Lumen unleashes productivity and joy with agile and Atlassian cloud

200%

increase in throughput with
agile and Atlassian cloud tools

With agile and Atlassian cloud, Lumen has focused, increased throughput by 200%, and reduced cycle times – leading to happier employees and customers.

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MAI LIAN SCARLETT

Former Senior Director, Agile Transformation Office

LUMEN

Lumen is a multinational technology company that empowers organizations to unlock the full potential of their data, quickly adopt game-changing technologies that will revolutionize their business operations, and seamlessly deliver digital innovations that redefine our everyday lives.

INDUSTRY
Internet and Software

LOCATION
Americas

NUMBER OF USERS
7,000+

ATLASSIAN PRODUCTS & APPS

Atlassian Access
Security and control for the cloud

Confluence
Document collaboration

Jira Align
Plan, deliver, measure

Jira Service Management
High-velocity ITSM

Jira Software
Project and issue tracking

Jira Work Management
Business team collaboration

CHALLENGE

After years of growth and acquisitions, Lumen's technology firm had accumulated various development tools, instances, and processes, which resulted in less-than-ideal cycle times.

SOLUTION

Lumen began an agile transformation and cloud migration journey to standardize ways of working, deliver even more value in less time, and better support employees.

IMPACT

With agile practices and Atlassian cloud tools, Lumen has become more focused, increased throughput by 200%, and reduced cycle times – leading to happier employees and customers.

As any small organization scales, processes and systems can quickly become the "Wild West," hindering productivity and innovation. This was the challenge Lumen Technologies (formerly known as CenturyLink) faced when they began their agile transformation and cloud migration journey.

Lumen had the right people on board, but as a fast-growing, global enterprise, they needed to modernize and standardize the way they worked to improve performance. By adopting agile practices and migrating to Atlassian cloud tools, the company hoped to unleash their teams' productivity and joy with better processes and platforms.

Unlocking potential with agile – and enhancing it with Atlassian

In 2018, Lumen was a project-oriented company using traditional methodologies, which resulted in less-than-ideal cycle times. The organization launched their agile transformation initiative to create new ways of working and deliver even more value in less time.

For Lumen, embracing agile and migrating to Atlassian cloud was just as much about helping their people as it was about optimizing their processes. "For us, agile transformation is unlocking human potential…In order for us to really connect the hearts and minds of people, we leverage the Atlassian toolset to create transparency around the work our people are doing and the value that it has to our customers," says Mai Lian Scarlett, a former senior director in Lumen's Agile Transformation Office.

From 2019 to 2020, Lumen created their transformation roadmap, launched a pilot, and trained their workforce on agile. After seeing fast results, they started scaling in 2021 by launching numerous value streams, investing in DevOps transformation, and expanding training to new areas of the organization. Alignment, communication, and execution continued to improve, so in 2022, Mai Lian says they began scaling agile beyond product and IT, while expanding their toolkit with Atlassian "as an accelerator for value creation."

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> Director, Agile Transformation Office

At the time, Lumen was trying to manage an assortment of development tools and instances due to various acquisitions. The lack of integrations and inconsistent data was hindering decision-making and efficiency. "When a company has a tool proliferation problem, Atlassian helps consolidate onto a common platform and create a single source of truth," explains Director Rob Mulvaney. To that end, Lumen's Agile Transformation Office set out to centralize with one integrated, cloud-based platform that would enable the organization to start fresh and establish standards, while facilitating collaboration and agile practices.

A cloud migration creates an "active engine" that supports standardization and success

Over the course of several months, Lumen migrated employees in waves from on-premise and Data Center deployments of Atlassian tools to the cloud. This approach helped minimize the confusion and inefficiencies that come with working in different deployments of the same tool at one time.

"Lumen has over 7,000 users, nine value streams, nearly 90 Agile Release Trains, and hundreds of teams," Rob says. "Keeping the peace and ensuring our cloud instance doesn't become the Wild Wild West is very important. Everyone has their intent to do good, but 'good' might have a different definition for each person. So there's great value and benefit in having standardization and understanding the context."

Through the migration, Lumen's teams gained a full suite of cloud collaboration tools to support this standardization effort without cramping their creativity.

Today, Product and IT teams use Jira Software as their hub for development and delivery. The tool became even more valuable during a period of rapid change within the company. "Jira Software serves as the bedrock and source of truth for Lumen's engineering teams. Data has no emotion, so during turbulent times, we can look at our Jira boards and data to make sound decisions," Rob explains.

While technology teams rely on Jira Software, Jira Work Management serves the same purpose for business teams and an "entry point" (as Rob calls it) to the Atlassian suite. Plus, with Jira Align, Lumen has the ability to tie all execution work back to the company's strategic goals.

Employees across the company also use Confluence to document important information like objectives and key results, which Rob says helps "keep teams aligned across the big-picture goals." In addition, Jira Service Management provides one place where teams can find answers to common questions and submit project requests in a standardized way. Although Lumen has over 7,000 employees, 25 agents can meet their needs thanks to the impressive solution they've built to support their service.

"Jira Service Management is a powerful ally in our agile adoption and an active engine that enforces our ways of working, our guard rails, and compliance," Rob explains. "We've seen a desire from teams to increase use of Jira Service Management and spin up their own Jira Software site once they find out they can have their own instance with control and autonomy over their workflows."

Underneath all of these tools lies Atlassian Access, making it easy for authorized users to quickly sign in to all of their tools. "One of our biggest wins has been the integration with Atlassian Access into our single sign-on protocol. Now, individuals and teams can connect from literally anywhere," Rob says.

Together, these solutions provide a collaborative platform to connect Lumen's teams and help them create even more value for their customers.

"An accelerator and an enabler to our digital transformation"

While Lumen is still at the beginning of their agile and cloud journeys, Mai Lian, Rob, and the entire Lumen team are thrilled with the results they've already seen. "Our agile transformation and Atlassian toolset have really changed the culture of our organization and led to the successes we've seen. By focusing more, we've been able to reduce our cycle time and increase throughput by 200%, which means we're delivering capabilities to customers faster and increasing customer satisfaction," Mai Lian proudly states. "Our partnership with Atlassian has really been an accelerator and an enabler to our digital transformation...We're excited to see Atlassian's commitment to the cloud platform and anxious to see how Lumen can help shape those solutions."

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With Atlassian, Lumen has increased focus and standardization to avoid becoming the "Wild West" – but without sacrificing agility. "Successful transformations require consistent standardizations and contextualization. Lumen relies on Atlassian for this," Rob says. Mai Lian adds, "The feedback that we've gotten from our delivery community has been that there's a balance between guardrails and autonomy. We tried to provide just enough structure to enable transparency and scale our metrics, but also leave some adaptability for teams to tap into 'developer joy.'"

Now that Lumen is unleashing productivity and joy with agile methods and Atlassian cloud tools, Mai Lian says the team can't live without them. "Most organizations don't have a capacity issue – they have a focus issue. Atlassian is part of who we are as a culture and the commitment to our employees to create focus and clarity, which ultimately benefits our customers," she says. "Atlassian tools were once an option, but they've really become a way of working that's woven into our DNA."

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ATLASSIAN