

Kanban Dialogue - VGlabs Scenario

Introduction

VGlabs is a specialist organisation that delivers cloud-based solutions to the market. VGlabs has an established product line that was developed 8 years ago. This is VGlabs' main revenue earner and has gone through a phase of rapid growth. During this time VGlabs invested in mobilising a number of offshore vendors to add functionality to the flagship product iSure. This period of growth resulted in a significant amount of unused, partially duplicated product functionality. The codebase also reflects this period with excessive lines of code, complexity and brittleness of the codebase.

Investment Board

Ideas and request for change could come from customers, sales, marketing team, customer services, operations, loyalty and technology. Ideas are funded based on their value categorisation as shown below. VGlabs makes strategic decisions on the ration of funding in the different value drivers as well as investment themes in the lines of business.



The Investment Board approves ideas for a new product or product enhancement. An idea requires a business case and an order of magnitude estimation for the investment board to consider, approve or reject the funding. Once an idea is approved a project is created for it.

Release Management Board selects approved projects and assigns them to a candidate release. This initial allocation is then verified by the Delivery Team, who create a RAG rating for the projects using a traffic light system; Green for projects with high chance of release, Amber for those projects that may make it to release and Red for projects that are unlikely to make the release.

The Investment Board meets weekly and approves ideas based on their value estimation, cost, category and line of business.

Large pieces of work are covered by projects. If the work is small a Change Request CR is raised and approved by Investment Board.

Approved projects and CRs are listed on the annual project roadmap, which is managed by the project office. Each project has an estimated value, duration and expected delivery date.

Investment Themes

VGlabs sets up its strategy for percentage funding in the lines of business annually. For the current year our strategy is for growth and the following shows the investment themes.



Product Delivery

The product delivery team works on projects, CRs, defects and enhancements.

The Product Delivery Team delivers releases. Each release may have one or

more projects that have already been approved by the investment board. The approved projects are assigned a release by the Release Management Board. The Release Management Board selects approved projects and assigns them to a candidate release. This initial allocation is then verified by the Delivery Team, who create a RAG rating for the projects using a traffic light system; Green for projects with high chance of release, Amber for those projects that may make it to release and Red for projects that are unlikely to make the release.

The Product Delivery Team needs to ensure that governance is maintained and coordination is in place with the Enterprise Architecture Team, Steering Board, Release Management Board, sponsors and the line of business managers.



Visibility, transparency and governance are required throughout the delivery. Stakeholders and sponsors need to be kept informed throughout. The Release Management Board provides updates to the Steering Board on a weekly basis. The Product Delivery Team has daily checkpoint meetings with the Release Management Board to provide progress updates. The Release Management Board provides guidance on priority and selection criteria to the Product Delivery team.

Product Propositioning

Majority of projects involve launching a new product, which requires Product Proposition specialist work.

The Product Proposition work needs to be done first before other work starts. The metadata work is normally completed within 5 working days to a sufficient level, which enables the project to progress. The rest of the metadata work is completed during the project. On some occasions the metadata work will take as long as 4 weeks.

The Product Delivery Team has a blended team, which includes internal and external team members. External team members include partners, independents. The Delivery Team is a distributed team that spans different geographies and time zones.

The Product Delivery Team includes project managers, managers, team leaders, developers, UX specialists, test specialists, DBAs, System Administrators, product propositioning specialists, Business Analysts, Build & Configuration Management.

Projects take 10 to 12 weeks to complete.
Change Requests take 1 to 2 weeks to complete.

Production Support Manager (PSM) manages production defects; requests for defect fixes are sent through by PSM directly to the development manager who expects the teams to fix these defects without impacting project work.

The teams also receive requests for reviews from other teams. There is a release every month and the capabilities that are ready will go to the release. The Candidate Release Branch is created and the code is deployed to the verification environment where performance, security, smoke, regression and functional tests are carried out. This verification cycle takes 5-days. On successful completion the code is deployed to a Live environment.

Project managers manage projects. Each project manager may manage more than one project or CR.

Once the project is completed it waits for the release. The release manager manages the release, which contains all the projects that are ready for the given release.

Map VGlabs working practices on a Kanban System to visualise the work for VGlabs that provides visualisation from the following perspectives:



Notes on how to run this exercise

Split the people into small groups no more than five people in a team, teams of three seem to work best.

Print the below free [Kanban System Mapping Guide](#) on A5 and stapled on the side worked well.

Download Kanban System Mapping

- 1) List the work items
- 2) List the touch points (people, roles, teams, departments)
- 3) List the knowledge discovery steps
- 4) How fine grain does the object need to be, based on the viewpoint that you are mapping for
- 5) Sequence them

Love to hear your feedback

Please let me know how you get on using this exercise.

You want to improve this scenario, let me know.

Do you have a better scenario, please let me know.

Send your feedback to ntalai@valueglide.com

Nader