# Case Study Analysis – Student #2

## Questions

1. What improvements has the hybrid scrum approach provided over the previous Waterfall approach used at Solution Point?

Despite facing som­e challenges, the team has made some improvements with their new hybrid Scrum approach. Under their previous Waterfall-style approach the team also had problems delivering their content authoring system on time,­­ where that project had grown in scope and been delayed by about 70% from their initial estimates. So, while in the new approach they are not prepared for their deliverable at the end of Sprint 2, this appears to be similar to their previous experience.

On the other hand, a few key benefits have occurred. For example, Milton observed that collaboration was emerging more naturally on the team, where the team is communicating much earlier, instead of being more siloed in their separate workspaces. This was especially evident with the engineer that was having problems with the UI transitions that Rebecca was able to help.

In addition to improving their communication, the daily reporting in their standup meeting was also having a positive effect of learning to improve their daily work estimates (at first, they were too optimistic) and learning to break their features into smaller tasks.

In addition, it should be noted that even though they may not meet their deliverable for Sprint 2, they did meet their milestone goals for Sprint 1. While not stated in the case, it’s possible that their old waterfall approach would not have had a two-week goal like this, so this may be another improvement.

2. What are the challenges or problems that Milton is facing at the end of the case?

The most pressing challenge for Milton is that the team appears to be behind schedule, because by the end of Sprint 2, they were supposed to deliver a working prototype, but they are not prepared.

In terms of their process, the way Kevin has converted their daily standup meeting into a more formal status report has impacted the engineers so that they are less open in their communication. This is eliminating the benefits they saw in Sprint 1 of increased communication and collaboration, such as when the engineer reported being stuck on the UI transition and asked for help. Instead, the team is now not wanting to mention any problems until they had solved them.

The team also has a problem that their sprint deliverables were determined at the beginning of the project, using the Waterfall approach, rather than being defined by the key stakeholders at the beginning of each sprint. The result is that once they started Sprint 2, the prototype deliverable may not have been a reasonable goal to reach, but they were already committed to it.

Similarly, there seems to be misalignment between the work that the engineers are doing and the actual deliverable for the sprint. Milton noted that they were making good progress and may even be ahead of schedule overall, but their progress was not aligned with the sprint deliverable.

3. What are some adjustments Solution Point could make to their hybrid scrum approach to make it more effective?

I would recommend they reconsider their milestone deliverables. Because these were planned at the beginning of the project, they may not reflect changes that have arisen in the meantime. Instead, at the beginning of each sprint, in a sprint planning meeting they could determine reasonable deliverables. Also, during those sprint planning meetings, they should make sure they identify the tasks and features they should be working on that directly align to the agreed-upon sprint deliverable.

I would also recommend they reexamine their daily standup meetings. As the scrum master, Rebecca should be playing a more active role in running the meeting and making sure that everyone follows the standard process, keeping the meeting short and concise. She will need to keep Kevin from dominating the meeting, and may even need to ask him not to attend for a period of time to restore the honest and open communication.

4. Given what you know about the company, how might the key stakeholders react if Milton suggests your proposed changes? Are there any risks for him personally?

Rebecca is also interested in Scrum and following its principles, so she would likely be receptive to better defining her role as the scrum master and taking a more prominent position in the standup meetings, as long as Kevin agreed to adjust his behavior.

Despite causing problems in their hybrid scrum processes, Kevin was described as “not being opposed to new ideas,” and was open to incorporating Scrum principles in the first place, so he may be open to understanding more about how the meetings should operate. He has likely not studied the new agile processes as much as Milton and Rebecca, so the issues he is causing may be from a lack of knowledge and reverting back to what he is used to, rather than because he is trying to be dominant or unsupportive.

Clear Ocean is a key stakeholder that would be most affected if the team changed their milestone deliverables to be determined at the beginning of a sprint, instead of from the beginning of the project. While we can’t be certain, the reading describes that Clear Ocean has a positive history with Solution Point, and trusts them in their work. They were flexible to some degree in extending the deadlines and scope of the previous authoring system project, and they were happy with it, so they may be willing to have flexibility in a different way with the current project.

Despite these observations there are still risks for Milton in making the suggestions.

Because Rebecca is equally excited about the new process, it seems there is a low risk that she will have concerns with Milton suggestions about her playing a more active role.

As a director, there is a risk that Kevin will react more harshly to being told what to do by one of the people on his team. And he also may be unwilling to change the deliverable schedule. But he and Milton seem to have a collaborative working relationship as evidenced by their compromising on a hybrid Scrum process.

Finally, because this is Milton’s first project as a tech lead, there is a risk that changing the deliverable schedule will reduce his reputation in the eyes of Clear Ocean and Kevin. They may perceive him as not being able to lead the team to on-time delivery. Hopefully, by addressing some of the team’s problems, the project will end up being more successful and his reputation will actually increase as a result.