Agile Kata.pro

HOW THE AGILE KATA IS HELPING THE BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION DELIVERY TEAMS BECOME MORE STABLE AND MORE PREDICTABLE.

CASE STUDY

GOALS

- Reducing throughput variance to less than 20%.
- Increased forecasting capabilities.

ABOUT

- Cox Enterprises, Inc.
- 55,000 employees
- Industry: Communications
- HQ in Atlanta, GA USA.

JIM SPARKS
Sr Scrum Master
Cox Enterprises, Inc.

Jim is a Senior Scrum Master at Cox Enterprises, Inc. guiding the Benefits and Compensation teams to an Agile Delivery Model. He previously coached the Agile transformation of the Supply Chain organization with Lowe's Companies, Inc.

He teaches Applying Professional Kanban to help teams be more effective, efficient, and predictable.

THEIR STORY

Communications giant Cox Enterprises, Inc. consists of Cox Communications (cable, broadband) and Cox Automotive (Manheim car auctions, AutoTrader.com). Their brands include Autotrader, Kelley Blue Book, Manheim, Savings.com and Valpak. The Atlanta-based company was founded by James M. Cox in 1898 when he purchased the Dayton Evening News.

In March of 2023 Cox Enterprises kicked off an Agile Transformation in their Human Capital Management (HCM) group. They began this transformation using the Leading Agile model for change but have pivoted away from a prescriptive framework to a method customized to the organization with a focus on predictability and product delivery.

Within the Benefits and Compensation value stream, the 2 delivery teams have begun using the Agile Kata to complement the agile transformation in the HCM space. Their first Kata was focused on reducing throughput variance.

"Using the Agile Kata to stabilize the teams into 2 separate teams has helped with planning and allocating work, and the predictability of the work we can accommodate in a sprint."
-Dhara Goel (Sr Lead Enterprise Applications Engineer)

At Cox Enterprises, they were in sync with the spirit of Agile Kata from the get-go. Their foremost objective? To uncover opportunities for enhancing stability and predictability. Their focus rested squarely on the Benefits and Compensation value stream, an integral part of the organization, serving the insurance, benefits, and compensation needs of over 50,000 dedicated associates.

> **"IT IS REALLY COOL THAT IT IS NOT OVER. WE ARE NOW MORPHING THIS TO REFINE THE WAY THE TEAMS PULL IN WORK. SO THIS IS TAKING ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN."**
>
> **JIM SPARKS**
> **SR SCRUM MASTER COX ENTERPRISES**

The program took flight, armed with the Agile Kata mindset. It wasn't just about seeing opportunities; it was about visualizing the gap between their current reality and the desired future state. This visualization set the stage for a series of meticulously crafted experiments—a voyage toward progress.

"Benefits & Compensation have recently made changes to formalize into distinct teams using the Agile Kata. Since the change, both teams have been more predictable, gotten more work done, and has also helped us pinpoint opportunities to continue to improve and grow."

-Mark Castleberry (Director, Enterprise Applications)

Benefits Delivery team Throughput Variance
- 92% on April 2
- 25% on June 25
- 30% on July 9
- 19% on August 31

Compensation Delivery team Throughput Variance
- 75% on April 2
- 80% on June 25
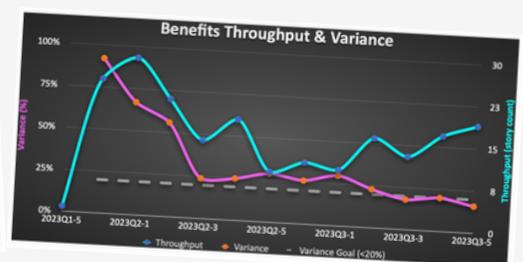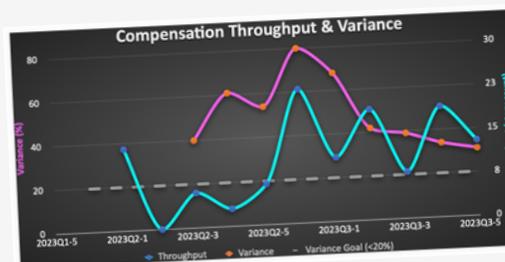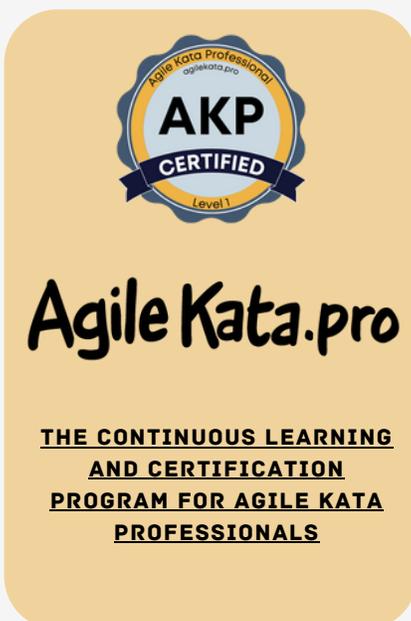- 68% on July 9
- 34% on August 31

Utilizing the Agile Kata introduced a shared language that easily permeated throughout Cox Enterprises, reinforcing the principles they had grasped during their Agile Kata Pro certification course. However, the implementation of the Agile Kata at Cox Enterprises encompassed broader aspirations than simply reducing throughput variance. As the methodology took root, it illuminated opportunities to streamline planning, enhance communication with stakeholders and clients, and elevate their forecasting capabilities.

Cox Enterprises remains steadfast in their ongoing agile transformation, aiming to expand the reach and adoption of the Agile Kata throughout every facet of the organization. Jim Sparks, ever the visionary, contemplates leveraging the Agile Kata as an alternative to Scrum, recognizing its superior alignment with the work undertaken by the delivery teams.

THE CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR AGILE KATA PROFESSIONALS