

Case Study: News UK



Agile helps bring you the headlines at News UK

Background

Nick Walker is programme manager for News UK, the British-based American-owned newspaper publisher, and a wholly-owned subsidiary of News Corp. It publishes titles including The Times, The Sun and The Sunday Times and has a wide range of web and app-based services, covering news, sport and betting.

What was the challenge?

Although historically an Agile organisation, the company had fallen back into old waterfall-style ways. When Nick Walker joined a re-shaped leadership team in September 2016, there were pockets of teams using Scrum processes and believing they were Agile, but no sustainable programmes of work across the group.

The Sun programme was in a particularly poor state, with no permanent employees on teams made up of contractors and agency staff.

Because of the combination of circumstances, delivery of projects had become difficult, causing scepticism from the wider business and making achieving buy-in from other departments a challenge.

Implementing an Agile approach

More holistic work teams capable of delivering sustainable programmes were formed, working towards Key Performance Indicators and outcomes.

Senior managers looked at the products already in place across apps, websites and CMS, and shaped the development teams around them before looking at how new projects could be linked together.

Delivery is focused on outcome-driven projects, that are going to drive the organisation towards its stated goals.

An "all in it together" approach has been adopted, which includes editorial teams who are involved in weekly "think-up" meetings.

How Agile helped News UK

Nick believes Agile has delivered successfully at News UK.

Consistent delivery of successful new products has eliminated the business scepticism that greeted him when he joined, and the buy-in from the rest of the company is highlighted by the involvement of the editorial teams in the development process and making them part of the journey. "I cannot imagine a day without talking to them," said Nick.

"And the proof is in the pudding," he added. "When I joined, The Sun site ranked 10th in our sector for unique visitors on analytics site comScore. Now, less than a year later, we're up to second thanks to the developments made and new products launched through our Agile approach."

Case Study produced in collaboration with Nick Walker, Programme Manager, for News UK.

This Case Study is published by the Agile Business Consortium. If you require any further information, please contact Jenny Bailey, Marketing Executive at jenny@agilebusiness.org or call +44(0)1233 611162.

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