Sprint-based Requirements

Annie Egan - ICPA
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Overview

- Overview of Agile
- Agile in Government
- Challenges with Agile
- Overview of Sprint-based Requirements
- Sprint-based Requirements Process
- Questions

Agile

Agile Software Development is a lightweight software engineering framework that promotes iterative development throughout the life-cycle of the project, close collaboration between the development team and business side, constant communication, and tightly-knit teams.

General principles include:

- Continually develop software
- Concentrate on delivering working software frequently
- Promote development that is sustainable - sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain an indefinite, constant pace
- Simplicity is considered to be the art of maximizing the work that is not done
- At regular intervals the team will reflect on how to become more effective

Agile in Government

“The returns on adopting these practices are clear…What might not be quite as crystal clear is how organizations as big as the federal government become highly agile. Or how they manage programs and projects in ways that enjoy the benefits of agile without descending into complete chaos. This is where an approach that integrates agile into conventional project management is beneficial. Together these can provide an optimal mix of predictability, sustainability, risk reduction and rapid adaptability.”

- Federal Times

ICPA Challenges with Agile

One of the Platform Solutions team's (ICPA) biggest challenges with agile development is that most of our Salesforce applications do not have a standing development team (outside of O&M).

- Development teams are on boarded as GSA business lines have new application requests or major enhancements to existing applications
- Contract modifications are needed to bring on these additional development resources
- Often times the development teams are brand new to GSA and have to come up to speed on everything very quickly

This makes it very challenging to establish long-term collaboration between the business line and development team, maintain a constant pace and reflect on becoming more effective.

Audience Question: Does your team face similar challenges?

Overcoming the Challenge

With the development resource constraints, ICPA needed to determine a way to be agile outside of development sprints using our current resources.

- The ICPA team and the Salesforce Center of Excellence (CoE) is made up of seven Government Leads, three Salesforce Architects and a vendor Program Manager
- We determined that our standing team should start working in sprints outside of development projects - meaning the work prior to development (e.g., user story generation, to be process flows) would be worked as sprints (aka, Sprint-based Requirements)
- This would allow us to efficiently gather as much business information as possible and prepare to effectively onboard dev teams and plan for successful dev sprints

Audience Question: Does your team practice agile outside of dev?

What is Sprint-based Requirements?

Sprint-based Requirements follow a typical agile sprint format that run for **two weeks** with defined business topics and scope to discover during the sprints. This format ensures that the ICPA team has a proper understanding of how to setup Salesforce standard objects, configure workflows, and setup reports / dashboards based on the needs of the business line.

- The Salesforce CoE's process is to work to configure solutions based on the different businesses we work with and their requirements.
- The scope of new Salesforce projects is to focus first on creating a Minimal Viable Product (MVP) using Salesforce Out of the Box (OOTB) functionality.
- ***OOTB*** is defined as using the declarative features provided by Salesforce, where we can develop applications by using point / click functionality and without any code. Business requirements and user story generation is needed to determine the best solution for configuration.

Sprint-based Requirements Process: Intake

1. **Customer Intake**
    a. Request Customer to complete the **IT Project Request Form** to gather initial information
2. **Provide Ballpark Estimate (ROM) based on Request Form**
    a. Level Sets
    b. Communicate Sprint-based Requirements Timeline and Availability (may request up to 50% of business line SME's time)
    c. All Backlog grooming and solutioning is documented within JIRA
3. **Request business POC and SMEs to share any documented requirements or supporting documentation**
    a. Gather enough information to determine the # of Requirements Sprints needed and the scope/topic of each sprint
4. **Share estimated project plan / timeline with Customer and ensure business line commitment**

Sprint-based Requirements Process: Execution

1. **Sprint-based Requirements Kickoff Meeting**
    a. Include “Introduction to Agile” to establish common language
    b. Clearly communicate Definition of Done
2. **Facilitate Whiteboarding Sessions (example with Login.gov)**
    a. Seat Rides
3. **Create product backlog within JIRA**
    a. Work closely with business to create, groom and finalize stories
    b. Request business to categorize stories for the MVP sprint
4. **Architect and Gov Lead create and send final LOE and cost estimate to Business POC for MVP**
    a. Potentially re-prioritize stories based off of budget
5. **Onboard Sprint Development team**
    a. Sprint Zero to understand requirements gathered during requirements sprints
    b. Development follows a two-week sprint cadence

Sprint-based Requirements Process: R&R

Role	Responsibilities
Business POC and SMEs	• Provides any supplemental documentation • Helps to coordinate seat rides, etc. • Determines other Business SMEs who should be included • Provides business related information (e.g., user groups, email templates, knowledge information, etc.)
Gov Lead	• Coordinates logistics • Creates Sprint-based Requirements Project Schedule • Facilitates white boarding sessions and backlog grooming • Sends end of Sprint-based Requirements deliverables • Creates SOW and IGCE for Contract MOD
Salesforce Architect	• Participates in sessions by asking pointed questions • Assists with user stories and acceptance criteria creation • Documents “As Is” and “To Be” Process Flow • Solutions stories in order to determine LOE and Cost Estimate

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – Henry Ford

Sprint-based Requirements Process: Deliverables

Items that customers get at the end of an engagement. Note, this can be a mix of one or more deliverables depending on the type of requirement or complexity of requirement.

- Current “As Is” Process Flow and “To Be” Process Flow (example, **Payroll Services)**
- Baseline User Stories in JIRA
- Analysis findings
- Architect support document for more complex development efforts
- Playbook
- Prototype

Summary

- Agile is a great framework to follow, but you need to be able to customize it based on your environment and available resources.
- Sprint-based requirements is a good way to show value to your customers and ensure they are as committed as you are to the project and future application.
- Customers often come to us with “simple” requests, but don’t realize that additional thought and analysis is needed before taking next steps (especially before developing a new solution on an enterprise-wide platform).
- The Sprint-based Requirements framework helps us to separate the problem from the solution so that we can focus on the current and future business process without solutioning.

Audience Question: Has your team put your own spin on Agile based on environment or resources?

Questions?