



CASE STUDY

# Development Team Extension Services to a Large Client with Multiple Agile Release Trains

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## At a glance:

A global technology enterprise was facing challenges in managing large-scale projects across multiple Agile Release Trains (ARTs) within the Scrum methodology. To address this, Comtrade 360 provided a blended model of fully autonomous independent teams and team augmentation services, including roles like RTEs, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and System Architects. This approach enabled the client to scale their development efforts, enhance leadership and coordination, and maintain agile discipline, ultimately resulting in increased capacity, smoother integration with agile practices, and more flexible resource management.

## Industry

Technology – Software Development and Large-Scale Agile Project Management.

## Technology

Agile Methodology: Scrum, Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)

Tools & Practices: Program Increment (PI) planning, Cross-Team Collaboration

Specialized Roles: Release Train Engineers (RTEs), Scrum Masters, Product Owners, Product Managers, System Architects

Certification: SAFe 5 and 6 Program Consultant, SAFe Scrum Master Validation, SAFe Advanced Scrum Master Validation, SAFe Product Owner/Product Manager



1 Product Manager  
1 Solution Quality Architect  
4 Architects  
9 Product Owners



## Introduction

As businesses grow and scale, so do their problems: now, they face exponentially bigger challenges related to managing large, dispersed teams and dealing with complex projects. This case study covers how our Development Team Extension services, including both independent and augmented client teams, helped a major client maintain agility even as it improved delivery performance. The client was running several Agile Release Trains within the Scrum methodologies, and within that, the services supplied ranged from developers and testers to specialized roles like RTEs, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, Product Managers, and System Architects.

## Background

The customer is a global technology enterprise that runs a portfolio of high-stakes, large-scale projects. Each of these projects requires the continuous delivery of features. In pursuit of this objective, the company has adopted the Scaled Agile Framework and Scrum methodology for its Agile Release Trains. Each ART consisted of several Scrum teams; all of them had numerous interdependencies, which could only be managed with structured coordination to ensure successful program execution. The client needed more capacity and specialized skills, so they reached out to a Development Team Extension solution aimed at extending the capabilities of internal teams by creating independent teams that take ownership over features and product areas.

# Objectives

Primary goals driving this need for Development Team Extension were the following:

- **Scaling development efforts:** Expand development capacity without compromising quality.
- **Providing specialized resources:** Supply resources such as RTEs, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and Managers to fill leadership and coordination gaps.
- **Enable independent team contribution:** Independent Agile teams that could build complete feature sets within the structure of an ART.
- **Alignment with Scrum and SAFe methodologies:** Ensure that the extended teams align with the agile principles of the client and integrate seamlessly into the big ecosystem of an ART.

# Approach

Our company engaged in a blended model through the provision of fully autonomous independent teams and supplementing the client's existing teams with specialists. The approach encompassed four key elements:

## 1. Independent Agile Teams

We constituted independent agile teams that bore the responsibility to deliver features falling under the scope of the ARTs. In this regard, the composition of the team included developers, testers, Scrum Masters, and business analysts operating in full compliance with the customer's agile methodology:

- **Autonomy with accountability:** These teams were given ownership for their workstreams but remained accountable to the overall goals of the ART.
- **Sprint cadence:** The independent teams operated in the same sprint cycles and became active participants of the Program Increment (PI) planning sessions so that consistency can be maintained at the level of the ARTs.
- **Cross-team collaboration:** Regular collaboration with the leadership in the ARTs made sure that independent teams joined client internal teams to address dependencies on agreed-upon delivery schedules.

## 2. Team Augmentation

Our company further enhanced the Scrum teams with additional resources to augment the client's existing ones. This involved:

- RTE: These would be part of leading the coordination between the different teams making up the ART, ensuring that there was timely and quality feature delivery.
- Scrum Masters provided facilitation in daily stand-ups, sprint planning, reviews, and retrospectives while ensuring Scrum principles are followed within the augmented teams.
- Product Owners worked closely with stakeholders to prioritize the backlog and make sure that the right features were developed according to business objectives.
- Product Managers provided strategic guidance to help shape the product vision and roadmap, ensuring that the ART delivered value in the long run.
- System Architects were brought into the ARTs to support the technical vision in maintaining system integrity. They closely cooperated with both augmented teams and independent teams in overseeing architecture decisions that solutions are aligned to the broader system landscape.

## 3. Embedded Leadership Roles

Having taken into consideration the fact that leading more than one ART is challenging, we provided highly qualified leaders such as RTEs, Product Owners, and Product Managers. The leaders played a key role in:

- Ensuring alignment of the ART: The RTEs facilitated planning, execution, and coordination across all ARTs, having ensured that all teams were aligned on common objectives.
- Product Strategy and Delivery: Product Owners and Managers aligned teams with the bigger product strategy on feature delivery.
- Scrum Excellence: Scrum Masters were embedded in both independent and client teams to ensure Scrum Ceremonies are held efficiently, roadblocks are dealt with quickly, and agile principles upheld.

## 4. Alignment to SAFe and Scrum

Our company has placed strong emphasis on the strict adherence to the principles of both Scrum and SAFe. Independent and augmented teams would fully participate in PI planning, sprint reviews, and retrospectives; they would maintain one backlog across all ARTs.

RTEs, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, Product Managers, and System Architects from our company who led in together with the clients' management; made possible that all agile ceremonies—from sprint planning to PI reviews—were executed with precision that allowed for increased transparency of prioritization and consistent delivery outcomes.

# Challenges

Despite the overall success of the engagement, various challenges came to the fore within the project. These included:

**Onboarding and integration:** There were minor issues associated with bringing in the external teams into the existing ART ecosystem-in terms of differences in communications styles, toolsets, and ways of working. The company dealt with this with an extensive onboarding session followed by regular touchpoints both with the client stakeholders and team members for seamless transition.

**Cross-Team Dependencies Management:** Since many of those features were interrelated and ARTs were working on them, internal and external dependencies management was imperative. Experienced RTEs, through cross-team dependency management, helped make the whole process smooth and mitigated the risks at an early stage of the sprint cycle.

**Cultural Alignment:** The involvement of the extended development team brought to light the necessity of cultural alignment between the client's internal teams and the extension teams. The cultural differences between our teams and the client teams were minimal, which really helped in increasing collaboration and speeding up decision-making.

**Maintaining Agile Discipline:** At the scale at which distributed teams were maintained, the risk always existed that agile disciplines would get diluted. Our company made sure that agile discipline was maintained and, further, even improved for both internal and external teams through the deployment of competent Scrum Masters and further through regular alignment with PI planning and periodic Scrum ceremonies. At the core of our outsourcing services lies an overriding commitment to ensuring that our teams have access to the best practices, tools, and frameworks meeting industry standards. We strongly invest in the training and certification of our staff in agile methodologies like Scrum and SAFe. Some of our certifications include:

- Certified SAFe 5 Program Consultant
- Certified SAFe 6 Practice Consultant
- SAFe Scrum Master Validation
- SAFe Advanced Scrum Master Validation
- SAFe Product Owner/Product Manager

## Results

The engagement of the Development Team Extension brought several valuable results to the client. These were:

**Increased Capacity and Scalability:** The customer could scale up the development effort without adding internal headcount or losing quality. Independent teams delivered critical features while augmented teams hardened the existing Scrum Teams.

**Leadership and coordination:** Introduction of experienced RTEs and Product Owners streamlined the communication across ARTs, reduced delays, and aligned with business priorities.

**More flexibility:** The customer could increase resources up or down, depending on the needs, which helped them be able to respond to the dynamic changes of the project.

**Smooth integration with Agile practices:** Although it was quite challenging to operate several ARTs, both independent and augmented teams were integrated into the already existing agile setup of the customer while maintaining consistency and discipline in their Scrum processes.

## Conclusion

This case study shows how the Development Team Extension services can help a large client with several Agile Release Trains to improve delivery capacity, enhance leadership, and maintain agile discipline. Our company was in a position to provide the client with a flexible solution, to be scaled up or down at any time, either with independent teams or team augmentation, completely aligned with their business objectives and their current Scrum and SAFe practices.

This proves the value of Development Team Extension services in terms not only of development capacity, but also specialized roles made of RTEs, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and System Architects-that drive strategic and tactical improvements across large-scale agile operations.



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