

How Medica Accelerated Delivery by Aligning Agile Practices with Strategic Goals


Executive Summary


- Medica Health Plans undertook a significant transformation to mature its solution delivery capabilities. Facing inefficiencies in their existing processes, they decided to reorganize their development teams and product management structure, introducing a more agile approach aligned with the strategic goals of senior leadership.
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About the Customer

- Medica Health Plans, a leading non-profit health insurance company with a robust portfolio including individual, family, employer, Medicaid, and Medicare plans, serves over 1.3 million members across Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, and other states. The company is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of its members through innovative and accessible solutions.
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The Challenge

 **Before:** Medica faced significant challenges with a blend of agile and traditional project management approaches, which led to inefficiencies and limited success in scaling agile practices.

 **Impact:** Internal change agents grew frustrated with the slow pace of agile adoption, and a lack of leadership engagement hindered progress. With no cross-domain planning, teams worked in silos, and although a successful pilot ART was executed, it was disbanded once the associated project ended, preventing sustained agile transformation.

 **Need:** Transformation assistance from external experts who could diffuse the blame and build consensus.

The Solution

- We guided Medica in launching a Lean-Agile Center of Excellence (LACE) and Communities of Practice (CoPs) for Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and Release Train Engineers (RTEs), equipping them with the tools and practices needed for agile maturity.

- A comprehensive current-state assessment based on SAFe's 10 Critical Success Factors helped identify gaps, allowing for focused interventions.
- By facilitating a Value Stream Workshop, we reorganized teams to align with the way value is delivered across the organization.
- Working hand-in-hand with the LACE and RTEs, we introduced a relentless improvement plan to drive agile maturity.
- We prepared the RTEs, Scrum Masters, and key team members for PI planning by emphasizing strategic vision and top features, ensuring alignment across domains.
- Throughout the transformation, we coached ARTs through PI planning activities, ensuring comprehensive PI objectives, iteration plans, and the creation of ART Planning Boards.

The Results

- The transition from traditional project management to SAFe practices accelerated Medica's ability to deliver on its strategic goals. Through this partnership:
 - Over 1,000 participants were trained in SAFe/Agile courses, including SAFe for Teams, SAFe Scrum Master, SAFe Product Owner/Product Manager, SAFe RTE, and Leading SAFe.
 - Medica Health Plans successfully launched 8 ARTs, organized into 2 Solution trains.
 - ART Predictability improved to 80%, demonstrating enhanced planning and delivery alignment.
 - Stabilized team flow velocity ensured teams worked at a sustainable pace, improving both efficiency and morale.

Quotes & Testimonials

- "First and foremost, it was evident that there was a marked improvement in both the planning and orchestration of this event compared to our previous endeavors. The structure, flow, and engagement levels were significantly enhanced, which did not go unnoticed..." – Director, Sales/Product Operations

- “A standout aspect of this PI planning was the exceptional coaching and mentoring provided by our Icon Coach. His deep knowledge, engagement, and organizational skills, coupled with his ability to communicate effectively, played a crucial role in keeping the teams focused and on track. His dedication to excellence was truly commendable.” – Director, Sales/Product Operations

Lessons Learned & Key Takeaways

- **Education and alignment** on Lean-Agile principles and practices were crucial in driving sustainable transformation across teams.
- Achieving the **10 Critical Success Factors of SAFe** directly correlated with enhanced solution delivery and organizational agility.
- Continuous **improvement through regular coaching** and feedback ensures lasting impact and scalability.

Engagement & Next Steps

- If your organization is facing challenges with traditional project management or struggling to scale agile practices, embarking on a Lean-Agile journey using SAFe can lead to improved collaboration, better alignment, and enhanced delivery. Start your transformation today with ICON Agility Services to unlock the full potential of agile at scale.
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