

Increasing Software Quality: Agile Experiences in a Non-Technically- Focused Organization



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Multnomah County

- Population ~ 735,000 (2010)
- County staff ~ 4,700
- Software developers ~ 40

Waterfall Challenges

- Changing Requirements over Long Project Span
- Poor communication between customer/ developer silos
- Extensive unbudgeted rework



Software in a Non-Technical Organization

- Software Supports Business Operations
- Software is Not the Business Operation

Defining Software Quality

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- Ease of Use
- Consistency Amongst Applications
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- Perceived Relationship Between Business and Development Staff

Business Staff Challenges for Software Development

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- Training Our Customers

Customer Involvement
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- Perception is Reality

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- Perception is Reality
- Management Support Facilitates Involvement (which Facilitates Success)

Agile Tool Experiences



photo by katerha (Flickr)

Post-It Notes

- Cheap and Easy
- Visible to those Nearby
- Archive and Search was Less Than Optimal
- Some Stories Lost Due to Gravity

Microsoft Team Foundation Server (TFS)

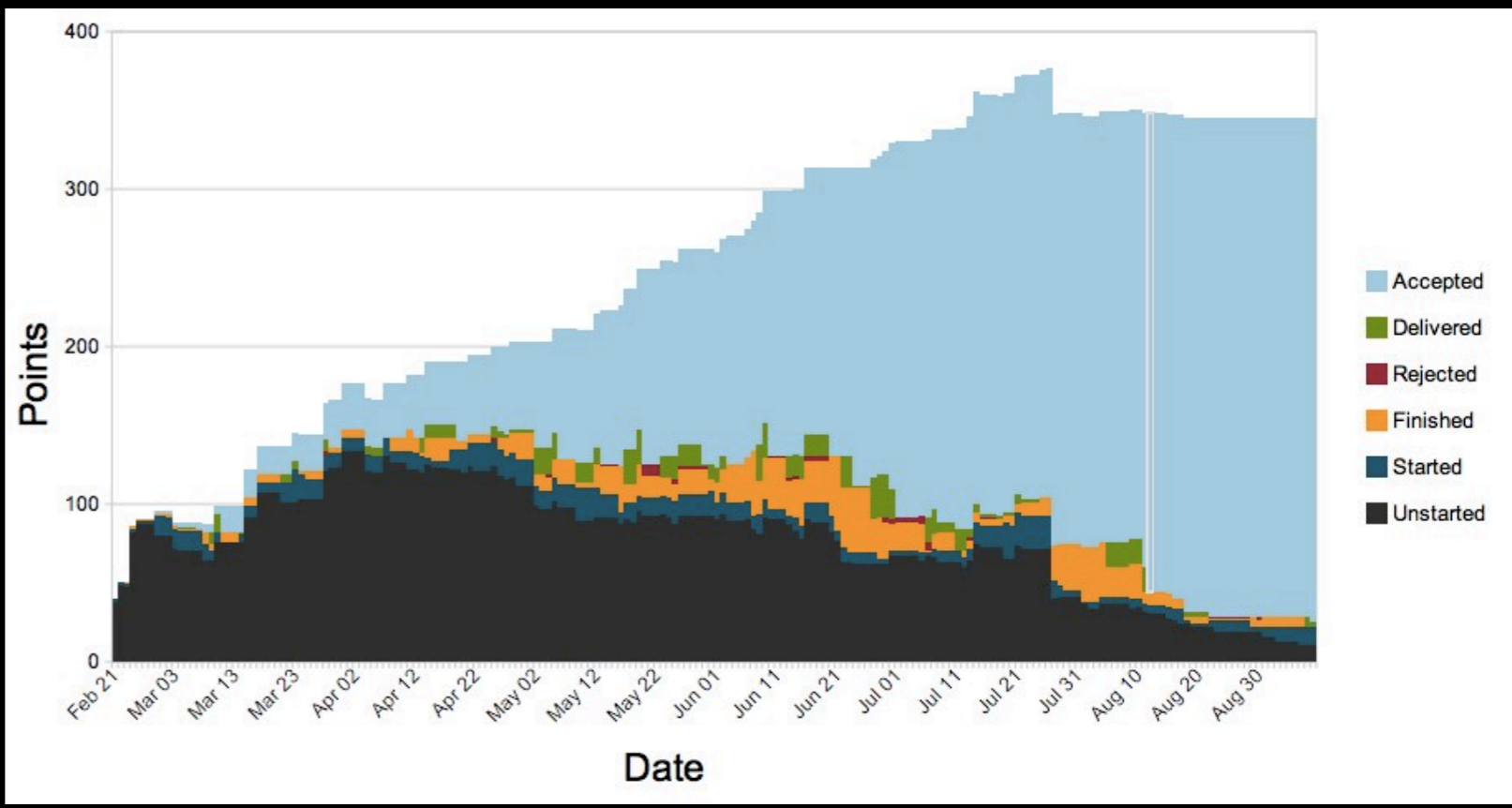
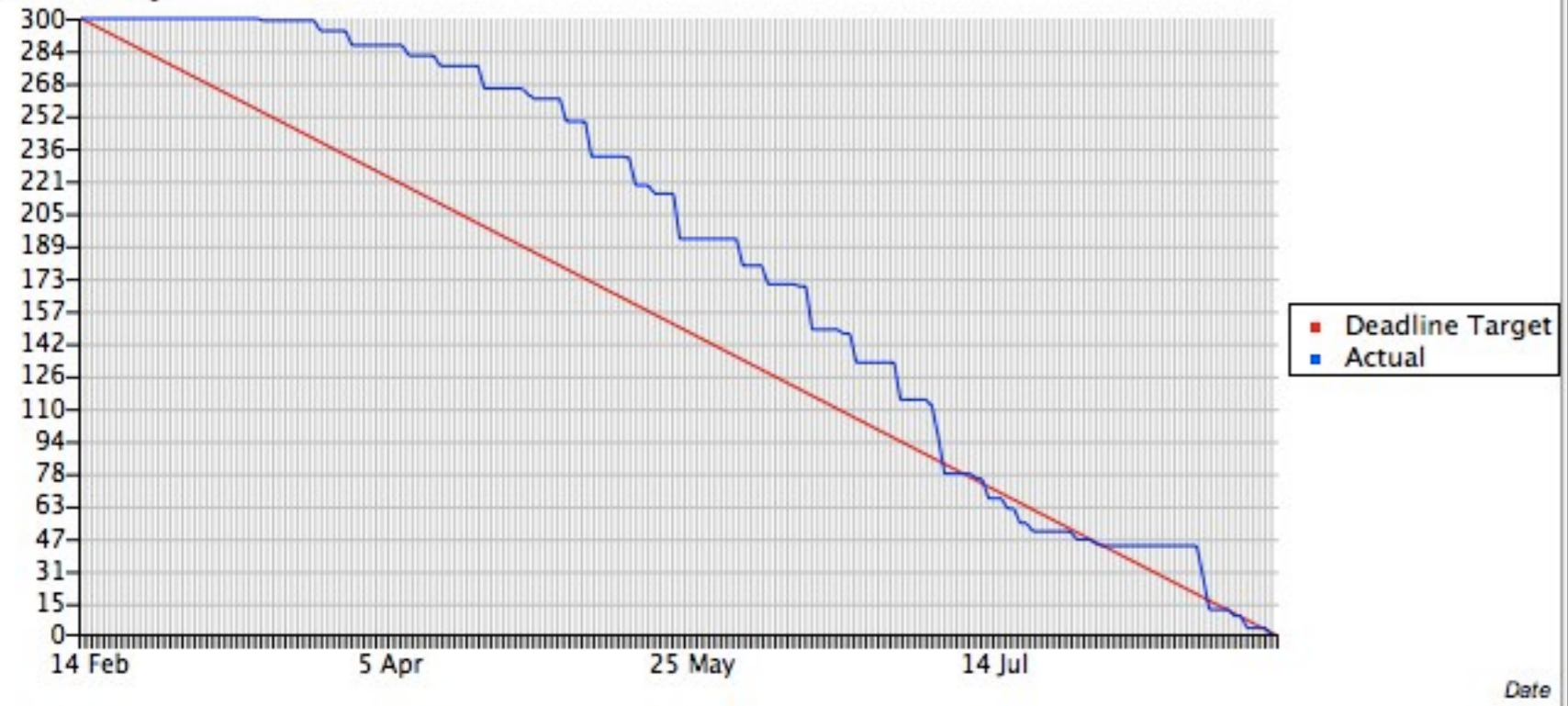
- Well Integrated with Developers' Toolset
- Detailed Work Item Tracking
- Not Customer-Focused; Poor Customer Communication Tool
- Expensive Server & Licensing

Pivotal Tracker

- Built for Agile
- Easy to Understand Stories as Business Value
- Hosted Solution; Reasonable Licensing
- Pre-Built Burndown & Velocity Reporting

Release: Production Release 3 (done)

Points remaining



“TFS is a far superior project management tool because of the breadth of information it can capture.

Pivotal Tracker is the best ‘customer expectation management tool’.”

- Ed Chapel, Sr. Development Analyst, Multnomah County

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- Regular UAT Deployments

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- Prioritized Queue of Pending Work
- Every Other Week: Iteration Review & Kickoff
- Work Can Span Iterations
- Automated Deployments
- Daily QA Deployments
- Regular UAT Deployments
- Continuous Feedback

Experience: Estimation

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- High-Level Sizing by Business System Analyst + Developers
- Stories are Decomposed and Sized
- Iterative Construction Results in Projected End Date with Increasing Accuracy (GPS)

Experience: Life of a Work Item

- Definition and Prioritization
- Clarification
- Construction
- Testing
- Acceptance

Summary

Q & A

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