



*Comet Solutions, Inc. breaks the boundaries of simulation by providing a full line of software applications that enable manufacturers to achieve a product development process driven by engineering intent. Comet's reusable Simulation Templates bring insight from simulation much earlier in the product design process, placing it in the hands of the entire organization.*

## Overview

Comet's mission is to deliver innovative technology that changes the landscape of how simulation can be used in the product development process. With customers ranging from manufacturers, suppliers and simulation experts in the automotive, consumer goods and aerospace sectors, Comet's software enables companies to benefit from simulation results during early stages of conceptual engineering and feasibility studies. As a developer of cutting-edge technology, it is critical for Comet's development team to respond quickly to the changing needs of their markets.

## Company Challenges

The company was using traditional waterfall methods for product development, but it was close to impossible to respond to customer requirements and changes. By the time requirements were written and the software was developed and tested, it was already out-of-synch with Comet's customers.

"Once product designs were finally in place, we found ourselves shooting at a moving target," said John Skinner, Director of Software Engineering. "We knew we had to dramatically change the way we were doing things in order to deliver real value to our customers sooner."

## Moving to Agile

John Skinner began practicing Agile in 1994 after learning it from Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland, two of the founders of Agile practices. When he arrived at Comet Solutions, he recognized that a technology-driven company like Comet needed to dramatically overhaul its development practices or risk becoming obsolete.

The first step was to educate the executive team on the benefits of Agile practices. Showing better synchronicity between development processes and the company's bottom line goals was a relatively easy sell. Once the executive team was on board, John began to act as the primary coach for the development team and started educating them on Agile development and Scrum. The team gradually began to work Agile principles into the development environment with a slow and steady approach to Agile implementation.

## Searching for an Agile Solution

The search for an Agile tool began as a way to provide executives visibility into the entire development process. The Comet development team first tried to use one of its existing bug tracking tools, but after six weeks of frustration, they began to look at other options, including other bug tracking tools and open source tools. The Comet team had a hard time finding a tool that reinforced Agile practices and didn't require extensive customization. Finally, they found Rally.



## Company and Industry

- Industry: Technology
- Pioneer in integrated simulation engineering, serving manufacturers, suppliers and simulation experts in the automotive, consumer goods and aerospace sectors

## Development Environment

- Development is primary focus of company and teams include software engineers, project managers, and product managers
- 9 day iterations; day 10 is spent planning for the next iteration
- 4 major releases per year, along with 4 point releases

## Challenges

- Traditional waterfall methods didn't enable the organization to easily adapt to customer needs
- Executive team had little visibility into the development process
- Bug tracking and open source tools lacked functionality and weren't designed as Agile tools

## Solution

- Implemented Rally's Agile lifecycle management solutions, enabling the organization to better respond and adapt to customer requirements
- Through Rally's Web Services API, adding on Salesforce.com integration module to enable full product tracking throughout the organization from development through to support
- Rally reinforces Agile practices and offers the functionality Comet Solutions needs

## Results

- 25% increase in software quality
- 10-20% improvement in software development time
- Complete end-to-end product lifecycle visibility for executive and development teams

# Scaling Software Agility®



“Every tool we looked at seemed to be a round peg in a square hole. When we found Rally, we knew we had found a solution that both reinforced Agile principles and could be implemented quickly to our teams, without requiring a lot of customization,” explained John.

After doing one manual iteration, the team conducted a trial with Rally. Following the trial’s success, the team began to implement Rally across the development organization and to members outside the development team.

### **Software Quality Increases by 25% and Development Time Speeds Up by 10-20%**

“Rally has certainly met and exceeded our expectations. The best part of Rally is that we don’t have to force it to be Agile because that is what it is designed to do, unlike a lot of other tools out there,” says John.

As a result of implementing Agile and Rally, software quality has increased by 25 percent because it is much easier to track quality and testing throughout the product development process. In addition, the development team has sped its time-to-market by 10 to 20 percent. Comet Solutions now does four major releases per year, along with four point releases, up from two major releases per year prior to implementing Agile and Rally.

John explains, “Rally really goes beyond a planning tool and acts as a solution where we can measure how effectively we are executing. As a result of Agile and Rally, the quality of our software has increased dramatically, specifically because we can detail test cases for each user story and constantly track our progress. Rally gives us a solution that allows us to set up our business strategy and effectively execute on that strategy.”

Comet also uses Rally to show the product roadmap for the year and the various releases related to the roadmap. This is readily available to the entire executive board and ensures that everyone in the organization is executing on the roadmap efficiently.

“With Rally, at any time, anyone from the CTO to a member of the development team can tell where we are and exactly what needs to get done. Some executives worry that Agile means chaos and unplanned activity. Rally alleviates those worries and lets everyone in the organization have complete visibility into the development process,” notes John.

### **About Rally**

Rally is the #1 partner for Agile success through its family of products, coaching and community support. With a dedicated focus on Agile practices, Rally helps organizations of all sizes shorten their development cycles, minimize risk, and collaborate across teams and silos. Rally's on-demand Agile lifecycle management products were honored with three-time Jolt Product Excellence Awards (the industry's Oscars) in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and currently support over 300 corporate customers and 12,000 subscribers in more than 30 countries. Rally's end-to-end solutions for Agile development also include Agile University, the largest source for Agile training, and Agile Commons, the largest collaborative Web 2.0 community dedicated to advancing software agility. For more information, visit [www.rallydev.com](http://www.rallydev.com).

“With Rally, at any time, anyone from the CTO to a member of the development team can tell where we are and exactly what needs to get done. Some executives worry that Agile means chaos and unplanned activity. Rally alleviates those worries and lets everyone in the organization have complete visibility into the development process.”

John Skinner  
Dir. of Software Engineering  
Comet Solutions