

Making Agile Work Across Oceans

James Morehead

VP Product Management and User Experience
support.com

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My Background

- Lead a global Product Management and User Experience Design team
 - Product strategy and usability research
 - Build / buy technology decisions
 - Consolidated prioritization
- 20+ years work experience includes:
 - Product Management, Product Marketing, Strategic Marketing, IT Project Management and Software Development
- Prior companies include:
 - SupportSoft, Portal Software and Nortel Networks
- Education background includes Computer Engineering (University of Waterloo) and an MBA (University of Toronto)

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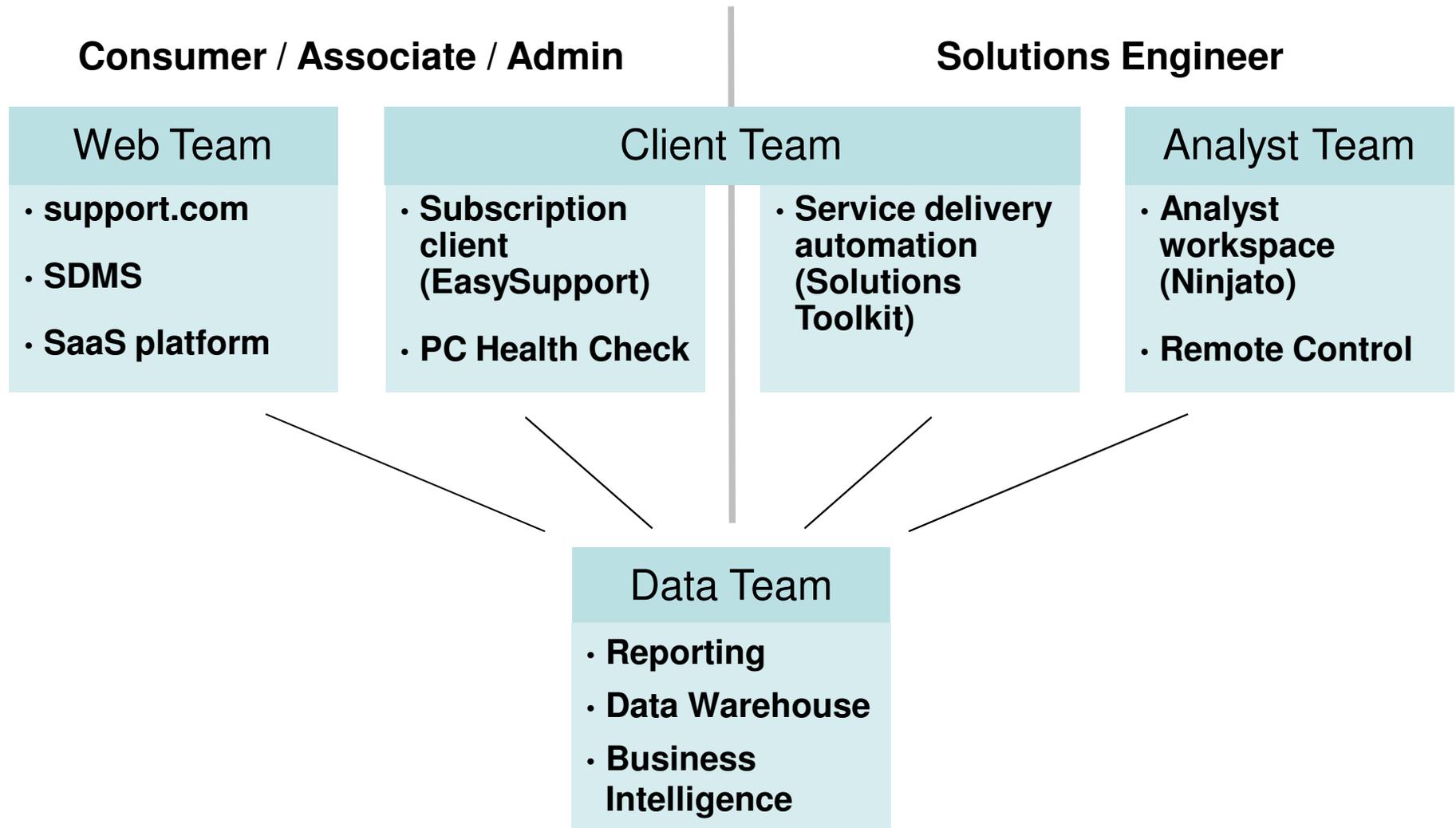
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- Direct to consumer and white label
- US/Canada-based work from home Solutions Engineers

support.com context:

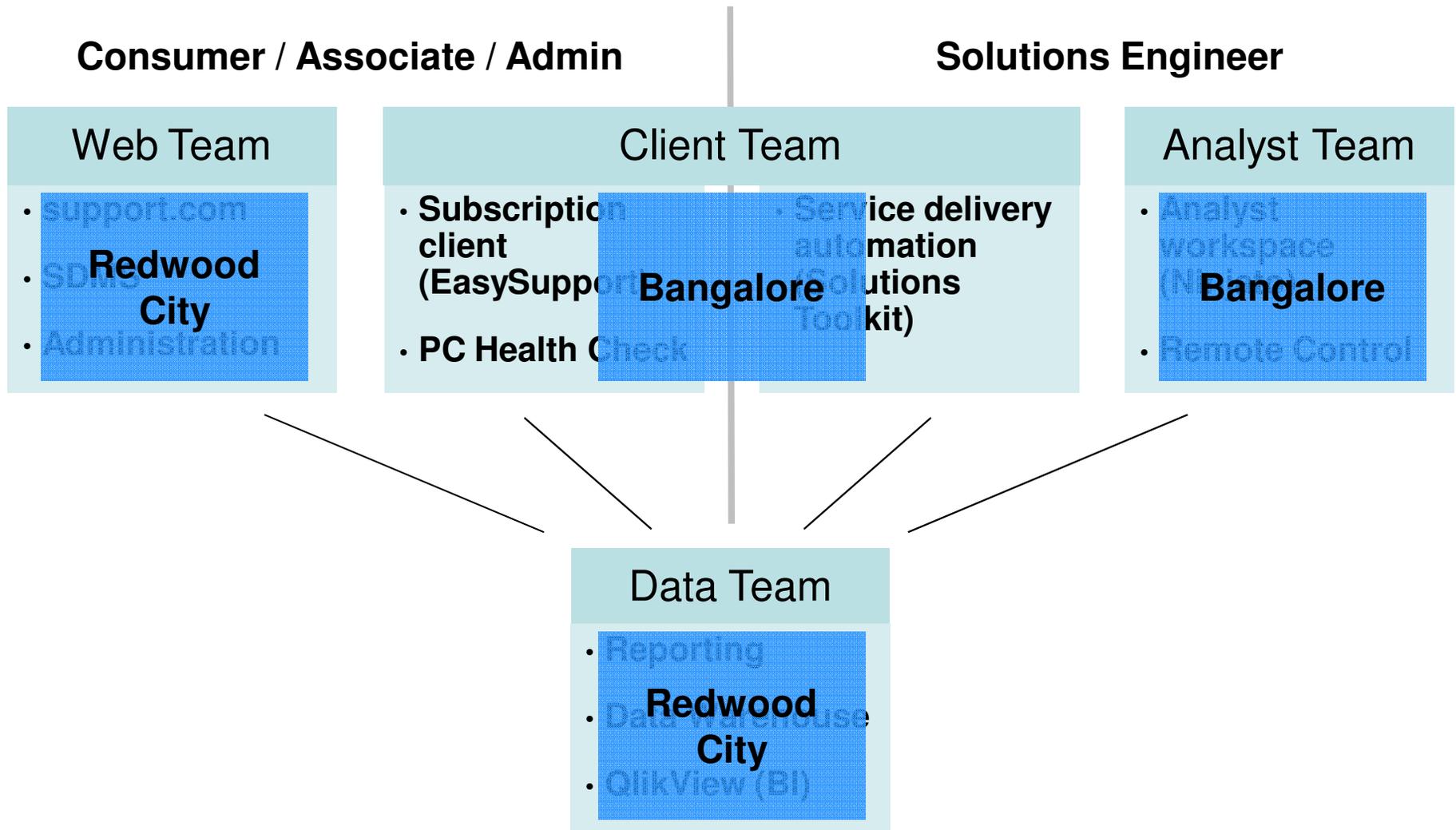
Turnkey Technology-enabled Service

- Virtual Solutions Center (fully distributed call center)
 - 300+ work from home Solutions Engineers and Supervisors
 - 20+ States, 8+ Provinces (Canada)
 - 100% VoIP (Voice over IP)
 - Experienced problem solvers with excellent communication skills
- Solution Engineer (SEs) provides:
 - Computer
 - Broadband connection
- support.com provides:
 - Telephony equipment (VoIP)
 - Analyst workspace / e-commerce front end (Ninjato)
 - Problem diagnosis and resolution tools (Solutions Toolkit)

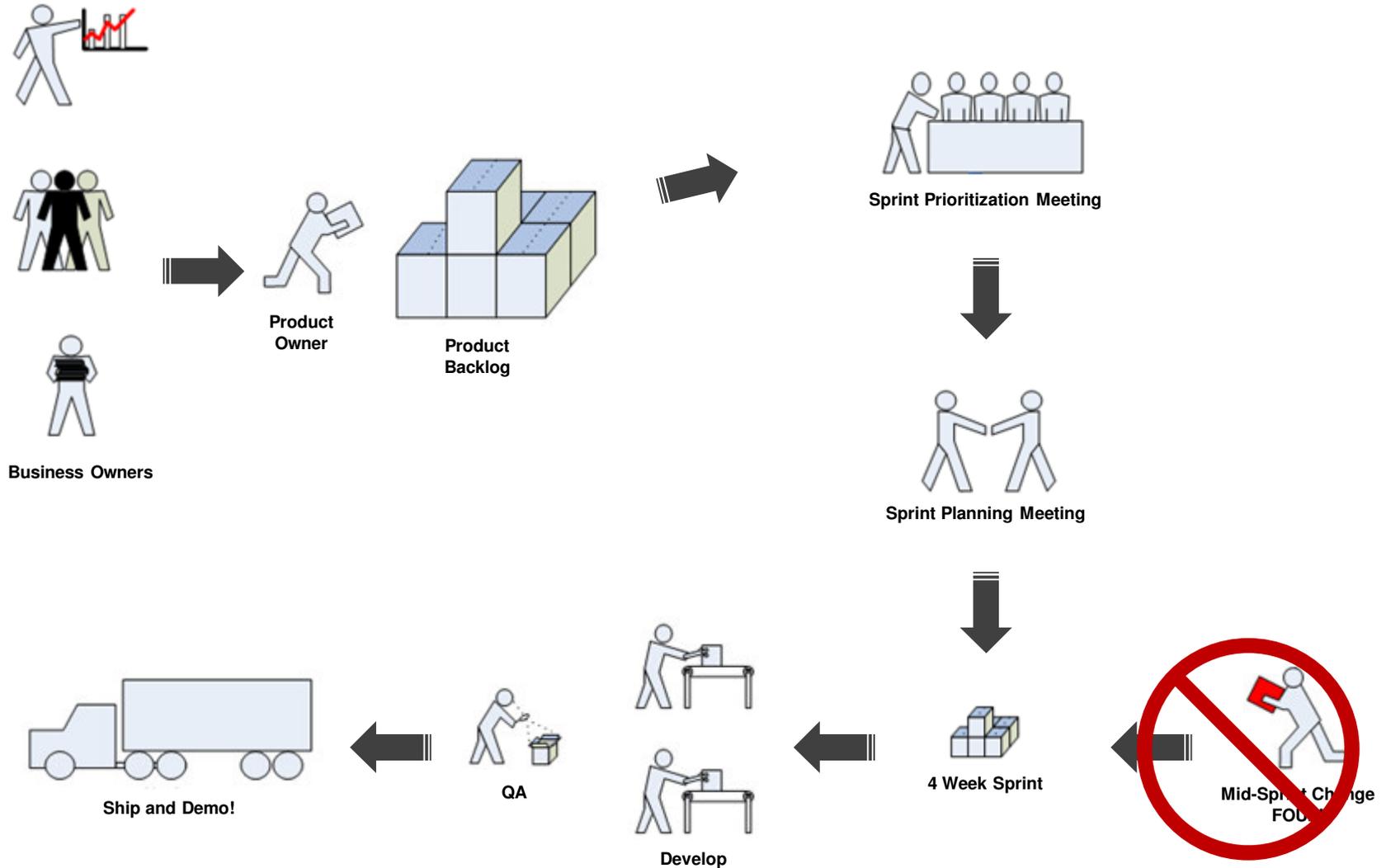
How the Work is Organized



How the People are Organized (PM, UED & Eng/QA)



Scrum Process (in 5 min. or less)



Recommended Reading: "Agile Software Development with Scrum" by Ken Schwaber and Mike Beedle

support.com Sprint Results

- 4 week Sprints, 1 week between Sprints
- 10 major releases per year – unified across all focus areas
- 2-3 minor (dot) releases per Sprint cycle for production support
- 90%+ on-time success rate
- 95% what goes in comes out feature delivery rate

Making Scrum Work (in general)

- CEO level support to avoid thrashing
 - No executive overrides allowed after Sprint Prioritization and Planning permitted – not even from the CEO
 - Survive moments of truth (when an override is most tempting)
- Find a cycle time that works – and stick to it
 - We tried 2, 3 and 4 week cycles
 - 4 weeks is optimal for us – enough time for QA to coordinate, short enough to result in predictable outcomes
- Create a parallel process to address Field Readiness issues
 - Partner readiness, field training and other release impacts

Making Scrum Work (across oceans)

- Business owners
 - Local team drives Sprint Prioritization meetings
 - Business owners time shift to attend
- Product owners
 - Local product management critical to agile success – daily interaction
 - Local means less need to create waterfall-style requirement specs
- Local user experience design team
- Engineering / QA
 - Weekly, global Scrum of Scrums
 - Local QA resources is preferable
- Set aside budget for periodic in-person alignment meetings
- Skype

Making Scrum Work (across oceans)

Upcoming Releases

Release	Date	Type	Push Instructions	Build	EE#	WH build	WH EE#
V23.1	10/20/2009?	minor	ProductionDeploymentV23.1	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
V23.0	10/06/2009	major	ProductionDeploymentV23	23.0.589.0	⇒ EE:21369	23.0.14.0	TBD
V22.4	10/06/2009	minor	ProductionDeploymentV22.4	TBD	⇒ EE:21359	TBD	TBD

Current Sprints / Defect Statistics

Team	Complete	Sprint	Other Links
Web	Nov 11	Web Sprint V24 Tickets	Bug+
Client	Nov 11	Client V24 Sprint Tickets	Bug+
Analyst	Nov 11	Analyst v24 Sprint	Bug+
Data			
Architecture			

Web Sprint V23

Related: [SDMSv3.1](#); [SDMSv3.2](#)

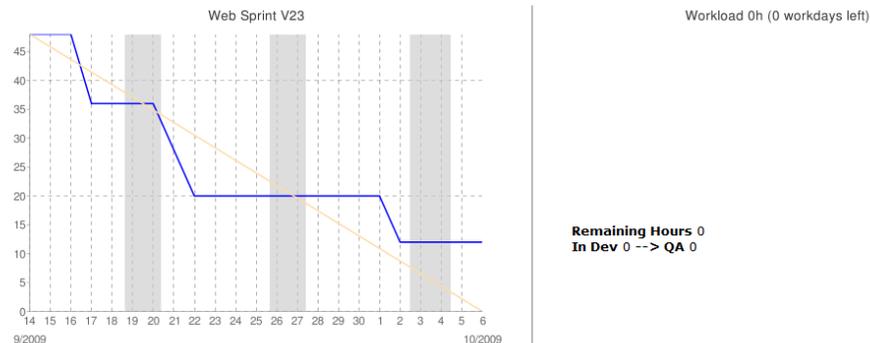
Tickets:	My Tickets	All Open Query	All Report	view & wrapup	Estimates:	feature summary view	feature detailed view	developer summary view	developer detailed view	Bugs:	Bug+	Find Vs. Fixed	Table of Contents Important Dates Burndown Chart Current Action Items Sprint Goals With Dev Team With PM Team With QA Team QA Test Plan QA Drops
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Important Dates

- Sprint Kick-off: 09/14/09
- Sprint End Date: 10/06/09
- QA Regression 100% Complete: 09/24/06
- Drop 1 to Staging: 09/30/09
- Release to Production: 10/06/09

Production Deployment Instructions: [ProductionDeploymentV23](#)

Burndown Chart



- Variety of 3rd party development tools used
- Common requirements tracking / Sprint management system (Trac)
- Common source control (Perforce)
- Continuous builds (Cruise Control)
- Automated testing (WATiN, Silk)

Global Sprint Prioritization Meetings

- One meeting per team – usually 30 minutes or less
 - Product Owner brings a prioritized backlog
 - All features have t-shirt sizes from Engineering
- Rough Sprint budget to help business owners know where the cut line might fall
 - Likely cut line needed to force prioritization decisions
 - Business owners know the likely cut line is *not* a guarantee – just a place where prioritization is very important
- Some teams use points, others days – doesn't matter as long as it's consistent
 - 15% infrastructure budget prioritized by Engineering
 - Variable production support budget set aside
- For SOX compliance we use DocuSign for both Sprint Prioritization and Planning document approval

Summary

- Scrum has dramatically improved support.com's development productivity
- Increased ability to respond to changing business priorities
- Business owner visibility into the development process
- 4-week Sprint cycles forces better and more frequent communication across oceans
- Co-located Product Management and Engineering is a must have
- CEO-level buy-in and support is the most important factor