Embracing Agile Operations & Digital Transformation in the Telecom Industry

CASE STUDY | Agile Project Management

**BUSINESSMAP
CASE STUDY**

businessmap

Algar Telecom

Industry
Telecommunications

Location
Uberlândia-MG, Brazil

Use Case
Agile Project Management
& Digital Transformation

Specializing in
Telecommunications &
IT Services

Size
4,500+ associates
(employees)

How Businessmap Helps Algar Telecom Improve Customer Experience Through Agility & Digitalization?

Introduction

Algar Telecom®, since its creation, has had the mission to serve. Their cultural trait "People serving People" marks the company's trajectory and governs the performance where sustainability and innovation are the main intangible assets. This type of thinking builds the company's mission and forms their reputation in the highly competitive ICT (Information & Communications technology) market.

Being a pioneer in this market for 69 years, Algar Telecom, a Grupo Algar company, has a broad portfolio of Telecom and IT solutions to serve corporate (B2B) and retail (B2C) customers.

The company offers high-speed fiber optic internet, quality cellular, voice, data, and IT services, including cloud and network security services, as well as management systems for small businesses. It has a modern infrastructure, supported by a network of 122,000 km of fiber optics that currently serves more than 372 cities in 16 states of Brazil and the Federal District. For all these locations, the company invests in personalized, consultative and effective service to deliver ever-increasing quality to customers.

Algar Telecom has more than 4,500 associates - as the company's employees are called - committed to maintaining a close relationship with its customers and high-quality service delivery through sustainable and innovative practices.

Backstory & Initial Challenges

Algar Telecom's case revolves around the transfer of their so-called "Integration TIC" tribe/department (which handles different services in information and communication technology such as deployment, governance, architecture, etc.) to a Business Unit with a strong focus on identity and Agile practices.

Among the products delivered in this Business Unit are:

- **Security solutions** such as Super Secure SD-WAN, Vision MEDR (Managed Endpoint), SIEM and WAF.

- **Connectivity products** such as SMARTFI Pro, SMART Connect and SD-WAN;

- **IT infrastructure** - Cloud Server, Cloud Plus, Cloud Backup, Azure, AWS, professional and managed services, hosting and colocation; etc.

While the business unit was already experimenting with Agile ways of working, the Integration tribe/department, made up of 50 associates, managed work in a more traditional way. Therefore, the main challenge for Algar Telecom arose from the lack of work standardization and consensus on how to deliver value in this new environment where the Business Unit and the Integration area had to cooperate.

To name a few, the Integration department's environment was categorized by some of the following challenges:

- Low solidity in project management

- Unclear delivery metrics

- Little to no standardization of flows

- Low visibility and transparency of projects

Due to the use of legacy work management systems, the Integration area used to experience a chaotic work environment where the professionals were not properly aligned to what the main Business Unit required to be done. For example, the monitoring of tasks, from planning to delivery, was done in long Excel spreadsheets. The image below shows the traditional screen of an Excel spreadsheet and illustrates the appointment of tasks and associates.

Figure 01: Previous project management practices were executed in long Excel spreadsheets

Work communication, on the other hand, was done through different mediums such as email exchanges, voice and video calls, as well as face-to-face alignment meetings. The problem was that there was no central place where all that information could reside to ensure everybody was aligned on what needed to be done.

This traditional way of working was also deficient in metrics, contributing to difficulties in planning and lack of clarity in delivery capabilities. In addition to all these obstacles, there was no monitoring of the project implementation by the clients.

With that as their foundation, the Integration area needed to fit into an environment where activities, operations and deliveries were based on digitization, organization, efficient data management, in an ecosystem of agility, innovation and customer-centricity.

To solve that, the company realized the need for the transformation of the Integration area's processes to become more digital and agile, so they could better fit the entire Business Unit. The main goal was to modernize current management practices, and as a result, improve the entire customer experience including service delivery performance. **Ednaldo Azevedo and Frederico Oliveira** were appointed as leaders of this digital transformation.

Adopting A Digital Mindset Through Lean/Agile Ways of Working

Getting Started with Kanban & Introducing Agile Ceremonies

With the main goal of Algar Telecom to bring digital transformation in the management of work in the Integrations department and thus better fit it within the main Business Unit, the company realized the need for a solution to provide a central overview of how work is moving across teams. To find answers to their burning questions, Agile coaches – Frederico Oliveira and Ednaldo Azevedo attended "Agile Brazil" in November 2022.
As a result, they started exploring ways to manage the unpredictable nature of work in the Integrations tribe. The main idea was to find a tailor-made approach that could be tweaked to fulfill the characteristics of their operations.

This is how they chose the Kanban method due to its emphasis on continuous delivery and continuous flow.

And while the method emphasizes more freedom in how you manage work streams, Algar Telecom shared with us their desire to still have control over when they plan and release projects. That's why, as part of the flow-based approach, they introduced Agile ceremonies such as "Planning", "Review", and "Retrospective" sessions.

As project managers in the Integrations department have certain projects with deadlines they need to release within every single month, they diversified their work streams to focus both on project work and other unpredictable demands coming from customers. In this line of thought, the Kanban method, combined with regular cadences, turned out to be a perfect solution. That's because due to the flow-based approach, the Integrations tribe found a solution to quickly switch between priorities and easily re-plan work in the beginning of every single month based on what was delivered in the previous month.

With the "Review" sessions, on the other hand, project managers became equipped to keep customers aligned to the value they were paying for. "Retrospectives" also served their purpose in terms of analyzing actions which were produced in the previous month and what could be done to improve the internal process.

The missing part was an actual solution to put the new management of work into practice and enable the digital transformation to improve customer satisfaction.

This is where Businessmap comes into play.

Mapping Workflows & Digitizing the Customer Journey with Businessmap

While being at "Agile Brazil", Frederico Oliveira and Ednaldo Azevedo got familiar specifically with the Businessmap software platform. They experimented with the platform and compared it to their tooling at the time. Soon enough, they realized that it would better adapt to their existing departmental structure.

The first step of the implementation was to build Kanban boards for the different teams inside the Integrations tribe and illustrate their end-to-end delivery steps. The customization of the workflows was achieved through a collaborative, team-based co-creation process. **Every board consists of project workflows and "Cards Workflow" where teams break down bigger initiatives into smaller work items.**
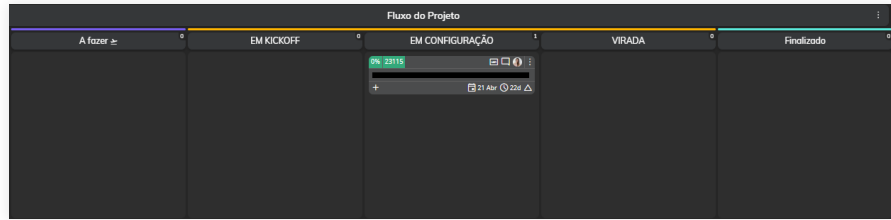
Figure 02: Mapping the project flow

One of the main digital benefits that the boards gave the Integration tribe was the ability to see what was blocking the work and how everything is connected across the hierarchy to manage dependencies. Combined with visualizing work performance data across dashboards, Algar Telecom reported that project managers saved hours of manual reporting time which they could convert in gathering customer requirements and better understanding them.

Figure 03: Analyzing project flow's performance

Furthermore, the Integration department began standardizing their work processes and better incorporating them within the general Business Unit. Another practice that the management implemented was to share their boards with actual customers and generate custom reports for them from within the system. This resulted in digitalization of the entire journey of work flowing from conceptualization to customer delivery.

It also turned into a "win-win" situation, because customers received a first look into the progress of their work, which made it possible for them to raise concern, so the teams can react to them on time.

Here's an overview of the main processes which were carried out after the adoption of the platform for digital transformation purposes:

- Training for deployment managers given by the tool's partner

- Application of digital transformation in project management of the delivery team

- Tribe Integration adopted the learning, innovation and interaction methodologies of the different areas of the BU

- Openness and refinement for monitoring activities and process reports under implementation

- Opening of the digital and innovative experience for the customer through ICT products

- Digital integration of actors in the ICT implementation journey

- Implementation of health monitoring rituals and continuous improvement of teams

- Definition of flow management for the implementation of fully customized ICT solutions for each product journey

- Development of metrics for productivity analysis, delivery forecast and bottlenecks through the implemented tool

- Adoption of ceremonies across the tribe, with content and organization divided weekly each month, through specific agendas, following specific timeboxes

- Digital and visual delivery of the customer journey in a visual and transparent way

- Implementation of the review together with customers

Key Results for Coordination and Flow Efficiency

The use of the tool was fundamental in digitizing the customer journey, which is at the heart of the entire process. There is no metric on efficiency, because before Businessmap this index was not mapped, and the results were not evaluated.

Due to the ability to build and customize dashboards where key delivery metrics are tracked in a central place, the management at Algar Telecom became more assertive in decisions. As a result of regular ceremonies and daily stand-ups implemented as part of the Lean/Agile ways of working in the Integrations area, the company saw an increase in the agility of operational processes at different levels. This also resulted in the definition of better action plans which are now applicable to the customer journey.

Through regular "Retrospectives" where teams would review dependencies between work items on their interconnected Kanban boards, including bottlenecks and blockers, the Integration department unlocked productive conversation within the teams regarding continuously improving the flow of work. In turn, this opened opportunities for preventing issues from happening on future projects.

For example, in March 2023, the Integration department delivered 15 reviews in total for the month. Due to the new ways of working, the teams synthesized 12 root causes and resolved 20% of procedural obstacles at an emergency level, speeding up the overall project flow.

In general, the change in the perception of service, soon after the implementation of Agile cadences such as "Reviews" and "Retrospectives" for service and process improvement, can be evidenced by customer feedback as shown in the images below.

Just to record that our meeting was very productive, I had the opportunity to report some difficulties we have with Algar and also to point out the great improvement we had with the new Cloud Phone product.

I want to thank you for this opportunity that you gave me to let you know that we are in this partnership with Algar and we intend to maintain it for some time, thank you very much.

Figure 05: User feedback

I would like to inform you that the Businessmap tool is a great project vision platform, easy to use, great project vision and communication.

Figure 06: User feedback

Next Steps on the Digital Transformation Journey

In terms of future plans, the Integration department within Algar Telecom aims to expand the use of Kanban and the Businessmap software platform to all parties involved within the main Business Unit including project managers, developers, analysts, commercial, etc. While the other part of the BU currently uses other tools, Agile coaches would like to consolidate everything in a single work management hub that can become the main "source of truth" of what's going on regarding overall project portfolio management.

Speaking to Frederico Oliveira and Ednaldo Azevedo, we also found out that they're currently experimenting with **OKRs (Objectives & Key Results) across the teams from the Integration department within the platform**. Their goal is to eventually bring both the tracking of goals and their execution under one umbrella.

Another next step on the journey would be to use more of the analytical charts for continuous improvement, available on the platform. The idea here is to create a standardized process of converting data into valuable information that can be used to influence management decisions regarding better project planning and allocation of resources for optimization purposes.

Key Takeaways

With the use of Businessmap, the Integration area is empowered to guarantee good service, share ideas, present solutions, grow with the clear and frequent contributions coming from the different areas of the BU. The company reports that the tool has provided them with more possibilities for organizing and monitoring processes to ensure maximum satisfaction for the end customer.

The management told us that due to the Agile model, they are no longer limited to initial planning, which allows them to adapt to offer the best internal solution for the client.

There is a new management era at Algar Telecom. And with our platform, the Integration department, is already accelerating the spread of digital ways of working across their operations to initiate faster responses and ultimately higher satisfaction for the Telecom's customers.

About Businessmap

Businessmap is an Enterprise Agility solution provider aiming to discover new management ways and share this knowledge through amazingly powerful, easy-to-use tools and professional services.

Businessmap offers the most flexible software platform for outcome-driven enterprise agility. Its unmatched functionality consolidates multiple tools into one, enabling affordable deployment at scale, visibility across all projects/portfolios and alignment on goals, to deliver quality work faster. Pairing it with the proprietary consulting program delivers a tailored solution that ensures lasting value and exceptional ROI.

OUTCOMES AT SCALE

The most flexible Business Agility platform that helps your entire company align on goals & deliver faster.

Try for Free