

Case Study – DeCare Systems Ireland (DSI)



“Our sessions with IntegratedThinking have instilled our strong believe that if you understand your customers and your market then you can build products that sell themselves. The team here in DSI really enjoyed the in-house product management sessions of Scala CEO and are continuing to apply the practices learned.”

DeCare Systems Ireland
CEO, John Murphy

DSI were participants in the Scala CEO programme delivered by IntegratedThinking on behalf of the ISA Software Skillnets in 2014

Many technology companies put primary focus on the establishment of a robust engineering discipline and can lose sight of the market opportunities available through deep customer insight. Establishing a strong product management discipline helps to address this imbalance.

The Company

DeCare Systems Ireland (DSI) is a 200+ person software services company.

They are in business since 1998 and are a subsidiary of Anthem, one of the largest healthcare insurance companies in the United States. They have a strong track record in developing eBusiness and insurance administration systems.

They deliver software development services to corporate clients mainly in the US.

They developed the **SafeTrx** product for the Search & Rescue sector to deliver a vessel tracking Smartphone application that fills a critical gap in the maritime situational awareness space.

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DSI are also investigating future product development initiatives and would like to support a process of continuous innovation in their company.

Prior to the programme, Product Management did not exist in DSI, in any formal way, although they do have a well established Agile development process with an established Product Owner function.



Company Objectives

According to John Murphy, CEO at DSI, he primarily signed up to the Scala CEO programme

"To develop a deeper understanding of software product development"

DSI has a strong services heritage and he wanted to ensure that they applied best practice to any current and future product initiatives.

He primarily wanted to listen to and learn from others, with a view to applying the material to their existing software product initiative and to review their whole strategy in relation to product innovation and execution.

What Did They Do?

The CEO initially attended the intensive 2 day **Scala CEO** workshop where he had the opportunity to interact with industry practitioners, with direct experience of the practicalities of applying product management in their organisations. He had the opportunity to network with CEO peers who faced similar business challenges.

As a follow-on to this workshop, John was assigned a product management mentor who visited their company in Cork over 2 separate ½ day sessions. These sessions offered John and his leadership team the opportunity to review how they applied aspects of the product management discipline in their organisation currently and what areas they would like to address.

John and his team decided to focus on the **internal value proposition** for their Safetrx product . They had previously put a lot of focus on requirements management through their agile development process, and agreed to spend some time on some "strategic" aspects. Through mentor led workshops they focused on the following key aspects of their "internal" value proposition:

- Customer Segment
- Market Type/Size
- Problem/Need Analysis
- Buyer Personas
- Solution definition
- SWOT analysis

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Business Outcome

The CEO indicated that his team really embraced the rigour of undertaking a deeper analysis of their target market for the Safetrx product and they now have a far clearer understanding of problems and needs to be addressed for their customer segments.

They are directly applying the knowledge gained to help them to identify the critical features required for upcoming agile releases – focusing on the "minimal viable product (MVP)". CEO, John Murphy indicated:

"We have applied prioritisation approaches learned in the programme to select features for new releases – an area that we are now far more conscious of"

He also indicated that they are applying greater rigour regarding new product initiatives going forward. They now hold regular product management meetings with an extended team of key stakeholders:

"We have started the product management process and have terminated a product initiative (in part due to the learnings from the course). The rigour required in the initial assessment phase was a real eye opener"

The CEO also signaled that perhaps if they had the opportunity to attend a programme like Scala CEO earlier and taken on board some of the key learnings that it would have helped with their decision making on some previous product initiatives.

They now recognise that not all ideas will succeed and that there are techniques you can apply to help you to "fail fast" when appropriate and to focus on the ideas that will add most value.

"The presentation material and templates provided through Scala CEO were very good and hugely practical"