

Cisco Accelerates Innovation and Boosts Competitive Advantage with Rally®

Client Profile

Industry: IT services

Company: Cisco

Employees: 73,000

Business

Cisco is the largest networking company in the world. It develops, manufactures and sells networking and communications solutions that increase connectivity for people and devices.

Challenge

To support continuous innovation, Cisco needs to be able to deliver new IT capabilities quickly and cost-effectively. The global IT team needed to take a new approach to how it serviced employees and partners.

Solution

Agile methodologies and Rally® (formerly CA Agile Central) have transformed how Cisco's IT team enables business outcomes with simplified collaboration and consistent digitized processes. Rally supports 24,000 users, 300 workspaces and 6,000 project spaces.

Benefit

Cisco can now implement new IT capabilities faster with delivery times reduced by an average of 25 percent. This helps accelerate innovation, boost competitive advantage and increase employee satisfaction.

Business

Enabling people to connect, communicate, and collaborate

Cisco was established in 1984 when its founders pioneered the concept of connecting geographically dispersed computers and invented the multi-protocol router, a breakthrough technology at the time.

Today, it is the largest networking company in the world, helping companies seize the opportunities of tomorrow by proving that amazing things can happen when you connect the previously unconnected.

Headquartered in San José, California, the company provides products and services that play a vital role in our personal and professional lives—from the Internet of Things and energy management to IT security and employee collaboration.

Cisco focuses on creating long-lasting partnerships and working with customers to deliver solutions that meet their needs and support their success.

Challenge

Accelerating and simplifying transformation

To stay competitive in the fast-moving IT sector, Cisco needs to keep innovating—not only in terms of its customer offerings but also its own processes. “We are evolving our business and our culture to help us move more quickly and simplify at every turn,” explains Robbie Rivera, Agile Coach and Practitioner within Cisco IT.

To support continuous innovation and deliver greater business value, Cisco’s IT organization needed to rethink how it serviced employees and partners. “We wanted to accelerate time to capability while also increasing quality and decreasing costs,” adds Rivera.

To achieve these goals, Cisco needed to change not only legacy IT systems but also processes and mindsets—especially within project delivery and software development. “Cisco IT was based on a typical waterfall culture, with cumbersome processes, long lead times, and lots of documentation,” comments Rivera.

The sheer scale of the IT organization, which includes 20,000-plus people distributed across 110 countries and 14 time zones, threatened to hamper the team’s ability to execute a global change program. “We faced a major challenge in terms of the scale, diversity and distribution of the people involved in the transformation,” adds Rivera.

Solution

Adopting Agile methodologies

Cisco IT decided to adopt Agile methodologies supported by Rally to help drive its transformation and meet the company's broader innovation goals.

"We needed to adopt new methods and processes that could co-exist with our old ones for a defined period of time," says Rivera. "The team at Rally went out their way to help us throughout this journey. We were particularly impressed with the customer success team, who were easily accessible for consultations, recommendations, and providing solution options. We have a monthly brown bag session to discuss best practices and new functions of Rally as we continue to work closely with our trusted advisers on our transformation journey."

The move to Agile represented a major operational and cultural shift for Cisco, so executive-level sponsorship was essential. Rivera explains, "From our CEO and CIO to the heads of sales and marketing, we ensured there was a single, strong message: that as an organization we needed to be more agile."

Cisco is starting to re-organize its global IT teams and organized tailored training programs. "When people understand their role in the new model and have the right skills, transition becomes much easier," comments Rivera.

One of Cisco's key goals in moving to an Agile culture was fostering greater transparency and accountability. "To deliver the best outcomes faster, we need to follow the same processes and use the same terminologies," says Rivera. "Rally enables our teams to collaborate across multiple geographies and time zones, and take a consistent approach when progressing new projects."

The solution also enables the IT team to gather feedback on new capabilities that have been introduced and integrate this into the next planning cycle.

Rally is also used to help ensure ISO compliance for Cisco IT, as Rivera confirms, "Rally logs every activity so it is always possible to see who did what, when, and why. That gives us a high level of confidence that we can undergo an ISO audit relatively easily and come out of it successfully."

Benefit

Supporting innovation and transformation

In just two years, Cisco has standardized its entire global IT operation on Agile. There are now around 24,000 Rally users as well 300 workspaces and 6,000 project spaces running on the solution. "Agile and Rally are integral to our culture and how we operate as a business," comments Rivera.

One of the key measures for success for Cisco has been the reduction in delivery timescales for new IT capabilities. "With Rally, we've been able to establish a mindset of 'minimal viable product'," says Rivera. "This means

we focus on those initiatives that will provide most value to employees and partners, and deliver them as fast as possible.”

Since its adoption of Agile, Cisco IT has achieved a 25 percent improvement in the average time for delivering capabilities, with some capabilities now completed in just 38 days.

By taking an Agile approach to IT development and delivery, Cisco has been able to:

- Improve the productivity and efficiency of its delivery teams
- Increase employee satisfaction
- Accelerate innovation
- Reduce cost of ownership.

“With Rally, we can respond faster to business requests for new IT capabilities. This helps to safeguard Cisco’s competitive advantage and supports ongoing innovation, which benefits our customers,” concludes Rivera.



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As of November 2018, CA Technologies was acquired by Broadcom Inc.