

## Unlocking Agile with Platform.sh

Agile methodologies are known to enable business value much earlier; based on better information, pushing back the point where requirements need to be known in full, and delaying the need to make irreversible design commitments. And as such it's no great surprise that advanced Agile management usually delivers products to requirement and under budget.

Unfortunately, most development workflow tools are not actually Agile, and impose constraints on the development process that prevent gathering the full value of the methodologies. Rigid Development-Test-Production sequences slow down the promotion of code into upstream environments, and introduce dependencies between development tasks that should not be there.

### **Agile methodologies bring visible business value**

A comprehensive approach to Agile emphasises not only requirements accuracy and then efficient code development, but also the importance of identifying and managing organisational changes in conjunction with appropriate technology choices to deliver complex projects successfully.

Every project is bound by the Iron Triangle, tightly binding available resources, delivery deadlines and the completeness of the delivered product. Any negative adjustment to one corner of the triangle will usually have a negative effect on one or both of the remaining corners.

Agile methodologies however, improve

the effectiveness and longevity of design decisions that would otherwise have become irreversible much earlier. Where possible, the “point of no return” for as many aspects of the build as possible should be pushed back to the end of the initial build phase.

The Fixed approach nearly always requires that design decisions are made early on, at a point when the least amount of information and learning is available about the project and its future working personality. Following a lengthy and complex design phase, a large number of application features and functions are then quickly built in parallel around predefined inter-relationships, and are not available for business review until the entire assembly comes together immediately prior to completion. In addition, upfront proposal

costs are usually low-balled in order to win the work in the first place, with subsequent and inevitable changes being overpriced; the irony being that many of these changes will be correcting earlier design flaws and improper detail.

Agile however, starts by quickly building selected core business functions, demonstrating their value and then iteratively building more. Relevant and valuable feedback is provided at frequent intervals during the early stages, improving learning and knowledge about the project's intended personality far earlier than would otherwise have been possible. Neither the scope nor the cost are fixed, nor do they have to be fulfilled or used up, as these are now governed by the customer who decides what they see next, and when they are satisfied they have seen enough. The MVP is available early on in a project's lifecycle and therefore subject to an earlier decision on viability.

The allocation of development time attributed to detail versus core feature is roughly 80:20. With Fixed, both customer and supplier are committed to use up 100% before revealing the finished article, whereas Agile enables small chunks to be built, delivered and usable in their own right. The budget burn-down becomes meaningfully visible to the customer, the cost of subsequent work doesn't rise, and you only pay for what you decide to build.

## **Platform.sh underpins and enhances Agile**

Platform.sh provides automated systems administration out the box, environments are quickly and easily branched by developers, at will, and within seconds. Many different features can be developed in parallel by teams of developers against fully consistent copies of master environments, and then subjected to automated testing by your chosen tools prior to merging upstream.

Development timeframes are collapsed, developer resources required to deliver features are reduced, and iterations become quicker, smaller and happen in parallel, all of which maps very closely to the Agile KPI's described above. Ideas can be quickly built and demonstrated because deployment risk introduced by the infrastructure has fallen to zero. The Agile process is no longer limited by lesser technologies and clunky development processes imposed by the underlying infrastructure; it is, in fact, hugely accelerated by Platform.sh.

Platform.sh is a continuous deployment cloud hosting solution that can scale applications from the smallest project to ones handling millions of visitors. It is ideal for agile software teams because of its unique feature: it can replicate a live production cluster in seconds and create byte-level clones of throwaway dev and staging environments, which makes testing and validation up to 7 times faster. It can provide 99.99% SLAs thanks to 24/7 follow-the-sun support combined with a unique, triple-redundant architecture that's based on a high density grid of Linux micro-containers. With employees across five continents, the company serves thousands of clients worldwide, including Vivienne Westwood, The Canadian Football League, The British Council, and Flixbus.