

# Making Agile Work Across Oceans

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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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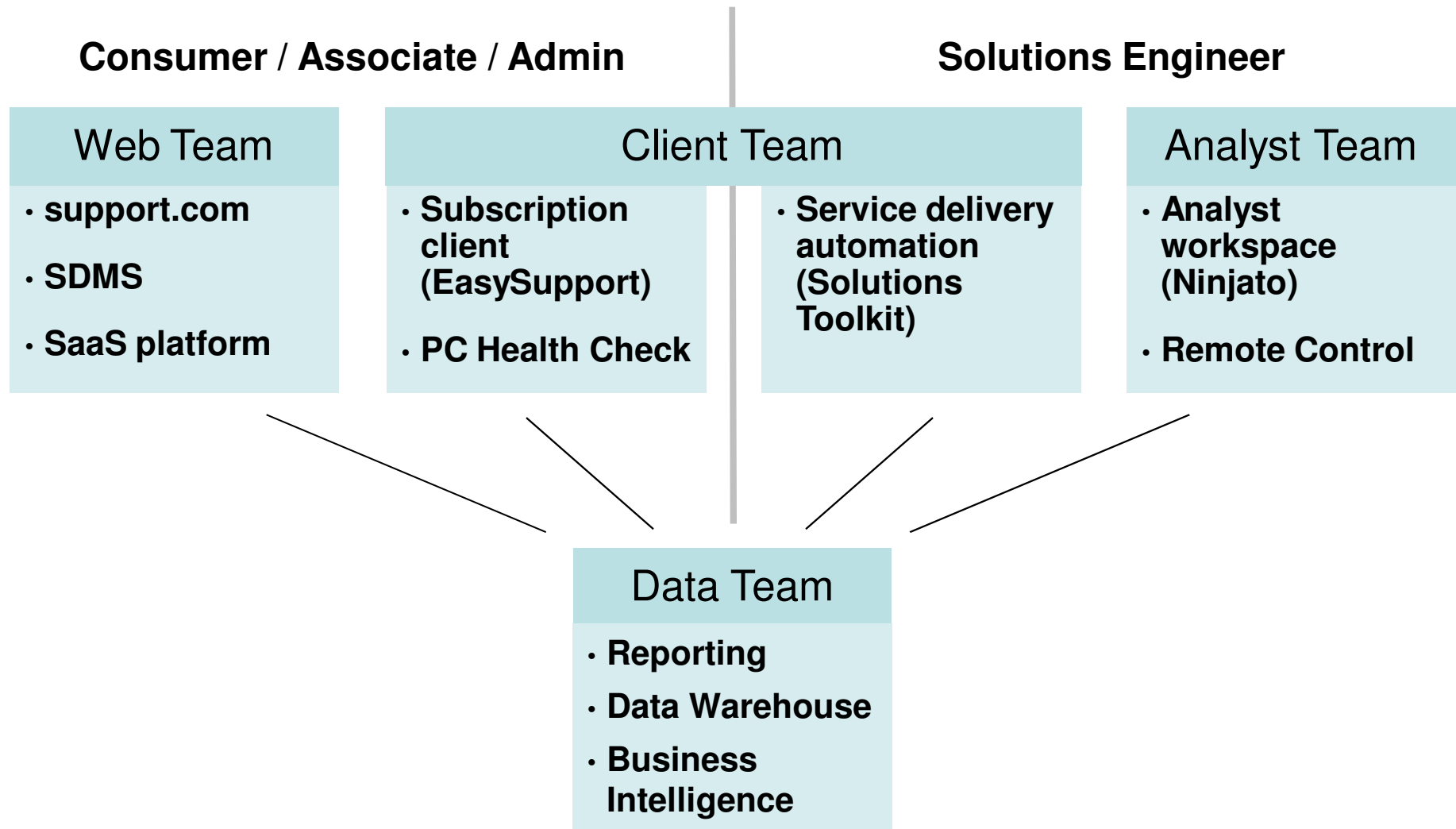
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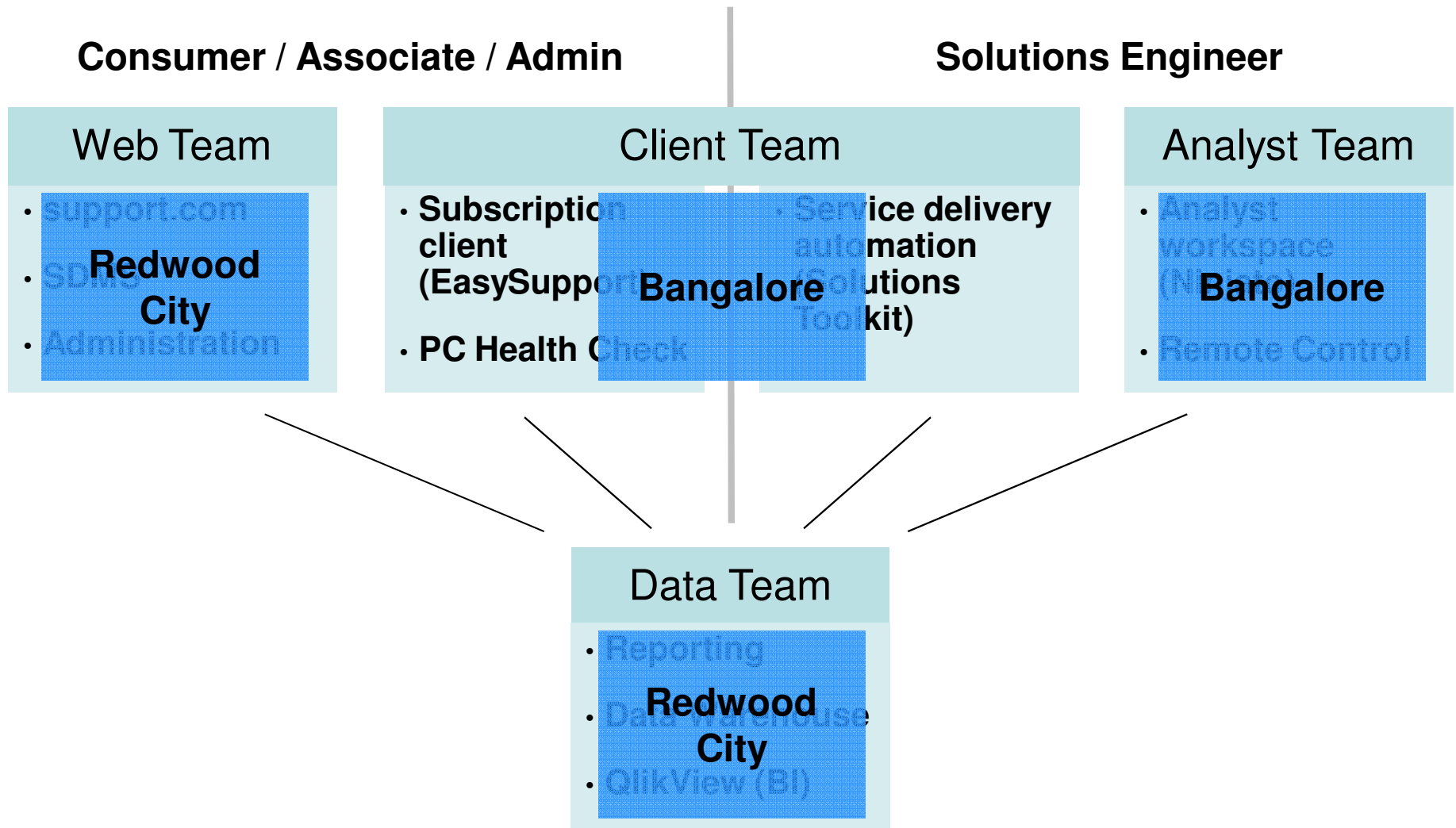
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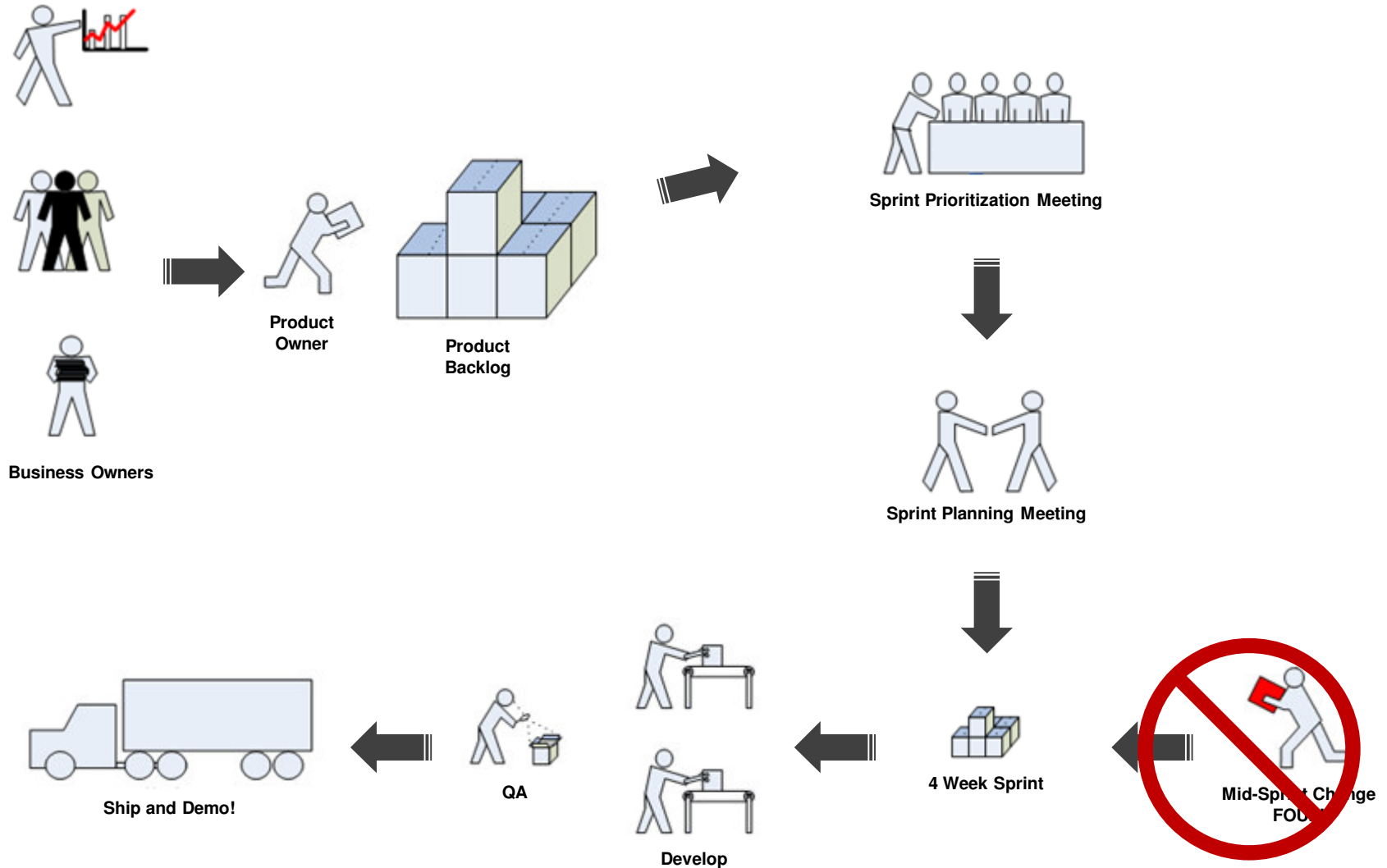
# How the Work is Organized



# 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](#)

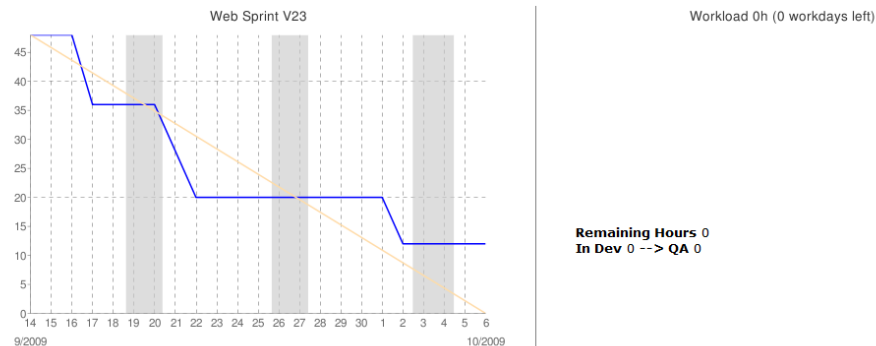
Tickets:	<a href="#">My Tickets</a>	<a href="#">All Open Query</a>	<a href="#">All Report</a>	<a href="#">view &amp; wrapup</a>	Estimates:	<a href="#">feature summary view</a>	<a href="#">feature detailed view</a>	<a href="#">developer summary view</a>	<a href="#">developer detailed view</a>	Bugs:	<a href="#">Bug+</a>	<a href="#">Find Vs. Fixed</a>	<b>Table of Contents</b> <a href="#">Important Dates</a> <a href="#">Burndown Chart</a> <a href="#">Current Action Items</a> <a href="#">Sprint Goals</a> <a href="#">With Dev Team</a> <a href="#">With PM Team</a> <a href="#">With QA Team</a> <a href="#">QA Test Plan</a> <a href="#">QA Drops</a>
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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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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