



Recondo Technology develops software that brings efficiencies and cost savings to health care payment processing, which currently costs the medical industry a staggering \$300 billion annually. Recondo leads the industry in verifying patient information, financially approving and clearing patients, predicting payment accurately, and automating the Medicaid/charity approval process.

Overview

Recondo offers healthcare providers real-time access to information that ensures payment sources for services are properly identified prior to, during, and after care delivery. In addition, Recondo provides claims processing that allows providers and hospitals to connect easily with more than 1,800 payers nationwide, as well as statement processing that manages approximately 300 million patient documents annually for healthcare providers throughout the country.

As a relatively new start-up, days at Recondo are long and sometimes blend into nights and weekends. The entire company is focused on getting Recondo products out as the door as quickly as possible in order to meet customer needs. Employees in the field constantly gather customer feedback on features and functionality, and the development team must be nimble enough to easily change course as needed. To ensure flexibility in their development process, Recondo adopted Agile practices from the start, beginning with the company's inception in April of 2007.

"We thought that Agile and Scrum would give us the best chance for success, given that our requirements aren't ever set in stone," said Bo Hamrick, Agile Process Manager. "We wanted to enable a solid feedback loop with customers so we knew right away that we were meeting their needs."

Company Challenges and the Search for an Agile Solution

The company first attempted to use spreadsheets to manage their Agile development, but found that spreadsheets were unwieldy to keep up-to-date and required too much time and effort from each team member. Additionally, various spreadsheets made it difficult to track progress and activities across the organization and get true visibility into development status. Without this visibility, the company didn't know when it would deliver customer-requested features, what was blocking progress and how to remove blocks and move work forward. Recondo began its search for a solution that would enable teams to easily track development activities, reinforce their Agile practices and provide much-needed cross-team visibility. Through a referral with a trusted partner, the search was a fairly quick one.

"Once we figured out that we needed something to help us track our Agile development, we asked one of our partners what they were doing. They had been using Rally for over a year and highly recommended them. Having a trusted partner with so much enthusiasm for a vendor basically made the decision for us," noted Terry Truman, VP of Marketing.

Hitting Their Stride

Recondo first started using Rally with just five developers and a ScrumMaster. After minimal training, the team began using Rally and determined best practices for rolling out Rally and Agile as new employees came on board.



Company and Industry

- Industry: Technology for healthcare providers
- A leader in verifying patient information, financially approving and clearing patients, predicting payment accurately, and automating the Medicaid/charity approval process.

Development Environment

- Java shop with six different development teams that each work on different projects
- Iterations and releases every two weeks

Challenges

- Start-up environment required flexible development practices to ensure customer feedback incorporated into software
- Excel-based tracking was cumbersome for the development team to maintain and made it difficult for the organization to understand development progress

Solution

- Implemented Rally's Agile lifecycle management solutions, reinforcing Agile best practices and enabling customer feedback throughout the development process
- End-to-end software lifecycle management solution is easy to update and maintain and provides the organization with a full view of development efforts

Results

- Complete end-to-end product lifecycle visibility for the entire organization
- Productivity improvements of 25-50% as compared with traditional waterfall methodology

Scaling Software Agility[®]



“As part of our orientation process for new employees, we have them train on both Agile and Rally to get accustomed to the development philosophy. Because Rally is so intuitive, new employees are fully integrated into our development practices quickly,” said Terry.

One year after the original Rally implementation, development, QA, customer support, professional services, and the product readiness teams access Rally daily. All testing is tracked in Rally as well, and the IT department uses Rally to track various activities and backlog. Teams all operate on bi-monthly iterations, with releases directly following each iteration. At the end of each iteration, the development team gives the entire company a demonstration on enhanced functionality and new features in the software. This process not only helps new employees ramp up quickly, it also provides a forum for the company to get a full view of the latest development progress and an opportunity for customers to provide feedback.

Product managers are constantly gathering customer requirements to ensure Recondo products are in synch with the market. Features and added functionality are prioritized in Rally and moved up or down, depending on forecasted revenue opportunity. The Recondo product management group prioritizes the backlog twice every month.

Recondo even used the information in Rally during their last round of venture capital financing.

Terry explains, “Showing investors who had been around technology for years a live portrayal of our development in Rally helped solidify their decision to invest in our company. They could see the progress we were making and have complete visibility into the development process.”

Getting Results with Rally and Agile

The team at Recondo continues to drive increased productivity, better meet market needs and improve the customer feedback loop using Rally and Agile.

“I believe we’re 25 to 50% more productive as compared to teams using traditional waterfall methodology. In my career, I’ve seen and managed a lot of software being built, and this is the most effective and efficient way I’ve ever done it,” explains Bo.

Terry further elaborates, “In the 1990’s, we had a couple of developers who were rapid prototypers, some of the fastest we’ve ever seen, but to go from prototype to production was still a long journey. Now, thanks to Rally, we can get features into the product faster than ever before.”

About Rally

Rally is the leader in Agile application lifecycle management (ALM) dedicated to making leaner development organizations that respond faster to changing customer needs. According to a study by QSM Associates, teams that rely on Rally’s Agile lifecycle management products and services are 50% faster to market and 25% more productive than industry averages. Rally’s products were honored with four consecutive Jolt Awards (the software industry’s equivalent of the Oscar® award) in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. The company’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.

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