



## WorthPoint

*WorthPoint is a collector's social network and search engine rolled into one. The web site is changing the process of assessing worth for collectibles by providing a vast database of sales records where an individual can assess the worth of items they own. Through WorthPoint, people can connect with experts to learn more about authenticity and value in art, antiques, and vintage items. Through the WorthPoint online community, WorthPoint members can contact other collectors interested in buying, selling, or swapping stories, and they can share their insight and knowledge through forums and wikis.*

### Overview

WorthPoint's major asset is its web site and online community. Collectors worldwide access the site at all hours of the day and night, meaning it needs to be up whenever a member wants access. This puts additional pressure on the development team at WorthPoint for code to work flawlessly the first time that new features or functionality are added to the site.

### Company Challenges

WorthPoint has historically outsourced much of its development efforts with varying degrees of success. With time zone differences, language barriers and a wide range of development methodologies, WorthPoint struggled to get visibility into the vendor's development process, making it difficult to make good decisions about the business. WorthPoint's management team had a less than predictable release schedule and, as a result, they couldn't tell customers, partners and prospective investors what was coming up.

Inadequate oversight into their outsourced development process also led to quality issues when new features or enhancements did get pushed to WorthPoint's web site. With an eye on solving their problems with collaboration, visibility and quality, WorthPoint's CTO, Andy Forbes, began researching alternative development practices in an effort to get a solid understanding of the offshore development activities.

"I knew that we couldn't continue down the path we were on. We were missing deadlines and it was difficult to accurately predict when new features or functionality would be released," noted Andy. He further explained, "As I researched Agile and Rally, it just seemed to make sense for us."

### Implementing Rally

In order to prepare for adopting Agile, newly hired Product Development Director, Marc Benton, began reading books on Agile practices and accessed white papers, webinars, and other Agile training resources from the Rally web site. He then pushed this information out to WorthPoint's offshore development team, along with having informal talks about adopting Agile. Three weeks after Marc started at WorthPoint, they began using Rally.

"To be honest, I was initially pretty worried about implementing Rally. I had used another project management tool and found it to be phenomenally complicated, and I was afraid Rally might be the same way. Instead, Rally has exceeded my expectations in terms of usability and intuitiveness of the solution," Marc explained.



### Company and Industry

- Collector's social network and search engine rolled into one

### Development Environment

- Majority of development is outsourced to offshore development teams
- Rapid, frequent delivery of new features and functionality
- 2 week iterations, with accompanying 2 week releases

### Challenges

- 12 hour time zone difference made it difficult to get questions answered in a timely fashion
- Less than acceptable software quality resulting from lack of transparency into the offshore development process
- Little visibility into the backlog, feature requests, and release schedule for C-level executives and others

### Solution

- Rally acts as the central repository for all user stories, enabling quick resolution of any questions or issues
- Implementation of Rally's product lifecycle management solution enables complete oversight into the development process and helps improve quality
- Rally provides an end-to-end view of the entire product lifecycle

### Results

- Significantly improved productivity
- Improved time-to-market with on-time delivery of releases
- Enhanced communication between company and offshore development organization

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Although Marc and the rest of the team at WorthPoint were enthusiastic about Rally, WorthPoint's offshore development team in the Philippines initially had a mixed reaction. Offshore managers were especially apprehensive that the changes meant that WorthPoint wanted to micromanage the entire development process. However, once things began to click, they understood their perceptions were mistaken.

One of the things that changed their original perception was that product owners used to push their requirements down to the offshore teams with little to no prioritization. Everything was important and considered high priority, and the team had little control over its projects. Now Rally is the source of record for any changes to the requirements (now referred to as user stories), and everyone on the team can see how that change might affect other items.

### Driving Value with Rally

The offshore development team is now organized into smaller teams, including a web site development team, a widget team, a business process outsourcing team, and a "tiger" team, which functions as a response and triage team for critical issues. The teams all run on two-week iteration cycles, with accompanying two-week release cycles. Although the team is still relatively young in their implementation of Rally and Agile, WorthPoint is already seeing a marked change in the development process.

"Before Rally, we simply didn't have information on development projects. Now, our CEO and I have a clear idea of what features are in the backlog, when site enhancements will be complete and when functionality will be added. That holistic and complete view of the development process is only possible through Rally. Rally lets the entire organization have better visibility into the offshore development efforts," says Andy.

Each morning, Marc, as the ScrumMaster, reviews all the user stories in WorthPoint's five workspaces, which each represent a component of their web site. Marc also acts as a clearinghouse for any and all defects and enters those directly into Rally. About twice per week, Marc works with the product owners to set up the next sprint, based on what is in the backlog. Every evening, he has a conference call with the offshore team, talking to each one of the team leads and addressing any issues that have arisen. When he sees user stories without enough test coverage, he can easily go in and schedule more QA time as needed in Rally.

Marc notes, "Rally has not only given us visibility into the entire development process, it has given our offshore team more ownership in the end product. As a result, we have fewer quality issues, on-time delivery of features and functionality and a greatly enhanced working relationship."

### Rally Adds Value Every Day

Rally has also enabled WorthPoint to incrementally fix issues without overhauling everything already in place. For example, WorthPoint recently tackled updating some inconsistencies with their web site's functionality and design. Prior to implementing Rally, WorthPoint may have looked to rip and replace the existing infrastructure. Now, they can plan to fix items incrementally and continue to enhance functionality in parallel.

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Andy Forbes  
CTO  
WorthPoint



Additionally, Rally acts a central repository for any questions that anyone may have on a project. This is especially critical with a 12-hour time zone between the offshore team and WorthPoint.

Marc explains, “Before we had Rally, the offshore team sometimes had to wait 12 hours or more for an answer to a specific question. Now, because everything is managed and tracked in Rally, people can go there first for any questions/answers and then quickly get back to their work.”

With improved time-to-market and scheduled releases, productivity is higher than ever before at WorthPoint and at their offshore development partner. WorthPoint has also been using Rally in ways they didn’t expect, such as creating test cases and recording the execution of those test cases to improve quality and predictability. The Rally solution gives WorthPoint an automated platform for assessing quality throughout the product lifecycle and enables the development teams to pull testing forward and measure the impact of product changes earlier. In the future, WorthPoint is looking at integrating automated regression testing in Rally to better assess feature quality and release readiness.

### About Rally

Rally is the #1 partner for Agile success through its family of products, coaching and community support. With a dedicated focus on Agile practices, Rally helps organizations of all sizes shorten their development cycles, minimize risk, and collaborate across teams and silos. Rally’s on-demand Agile lifecycle management products were honored with three-time Jolt Product Excellence Awards (the industry’s Oscars) in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and currently support over 300 corporate customers and 12,000 subscribers in more than 30 countries. Rally’s end-to-end solutions for Agile development also include Agile University, the largest source for Agile training, and Agile Commons, the largest collaborative Web 2.0 community dedicated to advancing software agility. For more information, visit [www.rallydev.com](http://www.rallydev.com)

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Marc Benton  
Product Development  
Director  
WorthPoint