

How to Fail at Agile

WITHOUT REALLY TRYING....

Getting to Know You

Me:

- Sr. QA Engineer with 20 years in the industry
- 3 years as Scrum Master

You:

- Implemented Agile?
- Succeed? 😊
- Fail? ☹️



Introduction

- Nobody likes to talk about failure
- Failure is a necessary step on the road to success
- If we don't learn from failure, we are likely doomed to repeat it
- Process failure doesn't always mean total failure – sometimes it just means things are harder than they have to be.



The Road To Failure

- Lack of Company-wide adoption (which led to....)
- Lack of Training
- Lack of On-Going Support
- Lack of Belief in Agile
- Team Stability
- Timing and communication Problems



(Road) Signs of Failure

- WaterScrum or ScrumFall
- Top-Down Estimation
- Feature Creep and Schedule Slippage
- Letting the Wrong People Drive
- Re-Inventing the Wheel
- Fractured Scrum Teams



The Road to Recovery

- Get Yourself a Full Time Evangelist
- Re-Commit to Agile
- "Weed the Garden"
- "Seed the Garden"
- Spread the Fun Around!
- Focus on Consistency
- Build Teams that Make Sense
- No Oddballs!
- Keep Your Teams Together, unless....



A Few Thoughts from the Road

- We are not alone in failure
- Our mistakes were not uncommon
 - Did not apply "strong technical processes"
 - When we did adopt processes, we didn't stick with them.
 - We built up technical debt.
 - We didn't culturally adopt Agile.
 - We compromised when we should have stood strong.



Where the Rubber Finally Meets the Road

- Company is open minded and accepting of change
- Recognition of failure
- Making some improvements:
 - Selective weeding
 - Implementing a single SCM tool
 - Transitioning to CI/CD for real
 - Actually using this paper and presentation as a blueprint for improvement.



Conclusions

- Implementing Agile is the easy part.
- Not falling back into old habits is difficult.
- Top-Down organizational buy-in is critical
- Strive for simplicity and sensible process
- Don't try to re-invent Agile – figure out how you're doing it wrong.
- Bottom Line: If you don't try to do it right, you will fail.



Questions / Comments?



THANK YOU!!!!!!!

- My Ever-Patient husband, Justin
- Scott Richardson
- Roger DeLorenzo
- Bhushan Gupta
- Karyn E. Zerr
- My Scrum Teams
- My Anonymous Place of Employment
- This Audience!

