

Established in 1995 by two veterans of the pharmaceutical industry, Synteract is a privately held, full-service contract research organization (CRO), dedicated to meeting the clinical needs of biotechnology, medical device and pharmaceutical companies. Synteract employs over 300 people with headquarters in Carlsbad, California and offices in North Carolina and Czech Republic. They specialize in clinical trials for oncology, central nervous system, cardiovascular disease and ophthalmology.

Challenge

Ad-hoc processes led to inefficiency, lack of visibility and communication issues

Synteract has a team of talented IT professionals, with continuous technical demands from their partner organizations, customers and clients. Their core development team was producing high-quality code, but because there were no dedicated project managers, the team was not managing its projects effectively. Senior management had little visibility into the progress of the team, and team members were working somewhat in isolation. Synteract needed a solution that would allow the team to manage itself effectively, allow for high visibility and improve communication and consistency among projects.

Solution

Introduced a tailored agile methodology and identified a team leader

Synteract hired Fairway Technologies to assess the shortcomings of its existing approach, and to identify and implement a more viable methodology, to ensure success. Fairway was responsible for the following:

- Fairway Technologies analyzed the current process and determined the necessary steps to implement a more effective process.
- Fairway identified the most appropriate software development methodology to fit Synteract's unique needs.
- The Fairway team reviewed and recommended agile management software to centralize project information and communication.
- Fairway trained the entire team on Scrum, using multiple presentations and using the highest priority projects as test cases.
- Fairway Technologies assisted with the architecture and development of the highest priority projects.
- Fairway advised Synteract on best practices in source code and configuration management.
- The team assigned a Scrum Master to be responsible for managing the agile development process.

Benefits

Fairway Technologies helped Synteract maximize the value of their development team and realize the following benefits:

- Increased management visibility into project status and team member contribution
- Implemented an agile software development process consistent with the team's strengths and culture
- Eliminated duplicate work and addressed project interdependencies early and often
- Clarified responsibilities and increased stability for the team
- Improved efficiency and communication
- Reduced risk of knowledge loss with a centralized content management wiki

Technology

Tools and technology used:

- Scrum (agile methodology)
- Rally Software
- Perforce
- ASP.NET, C#
- ExtJS/JavaScript
- MS SQL Server
- MediaWiki