

Leading with Agility: Embracing the Mindset Shift

Council of HR Executives
(Eastern Canada)

FEBRUARY 2025





WHAT IS AGILE?

HOW IT WORKS?

WHAT CAN WE DO?



NUMBER OF YEARS IT TOOK FOR EACH PRODUCT TO GAIN 50 MILLION USERS:

Airlines	Automobiles	Telephone	Electricity	Credit Card	Television	ATM	
							
68 yrs	52 yrs	50 yrs	46 yrs	28 yrs	22 yrs	18 yrs	
Computer	Cell Phone	Internet	iPods	Youtube	Facebook	Twitter	ChatGPT
							
14 yrs	12 yrs	7 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs	2 yrs	1 month



“Turns out that in an age of wrenching change and hyper-competition, the most valuable human capabilities are precisely those that are least manage-able.

Nerve. Artistry. Élan. Originality. Grit. Non-conformity. Valor. Derring-do. These are the qualities that create value in the 21st century.

Self-discipline. Economy. Orderliness. Rationality. Prudence. Reliability. Moderation. Fastidiousness. These are the human qualities modern management was designed to foster and reward.

No wonder most organizations are less resilient and inventive than the people who work for them.”

- Gary Hamel



What is Agile?





When you hear about Agile what do you think of?



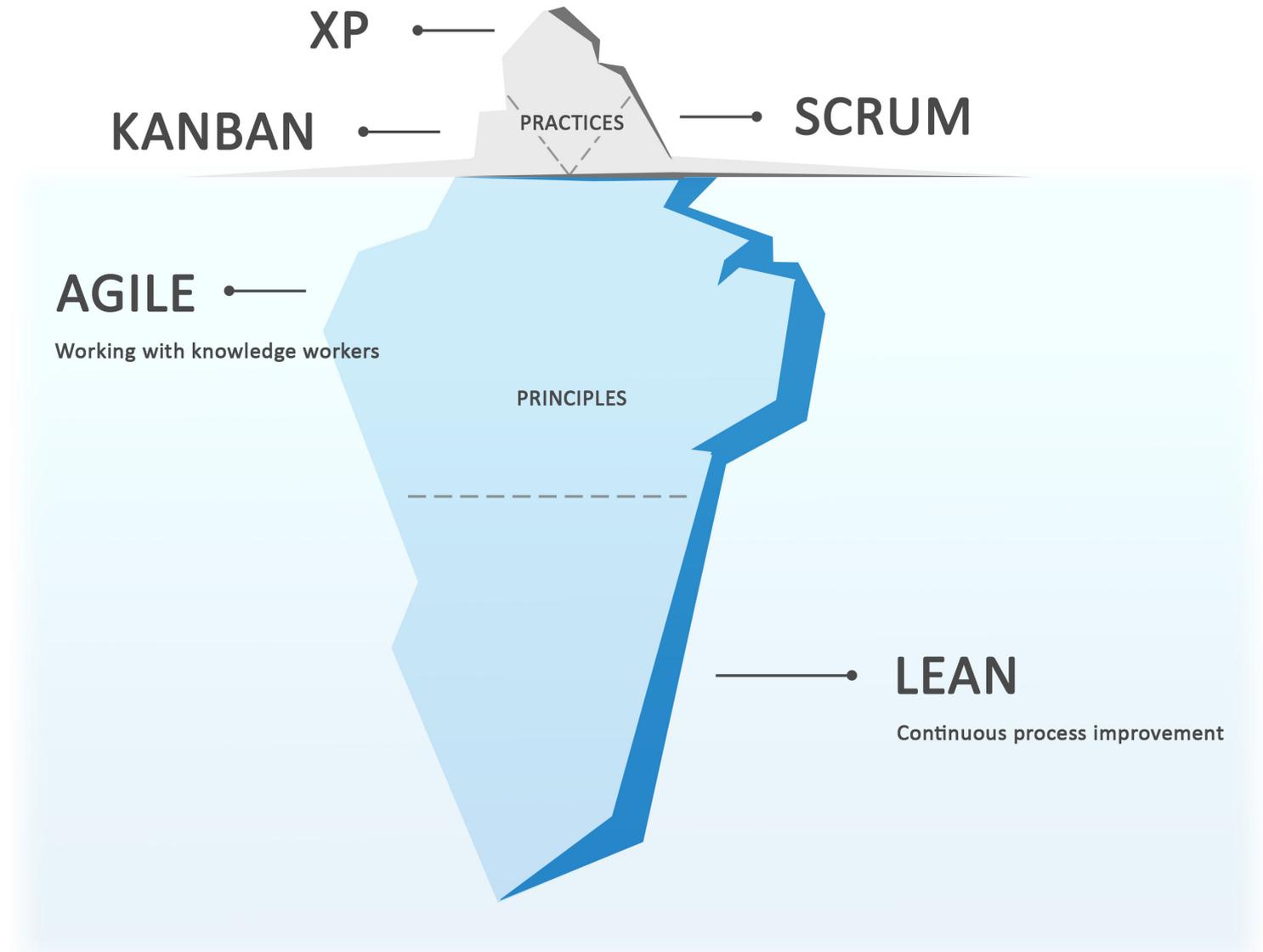
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Lean, Agile and Scrum

Tools and Practices

used with
Lean / Agile

Principles and Mindset





68!

Actual Count:



Predicted Total:

80?

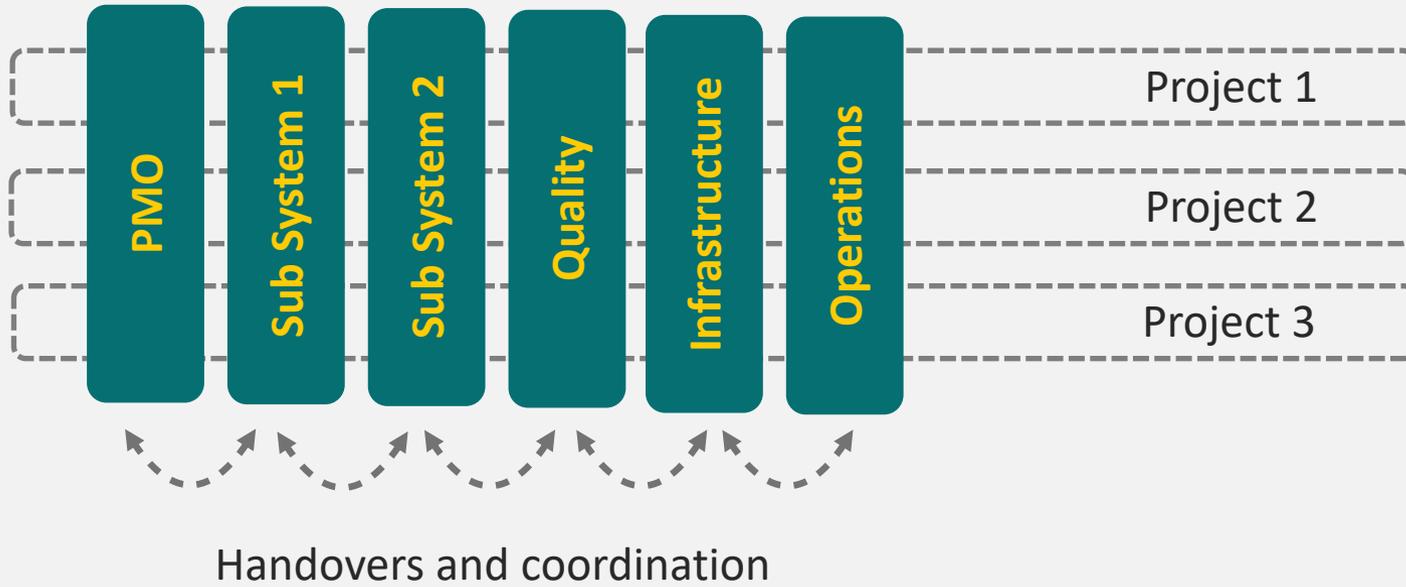
Cornerstones for Agile Delivery

What are the essential elements of a successful agile transformation?

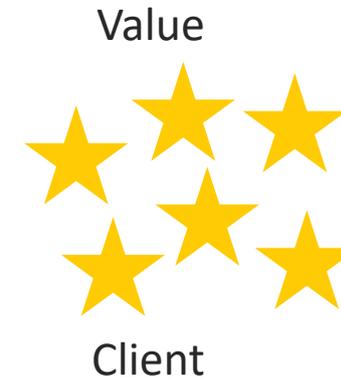
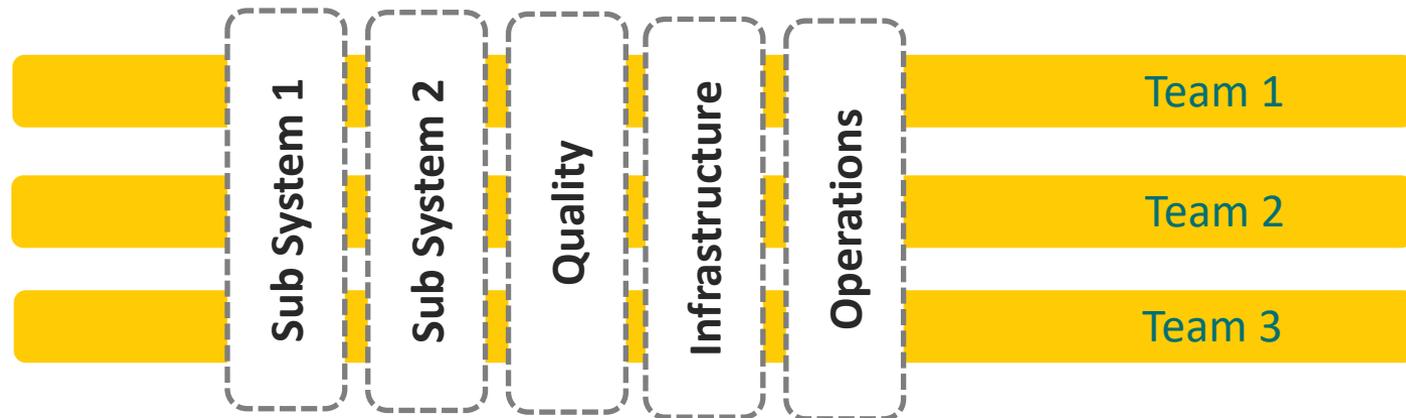
Empirical Process



Cross-functional Teams Optimize Learning



Functional teams... optimize for utilization, and *efficiency*



Cross-functional teams... optimize for value delivery and *time-to-market*



Cornerstones for Agile Delivery

What are the essential elements of a successful agile transformation?

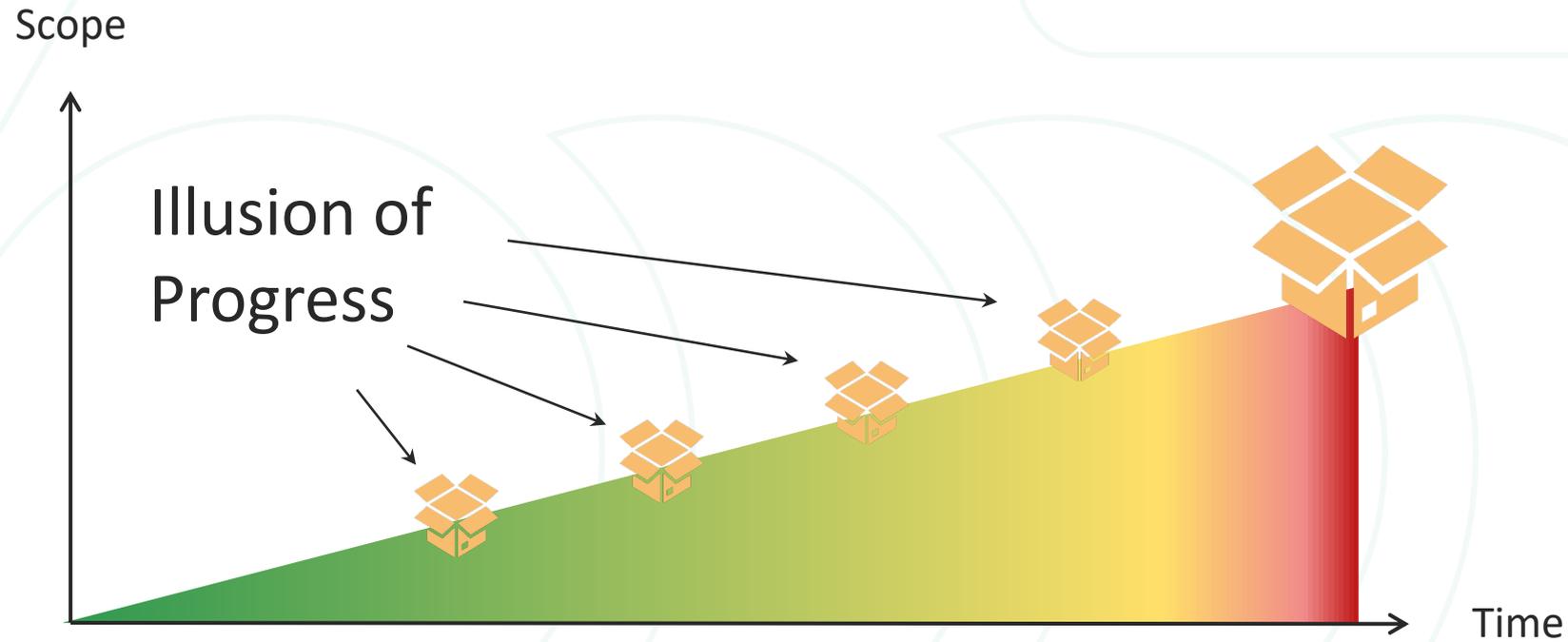
Empirical Process



Cross-functional Teams



Traditional Approach Defers Uncertainty



Analyze

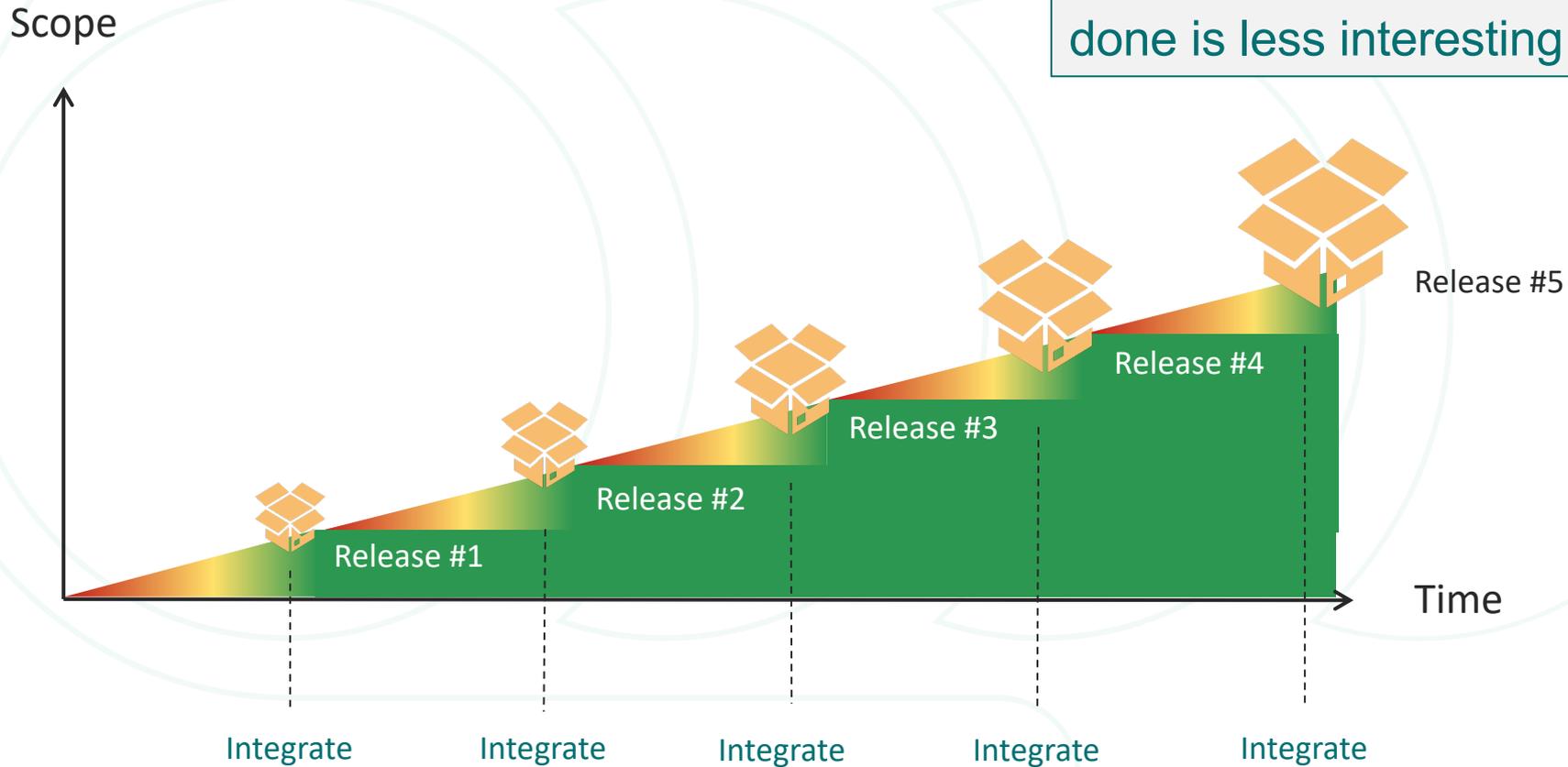
Implement

Test

I don't know *when* it's delivered,
so I focus on *how* it's delivered

Incremental Delivery Reduces Uncertainty

Because I see what is delivered, how it is done is less interesting than *what* is delivered



Cornerstones for Agile Delivery

What are the essential elements of a successful agile transformation?

Empirical Process



Cross-functional Teams



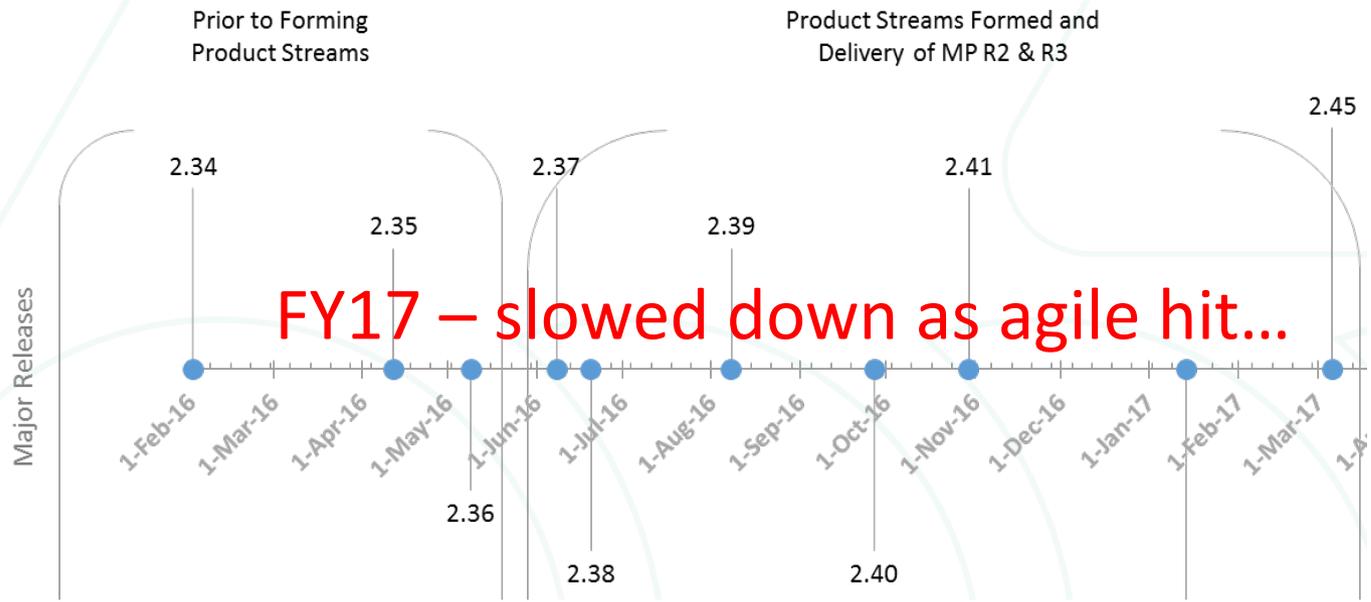
Incremental Delivery





How it Works





FY17 – slowed down as agile hit...

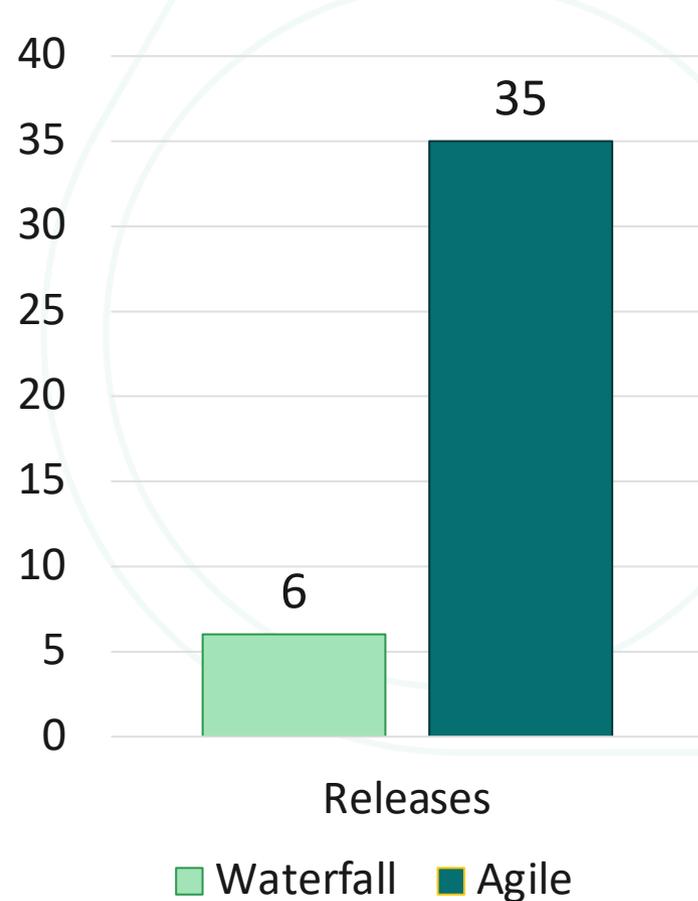
FY18 – frequency of delivery grew

Release Frequency

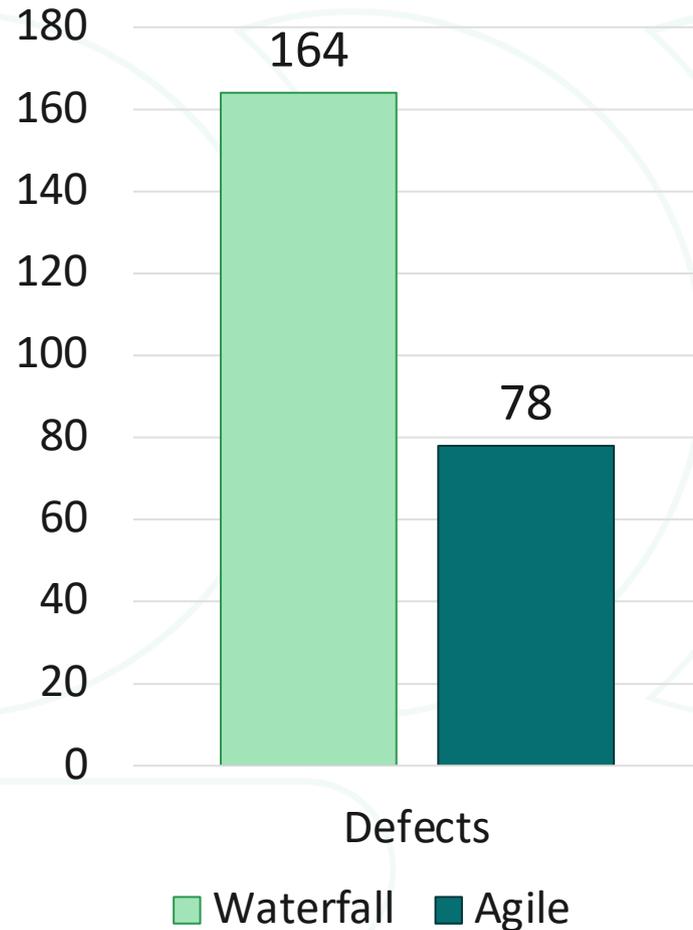
<https://resources.scrumalliance.org/Article/best-buy-canada-makes-agile-transformation>

Increased Speed and Faster Delivery

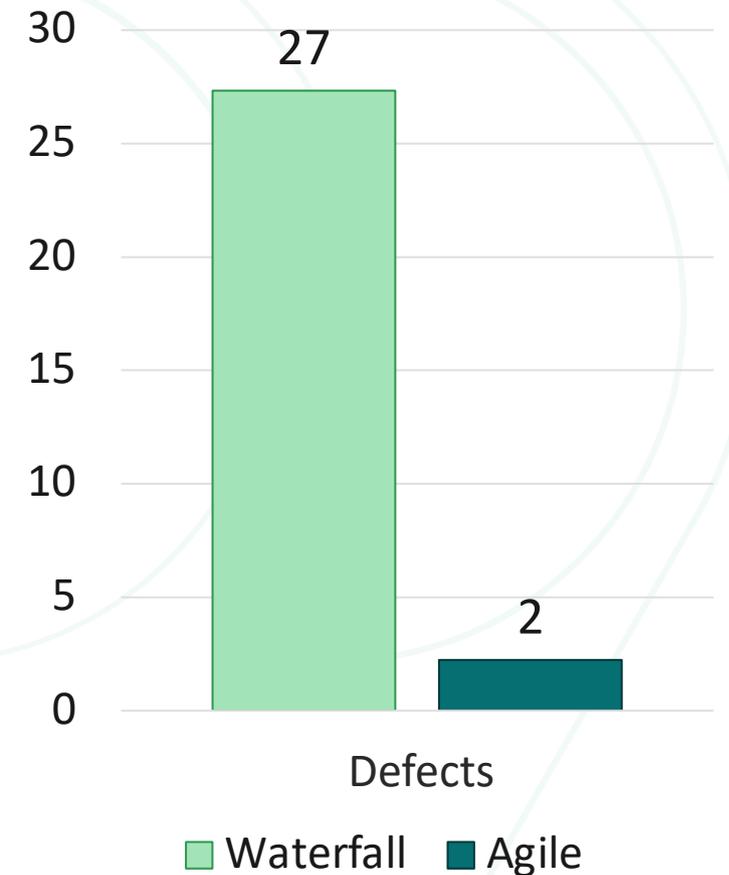
Software Releases Over 7 Months



Post Deployment Defects



Post Deployment Defects per Release



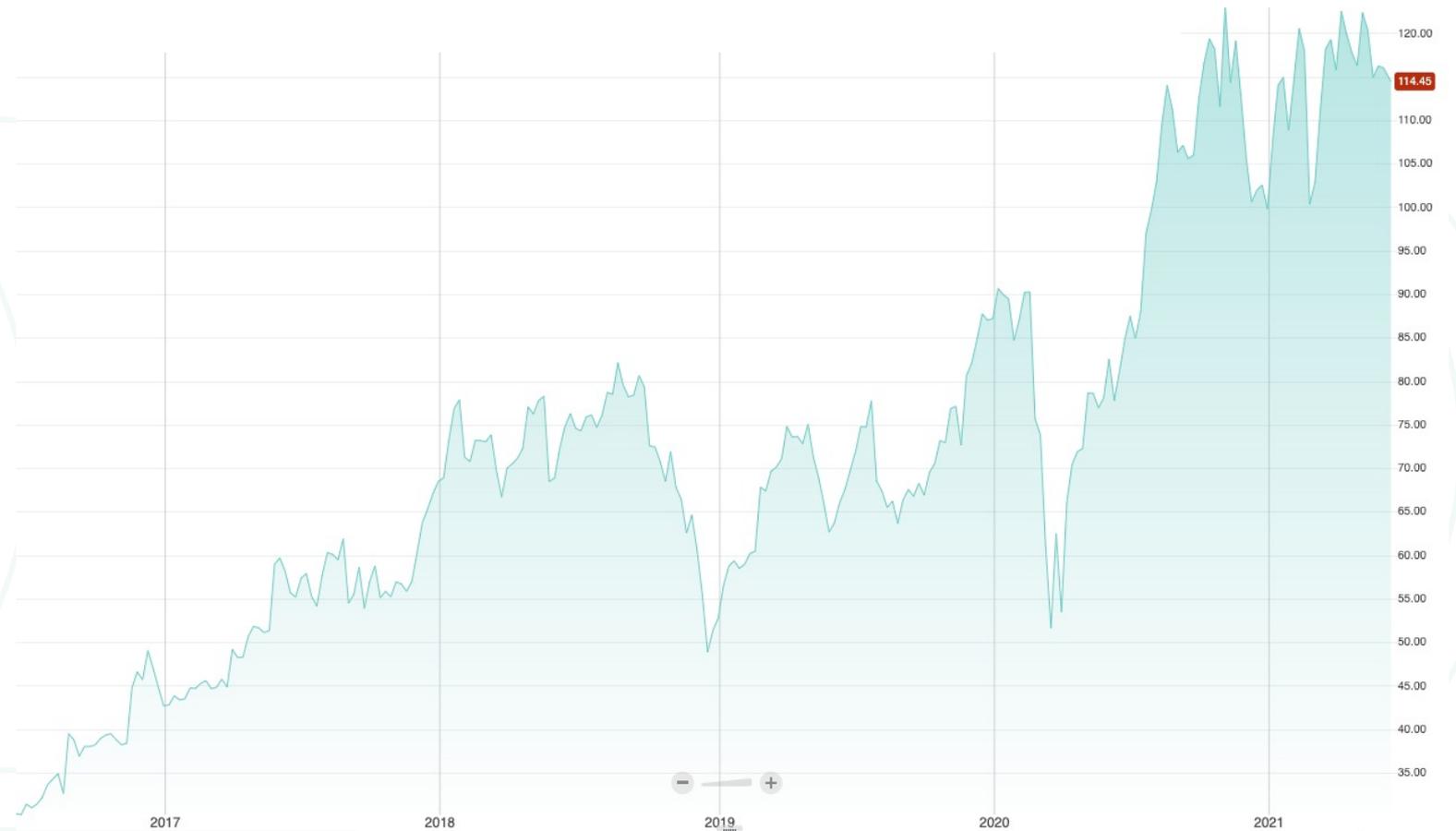


Samsung 9 Launch

- Didn't know when - simply told assets ready, on sale tonight
- That evening, the promotion was executing
- First retailer to offer Samsung 9, even beat networks!

<https://resources.scrumalliance.org/Article/best-buy-canada-makes-agile-transformation>

Share Price Performance Since 2017



A photograph of a referee from behind, wearing a black and white striped shirt with a large white 'U' on the back and a black cap with white stripes. The image is overlaid with a teal gradient. The text 'What Can We Do?' is centered in white.

What Can We Do?





What can HR do to embed Agile into your organization?

Have learning sessions after failing

Learning -chance mgmt

Promote taking bolder bets

Involve Business

Start small

Allow failure

Training programs

Talk about the why

Partnership

Demonstrate Buy-In

Make failing acceptable

Culture changed needed to support

Address the mindsets and processes that need to change

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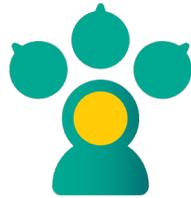
Where Agile Struggles



<https://digital.ai/resource-center/analyst-reports/state-of-agile-report/>

Lever 1: Agile Leadership Pipeline

Transform Leadership: Develop adaptive, agile leaders



Change Mindset

Grow leaders from expert authority figures to motivating guides.

Shift focus from technical expertise and operational delivery to growth metrics showing like *agility, coaching, and resilience*.



Empower Teams

Help leaders empower teams without fear of losing control.

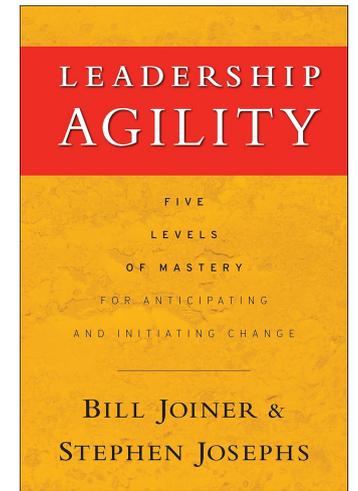
Redesign centralized, hierarchical decision making to promote *decentralized decision-making within enabling constraints*.



Recognize Learning

Create a culture of curiosity and learning over one of adherence to commitments.

Expect feedback and *welcome changes based on incremental delivery* and transparent feedback.



<https://a.co/d/c8Emnij>



Lever 2 – Cross-Functional, Agile Teams

Reinvent Teams: Develop agile, cross-functional units



Eliminate Resource Management

Remove resource management from the role of the manager.

It's the most available management tool to solve problems. Instead, focus on *supporting dedicated teams* aligned with strategic priorities.



Reward Team Performance

Recognize team performance over individual performance.

Adopt more *frequent team-based performance management* and refrain from recognizing individuals over teams.



Support Managers

Realign management responsibilities with an agile mindset.

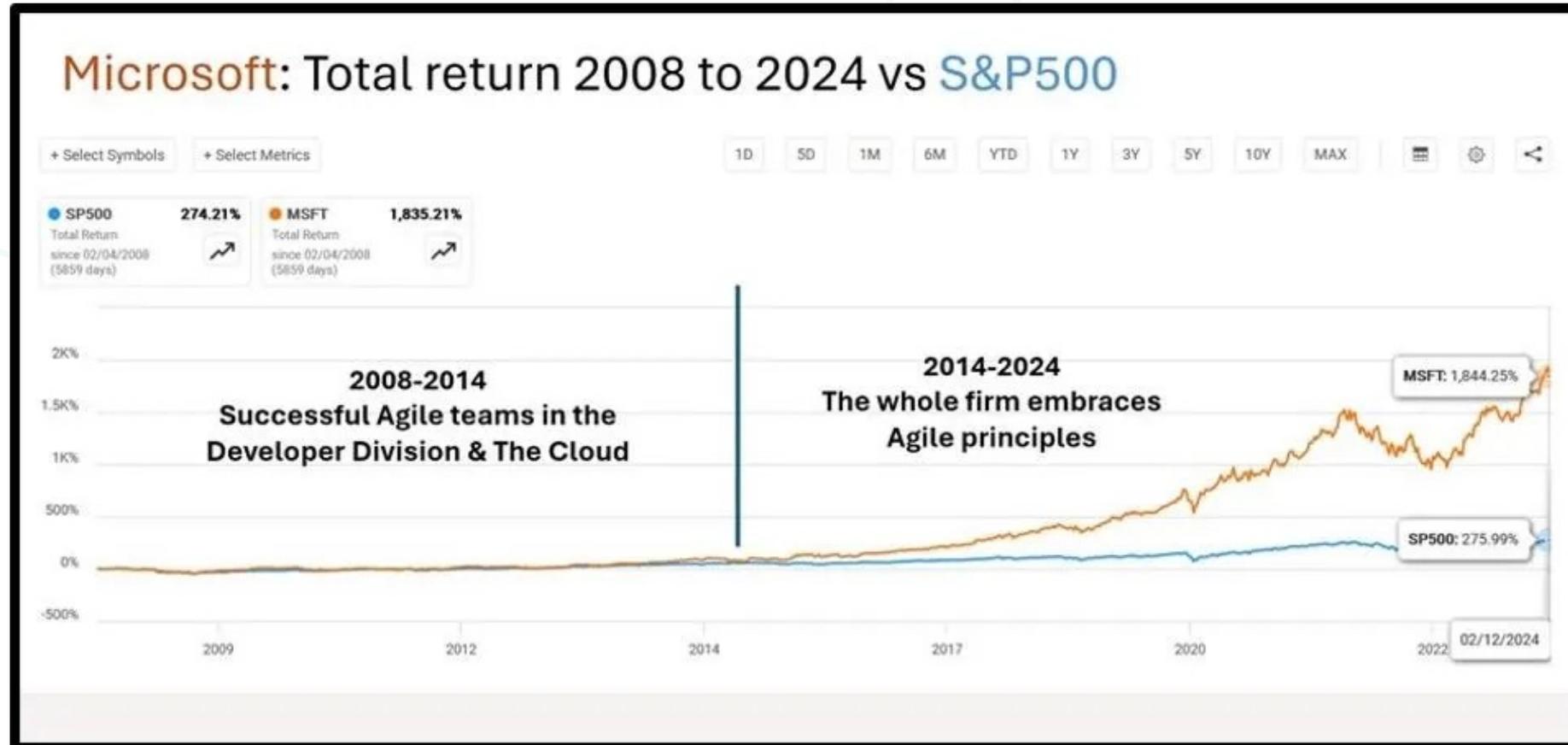
Create fluid, multi-disciplinary career pathways. Encourage managers to *grow functional capability* as they move beyond work and people management.



A person in silhouette stands on a construction site, holding a checkered flag. The person is wearing a hard hat and a headset. The background shows a building under construction with a railing in the foreground. The entire image has a teal overlay.

In Closing

Applying an Agile Mindset Across the Organization



Major gains to the business tend to occur when the entire organization embraces Agile mindsets, values and culture, which are used to drive and upgrade the organizations' methodologies.

- Steve Denning



Dave Sharrock

Founder and CEO

PhD, MBA

CST, CEC, CAL Educator

Government of Canada Agile SME

Scaling SME for Scrum Alliance

Podcast Co-host



“In most organizations, change comes in only two flavors: trivial and traumatic. Review the history of the average organization and you'll discover long periods of incremental fiddling punctuated by occasional bouts of frantic, crisis-driven change.”

- Gary Hamel

