

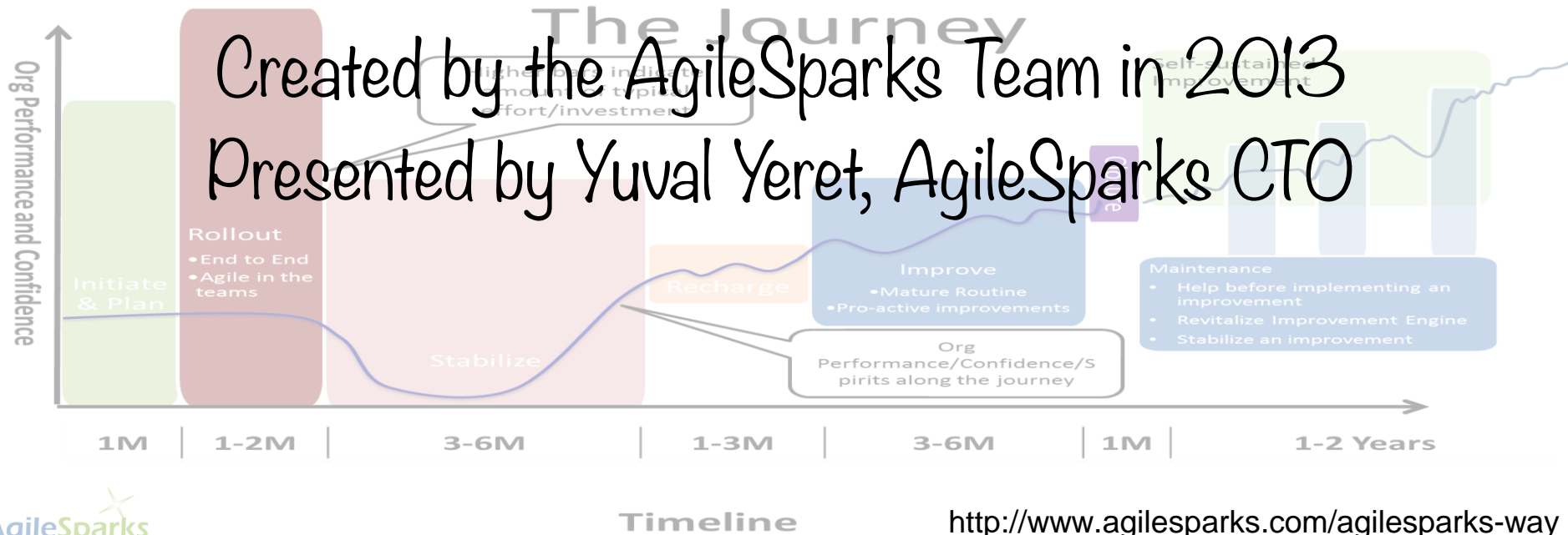
The AgileSparks Way



AN AGILE CHANGE JOURNEY BLUEPRINT

The AgileSparks Way

Created by the AgileSparks Team in 2013
 Presented by Yuval Yeret, AgileSparks CTO



AgileSparks & The need for a way

- AgileSparks is an agile consulting company. Our team of coaches/consultants help organizations improve through becoming more lean/agile. The main way we do that is through guiding organizations in their journey towards agile – what we call an agile implementation service. (We also hold Public Training workshops, conferences and community activities in which we educate people so they feel more prepared for the journey as well as to help them boost their capabilities support these journeys’)
- Through our work with dozens of groups/organizations taking the agile journey we realized both we as well as the organizations would benefit from a “map” to the territory:
- The coaches on our team as well as leadership teams we were working with wanted to have a proven blueprint. One that can be the starting point with a couple of options which routes to take, leveraging the collective wisdom gathered in the 6 years we’ve been walking these paths.



The AgileSparks Way

AN AGILE CHANGE JOURNEY BLUEPRINT

PLAN & INITIATE



Understand Pains

Establish Goals for Agile Initiative

Management Workshop

KICK OFF

Define & Kick Off Agile Cadence

Visualize Work Across Teams

Kick off Agile in the Teams

Initial Backlog Grooming + Grooming Routine

All-Hands Agile Intro

Establish Initial Work Policies

Agile Requirements Training

Agile Training for Leads

ALM Tool Yes/No? When? Which?

STABILIZE

Focused Coaching in Hot Areas

Agile-based Visibility & Prediction

Launch Forums ScrumMasters Managers...

Stabilizing Retrospectives

Focus on Struggling & Blocked Work

Agile Testing Principles & Practices

Inspect & Adapt Policies

More Frequent Builds & Integration

Build Agile Training & Development Plan Per Role

Phase Summary & Plan Next Steps

Recharge



IMPROVE

WIP Diet

Focus on Improving Agile KPIs

From Components to Feature Teams

Frequent Releases Diet

Agile Management & HR

Identify & Coach Agile Champions From Within

Agile Engineering Practices

Amplify Feedback Loops

Create Slack for Working on Improvement

Assess Agile Implementation Depth

Improve Meetings Using Facilitation

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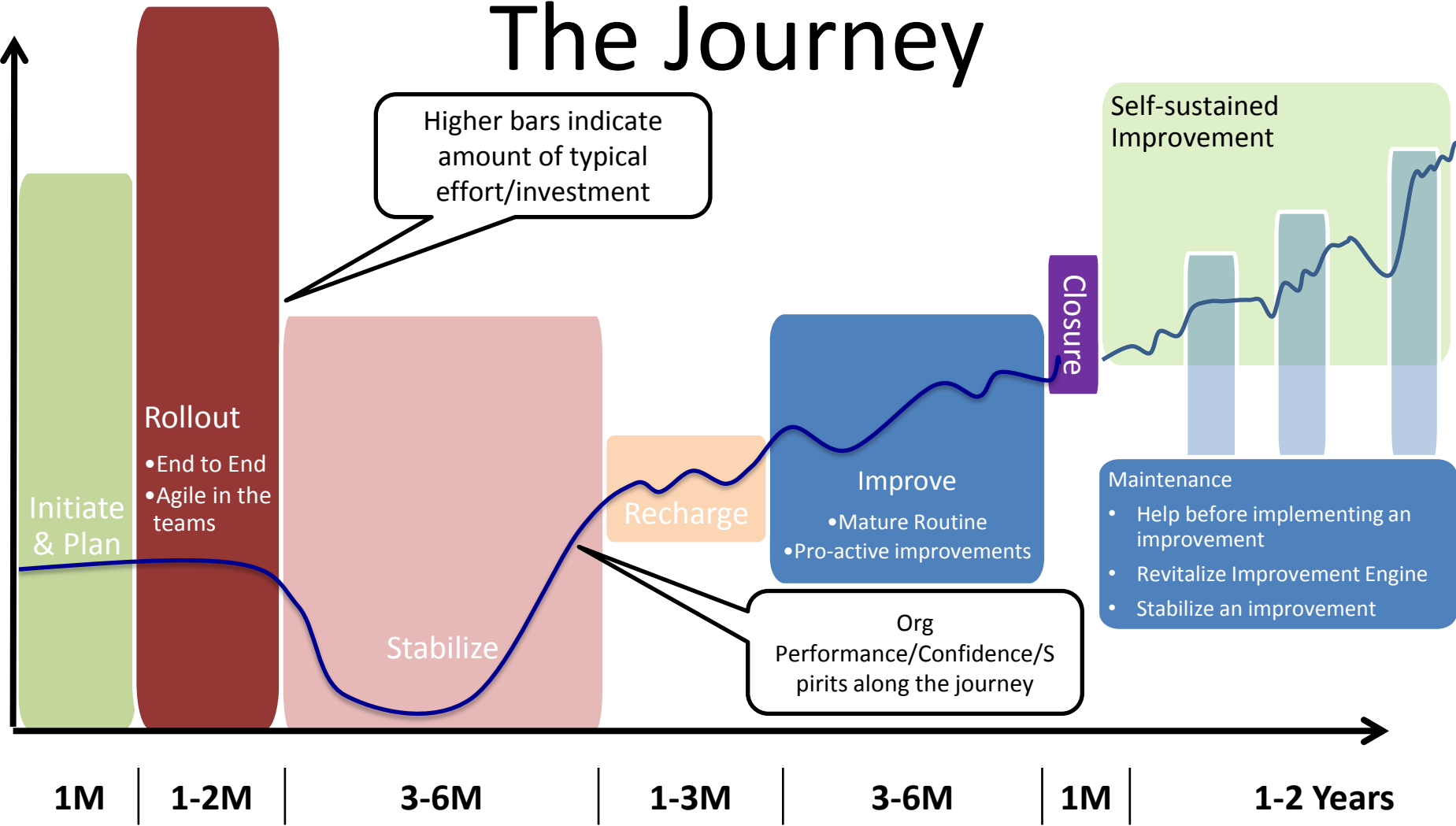
Agile Initiative Steering Forum

Run Agile Initiative using Agile

CLOSURE
AgileSparks Moving to Pull Mode

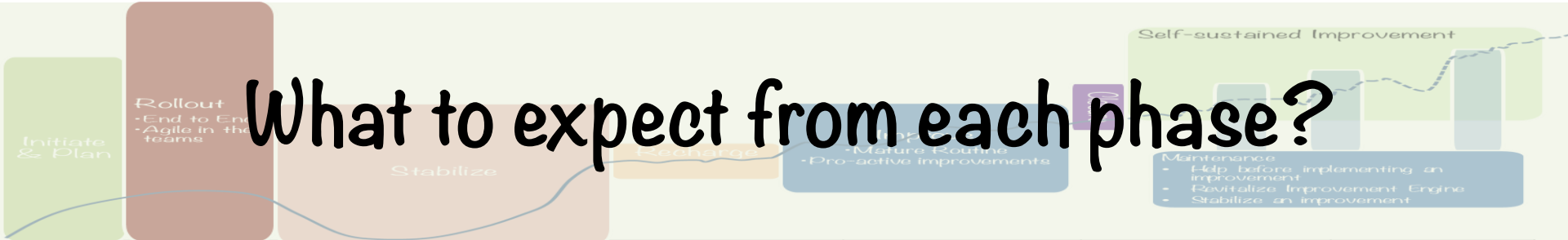
The Journey

Org Performance and Confidence



Timeline

What to expect from each phase?



	Initiate & Plan	Rollout	Stabilize	Recharge	Improve	Closure
Timeline	1M	1-2M	3-6M	1-3M	3-6M	1M
Theme	Plan for agility	Novice agility	Competent agility at current process	Recharge energies for further improvement	Competent at adapting/ improving	Learn from the journey
Deliverables (DoD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of pains/opportunities Goals Common language Management buy-in including willing to pay the price High level plan for the journey and more concrete plan for Rollout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All initial building blocks were launched and can be observed in operation. Includes Process/Engineering Can start learning how it is working and Stabilize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reached the agreed upon goals Reduced significantly the identified pains Current process feels reasonably ok, feeling we are after the initial storming Can sustain current process/practices even without support/coaching Can expect limited amount of further improvement/tweaks without support/coaching Have updated goals/pains to address in the Improve phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained stable operation as of end of Stabilize phase Recharged energies and now ready to take significant improvement steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement capability - can expect continued stream of significant evolutionary improvements without external coaching Reached the agreed upon updated goals Reduced significantly new pains identified at end of Stabilize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons for future change initiatives Identified next steps to ensure continued improvement Decided & setup external coaching support/maintenance Identified opportunities to leverage agility elsewhere in the organization

The AgileSparks Way

IMPROVE

PLAN & INITIATE

First exposure to Agile? Start here

RO

Agile is not working?

Doing some agile in a stable way but want to improve?

KICK OFF

STABILIZE



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Phase Summary & Plan Next Steps



- WIP Diet
- From Components to Feature Teams
- Agile Management & HR
- Agile Engineering Practices
- Create Slack for Working on Improvement
- Improve Meetings Using Facilitation
- Focus on Improving Agile KPIs
- Frequent Releases Diet
- Identify & Coach Agile Champions From Within
- Amplify Feedback Loops
- Assess Agile Implementation Depth
- ...

Agile Initiative Steering Forum

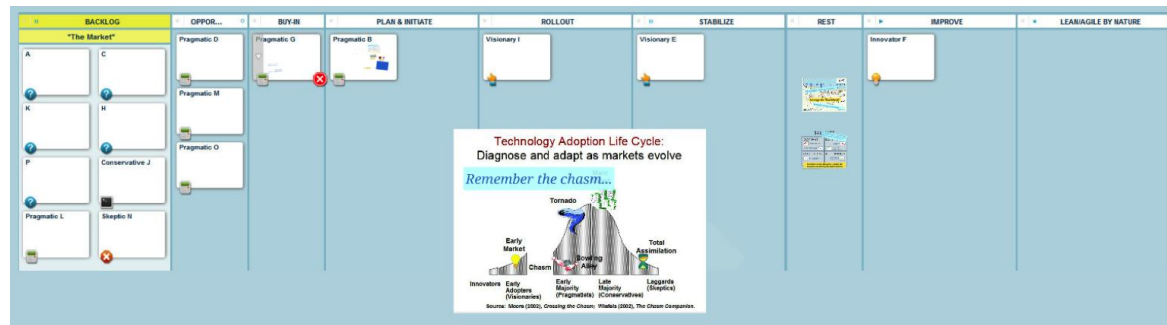
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CLOSURE
AgileSparks Moving to Pull Mode



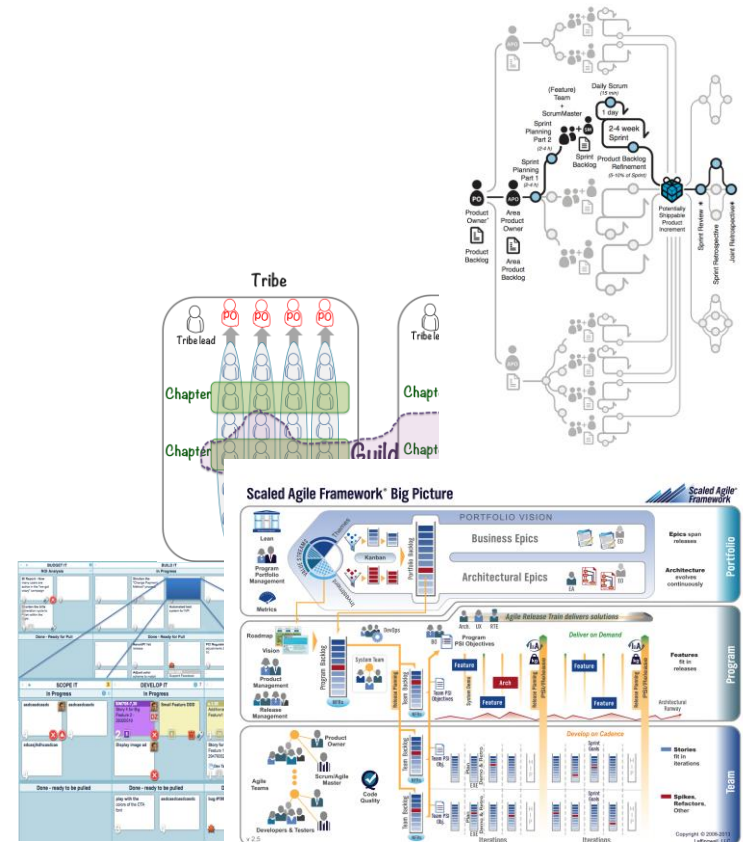
A Way for the bigger enterprise

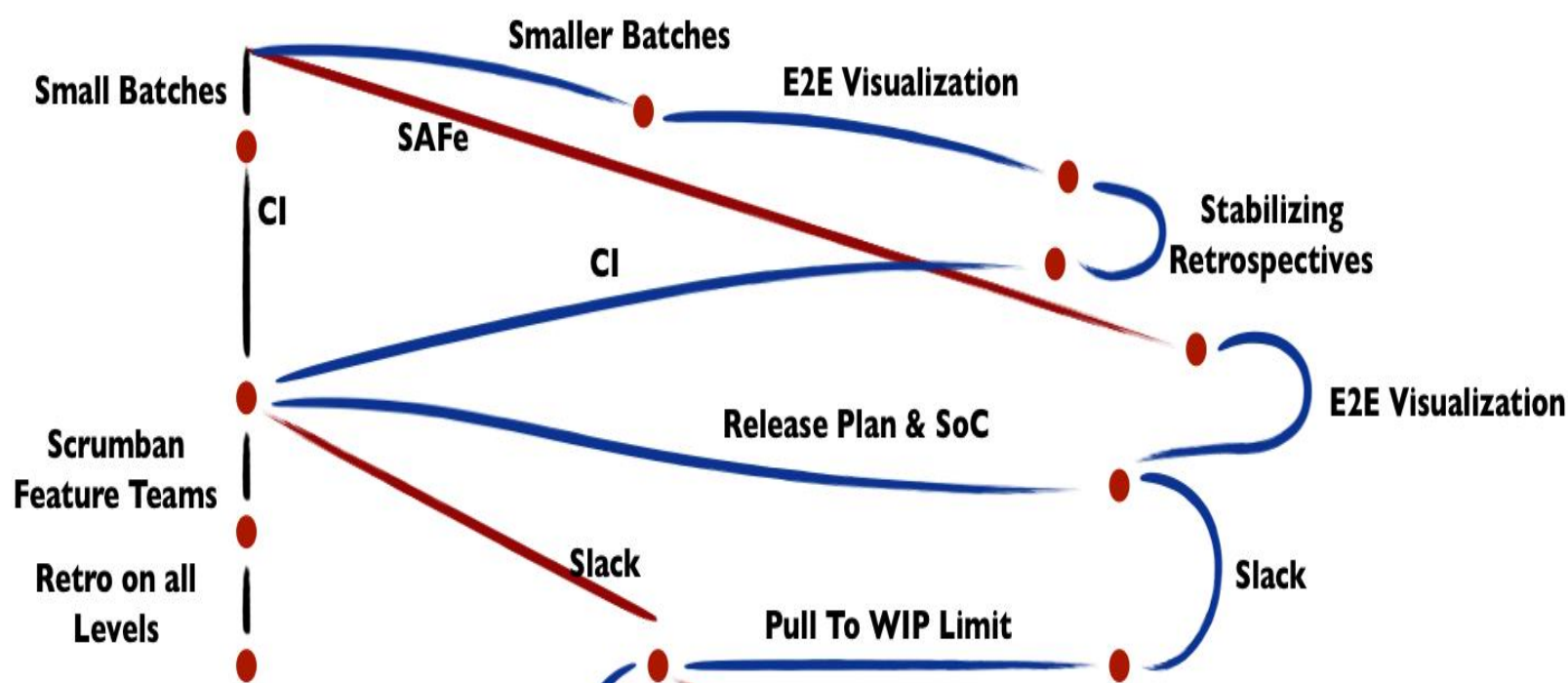
- If your organization is bigger, you could look at each group/LOB as an entity going through its journey at its own pace.
- A shared services group can market, sell, support the journey of each group, as well as look for opportunities to reuse/leverage learning/ideas across groups.
- For more on this approach see <http://www.agilesparks.com/kanban-sane-way-towards-agile-enterprise-lkuk2013>



How is this related to “Scaling Agile” approaches?

- There are a couple of frameworks aimed at providing a blueprint/map for how your agile process/structure should look like:
 - Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)
 - Large Scale Scrum
 - Disciplined Agile Delivery
 - Enterprise/SOA Kanban
 - Spotify’s approach.
- The agile change journey blueprint is NOT a scaled agile framework.





Why a blueprint/map for the change journey?

- Knowing the destination is not enough. Actually in many cases there is uncertainty around the exact destination.
- A good guide/sherpa that knows the territory is an option – but people also want to have a map and navigate themselves.
- One of our key design principles was to provide some structure/guidance while embracing uncertainty. A map gives you understanding of the territory and your options but doesn't force you into a single path.

Improvement

The AgileSparks Way

PLAN & INITIATE



2. Figure out a path towards the destination

OFF

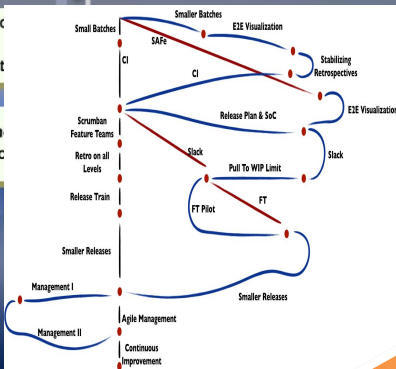
3. Iteratively Reorient and Readjust path and maybe destination

ABILIZ

Understand Pains

Establish Goals for Agile Initiative

Management Workshops



Kick off Agile in the Teams

Establish Initial Work Policies

Focused Coaching in Hot Areas

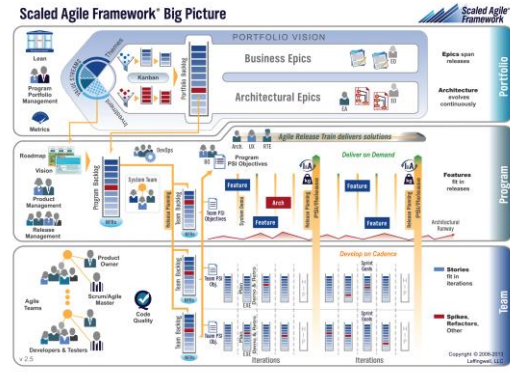
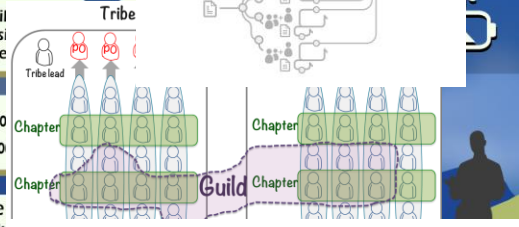
Stabilizing Retrospectives

Inspect & Adapt

Agile Visibility

Focus on & Block

More Business Intelligence



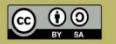
1. With your goals in mind, Figure out whether a Scaled Agile Framework is your destination

Agile Steering Forum

IMPROVE

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CLOSURE
AgileSparks Moving to Pull Mode



What are the chances of success?

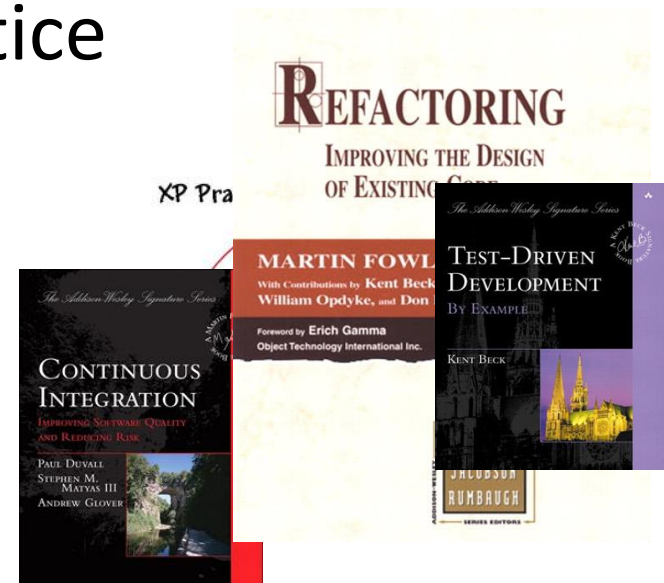
- The change journey blueprint/way is based on dozens of real life projects with a very high success rate.
- But Reaching the goals and especially sustaining improvement is mainly up to the organization and its leadership.
- Using the change journey blueprint increases the chances of success while ensuring a smarter and more focused/economic investment/effort along the way.

How much investment will it require?

- It obviously depends on the size of the group, the starting point, the willingness to change and the pace/intensity of the change.
- The most important point is considering the potential business value of the ROI from going Agile.
- In the “Plan & Initiate” phase we explore the potential value as well as the estimated investment and typically agree upon a plan which brings dramatic ROI to the organization.

What about engineering practices?

- Engineering practices are used along the way.
- Can be included in initial steps or added in order to deal with emerging situations.
- The blueprint/way provides guidance for when to decide to add a practice



1. Visualize & Manage the Flow

- Visualize main Work types (using Kanban Board or similar) to create flow awareness
- Definition of what Done (Working Tested Software) means is clear and adhered to ("DoD") so real flow is measured and so exceptions drive discussion/Improvement.
- Visualize who is working on what in order to be aware of level of multi tasking and dependency on specific people.
- Commitment to finishing work over starting new (eventually reaching a WIP level that "feels OK" for the team) to start to "weaken" constrain and improve flow.
- Use flow diagrams/charts (e.g. CFDs) to provide predictability and insight into flow
- Visualize and focus on blocked work so major flow efficiency issues are addressed
- Visualize work that is queued/waiting between people/workflow states to start raise to awareness reasons for queuing and identify options for reducing
- Awareness of Work Types and Work Items and differences in handling, in order to enable expectation setting with different stakeholders for different needs & allow people to make intelligent flow decisions according to the context
- Some areas in the flow have local work in process (WIP) limits - leading to lower WIP and cycle times and more explicit opportunities to learn from the (lack of) flow
- Visualize work variability and seek to reduce it (e.g. using Cycle Time Control Charts) so that overall average cycle time is improved and there is less uncertainty about velocity/cycle times enabling more aggressive planning
- Explicit WIP limit at workflow level - Single workflow full pull - catching more flow problems and driving WIP/cycle time even lower.
- Next is re-prioritized continuously (no commitment in Next)- Deferred Pull decisions (dynamic prioritization) in order to enable business agility.
- Definition of what "Ready for work" means is clear and adhered to in order to minimize rework or blocks due to unready work occupying the WIP.
- Guidelines for how to pull work (selection from "Next"/prioritization of WIP) are clear to everyone and adhered to so that most decisions can be decentralized and made faster as well as driving discussion about how to work and resulting in experiments/improvements
- Capacity is allocated to Investment Themes using work in process limits so that it is possible to ensure certain investment in each theme.

2. Improve

- Regular Lessons Learned events (frequency of no less than every 1-4 weeks) with actionable outcomes (e.g. Retrospectives/Kaizen)

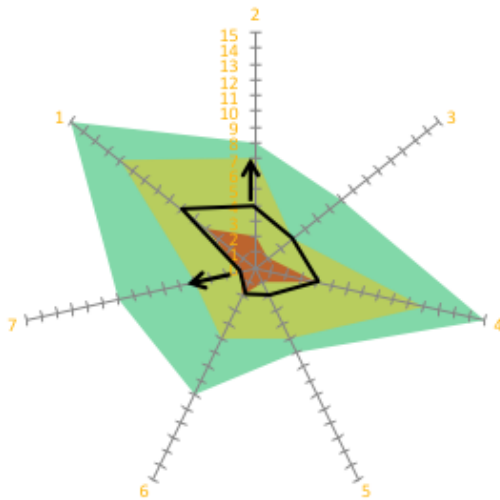
- People at all levels are highly aware and involved in improvement activity
- Actionable Improvement Work is visualized and managed using "Stop starting start finishing"
- Leaders are aware of the current operational capabilities (may require metrics)
- Leaders have an operational capabilities goal
- Team/Group knows the current process challenge they are targeting
- Team/Group knows what obstacles are preventing them from overcoming the current process challenge
- Team/Group addresses the current process challenge
- Team/Group improves the current process
- Team/Group maintains the current process condition

4

2. Business Value Driven Development

- Product owner sees working software frequently and uses the feedback to adapt the scope/timeline plan
- Work Items are integrative and testable cross-cutting across the architecture if necessary (e.g. User Stories). Done = Deployable and Performant/Secure, enabling real feedback/learning. Work items are integrative testable & SMALL - can be delivered in days thereby tightening the internal team level feedback loop
- Frequency of feedback from stakeholders/users is used to adapt the scope/timeline closing a real feedback beyond the product owner
- Escaping Defects and other kinds of Failure Demand (Waste) are analyzed using Five Whys or another kind of root cause analysis process in order to determine reasons for missing them earlier in the process.
- Value is delivered in iterative chunks using Minimally Marketable Features (MMFs) thereby achieving business agility - faster time to market and keeping more options open to what will be delivered after the current MMFs
- Requirements that are Hypothesis are validated Using MVP/MVF in a fast learning loop that includes Beta/Early Access programs or Continuous Delivery, in order to enable safe/cheap-to-fail experiments about risky but worthy ideas.
- Feature Usefulness and Successfulness is evaluated as part of the development lifecycle. Learning is applied to improve the feature and future ideas.
- Frequency of delivery to real users - up to 8 weeks apart
- Continuous Delivery - work items are deployed/activated/validated as part of the work life cycle - in a matter of hours/days thereby minimizing the work done without feedback that it is in the right direction

3



3. Individuals & Interactions

Feedback Loops

- All people involved in a work item work on it more or less in the same time period (Developers, Testers, Functional/Product) minimizing the overhead/waste from context switching/recalling past work.
- All people involved in a work item (even across silos) can collaborate directly with each other without third parties like team leads in every coordination/communication loop enabling faster decisions and more scalable operation.
- People working together act as a team with shared accountability to end to end delivery thereby decisions are more value than silo-focused
- Significant aspects of goals and rewards are oriented towards team performance/goals (rather than individual performance) driving collaboration not just individualism.
- Team environment is as collaboration friendly as possible
- Individuals are involved in performance feedback of the people they are working with, to encourage teamwork

4. Engineering Practices

- There is a clear definition of what "Coding Done" means and people are working according to it
- People are expected to write SOLID/CLEAN code and estimations reflect it
- Automation coverage is planned and implemented as an integral part of production code implementation
- Defects created as part of new development are fixed as early as possible and in any case before considering that work item as done
- There is a Test Automation Pyramid strategy guiding Automation coverage decisions (Preference to Unit Tests>>API tests>>UI tests)
- People are expected to refactor smelly code as part of "Coding Done" and estimations reflect it
- Functional Design is specified Test-Driven (ATDD/BDD)
- Sustained or improved code coverage is verified at build time using code coverage analysis tools (e.g. Sonar)
- Team is pro-actively and methodically improving collective ownership
- All code is reviewed in small batches, gaps are closed within hours
- People have access to the tools they need to do effective SW engineering
- A prioritized backlog of Technical Debt (ugly code, missing tests, etc.) is available and capacity is allocated to reducing it

4

Lean/Agile depth assessment helps you understand your capabilities and suggests next steps towards your destination

Agile Dep

Team: Sky

Date: Sep 2013

and individuals as a way to enable faster decisions as well as higher engagement/motivation

9. People are given opportunity to improve their mastery of areas which interest them

10. People can shape their work environment - technologies, facilities, etc.

I want/have to use Scrum.

Do I need the agile change journey blueprint?

- We believe that “Want to use Scrum/Kanban/XXX” is a decision you should make after you consider your goals and your options as part of the “Plan & Initiate” phase.
- If your mind is set or you have it as an external requirement (bigger organization decision, client demands, etc.) you should still understand what to focus on when using Scrum (replace with method of choice) and you will still benefit from managing your agile journey using a change journey map/blueprint like the one described here.
- Actually our agile change journey blueprint is method-agnostic. You can use it with any of the familiar agile methods.

Ways to use the Way

1. Do It Yourself
2. Full-touch/Light-touch Agile Coaching
3. Agile Coaching just for the change leader



You don't have to use AgileSparks or even an Agile Coach. The purpose of the Way is to be a "map for the territory" that can help people navigate or at least understand where they are. Obviously having an expert guide can help reduce risks, shorten the time to a stable healthy way of working. Regardless, it is your organization and its leaders/managers who will do the walking.

Contact us at info@agilesparks.com or <http://www.agilesparks.com/agilesparks-way> to learn more.