

# How a tech unicorn in the Middle East is **driving engineering excellence** through Plandek data

## Case Study



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## Plandek – Proposition Summary

‘Loved by teams and relied on by managers.’

Plandek is an intelligent analytics platform to help software delivery teams track and drive the delivery of valuable software, faster and more predictably. Plandek provides dashboards and analytical tools used across the delivery organisation:

1. ‘North Star’ dashboards for technology leadership to set direction, track Agile DevOps effectiveness and report meaningful metrics to C-Suite stakeholders.
2. Management dashboards of end-to-end delivery and engineering metrics to enable delivery, engineering and product managers to engage their teams and track and drive delivery improvement over time.
3. LiveView intelligent analytics to enable teams to identify blockers in real-time and identify and diagnose delivery issues to make their job easier and accelerate the delivery of value.

Plandek works by mining data from delivery teams’ DevOps toolsets (such as issue tracking, code repos, CI/CD tools and ITSM tools) to provide actionable and intelligent insight across the end-to-end software delivery process.

# 1. The Plandek use case at Alef Education

Alef Education develops one of the industry's leading AI-powered digital learning platforms. It is renowned for its delivery efficiency, which it aims to take to the next level (velocity x quality).

For this reason, the company was looking for a stack agnostic analytics tool to cross various organisational layers from strategic to operational without disrupting existing workflows. This was an important requirement for them, as the scope of their work requires an extensive network and infrastructure of technical teams/leads.

Alef Education advised, "We were looking for a balanced scorecard with metrics that would provide holistic insight rather than fixating on one or two measures because, for example, we do not want to maximise velocity at the expense of quality. We want to be able to weigh opportunity costs with all the information we need, leaving no stone unturned."

Alef Education implemented Plandek with the aim of:

1. Establishing a set of balanced scorecard metrics that promote delivery efficiency at all levels of their engineering organisation.
2. Aggregating critical data without disrupting existing workflows.
3. Empowering engineering teams by giving them the autonomy to make tactical decisions that improve their long-term engineering strategy.

Plandek was initially rolled out under the leadership of Jayr Motta — Head of Engineering — to trial the tool and create a centre of excellence from which the data initiative could grow.

## 2. Implementing Plandek at Alef Education

Alef Education wanted to hit the ground running with its new initiative. The company took a hands-on approach by quickly self-configuring the necessary data connections with Plandek. Doing so allowed Alef Education to look under the hood of their organisation immediately and connect the dots across their value streams by surfacing otherwise unforeseen opportunities.

Alef Education worked with the customer success team at Plandek to build a bespoke metrics dashboard that reflected their primary goal of taking delivery efficiency to the next level. Plandek's configurability enabled the creation of metrics that provided unparalleled transparency of the current processes, key measures, and infrastructure, with the capability to scale up as needed.

When asked about building the dashboard, they responded as follows:

"We agreed on an initial set of Plandek metrics to identify short-term improvements related to the company's long-term vision that would move us more quickly in that direction.

But there are dozens of ways to improve delivery lead time, for example. That's why we focus on the outcome and give the team the freedom to experiment with what they believe will produce more results and adjust along the way. It's important to us that we do not track metrics for the sake of vanity."

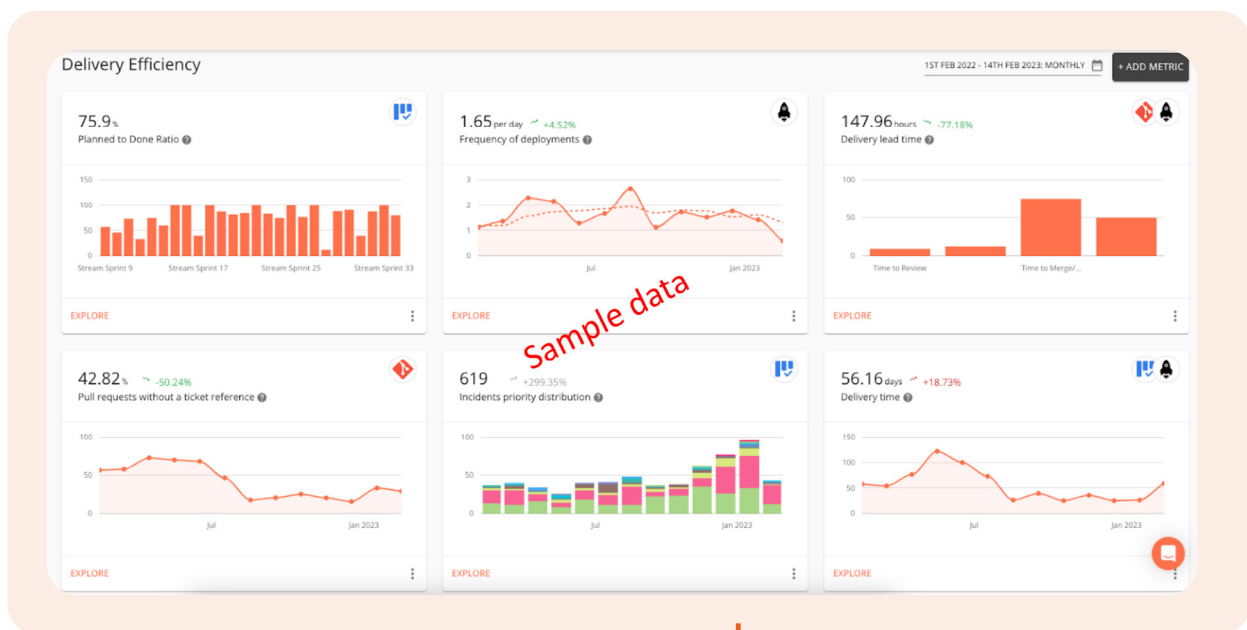
By adopting Plandek's outcomes-based approach to 'North Star' metrics, Alef Education was able to align teams with their broader engineering objectives, leverage a set of standard metrics that enabled them to share successes and learning across teams, and grant teams the autonomy they desired to take different tactical approaches to continuous improvement. This empowerment removed any individual apprehension that a data-driven approach would lead to micromanagement. As a result, Alef Education was able to make this culture shift seamlessly.

North Star represents the unwavering definition of a company's purpose, its products and its customers. Clarity about a company's North Star guides organisations toward their goals.

The outcomes Alef wanted to achieve were:

Outcome	Metric(s)	Behavioural impact
Take delivery efficiency to the next level, i.e., increase velocity and time to market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery lead time</li> <li>• Code cycle time</li> <li>• Deployment frequency</li> </ul>	Engineering teams can identify the stages of their delivery process (from ideation to production) that are behind and, therefore, can be improved.
Reduce bug backlog and increase resolution time to mitigate delivery risks and ensure SLA compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised bugs (by priority)</li> <li>• SLA compliance (true vs false)</li> </ul>	Sufficient time is spent on eliminating technical debt, strengthening Alef Education's delivery pipelines, and establishing a more stable foundation to release from, allowing teams to focus on creating greater business value.
An infrastructure of engineering teams that consistently meet delivery deadlines in terms of timelines and output.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprint (target) completion (planned to done ratio)</li> </ul>	Output and capacity are comprehensively understood, so overtime teams can be confident that they will meet the goals of their sprints.
Improve compliance and data hygiene to have the best view of the organisation from the tactical to the strategic level when making decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pull requests without a ticket reference</li> </ul>	Ensure there are references between code changes and tickets (essential for security and compliance) and enable cross-referencing between tools that lead to better insights and decisions by Plandek.

Here you can see how the desired outcomes aligned with the metrics, which, in turn, drove the necessary behavioural impact to achieve said results.

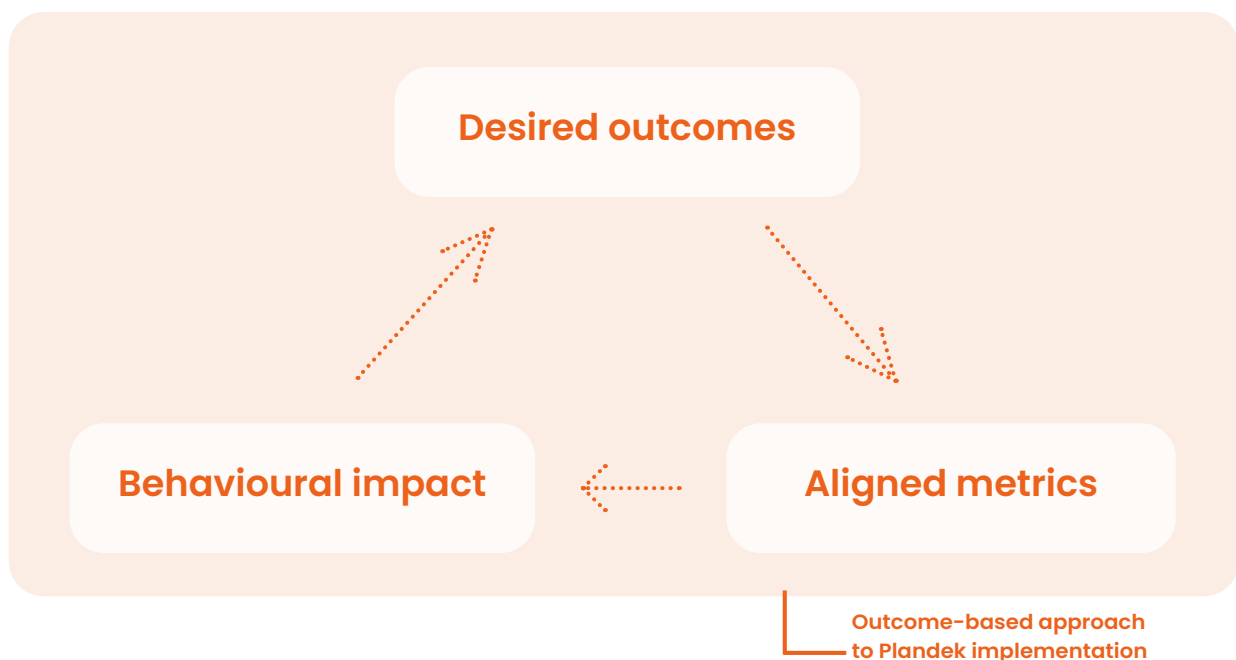


Delivery Efficiency Dashboard  
Plandek Platform

### 3. Engaging teams and fostering a **data-driven culture**

The challenge is to get stakeholders at all levels to align and buy-in as data adoption is intrinsic to sustained success. A client's implementation plan has a significant impact on how seamless the transition to a data-led culture is and how engaged the teams will become.

Alef Education's outcome-based approach was critical in this case, as the 'Delivery Efficiency North Star' metrics strongly aligned teams from the outset. Alef Education has integrated Plandek into its organisation at all levels, creating an environment where the tool pays for itself (see the figure below). Teams appreciate the desired results developed from the top as they can see the validity and therefore align their behaviour accordingly from the bottom up.



On fostering a data-driven culture and engaging teams, Jayr commented:

"With the long and short term aligned, we started operationalising Plandek by setting goals from the top-down and then asking development teams to propose

goals from the bottom up, so that both macro and micro concerns compete for capacity. We then negotiate those to ensure we address the most important things.

Once the cycle of objectives/outcomes is complete, I step back and let my team do their magic. I only meet with them every few weeks to see if they have any concerns or need my help. This way, I avoid micromanaging and show that I trust them. During this time, I focus primarily on developing the people and less on whether or not we will achieve the objective. The magic happens when teams start thinking about the actionable things, what they can do to achieve the objectives, and how they will know if they have done it.”

Plandek’s workspaces model supported Alef Education’s rollout approach by allowing them to have the Delivery Efficiency dashboard at an organisation and team level, aggregating only the required representative data of a given team or the whole org. It provides unprecedented visibility and allows Alef Education to leverage data at a tactical and strategic level—as mentioned above.



## 4. Tracking success – the impact of Plandek at Alef Education

As an established data-driven company, Alef Education has already built a solid foundation from which to share knowledge, as evidenced by the remarkable results of Jayr Motta's teams below. FY22 saw some fantastic progress and presented further opportunities for improvement going into FY23:

1. Delivery time from open to deployed (ideation to production) has decreased by 20.46%. The time from "In progress" to "Done" (cycle time) has decreased by 67.11%. This illustrates that lead time to value and ideation status (e.g., 'to do') are potential areas to focus on to increase efficiency further.
2. Delivery lead time (code cycle) has been reduced by 56.41%. This is due to proactive efforts in reviewing, approving, and merging/closing pull requests.
3. The above is due to a significant improvement in Deployment Frequency (+126.83%). The time between deployments has decreased by 49.90%.
4. Code hygiene has been cleaned up as pull requests without a ticket reference have decreased by 12.55% due to new robust internal processes. As a result, Plandek has more data, which, in turn, offers Alef Education more actionable insights.
5. The main area for development is at the tactical level, as the sprint completion rate (Planned-to-Done) across Alef Education's teams is 58.12%. The target should be 80% to consistently achieve the goals.

Based on the success described above, Plandek will now be expanded to include all senior engineers and their teams, with sponsorship extended to key stakeholders within Alef Education.



# About Plandek

Plandek is an analytics platform to help software delivery teams deliver valuable software faster and more predictably – across and within value streams.

Plandek works by mining data from delivery teams' toolsets (such as issue tracking, code repos, and CI/CD tools) to provide actionable and intelligent insight across the end-to-end software delivery process.

## Contact Plandek

Want to learn more about Plandek?

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

Or go to [Plandek's Resources page](#) to learn more about how you can utilise the power of metrics, Value Stream Management and end-to-end visibility.