

Case Study

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Implementing SAFe in Nets CEE



The Client

One of our clients, Mercury Processing Services International, after acquisition by the Scandinavian service provider NETS Group, was renamed to NETS CEE.

Nets is undoubtedly Nordic leader in payment solutions that has so far remained relatively unknown in the south and southeast of the EU, but with the acquisition of Mercury, this is also changing.

As a leading provider of digital payment services and related technology solutions across Europe, Nets operates a deeply entrenched network which connects merchants, financial institutions, corporate customers, and consumers, enabling them to make and receive digital payments and utilise a value-added service to help them improve their respective activities.

Nets has developed nemID code card, biometric ID cards that have been used in Scandinavia for more than 10 years, and today they are working intensively on the development of other authentication technologies – from the new generation of ID cards to face verification.

It is a huge corporation with more than 2,400 employees operating in three business segments – corporate services, merchant services and financial and network services.

They base their business on SAFe principles and methodologies, which has proven to be extremely important, both in generating new value and meeting current market needs, while keeping in mind the focus on the needs of their clients (client-centricity).

SAFe is a framework for scaling agile methodologies. It applies tools such as LEAN, AGILE and DevOps principles. It is a set of guidelines that define the rules of work in production organizations, and by standardizing the system, they try to solve the problem which often occurs with the natural growth of portfolio, whether it is new products or services.

SAFe actually acts as a mapper between the strict hierarchical structure of the organization and the range of products/services that make up the starting point of the value that the organization offers.

Small companies start with focus on customers and as they become bigger, they build strict hierarchical structure to be more efficient and stable internally, but on that way, they lose the focus on customers' needs. Now, if we want to keep the customer centricity in the enterprise environment, the solution is not to trash what we have, but to introduce a new framework that would act as a bridge between the stability of hierarchical organisation and speed and innovation of customer centricity model. SAFe is that bridge.



Challenge

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SAFe is an acronym, referring to the Scaled Agile Framework methodology. In other words, our client has introduced scaled agile methodology guidelines to manage their products, solutions, and portfolio. This process allows our client to achieve business agility by which they exactly achieve what Dean Leffingwell, Creator of SAFe, meant - "that entire organization – not just development – is engaged in continually and proactively delivering innovative business solutions faster than competition."

Business agility means quick adaptation to changes in the market, as well as flexibility in responding to customer requirements, and continuous competitive advantages. Innovation is key in the business agility framework.

Some say that the one constant thing in life is change. This is especially true in the business world when things in the market are changing so fast. Business agility actually allows companies to survive in the marketplace in such situations. Companies that strive to adapt quickly will not only compete in the market but will also thrive.

As their software development partner, we have supported this reorganization process with professional developers. We have 10 of our programmers on the project who are assigned to different teams and the main challenge is that the whole team, as well as the members individually, adhere to the approach required by SAFe, to comply with PI (program increment) commitments. All are members of agile teams, their work is guided by a safe methodology, and they participate in PI planning every 3 months.

The challenge of transforming an organization and embracing new leadership methods is most often divided into technological transformation and cultural transformation. The biggest challenge is precisely the transformation in the cultural segment, while the technological transformation is usually strictly defined and easily accepted.

Solution

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We saw the solution to the mentioned challenges by the correct interpretation of the SAFe methodology, and its correct application.

As SAFe contains the so-called implementation roadmap in its principles, the organization has adopted a horizontal (product) organizational structure led by the so-called Leadership. Prior to its formation, Leadership is certified through SAFe trainings, and with its approach to work it becomes a motivator, driver, and participant in this product unit.

As the biggest trump card in guiding according to SAFe principles, we see the distribution of responsibilities, where each employee is equally valued, and independently accepts the work in which he is the best. Because development requirements may involve different organizational units (SAFe – value streams), and therefore different teams, cross-dependencies are carefully planned through the Program Board on PI planning.

Thanks to the SAFe methodology, developers are more involved in product development through multiple iterations (4-6 iterations / approx. 3 months). Each team is self-organizing / agile, and selects the requirements from the priority list for development based on the technical competence of the individuals of which it consists.

Technical agility is achieved by “teams of agile teams” called Agile Release Train (ART) - a virtual organization of 5 -12 teams. Every ART is aligned to a common mission via its own Program Backlog from which each team creates its own backlog .

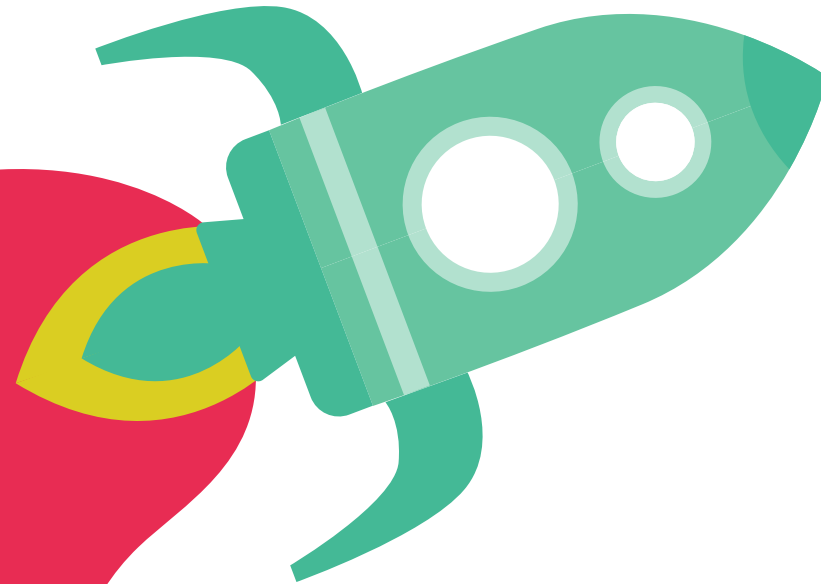
The solutions are based on the experience of one of our programmers, who is recognized by the client and promoted to the function of ART Leadership, and who actively participates in the process of leading and transforming their organization.



Result

When creating additional organizational value, this approach increased the productivity of all active participants, resulting in cost reduction, distribution of responsibilities, and most importantly – increased end-user / customer satisfaction. This methodology has enabled our client to increase customer satisfaction by reducing costs, achieving high team engagement and productive collaboration, and meeting deadlines.

In addition, the SAFe methodology has enabled our client to manage all associated corporate units in the same way. Furthermore, this has led to profitability reporting and monitoring being conducted in the same way for each part of the organization.



Accelerating business transformation through innovative technology

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Serengeti Ltd

info@serengetitech.com

+38513706047

serengeti
software tech

