

Has quality taken a back seat in your Agile shop? Is there a lot of coding but not a lot of testing going on? Quality should not just be another task in the User Story, it's a way of thinking. A highly productive Agile team requires more testing not less.

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Overview:

Has it become Agile vs. Quality?

How often in Agile/Scrum shops does it become, first deliver the product to the customer and then deliver quality. This attitude will eventually lead to "deliver quality only when it's convenient", and when does that ever happen during a two week sprint? Yes, the principle of "early and continuous delivery of high value software" is very important but fixing software in production is extremely dangerous and very expensive. This can only lead to customer dissatisfaction, software outages, and an unmanageable defect backlog. A User Story isn't complete until it has undergone thorough system testing. So are you releasing incomplete User Stories?

A Tradition of Pain

Traditional Waterfall is often characterized as a rigid tradition of pain. However, lessons learned over the last few decades seem to fall the wayside with Agile. One of those is Quality Assurance. Let's consider a few pain points:

- **Pain Point:** Customers complaining of a high number of system outages in Production.
Question: Are you managing defects by conducting Defect Triage using Severity & Priority?
- **Pain Point:** The Defect Backlog is huge and requires dedicated sprints to reduce their number.
Question: Have you conducted root cause analysis to determine why defects are slipping into production? Are defects stalled out in QA but you release them anyway?
- **Pain Point:** Our moral is plummeting. Testers aren't told when user stories or defects are ready for testing. Developers are complaining that the Testers just can't keep up.
Question: Have you implemented a Kanban board with a Work-in-Progress column for QA?
- **Pain Point:** We are always delivering the wrong functionality? No one knows what they are doing?
Question: Do you have Monster User Stories? Have you been running Deconstruction workshops?

DMARKHAYNES Consulting has been providing IT Services for over 20 years

- Experts in Project Management, Quality Assurance, Software Estimation & Process Improvements
- Well versed in Agile/Scrum, Rational Unified Process (RUP), & Waterfall methodologies
- Vertical areas: Logistics, Healthcare, Insurance, Automotive, telecommunications, marketing & Financial applications

Next Steps:

So What's Next?

There is a hard truth here. Software development is a complex business and it's made up of specialists. Generalization vs Specialization are very different strategies, each with distinct trade-offs. Cross-training as a principle is a good practice but developers typically want to develop code, not test it. A Quality Assurance Analysts acquires specific testing skills and provides a unique perspective, but more importantly the good ones develop a passion for quality. Agile requires a team of highly integrated professionals. Quality requires a strategy and planning. Quality must be blended seamlessly into your Sprint and Release Cadence. Quality is not just a task item in a User Story.

Offering:

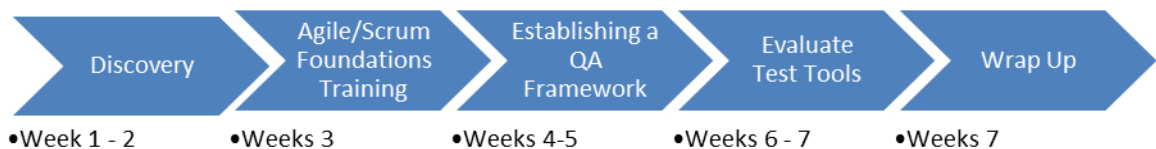
DMARKHAYNES Consulting will provide expertise for assisting the client in integrating Quality Assurance within their Agile/Scrum framework. Or enhance your existing team) using Agile/Scrum with additional capabilities. We will identify your quality pain points and provide:

- Formal training,
- Personalized workshops,
- Mentoring services, and
- Daily interaction with your development and Quality Assurance teams.

This product offering provides all the knowledge base transfer from a Scrum Boot camp but with the advantage of having an on-site Project Manager, Scrum Manager, Quality Assurance Manager, Mentor and Agile Coach all in one package.

Approach:

DMARKHAYNES Consulting proposes a multi-step approach for infusing Quality Assurance into an Agile / Scrum methodology, as detailed below:



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Approach:

Each distinct phase will be characterized with specific goals.

Discovery - Understand the current process. This includes:

- Project Kick-off presentation to management,
- Obtain overview of application & interfaces,
- Review of current quality assurance practices, and
- Present findings to management

Agile/Scrum Foundations Training – Establish a common language and knowledge base.

This includes:

- Provide core Agile/Scrum foundations training seminars, and
- Provide individual mentoring, reinforced with workshops using actual project work

Establish a Quality Assurance Framework – Align QA practices within a Scrum framework. This includes:

- Conduct seminars on: creating a Test Strategy, Test Plan, Defect Triage, & Test Cases,
- Provide Use Case Deconstruction workshops, and
- Assist Product Owner/QA Manager in constructing a Quality Dashboard

Evaluate Test Automation Tools – Evaluate the current state of automation. This includes:

- Create a Tool Automation Plan,
- Evaluate one class of test tools,
- Assist Scrum team with tool implementation, and
- Establish initial processes for tool usage

Wrap-up – Provide an assessment to management. This includes:

- Present Findings to Management
- Assist Product Owner/QA Manager with Sprint/Release metrics

Takeaways:

A few core Agile/Scrum practices you'll know well by the end of this offering:

- Overview of Agile/Scrum practices and terminology
- Understand the key traditions of Scrum
- How write a good User Stories & Acceptance Criteria
- How Quality Assurance fits into the Sprint & Release cadence
- How to conduct a Scrum Poker Session to estimate Story Points
- Understand the mechanics of Lean Software Development using a Kanban Board
- How to perform Quality Assurance in an Agile environment
- Understand key Agile/Scrum metrics
- How to construct Sprint & Release Quality Dashboards
- How to conduct a Sprint Retrospective

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