



Driving Agile engineering excellence in a growing development team

Case Study

secret Escapes



Plandek

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About Plandek

Plandek is an intelligent analytics platform that helps software engineering teams deliver value faster and more predictably.

Celebrated by Gartner and Forrester as a 'leading global vendor', Plandek mines data from delivery teams' toolsets and gives them the opportunity to optimise their delivery process using both intelligent insights and predictive analytics.

Co-founded in 2017 by Dan Lee (founder of Globrix) and Charlie Ponsonby (founder of Simplifydigital), Plandek is based in London and currently services the UK, Europe, the Middle East and North America.

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1. The context

Industry: Travel/tourism

Engineering team: 70 engineers

Secret Escapes is one of the UK's biggest success stories in the crowded travel/holiday aggregation market.

The London-based firm has raised over £100m since it launched in 2011 and achieved full-year group profitability in 2018. Secret Escapes has grown very rapidly both organically and by acquisition, most recently by acquiring the Slevomat Group in late 2017. Its success is built on a compelling and differentiated consumer proposition, underpinned by an excellent technology platform.

Eirik's team is therefore a key enabler of the future success of the business and it has seen significant growth in recent years. The team employs Agile principles with multidisciplinary teams and while the largest office is in London, there are additional teams located in other cities across Europe.

As the development team has matured, Eirik is increasingly focused on the ability to deliver high-quality technology outcomes in an Agile manner, whilst optimising team productivity and predictability. To do this the team need a set of Agile development metrics to calibrate, track and manage success. Plandek was selected as the BI platform to provide these metrics.



"The improved visibility that Plandek provides helps us reduce delivery risk – it provides a new level of actionable insight to help teams become more effective over time. It is a key enabler on our journey towards Agile engineering excellence."

Eirik Pettersen
CTO, Secret Escapes

2. The challenge

Secret Escapes needed to make some changes to their delivery processes:

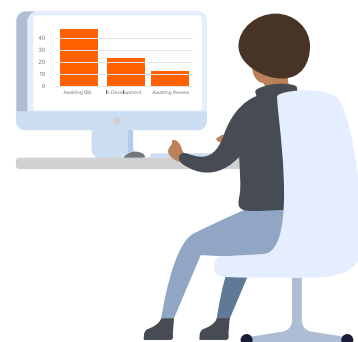
1. Managing delivery and performance across the distributed teams.
2. Optimising team productivity and predictability to calibrate, track and measure success.
3. Deliver high-quality technology outcomes in a growing team.
4. Develop a set of delivery metrics, apply and embed the best practices across the teams.

3. The solution

Eirik engaged with Plandek in Q3 2018 and was implemented across the Secret Escapes development team.

The Secret Escapes team use Jira (as a workflow management team and time tracker) and Git Hub as a code repository. Plandek was integrated with both tools and was rolled-out in November 2018.

The Plandek Customer Success team worked closely with the engineering and delivery teams at Secret Escapes to implement Plandek and normalise its usage within the existing Agile methodology.



3.1 The step-by-step implementation process

1.

Pre-rollout Plandek configuration

This was undertaken by the Plandek technical team and co-ordinated with the Secret Escapes team to ensure that Plandek has been correctly integrated, and is showing accurate data across all teams.

2.

Plandek kick-off and training

The Plandek Customer Success team worked closely with their Secret Escapes partners to engage the teams and train them on the use of Plandek. The real value of Plandek is realised when the actionable insight is used by Team Leaders, Scrum Masters and those involved in delivery.

3.

Using Plandek

Once teams are familiar with the tool, Team Leaders can set targets for improvement within their teams, using Plandek to track change and celebrate success. Plandek's 'balanced scorecard' of meaningful metrics ensures that this effort is focused on metrics that determine improvement in productivity and timing accuracy

Following these steps, Plandek has quickly become a valuable tool to help the Secret Escapes engineering team deliver to the ever more intense expectations of the business.



"It is early days with Plandek, but it is already making an important contribution to our collective effort to constantly improve our already worldclass Agile engineering capability at Secret Escapes."

Eirik Pettersen

CTO, Secret Escapes

4. Outcomes & results

Using Plandek gives the senior technology management team a helicopter view of critical delivery metrics across all teams – and it gives Team Leaders a new level of insight to manage the process of software development.

Plandek constantly shows potential bottle-necks and areas for investigation. It is used judiciously by the teams themselves to effectively manage. Care is taken that the metrics are not taken out of context by those external to the teams.

The Secret Escapes development team already understood the importance of meaningful metrics and recognised that excellence is only achieved by constant improvement, which requires the ability to track progress. The key is finding the metrics that are meaningful and trusted by the teams. And this is where Plandek has really helped.

A Continuous Improvement process is already underway working alongside the Plandek Customer Success team.

The focus has been on:

1. Agile best practices – simple disciplines that improve visibility of potential bottlenecks and areas for improvement
2. Sprint completion – providing a greater level of understanding and insight to further improve Sprint planning and accuracy, which is the building block of more predictable outcomes.

Contact Plandek

[Sign up for a free account](#) today to explore the platform or [book a custom demo](#) with our team.