ground where team members could explore the software’s features and functions. The team found the tool intuitive and well-aligned with Scrum’s framework, and within two weeks, they were ready to enter their first sprint.



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Solution

The ease with which Sun's Network.com team integrated Scrum was due in large part to the organization's commitment to clear communication and transparency, which allowed its staff to embrace the change without fear of the unknown. As a result, Sun's Network.com team encountered few of the common cultural clashes that occur during the Scrum transformation. No career paths were modified; no internal support groups were created; and no administrative changes were necessary.

"The entire process was very organic," explains Butzer. "Everyone decided to do it together, so it was a smooth transition."

For Butzer, one of ScrumWorks Pro's most valuable features is its extensive reporting capabilities. The tool tracks a variety of metrics including the team's velocity, the rate at which requirements change, and the rate at which features are added to the product. "It is very satisfying for teams to see the amount of work they accomplished in a sprint," he says, noting that his team's productivity has increased since they implemented Scrum. These reports are published online, and the stakeholders can conveniently access them as well through the Web links.

After three months (and six sprints), Sun's Network.com team's ScrumWorks Pro subscription has just been increased to support 200 internal Sun users. And according to Butzer, the tool's ease of technical integration and respect for the Scrum methodology mean it will continue to spread throughout the organization.

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