CASE STUDY

Becoming Agile at Aras.

Aras provides a Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) platform for enterprise-level digital industrial applications. Aras' headquarters is in the US, with offices across Europe and Asia. The company employs more than 700 people.

The challenge

When Aras engaged AgileSparks in 2018, it was in a growth cycle. The development and product management team size quadrupled in three years from less than 40 employees to more than 170. As the company began to scale, new layers of complexity emerged, and there was a sense that something fundamental about how the business was operating had to change to keep up as the existing structure and process started to become inefficient. Miscommunication and bottlenecks were becoming more common.

AgileSparks solutions

Value Stream Workshop to identify potential reorganization around value into ARTs/teams to align better with company goals and context. SAFe training for all layers and roles. Coaching and supporting the transformation.

Timeline: Approximately 30 months.

Results

- Significant improvement in time-to-market from an average of four months to five weeks per release.
- Improved release predictability with a target date delay of zero to five days down from one to two months.
- Improvements in predictably knowing the functionality content of releases where previously functionality could be unclear.
- Increased product quality due to the adoption of test-driven development and automation.

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The SAFe approach appeared to be the best fit for our complex enterprise-level software development involving hundreds of engineers. We quickly learned that there was a gold-level certification for SAFe consultants, and our research led us to AgileSparks. Moving to SAFe and an agile environment involved a significant mind shift. Teams had to adapt to working with different people and broadening from their specialization. They also had to get used to having a product owner tell them what they need rather than a manager telling them what to do. The self-organizing team approach where the developers decided together how to do the work was the opposite of how things had operated before. My advice for organizations contemplating an agile transformation is to get buy-in from management first. As with any large-scale change, there will be missteps along the way. Everyone needs to be prepared for that.

John Busa,
VP Production,
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