

Case Study

# Agile PPM with Cycle Control @ Entertainment Partners

## Background

Entertainment Partners (EP) is a global leader in the development of integrated production management solutions such as entertainment payroll, workforce management, residuals, finance and others. With 15 offices in the U.S., Canada, London and Tokyo, Entertainment Partners are dedicated to digitizing the paper-heavy back office processes and facilitate the streamlining of the production process by reinventing how the entertainment industry works. Entertainment Partners is comprised of more than 25 cross-functional teams using 5 different release processes. Before deploying Cycle Control, the company used several different tools to accommodate their release planning and management needs:

- **18 page PowerPoint** presentation that serves as a kick-off for the release process, where objectives and high-level scope are defined
- **Footprints**, a solution that enhances the basic service desk functionality
- **Clearquest** for tracking changes and lifecycle traceability
- **SharePoint, Confluence** etc.

When changes needed to be introduced to the release plan, ticket in Footprints was used to realign the existing scope with the latest release changes and developments. While this worked, it came with its own sets of challenges that led to inefficient collaboration between the company's multiple teams, inconsistencies in terminology, metrics and caused regular delays.

*"I've struggled for many years to balance the need for Agility and enterprise governance. Cycle Control is the first tool that I've come across that allows for upfront planning, without compromising Agile development."*

**Marina Kernes**  
Director of PMO | Entertainment Partners



### Name

Entertainment Partners

### Industry

Entertainment

### Size

1000+ employees

### Atlassian product used

JIRA Software, Confluence

### Botron Software product used

Cycle Control



## Challenges

Before implementing Cycle Control within the organization, some of the biggest challenges that Entertainment Partners encountered with their existing release process were:

- Inability to **balance high-level planning** aligned with business objectives
- The various tools were not integrated, thus the original **scope quickly became outdated** as the actual work on the release began and circumstances changed
- **Governance of scope changes** was slow and inefficient, by the time all stakeholders were identified and engaged, the software teams were already behind
- Engaging **on-time** and in **predictable way** the cross-functional teams e.g. UX, security, architecture etc.
- There were no well-defined acceptance criteria for definition of DONE across the teams which collaborated on any given release.
- The hand-off between teams was difficult to manage and caused delays as the teams were not aligned in their expectations.

*"There's no value in quality assurance at the end of a release. Cycle Control allowed us to constantly monitor and ensure that the quality criteria for any given release are met, which significantly improve both the quality and consistency of our releases."*

**Marina Kernes** | Director of PMO  
Entertainment Partners

Because of these challenges, Entertainment Partners decided to re-engineer their existing release processes with the following objectives in mind:

- Ensure releases **consistently** follow the process
- Implement a process that **balances upfront planning with agile development**; High-level scope is in sync with the teams work.
- Ensure **ease in hand-off** across multiple cross-functional teams without delays;
- **Provide consistency using real-time objective metrics** that constantly helps in improving the processes

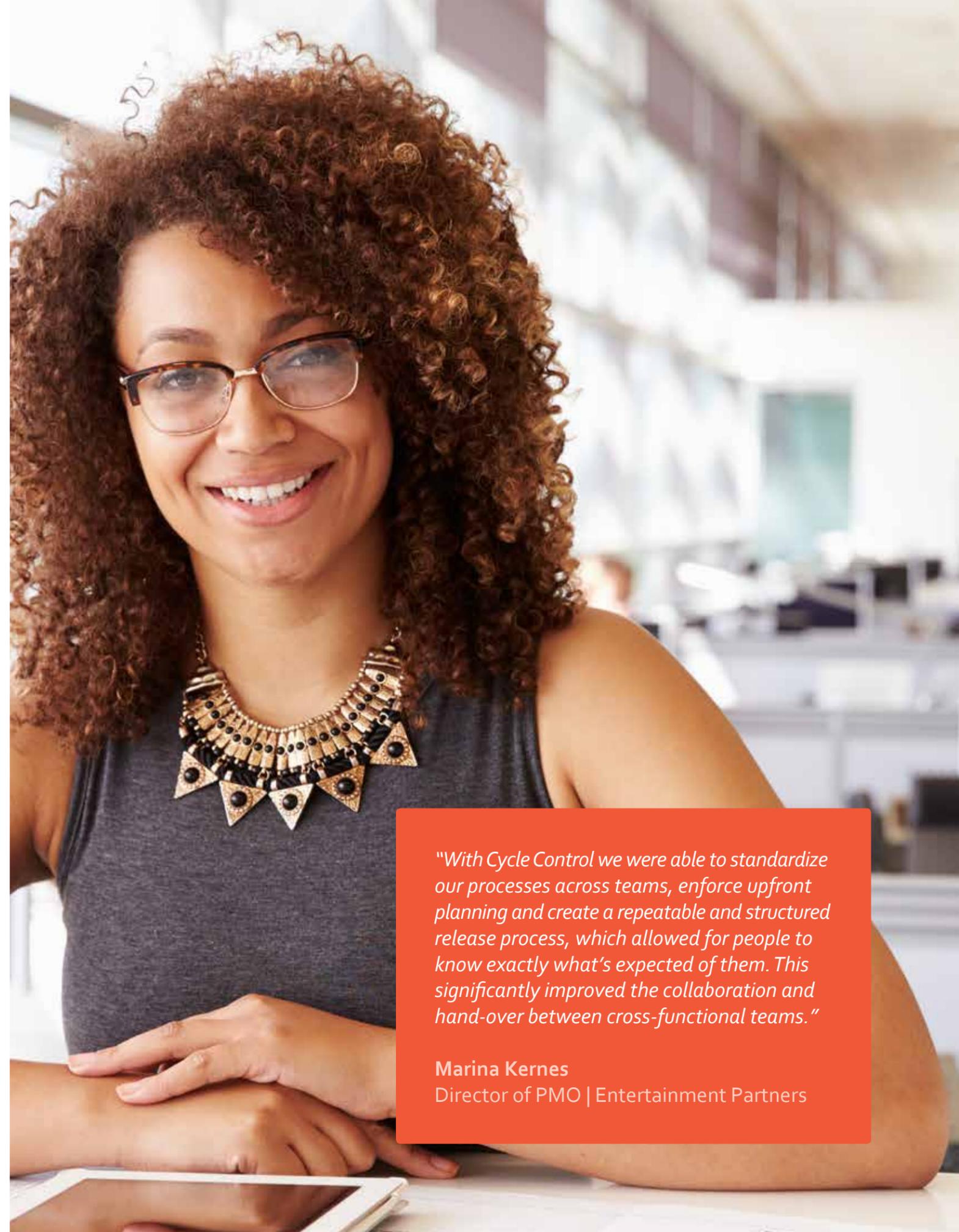
## Solution

After deploying Cycle Control, Entertainment Partners were able to utilize their existing JIRA investment and run the tool as a Project Portfolio Management platform. This enabled them to unify their existing processes into a well-defined and lean release process achieving their ultimate goal to cut delays. Cycle Control allowed for the effective re-engineering of Entertainment Partners existing release processes and solved most of the pressing challenges.

- **Release Types**  
Cycle Control Release Types ensures that all releases of the same type follow the same process, this helps align expectations and thus improves the quality and efficiency of the releases.
- **Hand-off and approvals**  
Combination of quality gates and approvals automates the hand-off process and meets the agreed upon standard to move forward. Approvals were tailored to Entertainment Partners existing processes.
- **Enterprise Level Planning**  
The Release calendars feature allows the creation of Roadmaps which provide greater visibility into current releases, their progress and upcoming releases.
- **Quality control**  
With clearly defined quality criteria, Cycle Control custom metrics provide detailed insight into the quality of the releases. The

*"With Cycle Control we were able to standardize our processes across teams, enforce upfront planning and create a repeatable and structured release process, which allowed for people to know exactly what's expected of them. This significantly improved the collaboration and hand-over between cross-functional teams."*

**Marina Kernes**  
Director of PMO | Entertainment Partners



current state of what is done and what is outstanding is automatically provided for weekly status meetings. This enabled them to keep everyone on the same page with clear objective status, which improves collaboration & communication across teams.

- **Centralized approvals**  
QA, UAT and PDM approvals were centralized in one system.
- **Ability to redefine and trace scope**  
With Cycle Control, stories automatically get in and out of a release based on their status. The final release status includes only completed stories and any desired changes or adjustments to the metrics around the scope can be implemented on the fly.
- **Regulatory compliance**  
With Cycle Control, Entertainment Partners were able to achieve 100% compliance with SOC I and SOC II requirements, since all changes are tracked via audit history.

## Benefits

Entertainment Partners were able to realize several crucial benefits from their adoption of Cycle Control, as the solution allows for Governance and Accountability, without compromising the Agile team autonomy:

- Standardize the release process across multiple cross-functional teams
- Ensure flexible upfront planning and ability to introduce changes to the initial scope
- Improve collaboration and hand-over between teams
- Improve the quality and consistency of their releases and ensured timely delivery
- Consistent and objective reporting of status and outstanding deliverables across the company



*"I believe Cycle Control is filling in a critical gap that will raise quality of software and help us mature our process. The team was amazing at providing support and did whatever it took to help us get full adoption and value."*

**Marina Kernes**  
Director of PMO  
Entertainment Partners

[www.botronsoft.com](http://www.botronsoft.com)

[sales@botronsoft.com](mailto:sales@botronsoft.com)  
[support@botronsoft.com](mailto:support@botronsoft.com)  
[services@botronsoft.com](mailto:services@botronsoft.com)

More about Cycle Control:  
<https://goo.gl/DsRVgj>