

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



EOS GROUP

Customer Success Story

Eos Group builds software for the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction industries. They know firsthand that the right tool makes any job easier, whether it's building a skyscraper or creating a software system to make pre-construction tasks more manageable. So when the time came to convert his distributed team to an agile methodology three years ago, Development Manager Warren Elliott made finding the right agile tool one of his highest priorities. "I needed a tool that spoke agile and would encourage my team to think and speak agile, too," says Warren. "VersionOne spoke agile and gave us just the right amount of functionality we needed for our environment. The tool was a good fit for our needs."

THE CHALLENGE

Three years ago, Eos Group felt like they had hit a wall in their development efforts. Their existing products were functioning well, but maintenance and enhancements had become increasingly challenging. "The code had grown to the point where it seemed to be determining our destiny instead of the other way around," explains Elliott. "We lacked a test harness to help automate testing and had to manually execute code tests. It was very expensive to add new features. When it came time to develop our next generation platform, I knew that I didn't want to keep doing things the same way and end up back in the same place two years later." Elliott required a development methodology that would allow his team to respond more quickly and economically to changes in their marketplace; he decided to move to agile.

The first thing Elliott did was get some agile training. "I took a CSM class taught by Ken Schwaber, did a ton of reading on XP and Lean product development, and also hired Tod Golding, a professional agile consultant, to help me become the internal Eos agile coach." Once Elliott became comfortable with how an agile project was supposed to function, he set out to find the right tool that would support the agile practice Elliott envisioned for his development group.

Open source tools were tempting but lacked not only the depth of functionality Elliott needed but also the kind of ongoing support Elliott was looking for. "I thought it was critical to have readily-available technical support, a solid company backing a proven product and a well-known brand that we could rely on in the long run." Elliott's search led him to two enterprise-class product companies, one of which was VersionOne.

"The first tool we looked at had many excitors but was too process-heavy," says Elliott. "In the end VersionOne was a much better fit." Specifically, Elliott chose VersionOne for its easy-to-follow agile workflow, outstanding customer support and its flexible project hierarchy and associated security features, which were critical elements for their multi-client business.

VersionOne's solution was a strategic factor in rolling out agile in our distributed company. I'm not sure we would have been as successful without it.

*Warren Elliott, Director of Development,
Eos Group*

SNAPSHOT

EOS GROUP

- For more than a decade, Eos Group has designed and implemented preconstruction solutions for the largest owners, builders and public agencies. From Detroit to Dubai, their preconstruction systems are the premier solution for enterprise-scale endeavors.
- Key customers include: Bovis Lend Lease, Messer Construction, Skanska USA, Turner Construction, Raytheon, Siemens Westinghouse Power Corp, Duke Energy, Edwards Airforce Base, National Park Service, Black & Veatch, CH2M Hill, Brasfield & Gorrie

BUSINESS ISSUES

- Shifting development from traditional waterfall to agile
- Supporting team members in more than five US regions, with an international team coming on board
- Managing multiple projects at different stages in the product lifecycle
- Moving to automated, integrated testing
- Adding customer-requested features in a timely and cost-effective manner

RESULTS WITH VERSIONONE

- Gave team members a common agile language and process
- Provided at-a-glance view into multiple projects
- Intuitive workflow increased learning rate for agile processes, even in a distributed environment
- Easy upgrade process lets Eos take advantage of new product features in a few minutes and ensures they are remain on the current release
- Development is more predictable, code is more manageable, and testing is automated

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THE CHOICE: VERSIONONE

Two and a half years later, Elliott and his team are pleased both with their decision to make the move to agile methods and their choice of VersionOne to help them get there. "I'm not sure how I would have pulled off [the switch to agile] without VersionOne," says Elliott. "Each new version of VersionOne makes our jobs a little easier. We love the notification by email that VersionOne recently added. That's a great new feature."

Eos Group has no trouble upgrading to new versions of VersionOne, which Elliott cites as one of many positive experiences he has had with the tool, "It's so easy, so painless, to upgrade VersionOne. It takes less than ten minutes start to finish. Nothing's broken when we're done. My IT manager just sends out the link to the video that tells everyone what's new, and we keep on working. It's just great!"

RESULTS

Eos Group no longer has to wrestle a nearly-unmanageable codebase to give their customers new features and functionality. "Automated testing is integrated into every iteration. We now have over 15,000 FitNesse assertions that run every day. We are big fans of executable specifications. We're doing a better job of coding, too," Elliott explains. More importantly, though, they are able to work closely with customers and incorporate their feedback into the customized products being developed for them.

Eos Group is growing and exploring the possibility of partnering with offshore firms. "VersionOne will be a great place to meet them," says Elliott. Besides giving the two groups a common language and process, VersionOne will help them stay on the same page and see at-a-glance how much work remains, eliminating some of the complexity and fear around bringing in new people to a project.

Elliott says that their version of agile, "Scrum wrapped around XP practices," has made the software release process more predictable. "We're having a great time now, where before there was just too much pain. Now, we're confident that we can take code in any direction, with speed and efficiency. We're building assets now that will last a very long time, that won't become liabilities in a few years. We couldn't have done that before. With agile and VersionOne we can build a future without worrying about hitting the wall."

Whatever the future brings for Eos Group, Elliott is sure that agile and VersionOne will remain part of it. Moving to agile, he says, "has truly been transformative." With excellent staff, a process in place that works and a tool that makes managing that process easier, Elliott says, "Software development feels sane now." Customers are closely involved in the process and can make decisions about which features to develop first and which ones to remove until later. "A lot of learning takes place when you're building something that has never been built before," Elliott explains.

With a background in construction, Elliott knows firsthand what it takes to build something that will last: excellent people, the appropriate process and the right tools. Creating a bridge between waterfall and agile was essential to their success; having a tool to help them make the transition was just as crucial. Elliott says it best, "Adopting agile practices was a fundamental paradigm shift for us. I would attribute our success to having a boss that had faith and gave me and my team room to change, excellent staff that set aside their doubts and did the challenging work of making the transition to agile happen, and a good tool to bind us to the process. I'm really happy VersionOne was there. They are a major reason for our success."

ABOUT EOS GROUP

Eos helps clients succeed in the time-to-market crunch that has become the AEC (Architecture, Engineering, Construction) industry norm. They are experts in the AEC industry, software and technology and organizational processes.

Eos group recognizes that any solution that comes in a box is not really a solution at all. An effective preconstruction system must address all the factors at play in an organization. Eos teams cover the specific areas outside of software in order to ensure the software actually works. www.eosgroup.com

ABOUT VERSIONONE

VersionOne is recognized by agile practitioners as the leader in agile project management tools. By simplifying the planning and tracking of agile projects, we help teams deliver better software faster. Since 2002, companies such as Adobe, Dow Chemical, Lockheed Martin, Motorola, Novell, Sony and Symantec have turned to VersionOne. Today more than 30,000 teams from over 170 countries use VersionOne.

Start small. Scale smart. See for yourself at www.VersionOne.com.