

CULTURE EATS AGILE PRACTICES FOR BREAKFAST

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
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ABOUT ME



- Agile/Process Nerd
- Practicing Agile (teaching, consulting, mentoring) for 9 years; project management for 18 years
- 17 countries, hundreds of teams, lots of managers, many different applications. Conclusion: Lots of [Fragile Agile](#) out there
- Co-authored “The Software Project Manager’s Bridge to Agility” (2008, Pearson)
- Genuinely interested in making work a great place for knowledge workers
- Orienteering, traveling, spending time with my husband and dogs

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QUICK EXERCISE

Why change the way in which your organization creates products or services?

What **blocks** change?

Why Change?	What Blocks?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• takes so long for tangible deliverables, then, not right• allows adaptation to late requests• trade-offs• two-way planning informed• team empowerment• quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• top down time to delivery (exec. mgt)• Confusion of roles• Crawl out of past architectural decisions• pressure (?)• engineering mindset• tools, training + feedback mechanism

SALLY STORMS OUT

The truth was too
much to bear.



WHAT CAUSES OUR DISCOMFORT WITH CHANGE?



WHAT IS CULTURE?

The set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group.



7 COMPONENTS

Social
Organization



Economic
Systems

Customs &
Traditions

Government

Language

Arts &
Literature

Religion

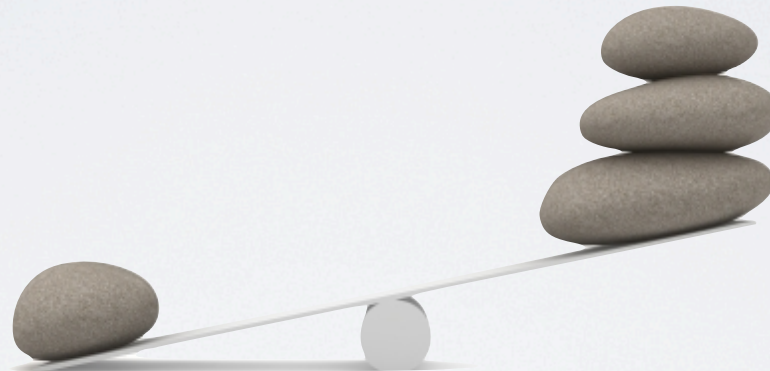
WHY IS CULTURE SO IMPORTANT TO US?

“Belongingness”



AGILE=PRACTICES AND VALUES

Just implement iterations! With Iteration Managers!
Just certify everyone as ScrumMasters!



To be agile is to embrace both values and practices.
Without values, practices are meaningless. And without
rituals (traditions), it's difficult to reinforce values.

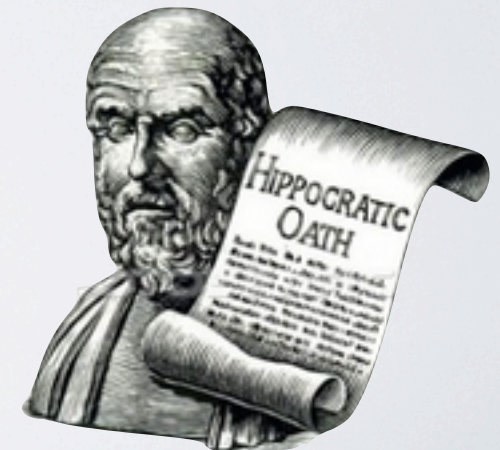
CULTURE CONFUSION

Implementing practices without supporting values...



THE WATERING DOWN OF AGILE

- aka “Fragile”, “Waterscrum”, “Scrummerfall”, “ScrumButt”, “Frankenscrum”, “Agile-like”
- Why? Culture.
- People are afraid to envision themselves working in a new way, with a new set of values and rituals.
- So we make excuses so that we don’t have to change all that much.



HOW DO WE INSTILL VALUES?

- Scrum says “the ScrumMaster is responsible for this”
- XP says “the team owns it”
- But people don’t often seize power when it’s dangled in front of them. Many existing customs, traditions and beliefs hold them back:
 - performance reviews
 - managers’ outlook or management style
 - an organizational culture that fears experimentation
 - groupthink that “we’re fine - everything is OK”

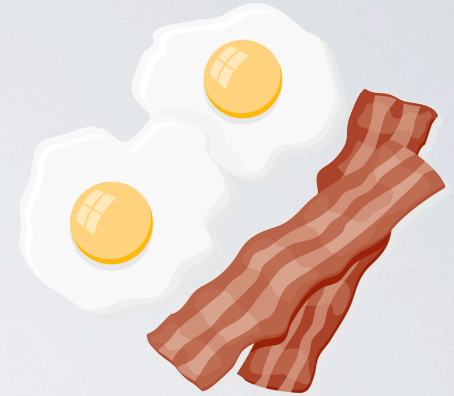
EMPOWERMENT

is not a gift bestowed
upon us by others;
rather, it is a decision
that lies within our own
power to make.



BACON AND EGGS: THE DAILY STANDUP MEETING

- Most mistranslated/abused meeting in Agile
- Not for managers
- The purpose is to synchronize, not provide status



THE “5 WHYS”



Why?

That's the way we've always done it.

Why?

That's our belief.

Why?

We don't think that pairing can help us go faster in the long run.

Why?

We are each working on our own tasks.

Why?

We individually aren't interested in what other team members are doing.

Problem: “We don't need to meet in a standup on a daily basis.”

ITERATION/RELEASE COMMITMENT: SUPPLY AND DEMAND



4 person limit for sharing a taxi in NYC

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5 WHYS



As a ScrumMaster (or team lead) you discovered that the team is really only capable of delivering 20 points of features in a sprint if they pay attention to things like refactoring, fixing defects, etc.

Problem: The product owner is asking for the team to deliver 30 points per sprint and work overtime if they wish to refactor and fix defects. And there's a BIG BONUS when we release six months from now!

ITERATIONS ARE NOT CLOWN CARS

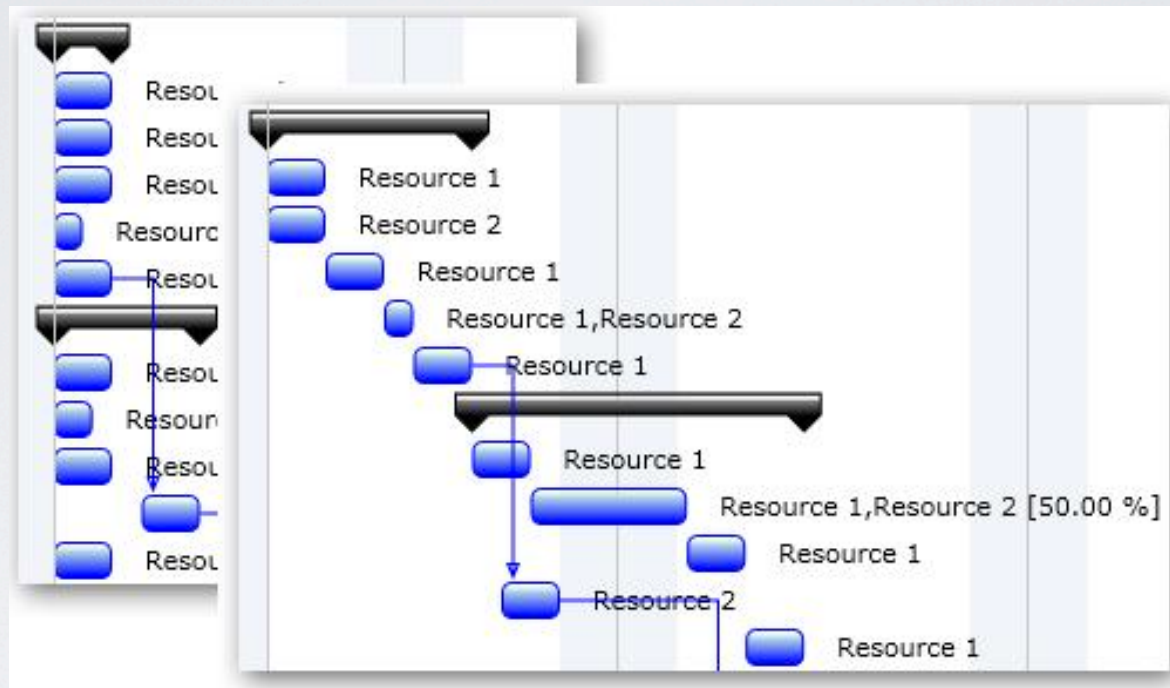


Keep saying Yes - what's the quality of the ride?

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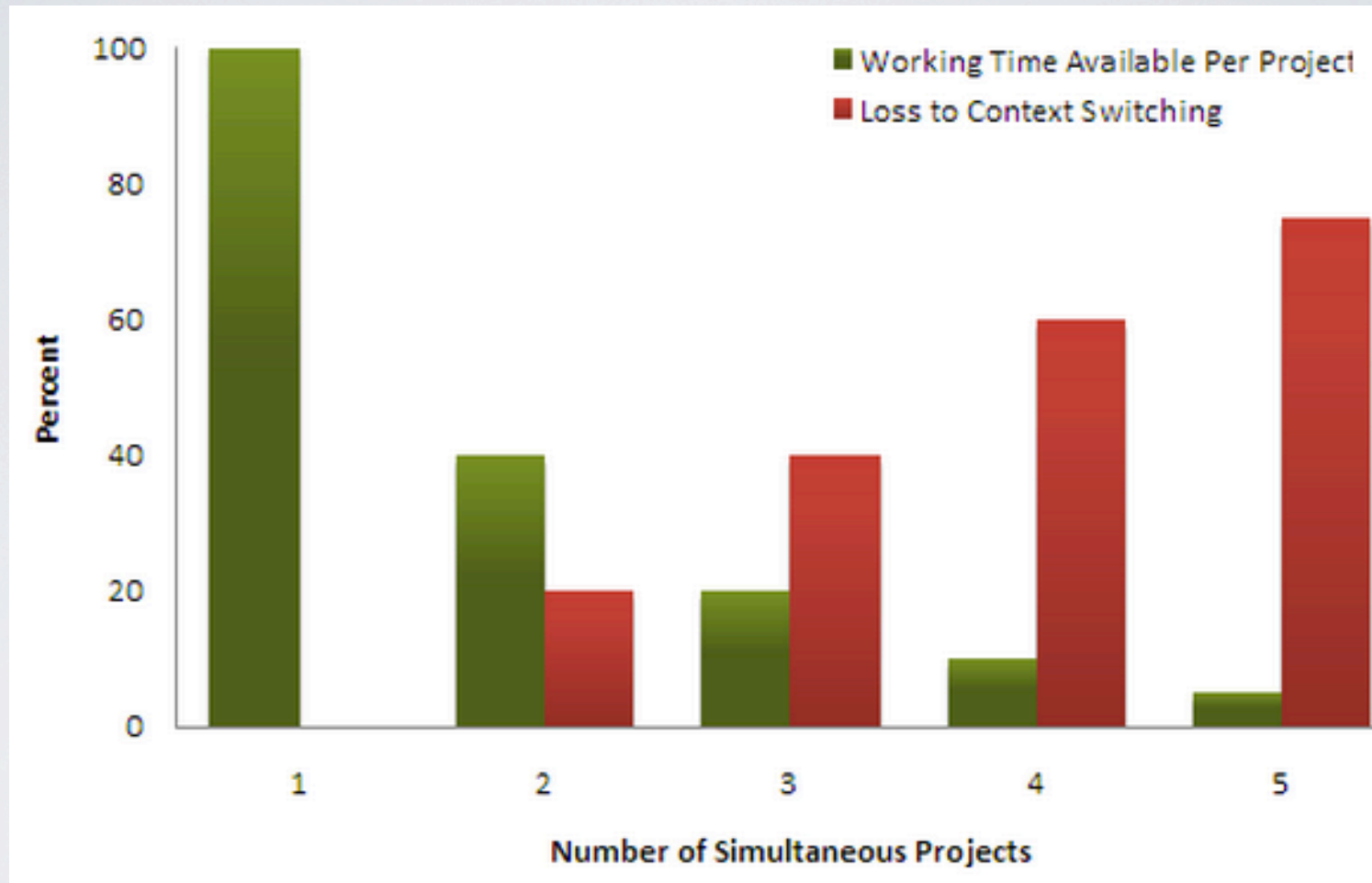


WE CAN'T CREATE DEDICATED TEAMS!



“Expert to task” resourcing model vs. “humans on a team allowed to focus on important stuff”

COST OF “MULTI-TASKING”



Source: Gerald Weinburg

WHICH HAS THE HIGHER ROI?



4





“Our dedicated team approach is working wonders!”

- Drew Harteveld, Project Manager
Martha Stewart Living

INFLUENCING CULTURE FOR AGILITY

- Create environments where it is safe to experiment and learn (aka “failing”)
- Create environments where all employees see themselves as innovators, entrepreneurs
- Create feedback loops and hold regular culture checks; practice OPEN communication
- Make sure that the reward system includes recognition for the culture you are trying to create
- Practice 5 Whys - Inspect and Adapt!

WALKING UP A HILL



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SO WHAT HAPPENED TO SALLY ANYWAY?

- She, along with a few others, sabotaged the entire program's teams move to agile practices
- In fact, two months ago, they decided they were going back to the old way (aka waterfall)



THANK YOU
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