

AGILE BULLETIN 2024

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INTRODUCTION

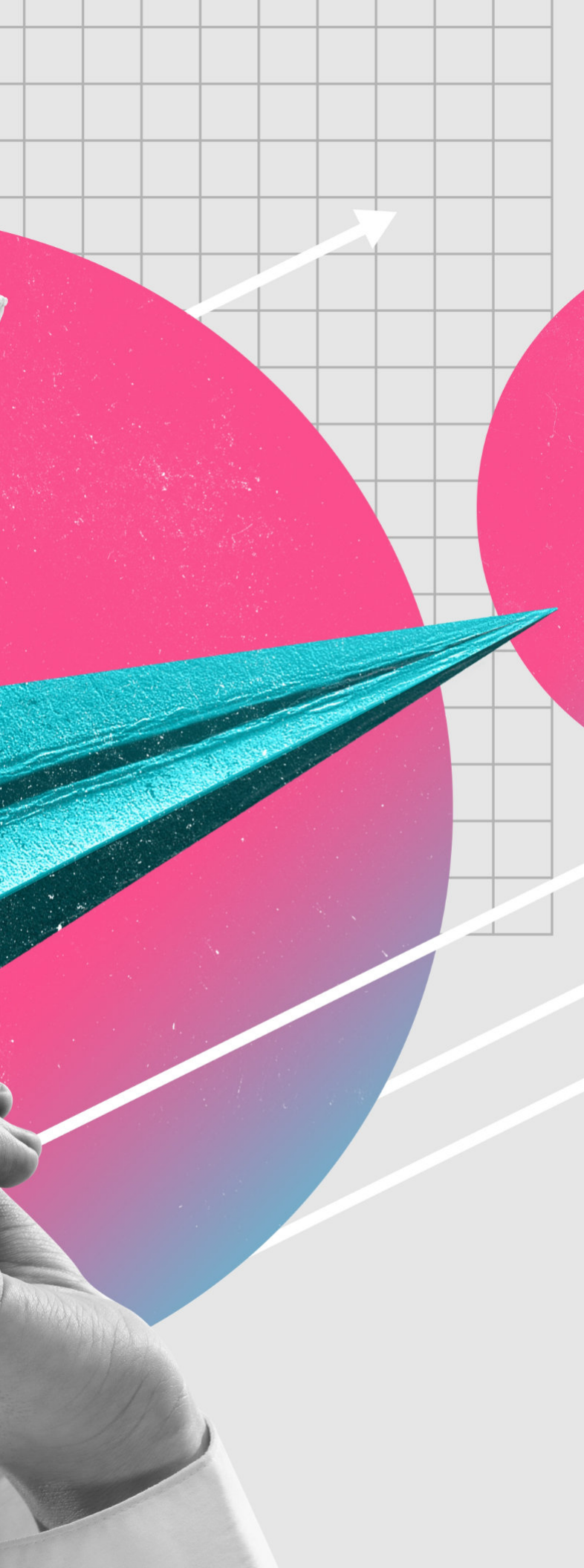
Another year went by so fast. It feels like just yesterday, we were getting ready to visit Agile 2023, and today, it is time for Agile 2024.

Last year, the first issue of the Agile Bulletin was a success. On the third day, we ran out of printed copies and had hundreds of downloads for our online version. This really proved to us the power of the Agile community and the lengths that people would go to share their knowledge with fellow Agilists.

But not even in my wildest dreams could I have anticipated the response we got from authors this year. We went from 3 authors who contributed to the initiative that Nikolay and I had started to 11 — an almost 300% increase in participation metrics. The number of articles practically doubled, bringing more diversity in topics and opinions. We even had to print a 64-page journal instead of the 32 pages we had last year. If that doesn't speak volumes about the power of the Agile community and their willingness to help each other, I don't know what will.

2024 is a tough year for the community. Participation in many events is down,





and some events were even canceled. We all saw in the news how organizations were cutting costs and letting hundreds of scrum masters, agile coaches, and other agile specialists go. The only way to overcome this adversity is to be Agile. We must inspect what went wrong and adapt ourselves and our community to answer the new challenges.

This issue of the Agile Bulletin will speak to that. This year, we have a variety of articles that will help you understand where the Agile community is going. From the importance of the entire value stream management for Agile team success to Agile funding implementation tips at the end of the journal, we covered it all.

I want to personally thank every single one of our authors this year: Joshua Barnes, Gary Cohen, Marina Alex, TC Gill, Jardena London, Joanne Stone, Eric Naiburg, Nik Gekht, Nimesh Soni, Alexander Frumkin, Al Shalloway and Antoinette Coetzee. Without you all, this Agile Bulletin would never have been possible!

And to all of our readers, enjoy the conference and your Agile journey, and always feel free to reach out for help.

With warmest wishes,
Ivan Gekht
CEO of Gehtsoft USA



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WILL VALUE STREAM MANAGEMENT BECOME THE NEXT “AGILE”?

There is so much controversy over agile these days. On any given day, you can find a new post on LinkedIn that goes something like this: “Is agile dead?” Agile has been around for a long time, and many people will place its origins in the mid-1990s, with the introduction of Scrum, or in the early 2000s, with the publishing of the Agile Manifesto. It goes back to before either way, so it has been around a while. But do you know what has been around longer, a lot longer? Value Stream Management (“VSM”). It has been around for over one hundred years. Like agile, as we know it, its origins were born to improve physical product development and manufacturing. However, VSM for digital

products and services is in its early days, and it can potentially solve many of the shortcomings of agile.

Agile ways of working have brought many benefits to teams and organizations, yet the overall and expected value for most of them has fallen short. There is a significant problem with expecting the flow of value delivery to increase substantially by adopting agile. Let’s start by thinking about all that needs to happen at most organizations to go from an idea or request to a value we can benefit from or consume. Figure 1 is a representative example of the end-to-end flow of value delivery.

The flow starts with a request from customers or

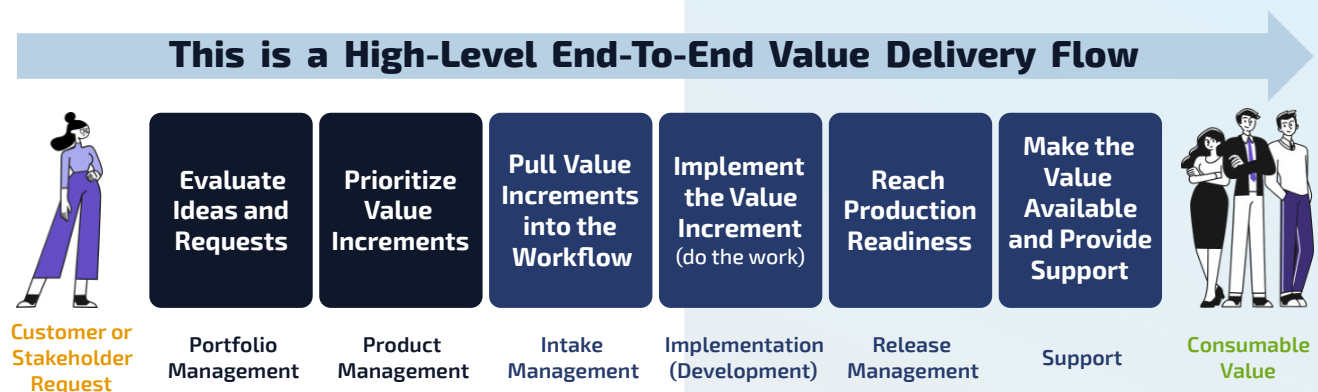


Figure 1: End-to-end Flow of Value Delivery

Joshua is the founder of Process Mentors, an agile, lean, and value stream management consulting company, and the creator of the End-To-End Flow VSM approach.

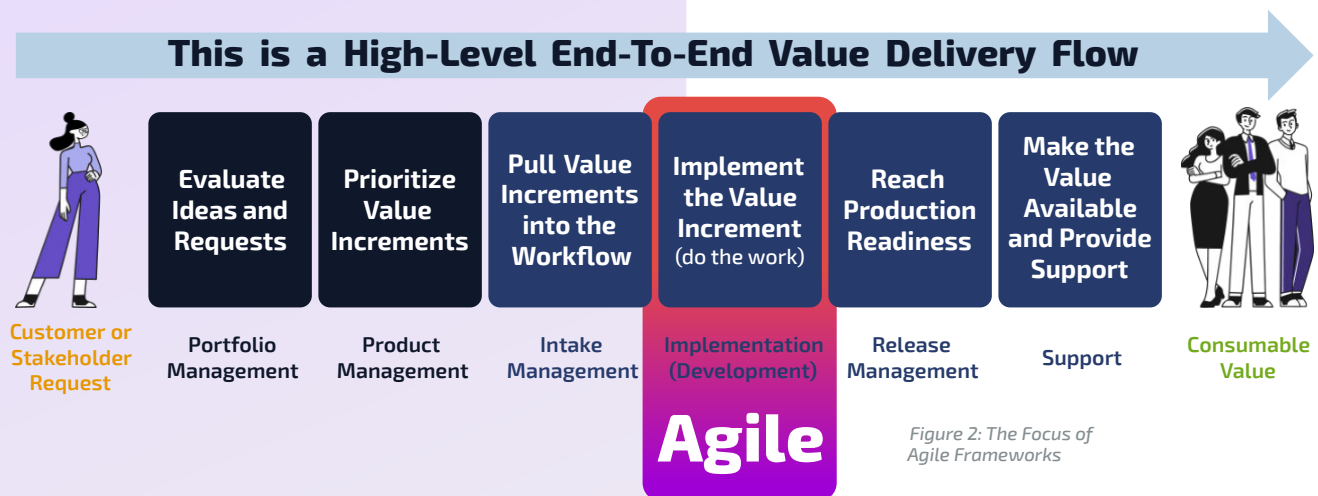
He can help you with:

- Team & Cross Team Improvements
- Value Stream Management Improvements
- Enterprise Organizational Transformation

stakeholders, which I like to call the “big idea”. In most organizations, the high-level set of activities looks something like this:

- Decide which requests to move forward with
- Invest time to understand the ones we will move forward with in the near term
- Pull the work into the workflow
- Do the work to implement it
- Reach production readiness
- Release the increment, making the value consumable
- Support the customer’s consumption of the increment

Are you wondering where the problem is with Agile? Well, it is where the focus of agile (in most organizations and frameworks) centers on — the delivery team, as indicated in Figure 2.



The work an Agile Team completes is an integral part of this flow, but it is just a portion of the end-to-end activities that must be done. This is where value stream management can significantly improve the desired outcomes of leadership at most organizations.

Value Stream Management focuses on improving the end-to-end flow of consumable customer and business value. What happens if you substantially improve the efficiency of your delivery teams, making them more effective at doing work that is of low value or should not be done at all? What happens if you invest a lot of funding and time to improve your delivery teams only to find that not much has changed? You would not be alone; that is the reality for many organizations.

Ok, if adopting agile, at least from a primary focus, will not improve our results, what will? Figure 3 contains many of the focus areas leaders want to improve.

These objectives are the focus of the End-To-End Flow (“e2e Flow”) approach to value stream management. By using these focal points, we can determine what is the most important to center on to improve flow.

For example, let’s check in on one of the more prevalent leadership goals, improving time to market. Figure 4 looks at two options for improving the time to market.

If we adopt a new way of working and we can see and measure an increase in throughput of, say, 20% for one of our delivery teams, will that have a more significant impact on improving our value delivery than if we were to reduce the scope size of our projects or value increments by 50% (or greater)? In almost every situation, I can assure you that

decreasing the batch size, the quantity of the scope we pull into our workflow, will result in greater flow improvements.

Why? Well, all the major activities of that end-to-end flow will benefit by having a smaller size of work. Decreasing batch size is one of the factors for effective value streams.

So, if adopting value stream management has a higher probability of increasing the flow of value delivery and grounds us in the desired outcomes leadership seeks (figure 3), what are some next steps?

End-To-End Flow is a value stream management approach agnostic to the way of working, whether agile, predictive, or hybrids. e2e Flow is based on solving a problem we have all encountered: “Can you show me an example?”. Sure, we have all been there. It may have been in a training workshop we attended or when a coach was working with us. It goes a bit like this: we say — “I think I understand the theory you are telling me, but can you show me an example?”

The answer we get after a bit of stalling is, “No, I don’t have an example to show you.”

If a picture is worth a thousand words, an end-to-end visualization example of value stream management is worth ten thousand. e2e Flow is based on providing an example that provides continuity from ideation through releasing new value. It is a comprehensive set of value stream management examples, everything from the end-to-end flow ideation to implementation, and examples to support adopting strategies and practices at the value stream, team, and enablement areas.

e2e Flow visualizes the workflow across the end-to-end value stream, centering on identifying value increments, understanding the need & measurable objective, and prioritization based on business value and capacity.



Figure 3: The Objective of e2e Flow's Value Stream Management Approach

Goal of Leadership

Which Would Have a Greater Impact?



**Increase Team
Performance
by 20%**



**Decrease Scope
Size by 50% or
More**

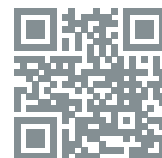
Figure 4: Which Option Do You Feel Would Have a Greater Impact?

This reference model is a starting point to unlock the flow of value your organization can deliver. It is an enabler of organizational transformations regardless of your organization's agile and value stream maturity.

The benefit expands through using the structure to add content from your organization's initiatives. It provides a strong starting point to build upon, combining content from your organization to raise awareness to an even higher level. The core design is a catalyst for improving the prioritization, delivery, and measurement of incremental customer and business value.

Putting the approach into action is vastly accelerated by an example-based learning journey. e2e Flow was born from engagements focused on the top improvement items for many executives. It has focused mini-workshops, two to four hours in duration, designed to accelerate the learning journey with a cost-effective and highly engaging approach. These workshops connect desired improvement outcomes with critical organizational objectives based on end-to-end flow examples and high collaborativeness.

Another component missing in many frameworks is assets that you can use in your organization to accelerate adoption. e2e Flow includes collaborative tools for accelerating the adoption of high-impact strategies, practices, and techniques. By providing you with collaborative templates to get you started combined with the examples, your PMOs, CoEs, Agile Coaches, Project Professionals, Value Delivery Managers, Portfolio Managers, Product Managers, Product Owners, Scrum Masters, or Team Members have a proven set of assets to use when adopting and measuring the implementation of value delivery improvements.



To find out more,
go to e2eflow site

www.e2eflow.com



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BEYOND THE BUZZ: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN AGILE PRACTICES AND AI ADVANCEMENTS

No doubt that you have seen plenty of articles, meetups, and LinkedIn posts talking about how the combination of agile practices and generative AI technology will significantly change the world of work and society as a whole. Of course, we are in the initial period of hype in the GenAI wave, but all indications are that over time, it **will** change the way we work.

What I did not see among all the attention about AI and agile is detailed thinking about why AI and agile are being grouped together, beyond the fact both are top of mind these days...

Therefore, let's take the time here to explore how agile practices might impact the development of AI products and how the use of emerging AI tools could change our agile product development practices.

Agile's Impact on AI Product Development

I think it is relatively straightforward to imagine how leveraging agile practices can improve the effectiveness of AI product development efforts.

Let's consider the current nature of AI products:

- There is great uncertainty about where the value in applying AI technology lies for consumers and businesses.
- Most AI applications are non-deterministic, meaning unlike traditional computer programs, if you give an AI application the same input numerous times, you will NOT necessarily get the same output produced each time.
- The capabilities of the underlying AI technology are constantly changing.

Given the above, AI product development is filled with uncertainty around how it provides



value and how to ensure quality, all while dealing with continuous change in capabilities. This is tailor-made for creating a product development process which features fast feedback loops so that we kill unworkable ideas as early as possible as we iterate toward as much value creation as possible. Likewise, determining how to appropriately test AI applications will require a great deal of experimenting. Agile practices seem to complement AI product development very nicely.

AI Will Drive Shift in Agile Development Practices

Now let's look at AI's potential impact on agile practices for traditional product development. I have seen many articles and posts touting AI-based tools that automate some of the tasks agile practitioners currently do manually, such as creating meeting minutes, answering questions, updating JIRA boards, and designing compelling retrospective meetings.

That's all well and good, but automating what we currently do misses the bigger opportunities that AI presents for evolving our product development approaches.

Let's stipulate that AI will eventually lower the cost and time required to build working software. This minimizes the impact of greater effectiveness on the delivery side of product development, which notably is where most of our agile practices are traditionally focused.

With it easier to produce working software, there will be more software products on the market, making it harder to differentiate our offerings. This puts a heavy premium on truly understanding our customer's "jobs to be done" and finding innovative and effective ways to make those jobs easier through our solutions.

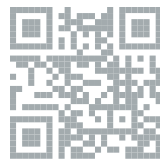
The good news is that with AI lowering the cost and time to write and build working software, we will have



Gary Cohen is a software development leader and organizational change consultant specializing in creating and coaching high performance / high agility organizations, building healthy organizational culture, and supporting customer feedback in all aspects of the product development lifecycle. He is a big believer in continuous improvement and empowering people in the organizations. Gary is the Owner and Principal Consultant at Practical Agility LLC.

greater ability to iterate more with working software, perhaps almost as quickly as we iterate today with wireframes and throw-away prototypes.

Putting all of this together, we can hypothesize that skill in continuous product discovery will increase in importance. The current separation of product discovery and product delivery efforts should and will dissipate over time. The key to this transition will be finding ways to seamlessly intertwine product discovery and product delivery to achieve fast feedback just as we have built practices to speed up feedback on the delivery side for many years now.



Teresa Torres book
<https://www.producttalk.org/>

Ideas like "product trios" and "opportunity solution trees" introduced by Teresa Torres in her book, *Continuous Discovery Habits*, provide promising vectors for visioning both the problem space and the solution space and considering multiple solutions at one time. Torres also provides guidance on how to quickly kill solutions that will not provide the business outcomes we are hoping for. This gives us more "at-bats" to find the solution that will deliver differentiable value to our customers.



**Fast Agile
Scaling Technology**
<https://www.fast-agile.com/home>

One issue, however, is that these ideas and this framework have mostly been applied to product discovery. I think these are readily applicable to the product delivery side as well, especially as AI drives down the cost of delivery. Looking to approaches primarily on the delivery side that might align and mesh well with the continuous product discovery practices, the Fast Agile Scaling Technology, commonly referred to as Fast Agile, utilizes team self-organizing and discovery trees (similar but not the same as the opportunity solution trees). Both approaches are still emerging practices, but I believe that taking a closer look at how to apply and refine the power of these approaches will bring us closer to product excellence in the brave new world of AI-assisted product development.

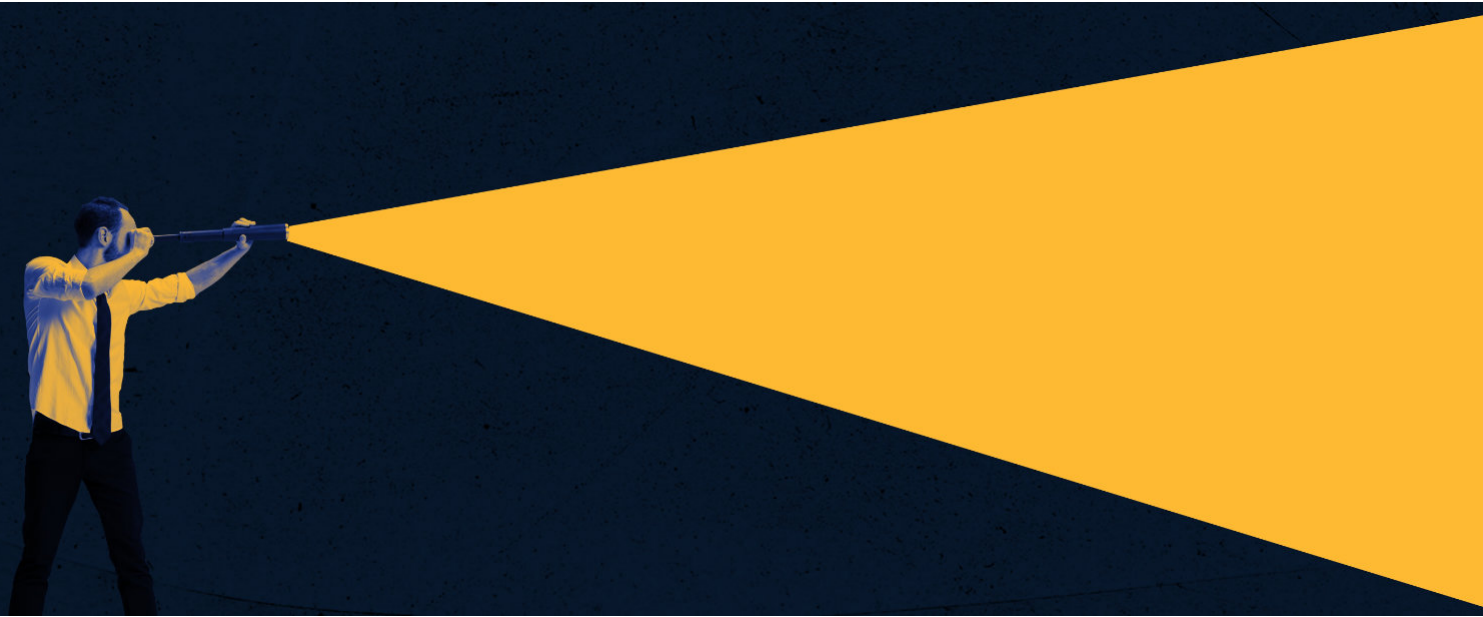


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AGILE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS: A BLUE OCEAN OF OPPORTUNITY



Why It Matters

Agile has transformed the IT sector for more than 20 years, but this market has become a red ocean saturated with competition. Conversely, applying Agile to small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) represents a blue ocean of untapped potential. Agile coaches possess the expertise to address key business challenges, but many SMBs and Agile coaches are unaware of each other's existence.

Marina Alex is a passionate Executive Coach, as well as a Business Agility Expert with 10 years of experience, specializing in increasing communication, aligning departments, driving revenue growth, and simplifying the lives of executives and employees across 34 industries and 21 countries.

With 15 years of diverse sales and marketing experience, she is a unique expert in uniting sales and marketing efforts, as well as an expert in marketing AI.

The Big Picture

In the United States alone, there are approximately 33.2 million small businesses, many of which lack IT departments and are unfamiliar with Agile, Kanban, Scrum, DevOps, and SAFe. These businesses span various industries, including restaurants, law firms, hotels, and dental practices. Despite the diversity, they face common problems that experienced Agile coaches can solve:

Case Study as an example of Agile in SMBs:

Ancient Lore Village, Knoxville, TN

Overview: A hospitality business with 50 employees.

Problems:

- Preparing the leadership team for the high season.
- Reducing turnover.
- Increasing guest satisfaction.
- Boosting sales and reaching revenue goals.

Agile Implementation: A 5-week journey that included:

- Creating cross-functional teams.
- Applying Kanban boards.
- Conducting planning sessions, daily stand-ups, demos, and weekly retrospectives.
- Changing individual KPIs to team-based bonuses.
- Establishing customer feedback processes.

Results: After 5 weeks, the hotel achieved all revenue goals, built a strong culture that continually improves, and now boasts a 95% booking rate. This example illustrates how simple Agile practices can significantly enhance a small company's performance, showcasing the transformative power of Agile coaching.

- **Revenue Decrease:** Many SMBs experience declining revenue due to market saturation and competition.

- **Operational Efficiency:** SMBs often struggle to optimize processes and manage day-to-day operations effectively.
- **Cultural Problems:** Issues related to company culture, including employee engagement and alignment with organizational values, are prevalent.
- **Communication Problems:** Ineffective communication within the organization can lead to misunderstandings and reduced productivity.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** Many SMBs lack a clear understanding of their Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) Value Proposition and sensitivity to customer needs, resulting in lower satisfaction and loyalty.

SMBs as a Blue Ocean for Agile Coaches. Why?

Faster Sales Cycle: In SMBs, you communicate directly with the CEO or founder, leading to faster decision-making and implementation of Agile practices.

Numerous Problems to Solve: In 2024, SMBs face many challenges that Agile can address, from operational inefficiencies to cultural issues.

Measurable Impact: With typically 50–100 employees, Agile interventions in SMBs can significantly impact the entire organization, making it easier to measure success through metrics like revenue growth, profit increase, and customer and employee satisfaction.

SMB Agile Coaching Rates

Many Agile coaches are now eyeing six-figure salaries, a trend established five years ago when

securing a one-year contract worth \$200,000 required a 9–12 month sales cycle. Enterprises were willing to invest millions in Agile transformations, even if they ended in failure. However, finding sizable clients is no longer as straightforward.

However, the financial landscape changes significantly when dealing with Small and Medium-sized Businesses (SMBs). They lack the hefty budgets for extensive consulting and cannot afford to wait years for results. So, what's the best compromise for Agile coaches and SMBs?

One of the best practices is to charge \$5,000 to \$15,000 for a 5–6 week engagement. This pricing model is appealing to SMBs and allows Agile coaches to deliver significant results within a shorter timeframe. It's much easier to enact change within smaller companies and experienced Agile coaches can efficiently guide them through the process in as little as two months, simultaneously assisting several organizations.

By working with approximately four companies per month, an Agile coach can earn between \$200,000 and \$500,000 annually. This arrangement proves mutually beneficial, offering a win-win solution for both parties.

Potential Issues

Lack of Awareness: Many SMBs are unaware of Agile methodologies and their benefits. Coaches need to communicate in simple, non-technical language, focusing on solutions rather than frameworks.

Diverse Needs: Each SMB is unique and requires tailored Agile frameworks to address specific challenges effectively.

Budget Constraints: SMBs often have limited budgets for Agile transformations and may not have experience working with consultants.

Simple Tools: Many SMBs use basic tools like Excel and email for managing tasks and may need guidance on adopting Agile tools like Kanban boards.

The Opportunity for Agile Coaches

Millions of businesses worldwide are struggling and need help with business agility. This represents a blue ocean of opportunity for Agile coaches willing to venture beyond the IT sector. By helping SMBs adapt to the modern business landscape, Agile coaches can create extraordinary teams and foster environments with happy, productive employees.

By understanding and addressing the unique needs of SMBs, Agile coaches can unlock significant opportunities for growth and transformation, driving success for both the businesses they serve and their own coaching practices.

Best regards, Marina Alex



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THE PEOPLE-CENTRIC HEART AT THE HEART OF AGILE



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In this article, I want to inspire you to see Agile in a different light. Maybe you already do as I do. Maybe you have moments when you see what I and others see. Whatever the case, I hope this creates a shift or even reinvigoration of your approach to Agile. One that helps teams become more productive, more energised, and resilient to the ever-changing weather systems of the complex and valuable work we do.

Without making any unhelpful assumptions about the reader of this article, the Agile methodology is often associated with software development. In fact, with the advent of Business Agility, Agile is being extended to many more parts of the organisation — even the whole. And for me, “Agile” extends beyond technical practices and principles. We will get to this shortly.

Tarlochan Gill, or TC as he is often referred to, is a transformational leader through the lens of leadership of others. Co-leading transformations with incumbent leaders and teams. Bringing about much needed changes in the organisation through through leadership, coaching, mentoring and teaching of out the box concepts

I like to look at organisations as a collection of systems. We often only pay lip service and attention to the ones that are the relentless focus of the business bods that run the show at a high level (e.g. the CEO, CFO, and the COO). These are:

- The Financial System
- The Operational System

There's another important one. Can you guess what it is? That's right. It's the Human System ... or the "Social System", as I like to refer to it sometimes. And this one doesn't get enough focus, in my humble opinion. Especially when sh*t hits the fan as it often does in the fast-paced, crazy VUCA world we dwell in.

So, it's not just operations and financial systems at play. There's a human one swirling and bubbling away underneath everything we do. And I invite you to really think about this. It is literally beneath everything we do when we come together. Personally, it baffles me why we don't spend more time talking, designing, and caring for this system since it's such a fundamental layer. This is the focus of this article.

As you've probably guessed, for me, a fundamental aspect of Agile is its focus on people and interactions.

After all, it is right there in the core values: «Individuals and Interactions over processes and tools»

I feel this beautiful one is often overlooked in our rush to get work done and delivered — or, as they would say in soccer or other ball-related sports, “to knock something out of the park.”

Not giving this core value equal weight is a hugely missed trick. Addressing it with vigour will pay dividends repeatedly, as I have seen in my experience and leadership journey.



INDIVIDUALS AND INTERACTIONS OVER PROCESSES AND TOOLS

Let's start. Let's boil this "Individuals and interactions" down to its simplest form. Let's say "You and me". Yes, you reader. I'm talking to you. We are a system right now. A small system, but an incredibly complex one. Human beings, with all our nuances, have the gift of making anything complex with our humanity.

Let's attempt to visualise that system. You are Entity #1. I am Entity #2. That's it, you may think! Nope. There is a powerful 3rd entity in that system with a life of its own. And that is the **relationship**. It has its own needs, its own expectations and its own dynamics.

By paying attention to this third entity, we start to see how the human system sometimes shifts and behaves. It sometimes works beautifully, and at other times, it turns into a storm of irrational craziness that affects all the other systems around it. Think of it like an undersea quake, and the strong waves that emanate from it. As you read that sentence, I hope it recalled moments where the interactions in your team, organisation and even your family took a sudden tangential turn. An example from me is

something that happened to me recently, where I had an outburst in the space that seemed to come from nowhere. Once I managed to get it through my system I got curious and contemplated what was driving it. In the cold light of day there it was. It was a dysfunctional relationship that got triggered. Let's just say it wasn't pretty and it left a mess that I and others needed to deal with.

I want you to really see that third entity. Yes, it may be an abstract concept. But it is there. Its impact is tangible. Even with the distance between us, you, the reader, and I, the writer, have developed a relationship of sorts that, if we ever met, would impact our interactions... hopefully, in a good way :).

And when we extend our view to teams, departments, and even whole organisations, we see a complex web of relationships. Either binding us together or pulling our interactions apart. Being aware of this wonderful invisible 3rd entity in all the nooks and crannies of the human system gives us the opportunity to design and artfully craft our spaces. To make them more productive, fun, and, for the sake of the organisation (a



living system in its own right), more profitable.

I want to invite you and inspire you to visualise it in your mind's eye. Whenever you are with your colleagues, friends, and family, bring awareness to the relationship systems you dwell in.

Sometimes, simple awareness is enough to fine-tune the way we show up. And the way you show up influences that system. The way you communicate things, the things you say or don't say, and the nonverbal communication from your body all impact this system. Now, there are many tools and approaches to enhancing this relationship system. Tools and other deeper concepts that are topics of many other articles to come.

So I hope this short article brings you back to the first part of this Agile saying (attributed to Alistair Cockburn): «Agile is about learning about each other, learning about our work, and changing as a result.»

AGILE IS ABOUT LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER, LEARNING ABOUT OUR WORK, AND CHANGING AS A RESULT.

attributed to Alistair Cockburn

It reorientates us back to the importance of collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding among team members. I see the human system in our organisations that underlies everything we do. We haven't yet reached that singularity point where AI is doing the work for us (nervous shudder), so these human systems are unescapably important.

So, do you see things differently now? That invisible web of relationships that binds us together has a life of its own and powerful impact.

Making a hopeful assumption, I'm glad you see what I see. Now, become the master at invigorating this invisible yet powerful system. Become the artistic leader, creating and nurturing these relationship systems you swim in.

RELATIONSHIP FIRST

I want to leave you with a mantra I used even before I became an Agilist. «Relationship First.»

It's a great reminder for me whenever I enter a new human system or when one has rocky times.

Create and look after these. They will look after you and your teams.

May the relationship force be with you friends.

UNPLANNED WORK — FRIEND OR FOE?



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“**R**esponding to change over following a plan” is one of the four values in the Agile Manifesto - the document that sets forth the guiding principles for Agility. The core premise of Agile is to become adaptive and responsive amidst uncertainty. Yet ever since Gene Kim published “*The Phoenix Project*”, the Agile-DevOps Community has been chanting the mantra “minimize unplanned work”.

Why are we deeply committed to being “adaptable and responsive” yet exasperated when faced with unplanned work?

I started to wonder, “What’s the difference between fire drills and adaptability?” and “How might we manage unplanned work better without losing valuable opportunities?”.

Why do people hate fire drills?

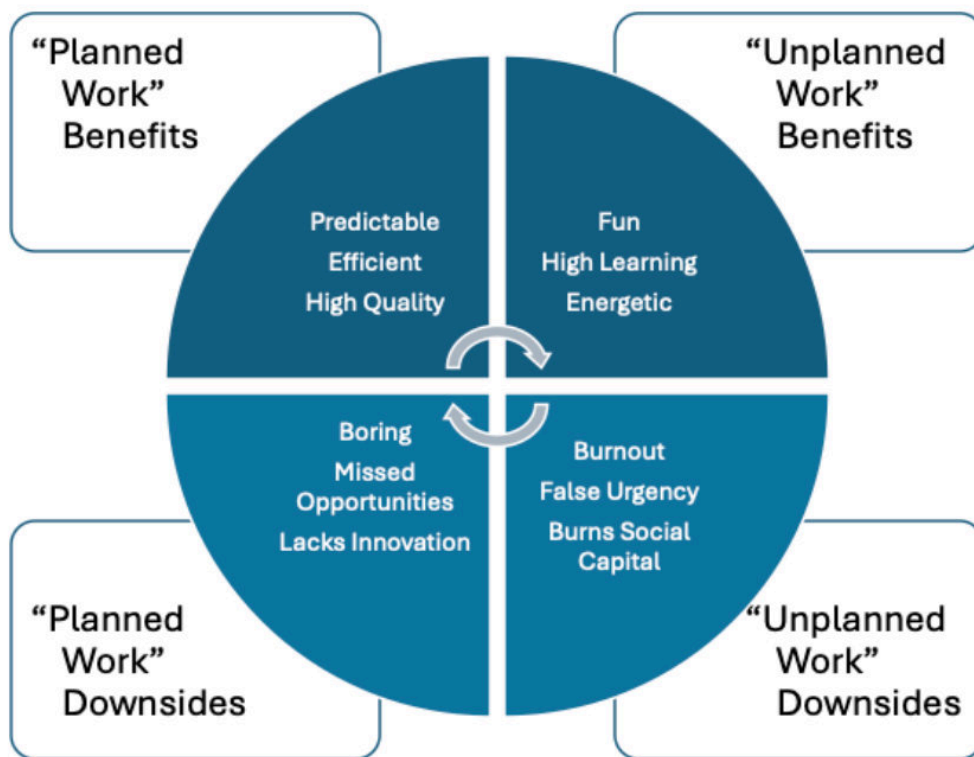
Fire drills are one of the top soul-crushing experiences at work. I recently worked with a client whose employee engagement survey showed they were unhappy about fire drills. The leadership hypothesis was, “They don’t like change, but the team needs to accept that fire drills are the nature of our business and deal with it”. I had the privilege of unpacking this with the team. I was eager to shake out exactly what it was about unplanned work that they didn’t like.

I met with the team and had them map out four quadrants: The upside & downside of

reason and wasting social capital they could use for more important work. The thing that was crushing their souls was urgent, unplanned work that they busted their ass and missed their kid’s soccer game to do when they didn’t need to. We’ll call work that didn’t need to happen or didn’t need to be urgent “**stupid work**”.

Once the team sorted this out, they implemented a process to better manage unplanned work. I’ll explain that in a moment.

The Difference between Planned and Unplanned is Time Horizon



both planned and unplanned work. Here’s what they found:

They thought unplanned work was “fun”! They didn’t like being burned out for no

When I talk to Agile teams about unplanned work, they say, “Anything that isn’t planned for the 2-week sprint is unplanned, and we just say ‘no!’”. Interesting, because I hate to



quote Agile Scripture, but the 2nd principle of the Agile Manifesto says, *“Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer’s competitive advantage”*. I couldn’t find the part in the Agile Manifesto that says, *“We welcome change as long as it’s more than two weeks in advance”*.

We consider work “unplanned” because it’s outside our planning time horizon. It’s not the work that’s unplanned; it’s that the planning cycle is too long for that particular work.

Unplanned Work delays Planned Work

Another problem with unplanned work is that it impacts the delivery of planned work, creating a whole host of problems with flow. Unplanned work also adds to the work in progress, which increases overhead and holding cost.

Constantly dropping one thing for another leaves a trail of unfinished work, with little value delivered to the business and its customers.

Can we be Adaptive and Responsive without Unplanned Work?

In the story above, the leader’s response was, “Deal with it; this is how we have to work to be competitive”. In fact, with this group, opportunities had popped up, with a small market window that was legitimately worth dropping everything for. But not all of them.

Some teams allocate a percentage of time to “unplanned work”, which is okay as a temporary measure so you can see what’s happening. However, it’s not optimal because it still allows capacity for “stupid work”, and limits the capacity for unplanned work that can truly make a difference.

We needed to find a way to jump on genuine opportunities without turning everything into an emergency.

Getting Started: Managing Planned and Unplanned Work

The bottom line is that if we want to be adaptive and responsive, we need to normalize unplanned work in a way that is good for business and doesn't crush people's souls. Here are a few ways to get started.

1. Get Unplanned Work into the Process. Unplanned work tends to live outside the normal process, which feels chaotic and lacks transparency. Consider a lightweight triage intake process to corral the work that comes off-cycle. Although the timing is ad-hoc, the format can be known. What do we need to answer when unplanned work comes in? Here are some suggestions:

- What is the benefit of pivoting to this work?
- Where does this fall in priority compared to the work we are currently doing? What can we deprioritize?
- What additional information do we need to move forward?

2. Minimize stupid work. The original adage to 'minimize unplanned work' is still true. Just be more specific about what type of unplanned work you're minimizing—the stupid kind. Actually, go ahead and minimize all stupid work—planned and unplanned.

Stupid work includes work that didn't need to be last minute, work that didn't happen at all, work based on an executive's passing comment or whim, and internal work to make someone look good. It also includes work that's urgent because an executive will be leaving for vacation tomorrow.

To get started, simply track and tag stupid work. Once you can see it, you can decide how to minimize it.

3. Communicate early and widely. I saw a sign outside someone's office that said, "A lack of





planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.” I have heard many leaders say, “We’re not ready to share this with the team yet; we don’t want to distract them.” But once they are ready, they want it yesterday and expect everyone to snap to it!

It is soul-crushing to keep people out of the loop until the work becomes their emergency. Being clear about priorities prevents people from getting distracted while you keep them in the loop.

Try this:

- Distinguish between ‘stupid work’ and ‘emergent opportunities.’
- Draft a lightweight process for new work outside your planning cycle.
- Communicate early and widely.
- Avoid crushing people’s souls by understanding the effort and commitment needed for unplanned work. The game they miss maybe their kid’s best soccer game ever.

Jardena London is a consultant (the good kind), author, speaker and CEO of Rosetta Agile. She has spent the last 30 years finding ways to transform organizations so our souls can flourish, while our financials thrive.

Her book *Cultivating Transformations: A Leader’s Guide to Connecting the Soulful and Practical* supports this mission by drawing a straight line between the processes we use, the way we feel, and the results we get so that we nourish our souls while producing thriving financial outcomes.

You can learn more about Jardena and explore her resources on leadership at www.jardenalondon.com www.rosettaagile.com www.cultivating-transformations.com

AGILISTS4SUSTAINABILITY



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In early 2020, before COVID-19, I had the privilege of joining Lyssa Adkins at a Women's retreat in Utah. We spent 4 luxurious hours driving to and from the retreat center. In the 8 hours of driving, we had a series of conversations, such as what motivated her to write the book *Coaching Agile Teams*, what she did before the book was published, what she was working on currently, and what she envisioned us as Agilists doing. BTW, Lyssa is a wonderful conversationalist and singer (I got to hear her sing some tunes in the car). What inspired me in our conversation, was her vision for us Agilists. She envisioned us being part of an emergency response network for climate challenges and how we could participate in the current emergencies. At that time, the Australian fires were raging, the loss of animals and nature was devastating, and it made it so clear to me that we needed to do something now.

The conversation about Agilists in Climate Challenges sparked something within me. I could see us

being able to make a difference, but I needed to know, could we? My curiosity took me to the first step, interviewing a 911 Operator from New York who specializes in disaster recovery. That was my first Wicked & Agile Interview, where I learned that YES, we, as Agilists, can make a difference in sustainability and planetary challenges.

Many more interviews came over the next two years. I interviewed Agilists who brought business agility to their local community governments to run an open space that allowed the politicians to hear what their constituents wanted vs. guessing what was required. One Agilist left her highly paid job to work at an Environmental Company that reduces the acidity of oceans. She brought product management, experimentation, leadership, and executive coaching to help them approach their work iteratively and adaptively. All of this curiosity and learning helped me on the current path I am on.



Joanne Stone believes in the power of the collective and uses this to bring more hope to our complex world. She has been part of the Agile Community since 2012. Founder of Wicked Agility; she helps organizations adopt Business Agility utilizing an in-depth knowledge of team dynamics, product management, organizational design, digital products, tools, and how to motivate individuals and teams. She is in her second year of initiating a movement on Agilists in Sustainability, where she founded the We Hope Magazine, Agilists4Planet Conference, Agilists4Sustainability Community, Sustainability Incubator Program (SIP) and keynotes on this subject. She created a mentorship group in 2017 that helped over 500 new scrum masters and agile coaches. She has 2 dogs and 3 cats and loves nature.

One day, Lyssa, to my delight asked me to be on a keynote panel at Agile 2022 and then again at Scrum Gathering Lisbon 2022. Both panels were full of amazing leaders experienced in bringing agile to work on sustainability challenges. (BTW, Sustainability for us is environmental, social, or economic challenges and can be defined by the UN's definition of Sustainability.) The passion I shared on stage was about us as a collective, the interviews I had and how, together, we can make an impact. I reinforced that WE are the collective that can make a difference. If not us, who could? We understand that one person alone cannot solve complex problems, and we need a diverse set of people who can work together one step at a time to learn the best approach to tackling these wicked problems.

After the keynote panels in 2022, the Agilists4Sustainability team was born. A collective group of movers and shakers decided how to raise awareness and impact worldwide. I felt privileged to be part of this amazing group, with each one of them bringing awareness to their communities and creating an impact. We brainstormed ideas for 2023, and we put them into action:



Agile and Our Planetary-Level Challenges
by Lyssa Adkins

<https://lyssaadkins.com/blog-1/2022/07/23/agile-and-our-planetary-level-challenges/>

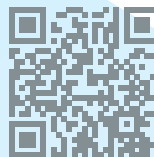
- **Agilists4Sustainability Meetup** — a place where we can share stories of impact, run Agility and Sustainability workshops, ideate ways to improve agile to support sustainability, and connect with other passionate souls.
- **Agilists4Sustainability LinkedIn Group:** The community shares posts, learns from each other, and shares upcoming events.
- **Agilists4Planet Virtual Conference** - a two-day virtual conference of workshops and talks from speakers in the sustainability and agility world.
- **We Hope Magazine** — a collection of inspirational stories of Agilists making a sustainability impact.
- **The Week** — Facilitating Frederic Laloux and Helen Gerin's The Week Sessions for 10,000 participants to increase climate awareness and action.

For me, bringing awareness was not enough. I wanted to bring agility to our local communities' sustainability challenges. I wanted to get into action. My thoughts wandered. How could we help a local garden that wants to create more food for the local food banks? How could we help a Latino community bring more value to new immigrants looking for professional jobs in Canada? How might we help large corporations to help their local communities?

Welcome to SIP, a Sustainability Incubator Program that utilizes design thinking, system thinking, experimentation, and agility. A group of SIPsters, Arev, Pam, Kari, and I, have been working on these experiments since 2023. We are pleased with our progress so far, and are aiming for 10,000 SIP projects globally by 2025. How do we do that? How do you do that? One step at a time. We know the keys: persistence, sustainable pace, iterating and adapting, and teamwork. Plus, for me, working with people I love and doing what I love makes a difference in our world.

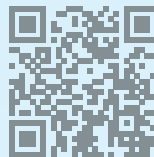
As a Agilists4Planet group, we are continuing to work on many things. After Agilists4Planet 2.0 on June 13th and 14th, we are ideating on Hack-a-thons.

Personally, I need a world with more hope, and this will come from more Cause-Based Leaders, AKA Wicked Leaders, those leaders who have a passion for making a difference in our world by tackling sustainability challenges. To support this, I am initiating SIP projects and activating more Cause Based Leaders in my Leaders with a Cause Program. With more wicked leaders and SIP projects, we can create more hope, and in our current world, we definitely need more hope.



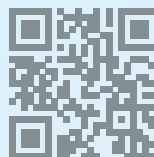
Agilists4Sustainability Meetup

<https://www.meetup.com/agility-impact/>



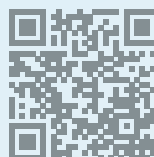
Agilists4Sustainability LinkedIn Group

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14272067/>



Agilists4Planet Virtual Conference

<https://www.agilists4planet.com/>



We Hope Magazine

<https://www.agilists4planet.com/we-hope>



The Week

<https://www.theweek.ooo/>



Sustainability Incubator Program

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13lx4d9a5wvM1ge5yvq0jgGznklz-luKX5/view?usp=sharing>



Leaders with a Cause Program

<https://www.get-wicked.com/legacy-event>



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THE CAPABILITIES OF PRODUCT OWNERSHIP

As described in the Scrum Guide, a Product Owner is accountable for maximizing the value of the product resulting from the work of the Scrum Team. How this is done may vary widely across organizations, Scrum Teams and individuals.



As a member of the Scrum Team(s), the Product Owner provides clarity to the team about a product's vision and goal. All work is derived and prioritized based on the Product Goal in order to deliver value to all stakeholders including those within their organization and all users both inside and out. Product Owners identify, measure and maximize value throughout the entire product's lifecycle.

In many cases however a single person cannot do everything that is required to accomplish true Product Ownership. This requires the Product Owner to collaborate with others while taking on a leadership role for the overall product.

Capabilities and Skills of Product Ownership

Product Ownership requires a distinct set of capabilities and skills which are often fulfilled by multiple people, roles or functions. Often a Product Owner will work with product managers, business analysts and others to satisfy these needs. We can categorize these into three core capabilities: Engage with Vision, Lead to Value and Evolve with Validation.

Engage with Vision

Delivering products requires a team of people working together as a team. Teams perform best when they do meaningful work, and when they are learning. Creating a strong vision helps align the team and give them focus. Product Ownership skills required to engage with vision include:

- Maximizing innovation and creativity
- Establishing product vision and put it to use
- Providing direction with goals and roadmaps
- Collaborating deliberately with stakeholders and teams based on value

Lead to Value

Contextual awareness is crucial in a complex environment. Thriving in such an environment means understanding your context, aligning with it, influencing it and being able to operate in it. Leading to value is both about discovering unrealized value, and influencing your context to be able to create value.

Product development is essentially about the decisions that are made. To increase the rate of innovation and learning, speed of decision making is a strongly limiting factor. With too little context (such as unclear vision & direction, slow and poor access to customers/users, collaboration with other teams or contributors) decision making suffers. The skills needed to lead to value include:

- Understanding the marketing
- Working with the organization
- Executing on, aligning with and influencing the business strategy
- Defining the product

Evolve with Validation

Good Product Ownership uses quantitative and qualitative data as a powerful ally in making decisions on what experiments to try, what to do throughout the experiment and to improve on what already exists. Discovery and validation is used to iteratively find out what is needed and wanted while evaluating what works and doesn't work. Skills to evolve with validation include:

- Iteratively and incrementally evolving the product
- Establishing, prioritizing and measuring value
- Experimenting deliberately

Moving from “Me to We”

Yes, in Scrum there is one Product Owner per product, but that doesn't mean that they do it alone. It has been proven that decisions by committee lead to a lack of commitment, confusion and disconnected product features. However, in order to be successful, the Product Owner must rely on others and work together. This doesn't remove the authority of the Product Owner, it spreads the skills required across multiple people.

The Product Owner remains the ultimate decision maker as they work together with others to support the product and deliver value to the organization and customers/users in the end. This requires that the people and teams involved respect the Product Owner, their decisions to delegate and those that they delegate to.

For example, someone with exceptional analytical skills can work closely with the Product Owner on discovering feedback and information about the existing product or experiments that are being run in order to empower decisions. Someone with strong user experience skills can provide feedback and input into how users may most effectively use the product. Someone with experience in mobile applications may provide input into requirements that don't exist on a general web-based application, etc.

In the end it is about assembling and building the skills required to be successful together.



**Learn more about the Capabilities
and Skills of Product Ownership**

<https://www.scrum.org/learning-series/capabilities-and-skills-professional-product-ownership>



Nik Gekht

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PROBLEM OF TRUST OR STOP PUTTING LAST NAIL INTO AGILE COFFIN



Nikolay Gekht, the visionary founder of Gehtsoft USA, is known for his unwavering determination to achieve what others deem impossible and to fix what others believe to be irreparably failed. With certifications including PSM III, PMI-ACP, DASSM, and DAVSC, Nikolay's relentless pursuit of success has been guided by a scientific approach, a system of profound knowledge, and system thinking since 1992. Over the past decade, he has embraced the Agile way, effectively tackling complexity and navigating unpredictable outcomes. Nikolay's expertise lies in building processes and teams that deliver great results. Through teaching, coaching, facilitating, and fostering development, growth, and self-sufficiency, he empowers teams to thrive independently, with the ultimate goal of achieving a team that can operate without his guidance. He shares his knowledge and experience giving back to the Agile community through articles in various publications and teaching and mentoring the next generation of Agile professionals.

Earlier this year, I mentored a group of experienced Agile coaches. One day, we worked on building an empathy map. We discussed the importance of empathy in a world of ambiguous and changing requirements and volatile and uncertain rules. Empathy guides us through all challenges as a path light. Our commitment to help is a north star that keeps us on track.

My teaching style involves ensuring that the topic becomes personal for my students. So, I put the students into a situation where they had to either be empathetic or avoid it and after that deal with the consequences of whatever decision was made. We discussed how much authority the team has over the quality and safety of their processes. You know, that good old story that they "know better." I took as an example an actual situation back in the 1980s when a violation of an established and documented process in one hospital in the USSR caused the mistreatment of newborns, which, in turn, caused five casualties. The staff misplaced medicines because it was more convenient for them to put them in improper places. They "optimized" their workflow. As a result, one nurse working overtime on the night shift used the wrong medicine. Then, I let them, as team coaches, handle the question of accountability. I made sure that they didn't "delegate" this to anyone else, e.g. management, team, or users. They had to decide. Scrum master/Agile coach is a leadership role, after all. You can only lead if you make decisions.

One student stated emotionally at some point: "No, my empathy will be with the team, and I will do whatever I need to protect them." It wasn't surprising. I saw it in many teams way more often than I would wish to. But I heard hammering in my head. I know that somewhere in the VUCA world another customer or decision-maker put another nail into the Agile coffin. Which one will be the last? I don't know. There is still some rope, but the end is close. I can feel it. We all see companies drop Agile or fire coaches.

Trust Problem

Why? Well, we all heard that "the Agile team needs trust." The problem is that many Agilists think that "trust" is a privilege or even a God-given right. Unfortunately, it is neither. By the dictionary definition, trust is "confidence that the other party acts in your best interest." Now let's pause for a minute and ask ourselves: whose best interest is protected by a coach who "will protect the team whatever it takes?" Not the company, the customer, or even the end users. So, none of those who invest in the team. How easy would it be for sponsors to trust their money to a team like this? So, I have advice: choose team comfort over end-users or sponsors again, fail to justify their trust. Agile is not dead enough without these efforts. Sarcasm mode is off. Knock-knock, the end of the rope is close.

Surprisingly, any Agile framework has whatever is needed to earn trust. Evidence-based management builds the

process around the goal. It provides metrics that measure the goal and the goal only, not efforts, promises, or formal and informal distractors. The job has either been done or not. Scrum, especially since 2020, is built around project and sprint goals. Since it was founded,

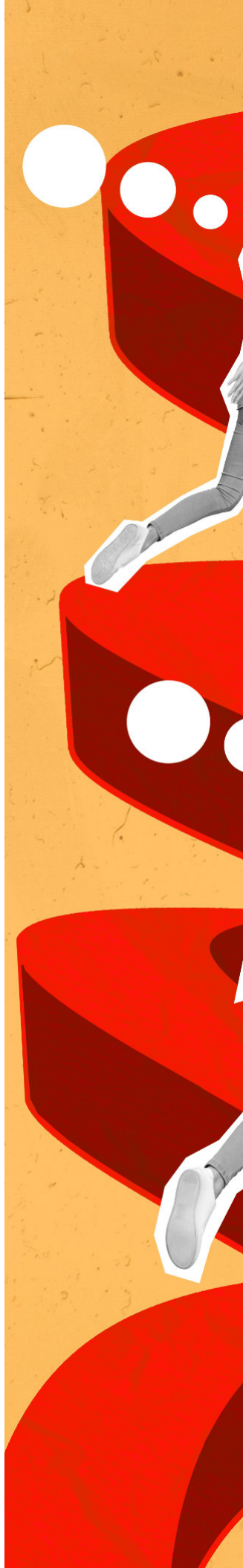
Scrum has offered daily opportunities to inspect how much of a goal we have already reached. It also has transparency as one of the pillars, which is the key to building trust. We trust what we understand.

The problem is that the freedom to find the way to do it (because those in Gemba know better) is often recognized as the freedom to decide whether the job needs to be done or establish the quality level where it is comfortable for the team, not for the customers. If I had a buck whenever I hear from Agile-certified candidates that Manifesto or Scrum Guide is "just a piece of paper", or "just to pass an exam" and "real life is all different", I could buy an island already. No, it is not. Every single letter there is meaningful. And if you don't understand it, it is not because "life is different." It is because you aren't qualified enough to understand it and do the job.

So, what to do?

1 First, stop lying to yourself that you have an exceptional case. If you need to learn how to apply Agile in full here, go and learn. Ignorance is not a justification for not doing. Shu-Ha-Ri. It would help to practice humility here. Do

WE TRUST WHAT WE UNDERSTAND





not change anything until you can follow the instructions and understand how to do it the recommended way. Only after that can you try to flex limits, primarily to understand why the instructions were made this way. And only this understanding will give you the superpower to decide what is the best.

2 Second (and it would help to overcome ignorance), stop inventing the wheel. Project management has mostly stayed the same since the Pharaohs. You must still learn about stakeholders and problems, gather the full range of requirements, define and manage goals and scope, and manage communications and expectations, resources, risks, quality, and deliveries. Everything from PMBoK is still here. Agile changes how we do it, the order in which we do it, and who should do it. However, every goal in that playbook must be reached to satisfy the customer. Again, Agile is the freedom to find the best way of doing it. It doesn't give you the freedom to decide to skip it.

3 Third, start your day with a project goal, continue with a goal, and end it with the goal in mind. A simple project in a simple environment can rely on common sense and follow the well-established, repeating process. With the degree of freedom and flexibility that Agile gives us, the burden of "making sure that everything is done" shifts from the process to each team member. Assessing every action against the goal is the only way that keeps us from developing tunnel vision and falling into the fallacy of "I know what I do and will succeed." If you knew it would be a simple project, you'd work in a well-established process. But it would help if you had Agile, which means you have a complex problem, so you don't know.

ADAPTING IS AN EFFORT. ADAPTING IS A CHANGE.

Go experiment and validate the outcomes against the goal. Sooner is better. Lather, rinse, repeat. Or Inspect, Make Transparent, and Adapt. Sounds familiar, huh?

4 Fourth, create transparency. Make it your daily job. Nobody has an obligation to trust you. Make it transparent to yourself, your team, stakeholders, and

end-users. Moreover, the more discomfort you or your team feel making something transparent, the more critical it is to do so. Adapting is an effort. Adapting is a change. Everybody wants change, but nobody wants to change. But everything will change if there is a more significant discomfort to avoid the change. Transparency is the least hurtful way to create that discomfort. You can wait until your management comes and makes you accountable. You can wait until stakeholders decide to terminate collaboration with your team. You can wait until end-users vote with their dollars against your comfort. All of these hurt you more and hurt more people around you. Don't trade little pain today for more significant pain tomorrow.

It sounds like "getting things done 101." And it is. My message is that by misinterpreting empathy and freedom in Agile, we made it a tool to comfort ourselves and satisfy our ego. I have a simple question for self-check: When you are comfortable, it is called a resort, and you pay money there. When your stakeholders, customers, and users are comfortable, it is called a job, and you are paid for doing that.

It's important to remember that Agile critically refined the order and priorities for our empathy and care. The end user always comes first. Again, I see hundreds of Agilists who prefer to comfort themselves by satisfying their peers, management, and stakeholders at the end user's expense. Agile makes it clear. Put the end user first. That means you will be in constructive conflict with the management and stakeholders to protect the project's success and to keep them accountable for their decisions.





And that's the difference. You don't prioritize the team above all else. Protecting the team is just one of the tools at your disposal, not your mission or purpose. The mission or purpose is to defend the project goal and the end users.

Customers trust us to get things done. We aim to ensure the project reaches its goal and the end users are satisfied and comfortable. That is our profession. And we are professionals. That is the only way to put Agile back where it deserves to be.



Nimesh Soni

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: YOUR SECRET SUPERPOWER!

In the dynamic realm of our high-paced work environment, mastery isn't just about theoretical knowledge — it's about practical expertise honed through experiential learning. It does not matter what your role and title is!

Have you ever started working with a new team, new organization, feeling pumped and ready to prove yourself, only to hit a wall when faced with real-world situations? Maybe you aced the interview and devoured every training manual, but something feels different in the trenches. Perhaps it's a presentation gone awry, a challenging client interaction, or a team dynamic that throws you for a loop.

You can be a Scrum Master, Product Owner, an Agile Coach, or any other role, your team and your organization is looking for experiences forged in the real world!

As an Enterprise Agile Coach myself and advocate for immersive, scenario-based training, I've witnessed the transformative impact it has on my coaching effectiveness. Let's explore why experiential learning is the key to navigating the complexities of Agile coaching, or any other profession for that matter, especially in tough economic times.



What is experiential learning?

Experiential learning is all about **learning by doing**. Instead of just reading or listening to information, experiential learning encourages you to roll up your sleeves and dive in. It's like learning to ride a bike: you can't truly understand it until you hop on and start pedaling. Through hands-on experiences and real-world simulations, experiential learning helps you internalize concepts, develop practical skills, and build confidence in your abilities. It's about stepping into the arena, making mistakes, and learning from them in a supportive and interactive environment.

Forget memorizing textbooks — experiential learning is all about diving headfirst into practical application. It's the learning by doing approach that equips you with the skills and reflexes you need to thrive in the real world, regardless of your profession.

Think of it like training wheels for your professional journey. Just like pilots hone their skills in flight simulators, experiential learning provides a safe space to practice navigating complex situations before encountering them on the job.

The Power of Simulated Learning

Let's face it, trial and error can be a costly proposition in today's fast-paced work environment (especially when you are in the middle of a 'battle'). We're talking about missed deadlines, frustrated colleagues, and even potential damage to your reputation. Imagine trying out a brand new negotiation tactic for the first time with a key client — not exactly the ideal scenario!

Experiential learning can be your secret weapon. It allows you to:

- **Develop Muscle Memory:** The more you practice responding to challenging

situations, the more your responses become instinctive. It's like building "muscle memory" for your profession, allowing you to react effectively under pressure.

- **Build Emotional Memory:** By working through simulated situations, you develop a deeper understanding of how different scenarios might feel emotionally. This "emotional memory" prepares you for the real deal, preventing those butterflies in your stomach and allowing you to stay cool, calm, collected, and focused, making you much more effective and impactful.

Experiential learning allows you to gain valuable experience in a safe, controlled environment, so you can step into real-world situations feeling confident and prepared.

THE BEST WAY OF LEARNING ABOUT ANYTHING IS BY DOING.

Richard Branson

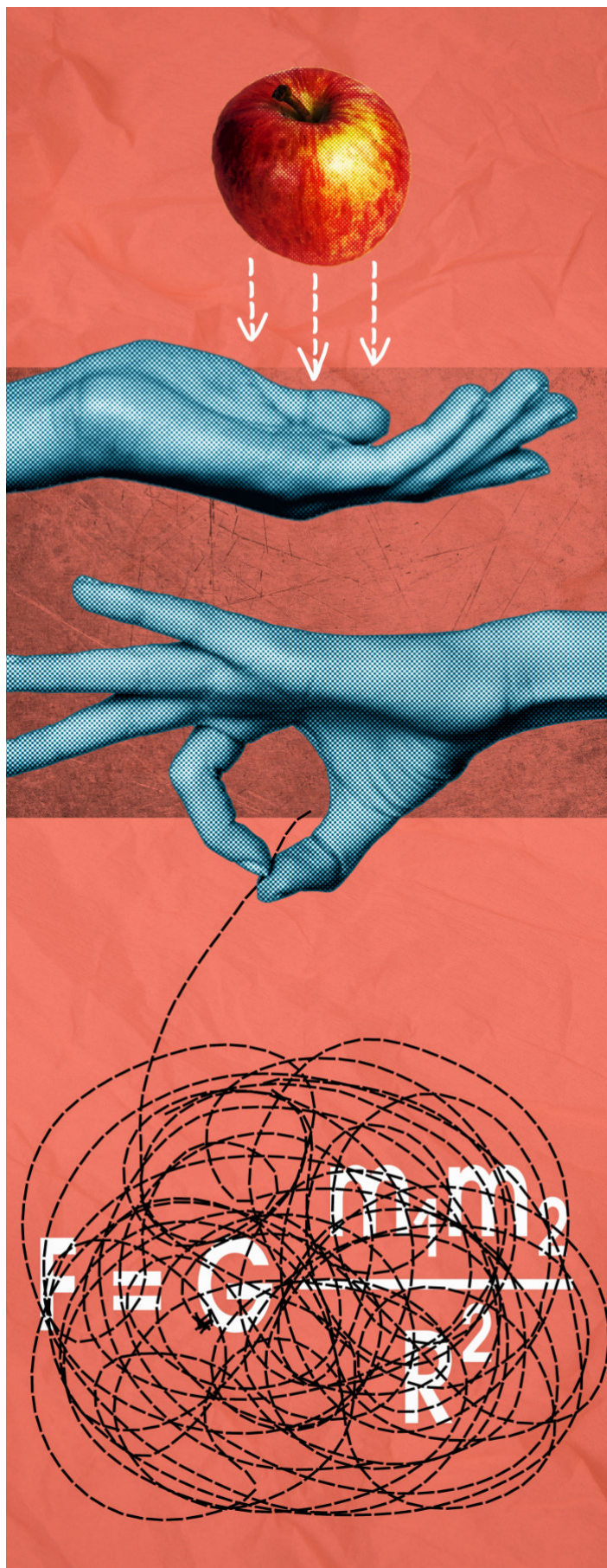
Unleashing Emotional Memory

Beyond intellectual understanding, experiential learning creates emotional memory. Picture this: you're faced with a challenging scenario at a client site. Instead of feeling butterflies, you're calm and steady, thanks to the preparation and practice you've had in simulated environments. It's about cultivating "steady hands" and clear thinking, ensuring you're ready to tackle any situation with confidence.

They say experience is the best teacher, but waiting to face real-life situations can be risky and time-consuming. In the heat of the battle, there's no room for trial and error. Scenarios, simulation of real-world scenarios comes in as the next best teacher, providing a safe yet realistic learning environment. It's about preparing for battle without risking your job or reputation in the process.

Experiential Learning: Your Secret Superpower

Embrace it! Experiential learning can be your secret superpower. It's not just about acquiring knowledge; it's about embodying it through practice. Imagine having the confidence and poise to navigate any challenge with ease. That's the power of experiential learning — it transforms theory into action, making you a force to be reckoned with in the arena.



- **Confidence in Crisis:** Experiential learning builds confidence to handle crises calmly and effectively.
- **Clear Decision Making:** Practice under pressure sharpens decision-making skills, ensuring clarity when it matters most.
- **Safe Learning Space:** Simulated environments offer a risk-free space to make mistakes and learn from them.
- **Effective Communication:** Improved communication abilities foster better collaboration and understanding within teams.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Practice in dynamic scenarios cultivates adaptability and resilience, essential in today's ever-changing world.
- **Practical Application of Agile Principles:** Experiential learning reinforces Agile principles through hands-on practice.
- **Proactive Mindset:** It fosters a proactive mindset towards continuous improvement, driving personal and professional growth.
- **Preparedness for Future Challenges:** Practice prepares us for future challenges before they arise, ensuring readiness in any situation.
- **Trust and Credibility:** Building trust and credibility with teams and stakeholders through demonstrated competence and expertise.
- **Enhanced Impact as Agile Coaches:** Ultimately, experiential learning makes us more effective and impactful as Agile Coaches, driving success for our teams and organizations.

Nimesh's YouTube channel —
"Agile Coaching Toolbox"

[www.youtube.com/
@AgileCoachingToolbox](https://www.youtube.com/@AgileCoachingToolbox)



"Embrace AI to Supercharge Your
Agile Adoption", Nimesh's
previous article

[https://files.gehtsoftusa.com/
Agile_Bulletin_2023.pdf](https://files.gehtsoftusa.com/Agile_Bulletin_2023.pdf)



TEN REASONS TO EMBRACE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Need even more reasons?
Here are 25 reasons to be exact!

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learning-with-scenarios-for-agile-
coach/#why](https://www.nimeshsoni.com/experiential-learning-with-scenarios-for-agile-coach/#why)

Nimesh is a Coach, Mentor, Trainer, Author, and an Enterprise Agile Transformation Consultant mentoring organizations in transition to value-driven approaches. He has been a key architect of transformation at various organizations including several of the Fortune 500 companies.

Taking a pragmatic approach towards transformation at organizations, he often mixes his agile expertise with a common sense approach while making it visual with illustrations and drawing so that it creates lasting impact.

Nimesh is an ICAgile authorized instructor as well as Certified Enterprise Coach (CEC/CSC) from Scrum Alliance and has helped various organizations as well as individuals on their transformation journey.

Nimesh teaches various certification workshops including ICAgile Fundamentals (ICP), ICAgile Team Facilitation (ICP-ATF), ICAgile Coaching Certification (ICP-ACC), ICAgile Business Agility Foundations (ICP-BAF), and Advanced Scrum Master (A-CSM) certification workshops.

Check out Nimesh in action on his YouTube channel, "Agile Coaching Toolbox".

And, don't forget to check out Nimesh's previous article "Embrace AI to Supercharge Your Agile Adoption".

Experiential Learning for Everyone

The power of experiential learning isn't limited to specific professions. From doctors and teachers to salespeople and entrepreneurs, anyone can benefit from the immersive learning experience. It fosters collaboration, improves communication, and helps everyone anticipate potential challenges, leading to smoother project execution and overall success.

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- **Seek Out Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Many companies and organizations are incorporating experiential learning into their training programs. Talk to your manager or HR representative about available opportunities.
- **Role-Playing Exercises:** Gather a group of colleagues and role-play real-world scenarios you might encounter in your field. This is a fantastic way to practice your communication
- **Start a collection of real-world scenarios that challenge you!** 'Walk through' those scenarios, creating and refining your strategy. If you are an Agilist, we have already created a list of Scenarios for you! Get them here →
- **Let us help you, let us hold your hands as you step into these scenarios.** Join our ScenarioLab ←



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Why wait? Embrace experiential learning today and elevate your career to new heights. Your teams, your organization, and your future self will thank you for it.



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WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM UNHAPPY AGILE TRANSFORMATIONS



"Anna Karenina"
by Leo Tolstoy

[https://en.wikipedia.org
/wiki/Anna_Karenina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Karenina)



**"Why do 47% of agile
Transformations
Fail", Scrum.inc**

[https://www.scruminc
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agile-transformations
-fail/](https://www.scruminc.com/es/why-47-of-agile-transformations-fail/)

Leo Tolstoy's famously declared in his masterpiece "Anna Karenina", "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Yet, when it comes to agile transformations, the opposite often holds true.

I've witnessed several very happy agile transformations where empowered teams rapidly deliver great innovative products to the market and all these transformations looked quite different from one another. I've also encountered my fair share of well-intentioned agile initiatives that met unhappy ends, with most of them failing for similar reasons.

Let's face it - in the fast-paced realm of agile transformation, success is far from being guaranteed. According to research

from Forbes Insights and MIT Sloan Management Review, a staggering 47% of agile transformations falter on their journey to success. And through this work I've uncovered a handful of antipatterns ready to thwart the best-laid plans.

Fundamentally, agility emerged at the end of the 20th century in response to the rapid changes and complexities of the digital era. The agile approach is rooted in empiricism, where knowledge comes from experience, and decisions are based on what is observed. It emphasizes self-managed teams empowered to quickly adapt to new experiences and knowledge. Instead of the classical plan-and-predict method, agile relies on a sense-and-respond approach.

Unfortunately, the majority of corporations, especially older ones, are built with a plan-and-predict approach in mind. They featured centralized decision-making, hierarchical structures, and organizational silos. The ultimate decision power is concentrated with a few people diminishing the idea of empowered self-managed teams. Middle-level managers usually constitute a major road-blocks for teams self-managing. Budgeting is typically based on annual or, at least, six-month cycles that inhibits rapid adaptation. Cost model relying on CapEx and OpEx conflicts with the iterative and incremental nature of agile product development. Performance review processes often emphasize individual contributions over team participation. Additionally, those responsible for transforming organizations often lack a deep understanding of agility, limiting it for a Cargo cult of using JIRA and having team “stand ups”.



Cargo cult, Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_cult

Company culture also plays a key role in agile adoption failures. The command-and-control style remains entrenched among many industry leaders who struggle to adapt to new challenges. This issue becomes even more apparent with the anticipation of a recession, as many organizations cut their agile coaches and revert to old-school management approaches.

Agile transformations conducted only at the team or department level, without dismantling hierarchical centralized decision-making structures, breaking organizational silos, empowering teams, and welcoming transparency, frequent inspection, and adaptation, have little chance of success. Here are just a few early indicators that your transformation might be at risk:





C-suite level leaders do not have a sufficient sense of urgency to be directly involved in the transformation efforts.

Company leadership lacks understanding of the challenges related to complexity of the problems in hands and still rely on comprehensive plans for business initiatives, including agile transformation itself, with specific deadlines and schedules.

Company lacks Product Vision and does not consider developing it to be a top priority.

There is no commitment to fundamental organizational change and flattening the organizational structure; transformational efforts are limited to one or a few isolated departments.

The primary accountability for product delivery remains with middle-level managers and department heads, whose monetary incentives typically depend on meeting delivery goals.

HR is not involved in the transformation efforts leaving old guidelines, job descriptions and RACI-based mentality unchanged.

The organizational focus is not on business outcomes but on outputs, such as the number of teams transitioned to scrum or the number of story points teams deliver.

If you answer "Yes" to any of these questions, the chances for agile transformation to succeed are very slim.

To make matters worse, the terms "agile" and "scrum" have earned a bad reputation because some coaches misunderstand or misrepresent the nature of agility and promote it as a kind of "snake oil." Some argue that these terms are now damaged beyond repair and that we, as a community, should avoid mentioning them to clients to prevent turning them away.

It does not matter what terms we use for it, agility seems to be still the ultimate approach for an

organization to survive and thrive in a modern modern VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) world. Introduction of AI makes this world even more complex and uncertain. And while transforming a classical organization to modern venture well equipped for creating great innovative products is a challenging goal, it presents a great opportunity for us, agile coaches.

When approaching a client, we should make it clear - an agile transformation is a complex and multifaceted endeavor that requires a holistic approach. Agile transformation is a complete system overhaul, rather like a new operating system for a computer. Using this computer metaphor, please do not confuse an agile transformation with a program installation. It's not just about adopting a new methodology or framework; it's about fundamentally changing the way an entire organization operates, from its culture and processes to its mindset and structure. This might involve flattening hierarchies, delegating decision-making authority to teams, and tribes, adopting more flexible budgeting approaches like rolling forecasts or dynamic budget allocation, redesign HR performance review process with the focus on the team work, and fostering a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement.

Let me emphasize - the goal of an agile transformation is not to "install agility" within an organization, but to help organizations leverage the benefits of agility to address their business challenges. Successful agile transformation starts with identifying these challenges and envisioning where organizations should be in the next one to three years. If company leaders have sufficient sense of urgency, if they are committed to leading fundamental changes within their organization, if they are willing to change themselves, and embody agile values and principals, only in this case their organization has a clear pass to agility to thrive in the VUCA world. And they need agile coaches as their trustworthy partners to succeed on this journey.

Alexander (Sasha) Frumkin is a passionate enterprise agile coach, trainer, and author from San Francisco, CA. He has over 25 years of hands-on experience in software development. Alexander has lived and breathed agility since 2007. Through these years, he has helped many organizations, as an agile coach, orchestrating successful agile transformations where empowered teams rapidly deliver great innovative products to market. As a trainer, he's trained over thousand Certified Scrum Masters® and Certified Scrum Product Owners®.



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WHY THE FUTURE OF AGILE SHOULD INCLUDE ADAPTIVE FRAMEWORKS

THIS ARTICLE SUGGESTS THAT THE FUTURE OF AGILE SHOULD INCLUDE WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO CREATE THEIR OWN FIT-FOR-PURPOSE FRAMEWORKS THAT ARE MORE EFFECTIVE AND EASIER TO USE.

Agile is far from dead, or even dying. But it is undergoing a transition. It must go beyond a mindset and include better ways of thinking and working.

Agile has expanded beyond creating software and is now used in all parts of an organization. Late adopters are also using it. These people typically require more guidance than the early adopters of decades ago.

These expansions require new concepts.

After a decade of being dominated by simple but immutable frameworks and overly large frameworks, many teams and companies are starting to develop their own approaches or rely on ad hoc methods.

We must not just abandon frameworks, however. Frameworks satisfy the need for having a well-defined set of agreements that people working together use. We need a different kind of framework.

We need to focus on the Manifesto's most powerful words "We are discovering better ways ..."

Frameworks need to be flexible and able to adapt to the changing needs of the people using them.

Fortunately, in this changing environment, other approaches have emerged that can fill the gaps in our needs.



Al Shalloway is the founder and CEO of Success Engineering which focuses on taking a scientific and engineering approach to success. Mr. Shalloway has been a thought leader in design patterns, test-first methods, XP, Scrum, Lean, Flow, Kanban, and SAFe. He is currently championing Amplio with a group of senior consultants to manifest our vision of business agility. Several of these Amplio Consultant Educators (ACEs) helped write this article.

Many have rediscovered the theories of Flow, Lean, and the Theory of Constraints. These can provide the understanding that is needed to be Agile in this new world.

Agile needs to be more than just a mindset now. It must also include a system of execution that:

- the information people need to make decisions on how to work when they need it. This avoids overloading people with too much information while not requiring them to reinvent practices.
- provide guidance on how to improve workflows so it can be determined what and how a change will improve things
- creates a focus on improving the organization's ecosystem. Most challenges encountered are not attributable to individuals. They result from the way people are organized and the practices they follow. This reflects the mantra, "A bad system beats a good person every time." Attending to the system creates safety because management can improve the ecosystem instead of blaming people when challenges arise.

**EXPERIENCE
TEACHES
NOTHING...**

Edwards W. Deming

This system must also integrate theory and experience.

Edwards W. Deming remarked “Experience teaches nothing. In fact, there is no experience to record without theory... Without theory there is no learning... And that is their downfall. People copy examples and then wonder what is the trouble. They look at examples and without theory they learn nothing.”

Theory provides an explanation of the empirical evidence we have. It enables people to take advantage of their experience where previously they weren’t quite sure why it worked or failed.

A system of agreements that is tailored for those using them reduces wasted effort and lowers the amount of motivation and courage required to be effective. It also evokes less resistance because people understand why they are doing what they are doing.

People can create these agreements from scratch or use a framework they are currently following as a baseline. They become the basis of understanding for the organization and its teams. Both the organization and the framework improve.

Accomplishing this requires

- Taking a holistic, systems thinking perspective that takes advantage of value stream analysis and management.
- Identifying the critical stakeholders of the organization, their success criteria, and constraints, and then having these be visible to everyone in the organization.
- Attending to the physics of flow to eliminate delays in workflows. This increases feedback and eliminates wasted effort.
- Using the above to improve the way our people are organized. This helps teams work together while also providing insights on how to remove dependencies.

These insights can provide a Pareto analysis of what to look for to make our workflows better.

The above thinking approaches also come integrated with solid practices and an understanding of where to use them.

“ALL MODELS ARE WRONG, SOME ARE USEFUL.”

George Box

I call these agreements an “adaptive framework.”

They act as the common understanding of how to together. They are the framework within which people work. They change as required, adapting to new situations.

Without these, teams end up having to learn lessons others already know. This can dramatically lower the amount of training and coaching needed. Enabling people to make needed adjustments on their own.

This does not cause Agile to revert to a deterministic system. Rather, it allows

people to take advantage of what they know while preparing for the surprises that will inevitably come.

It adds the why to the how and what. We expand the focus from “What we are doing” to include “Are we doing the right thing?”

As George Box famously said, “All models are wrong, some are useful.”

An adaptive framework continues to improve as we move forward and learn.

In summary, the benefits of adaptive frameworks are:

Enabling a holistic view focusing on creating value.

Having guidance on which practices will work for your situation instead of having to take prescribed approaches as a rigid and inflexible standard.

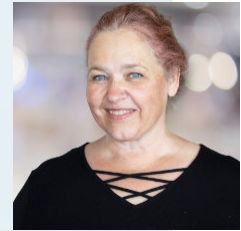
Enable people to start where they are and improve incrementally as appropriate for their situation.

Integrating known practices and where they apply avoids having to reinvent them.

Using fit-for-purpose methods lowers the amount of motivation and courage needed to be effective while also lowering any resistance that may be evoked.

Agile can reinvigorate itself by shifting from predetermined solutions to ways of learning and adjusting. Adaptive frameworks can reinvigorate Agile to satisfy the needs of today.





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ADDICTED TO SOLUTIONS

Hello, my name is Antoinette, and I am addicted to solutions. I thought I had recovered and it had been years since my last transgression, but lo and behold, I realised just last week that I never quite kicked the habit. I was reflecting about a particular scenario, a complex scenario, and caught myself thinking “if they do x then it will solve it all”.

Oh really? One step, and all will be set right in their world? Really?

Wrong. With very few exceptions, dead wrong.

But not a surprise.

Our development from when we are about 6 years old is focused on learning how the world works, how to solve problems and overcome the challenges that Life serves us. We are on a quest to gain expertise in general and around our craft specifically. We pride ourselves on being self-sufficient, we study our field, and we feel accomplished when people talk about concepts, models, and theories and we can contribute. That is certainly true for me.

As we mature and start developing our leadership either in our own lives, or as organizational leaders, we become aware that one cannot be an expert in everything. Organizational success

depends on our ability to keep our customers happy, and keeping customers happy needs more than one specialization. We need a variety of skills to build valuable products and services. We are forced to look towards others, which over time helps us lose our myopic view that knowing everything about our craft makes us Masters of the Universe. We therefore need to create well-functioning teams, and the environment they need to thrive. The skills and mindset to bring this about are very different from our expert mindset. We need to learn how to lead people.

We need to learn how to lead people.

Some of us choose to continue this path, taking on ever bigger and more complex challenges as we mature. Some of us choose to focus on cultivating growth in others, for instance growing leaders. This is what coaching is all about.

What these two paths have in common is that both ask us to sacrifice the instant gratification of coming up with a brilliant solution.

Why?

If we choose the organizational leader route and we want to scale ourselves up, direct a bigger or more impactful part of the organization, either

we work longer and longer hours, or we need to find people to delegate to. Delegation, when done right, will cause decisions to be taken at all levels, not just the top. Over time the leader will grow less and less familiar with what is happening at the coalface, so less and less able to come up with solutions that are well informed.

Should we go the coaching route we realize soon enough that providing solutions, OUR solutions, to the problems our teams and clients face is counter-productive. We are not in their situation, so our skills advice is possibly useless. We are also not them, so our solution will be different to theirs. And if what we are aiming for is behavioral change, telling them what to do is probably going to end up achieving the opposite. How many people do you know changed their behavior after being told to do so? Human beings and their behavior are much more complex than that.

(The irony is not lost on me as I write this: I KNOW that dictating changes in behavior does not work. Yet, I thought that telling myself to stop providing people with solutions would lead me to change my behavior. What was I thinking?)

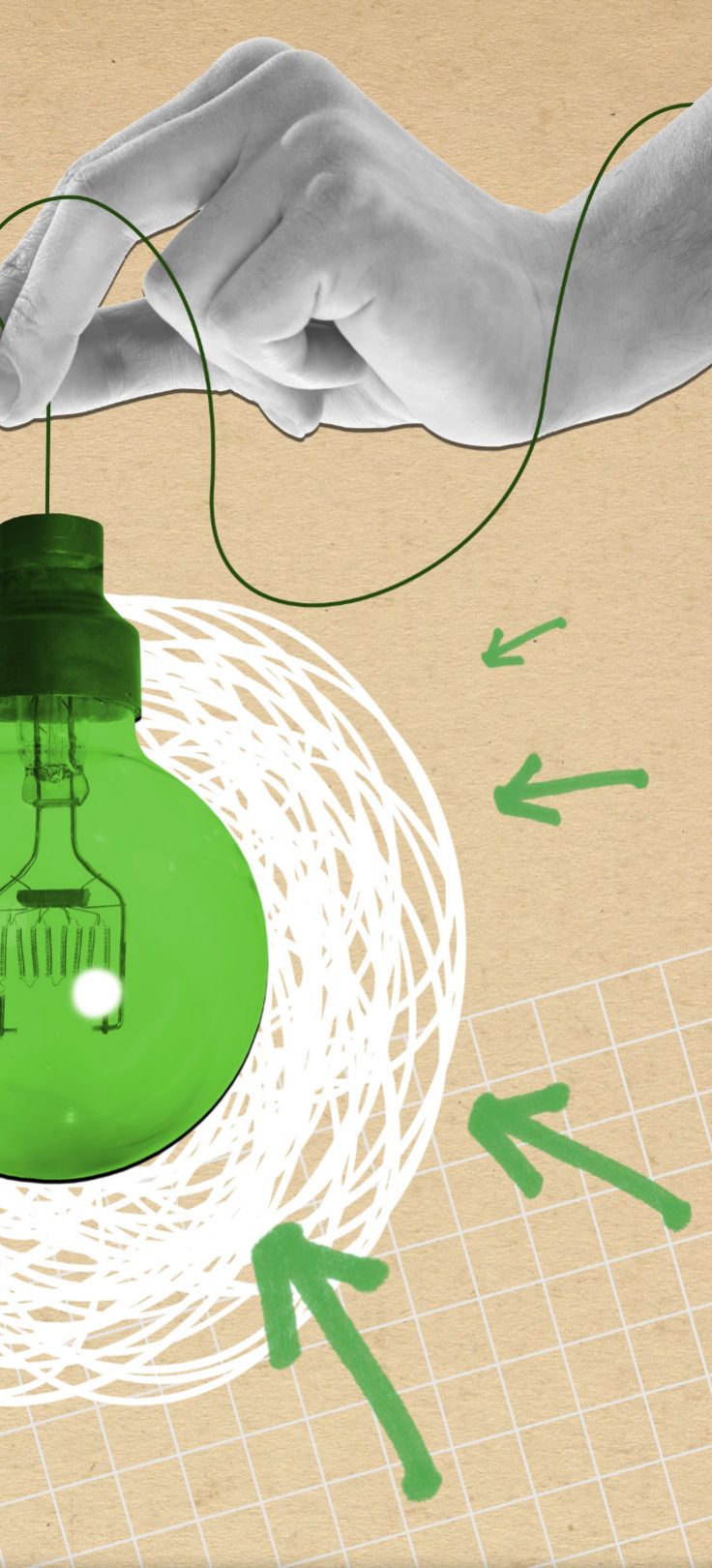
Even though we may realize that serving up solutions to ourselves and others may not be the best for them or the work they do, we seem unable to help ourselves. Why is that?

Firstly, society rewards us for getting rid of problems. If you are a good problem solver, you will get good marks at school and university. You will progress and be rewarded in your organization. People will turn to you for assistance and answers. And it is an honor to be called an expert in your field.

The behavior is thus well practiced. It might even be a habit.

We are also under constant pressure to work faster and faster, get more done. Beat our competitors in the market. If you can come up with a creative solution in





a short time, that saves time, and we all know that time is money. It is therefore hard to resist to bring a solution if I have one, rather than wait for yours. The problem is that if I have more experience or clout than you currently have, both you and I will be tempted to go with my suggestion, rather than explore yours. Which robs you from advancing, and both of us from learning.

Those are some of the external factors that feed the solutioning addiction. But there is also a lot going on within us that makes it hard for us to not go to solutions as soon as possible. Let's start with our brains.

A lot of the patterning in our brain is designed to keep us alive. In prehistoric times we had to decide instantaneously whether the creature coming towards us could be food for us, or whether we could be food for them! Our brains are designed to sense, make sense, evaluate and decide super fast. The neuroplasticity of the brain is what aids in this process, through the creation of neural pathways. Neural pathways are not so easy to change, though. We need to replace them. When I decide that I don't want to give in to my knee jerk reaction to provide a solution, I need to forge a new neural pathway. I need to catch myself in the act, and respond differently, several times, before that new pathway will be established.

That takes time and effort.

A second obstacle is when our egos are linked to our ability to problem solve. Exactly what has served us in our development, being able to form an opinion of the problem, followed by a good solution, is now standing in our way. If we tied our value to this capability, it is almost impossible for the ego to tolerate looking like we don't know. For some of us redefining our worth requires a deep investigation, and a scary jump to a place where we are beginners again.

Is your sense of self strong enough to appear ignorant for the sake of someone else's growth?

There are many more reasons that make this transition to "ignorance" hard, but let's end with the most



Antoinette is an ex-software developer that took a detour through academia to her current role as a professional coach. With extensive experience in Enterprise Agile transformations supplemented by formal studies, she now focuses on developing leaders and leadership teams to foster inner agility and Deliberately Developmental environments within their organizations. Her coaching approach is built on the principles of Vertical Development, Organisation and Relational Systems Coaching, and Dialogical Leadership, emphasizing the synergy between these methodologies.

uncomfortable one of all. The difficulty of working with this last one not only stands in the way of others developing and growing, but also impedes our own development. It is our attachment to the idea that there is AN answer, singular. A correct answer. It is so incredibly painful to not have a solution that our brains compulsively seek and analyze, seek and analyze. We are utterly convinced that the perfect solution exists, and if only we can think about it deeply enough, understand it well enough, gather enough data, models, theory and experience, we will find it. This belief makes it impossible for us to simply sit in aporia, a state of puzzlement and not knowing. So, we soldier on in our minds, desperately seeking for solutions, and when we find it, even though there might be cognitive dissonance, we grab it like an enemy's flag and wave it about with great relief. And our minds close to other possibilities, because once we KNOW, once we have that first solution, our curiosity is satisfied, and we lose interest.

In a world where the vast majority of problems are complex, meaning that cause and effect cannot be predicted, but only seen retrospectively, this approach is a tragic waste of energy. It reduces the vantage points from which we look at problems and makes our thinking one-dimensional. Unchecked, it kills original thought, novel solutions and innovation.

And yet, I still catch myself doing exactly that. Not all the time, mostly when I am under time pressure, getting too busy, but it is there.

How do we change?

It starts by noticing and growing awareness. Our capacity to observe ourselves is one of the most important tools in our growth. We need to protect it at all costs by giving it space, time, and attention.

We need to slow down.

Noticing also relies on our ability to be exquisitely present in situations, so creating for ourselves the necessary conditions for Presence in body, mind and soul is essential. It means I need to make friends with the anxiety that comes with not knowing, since anxiety interferes with my ability to be present. And I have to decouple my worth as a human being from my ability to solve problems. If I truly want great solutions to come about in the world, I need to ensure that my need for validation does not limit what is possible. What if my ultimate role in creating solutions is supporting another's thinking?

I also need to grow my ability to see and make sense of complexity. The majority of problems do not have

a solution that is obvious and springs to mind immediately. Complexity requires experimentation, probing, sensing, responding. The more we work with complexity, the easier it becomes to give up on our certainty about a solution – we learn through experience that it is pointless. And the more we are able to do that, the more we will keep exploring, and paradoxically, the better the chance of finding an extraordinary solution.

If we truly want to change, if we truly want to bring about a different future, we need to figure out what currently defines us. And then give it up. And allow ourselves to flounder for a bit, stay in the not-knowing. Give complexity a chance to work us, rather than the other way. The way will become clear.

That is one way. It works for me. But then, I am not you. I am not in your situation. So who knows what the solution is for you?

I certainly don't!





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3 TIPS FOR C-LEVEL TO SUCCEED AT AGILE FUNDING

AI is everywhere right now — in Sales, Marketing, and Agile. So, while getting ready for Agile 2024, I decided to test out a hypothetical: Can AI replace an actual Agile professional as a consultant to the C-level? I started with a topic close to my heart — Agile Funding.

Those who saw my presentation at the Knowledge Hub won't be surprised, but here's what I discovered.

How does this look as an Agile Triangle:

- **Value:** Fixed (Primary focus)
- **Quality:** Variable (Maintain high standards)
- **Constraints** (Time and Cost): Flexible?

How about the top 1 mistake being “**fixed budget**”?

Or a lovely “be prepared to adjust budgets based on project **needs** dynamically.”

While AI can provide good information on Agile Funding, it highlights the gap between true Agile principles and current widely adopted practices.



Establishing Agile Funding in Your Organization

Understanding the Reversed Iron Triangle

Agile, first and foremost, was chosen as a methodology to handle complexity. In software projects, complexity often arises from uncertainties in both the process/tools/technologies (the How) and the requirements (the What).

Let's look at Stacey's Matrix—complex projects are in the middle of the matrix. Both “How do we get there?” and “What is needed?” are not obvious but not entirely unknown.

Other options are:

Financing Simple or Complicated Projects: Use this for well-defined projects with clear outcomes. Estimate budgets and timelines accurately, implement risk management and maintain control points.

Financing Chaotic Projects: For projects with no clear path or requirements, use methodologies like “Triage” and finance them day by day.

Financing Complex Projects: This is where the Reversed Iron Triangle comes into play. Instead of estimating uncertain timelines and costs, focus on delivering the best possible outcomes within set constraints (timeline and budget).

Imagine standing in the middle of JFK airport at noon. You know you need to get to the Empire State Building, and you know you have only \$100 in your pocket.

The love of your life will be waiting for you on top of the Empire State Building at 3 pm. The ticket to the top costs \$80, and that leaves you with only 3 hours and \$20 bucks to get yourself there.

Yes, it might be your first visit to NYC, so traffic is unknown and unpredictable, and you have no idea how the subway system works.

So you start experimenting with theories and make hypotheses, quickly validating them. “Can I walk there?” — you measure that you can walk half a mile in 10 minutes and check that it's gonna take you 6 hours to walk 18 miles between JFK and the Empire State Building. “Can I get an Uber?” — a quick check on the app, and the cost is \$50. Nope, not enough money. AirTrain to Subway? \$21.

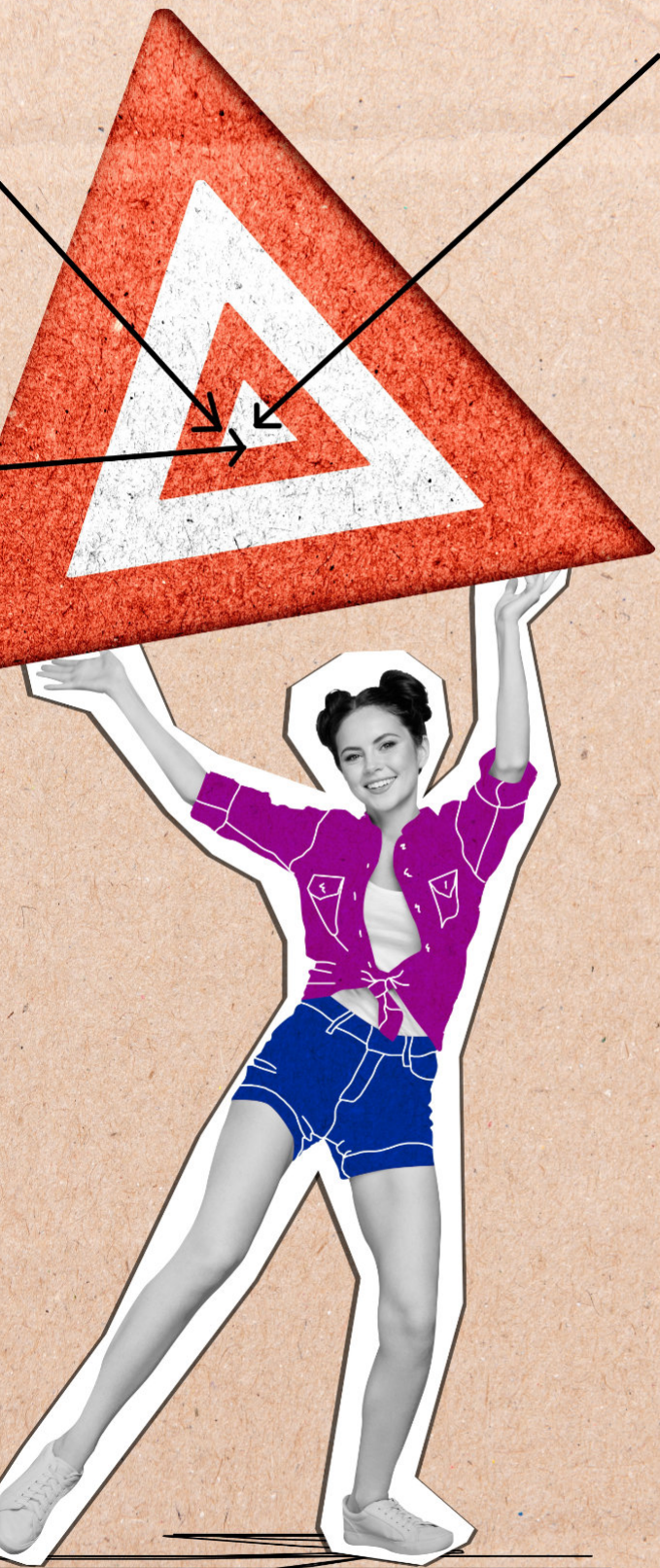
And finally, you find a perfect option. Bus to the subway for \$10 you have and 1:50 minutes total travel time, which actually gives you a little time to spare and get ready for the meet.

That is Agile.

With Reversed Iron Triangle, you fix the constraints (timeline and budget) but allow the exact scope to be flexible enough while still maintaining focus on a bigger goal of getting a particular value to your users and to your organization. Can that hurt?

Let's use the Pareto rule here. 20% of the features usually bring 80% value to your users. If your budget and timeline allow us to develop 80% of the desired features (starting with 20% of the most impactful ones, of course), it means that (pure mathematics) 95% of your user needs will





be covered. Is this 5% worth the sacrifice and going over budget? It might. The remaining 5% can be evaluated for its worth and decided upon accordingly. However evaluation will be done on business and organizational merits, not team needs and wants.

Ensuring Accountability

You saw the description of the Reversed Iron Triangle or Agile triangle above.

Well, that is how the actual author of the concept, Jim Highsmith, defined it in Agile Project Management:

Value goal: Build a customer-valued, releasable product

Quality goal: Build a reliable, adaptable product

Constraints goal: Achieve value and quality within acceptable constraints (scope, schedule, cost).

A lot of fake professionals in the Agile Community are like “unagi” — cool-sounding but actually slippery and almost impossible to catch with your bare hands, especially when it comes to accountability.

The difference between the actual description of the **Agile Triangle** and what AI gave us is just another example.

When it comes to evaluating accountability, “Achieve value and quality within acceptable constraints” **is not equal to** “Constraints (Time and Cost): Flexible.”

Accountability is crucial. Many in the Agile community talk about “help” and “empowerment,” but the focus should remain on responsibility and accountability. Stay true to Agile’s core: working with people ready to take accountability.

Do not let Agile project teams invalidate your professional responsibility to hold them accountable for value delivery and for adhering to the constraints that the organization had set for them.

You can even shift towards outcome-based contracts

where payments are tied to the delivery of specific outcomes or value.

Using Agile Funding as a Leadership Tool

Look, Agile Funding is not meant to be comfortable for your Agile teams. It's a tool for better management and achieving organizational goals.

Agile funding allows for dynamic adjustments based on performance and priorities, providing control and predictability over spending. Basically, Agile funding is a carrot in front of your team that can be taken away in the blink of an eye.

The best way to ensure that you are in control is to “shift left.” Ensure shorter iterations and consistent sprint-based value delivery. This will give you information and metrics to evaluate situations often and make necessary changes by making data-based decisions, not decisions made solely on “team feedback” or “project needs.”

Embrace Agile Funding

Agile funding might seem harsh but it provides true control over the financial complexities of Agile projects. It challenges teams to step out of their comfort zones, fostering creativity and innovation. Embrace Agile funding to drive success and benefit your organization and employees.

By adopting these principles, you'll enhance your strategic management and ensure your Agile initiatives deliver real value.



Ivan Gekht, the CEO of Gehtsoft USA since 2009, is a dynamic thought leader in the software development industry. With various certifications, including PSM III, ICP-ACC, CSSC BB, and DASM, Ivan is a seasoned entrepreneur and passionate advocate for Agile methodologies. With two decades of experience partnering with diverse businesses, from startups to billion-dollar enterprises, Ivan's expertise is widely recognized. Notably, he has been featured as a published author in various reputable magazines, including Authority Magazine, Forbes, and Disrupt Magazine. Ivan's thoughtful insights drive Agile transformations and fuel innovation in the industry.

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Agile Bulletin 2024