**Week 6 Case Study: Doubling Rev. Growth Through Fast Release Cycle Experimentation at Yahoo (2010)**

*Becca Buechle*

*October 18, 2020*

In 2009 Yahoo’s Answers user numbers started falling. The two major issues that Yahoo had was that they weren't ddoing much experiments and that they weren't getting feedback from their customer base about how they liked the new items They had to figure out how to combat these issues and fast so other companies in the same market didn't take over leaving Yahoo out of all that revenue. Below I will go into detail on how Yahoo learned how to over come these issues and come out on the top.

A case study done at Yahoo in 2010 said that the faster that they could iterate and integrate feedback into their products or services that were being delivered to  their customers the faster they were able to learn and the larger impact they were able to have. (Kim, G.) Yahoo had a drastic change when they started doing this and was able to change their releases from every six weeks to multiple releases each week. In 2009 a guy by the name of Jim Stoneham whom was the general manager of the Yahoo communities’ group which included Flickr and Answers. (Kim, G.) These Q&A communities where competing against other big names such as Quora. Answers had around 140 million monthly visits and over twenty million users however, user growth pretty much flattened out and engagement was also dwindling. (Kim, G.) Stoneham noticed however, that the Yahoo Answers game is still a big title for the company so they needed to figure out how to make and implement changes and fixes quickly and to also figure out what customers liked and didn’t like with the changes. He noted that other people such as Zynga and Facebook where able to do experiments at least a few times a week and would review any changes that were thinking about being pushed out before they were released to make sure everything was still good to go and on track. (Kim, G.)  Stoneham was pretty letdown because it was taking his Yahoo team 4 weeks for one release. People in the same market also had a feedback look that was at least 10x faster than that of Yahoo’s. (Kim, G.)  Stoneham also noted that product owners and developers are very metric-driven and when they aren’t doing daily or weekly experiments then pretty much wasted working on features that are already in production. (Kim, G.)  Yahoo was later able to move to weekly deployments and later on even several deployments a week which also meant that their experiments greatly increased. (Kim, G.) This all caused Yahoo’s monthly visits to increase by 72% and more than doubled their revenue. (Kim, G.)

To sum it up Stoneham’s team learned several lessons. The first was that experiments are important so that the teams can find out what works and what doesn’t. They also learned that getting feedback is just as important so they can find out what people dislike and what they like before something is pushed all the way. By doing all this Yahoo’s users and revenue greatly increased. Taking this information and putting it to use can be a great tool for developers that are starting out. It can save you from failure.

Bibliography

Kim, G., Humble, J., Debois, P., & Willis, J. (2016). DevOps Handbook. Portland, OR: IT Revolution Press.