



# **PARTNERING WITH VENDORS FOR AGILITY AND SUCCESS**

**CLINTON BELL – UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND**

**QUESTNET 2018**



# Introduction



- Background
- Why engage a vendor?
- Our Partnership Journey
- Outcomes and takeaways



# Student Portal – from this...



# To this



UConnect

Search USQ Portal

11:35am  
Official USQ Time (AEST)  
Toowoomba, Queensland

Today  
Thursday 30 March 2017

27 Nov 2017 **Open Day**  
Toowoomba campus  
10:00 - 12:30

Announcements

10:00 **Free Webinar: Tips to manage study stress**  
Discover strategies to better manage study-related stress and improve overall mental health and wellbeing with Toowoomba Toowoomba's Anna Mackintosh

Orientation

Task	Due Date	Status
Complete my enrolment for this semester	Due 12 APR	✓
Set up my UMail account	Due 12 APR	✓
Order my student ID card	Due 12 APR	...
Order my textbooks & study materials	...	...
Access my Enrolment Portal	Due 12 APR	...

Show 8 more

To do

Create your own to-do list here

Add + Set Due Date

Task	Due Date	Status
This is a long to-do item that I have added for myself	Due 12 APR	✓
Finish reading APC test book	8:00	✓
Meet with John Smith	Due 12 APR	...
Complete this multiple assignment item which doesn't fill width of no date	...	...
This is a long to-do item that I have added for myself	Due 12 APR	✓

Finish reading APC test book

Save Cancel Set Due Date

# How are we going to deliver?



- We had our design and user stories
- Looming Semester 1 deadline
- Experience gap with Drupal 8
- Expectation and communication gap between BA and Dev teams
- Unclear approach
- How do we include the student voice?

# Maybe we need some help...



# Don't know what we don't know



Our expectations	Reality
We have user stories ready for development	Over 100 development tickets needed to be re-written with more detail and proper Acceptance Criteria
Our ticketing workflow got us through Phase 1	The need to import all tickets into Jira to support a fully Agile workflow
We need vendors on-site	Embedding tools such as Zoom, Slack, Jira and Planning poker to enable remote collaboration
We do Sprints and Stand-ups	Rewriting, estimating and arranging tickets into our first managed Sprint. Assigning roles.
The BA team and Dev team are on the same page...	Coaching and embedding a fully Agile workflow with agreed ticket formatting, Quality control and release process
We're Agile	We use terms like "Agile"



# The right path



- Take a moment, listen to vendors, discuss internally
- Accept our knowledge and process gaps, and focus on upskilling
- We needed vendor to be on board with this approach..
- We needed a partner



# Recalibration

Last One, We Swear: Pop-Culture Quotes, No. 3

“All right, stop,  
**collaborate** and  
listen.”

- Vanilla Ice



Photo: Wikipedia Commons

#LeanUX14

@playfulpixel @\_themaj

# Learning #1 – Be honest

---



- Make an honest, objective assessment
- Listen to advice from the experts
- Be willing to make adjustments
- Put effort into on-boarding

# Learning #2 – have respect for each other

---



- Commit to open and honest communication
- Address issues early and openly
- Collaborative solution between you and vendor
- Ensure behaviour is not linked to another issue
- Have a clear path of escalation for different issues that arise

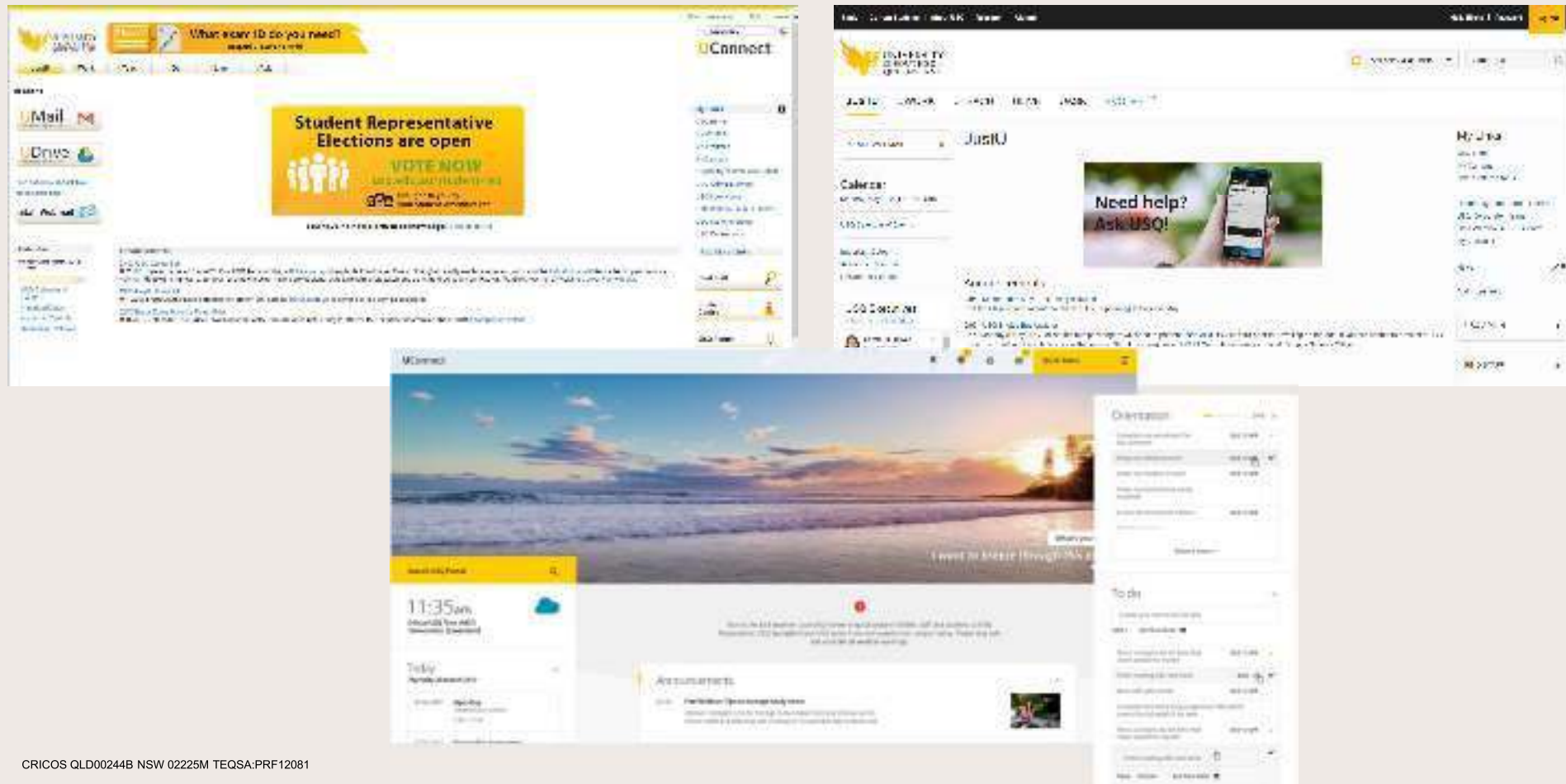
# Learning #3 – Have realistic expectations

---



- Always come from a positive place
- Clearly communicate expectations
- Be solutions focused
- Role clarity – have the correct structure in place
- Know the escalation points
- Know the environment and circumstances
- Understand the priorities and motivations for each group

# Where we are today



# Where we are today



"...Love the work IT has done, my partner works in software programming and design and was frothing over how beautiful this is (he works at **\*\*other institution\*\*** and as we know their website is s\*\*t)."



# Wrap up – would we do anything differently?



- No. because we didn't know what we didn't know.
- We came out the end in a totally different space to where we started
- Agile provides a tight, measurable process – at a cost
- There is a tension between organisational and Vendor capability – but that's ok
- Remote work is ok, with the right tools. USQ now has a positive frame of reference when approaching off-site work
- Developers are now working in other projects using these tools



# Thank you!



Questions?

If you think of something later, please get in touch:

[Clinton.bell@usq.edu.au](mailto:Clinton.bell@usq.edu.au)