Why Agile Doesn’t Scale
- and what you can do about it

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How Agile can Cross the Chasm
and why it usually doesn't

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A Guaranteed* Formula
for Scaling Agile

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* Not guaranteed. Or a formula.
What do we mean by Scale?
What do we mean by Scale?

- bigger problems?
What do we mean by Scale?

- bigger problems?
- bigger solutions?
What do we mean by Scale?

- bigger problems?
- bigger solutions?
- bigger programmes?
Why is scaling so hard?
Why is scaling so hard?

- Local optimisations don't roll up
Why is scaling so hard?
- Local optimisations don’t roll up
- Agile doesn’t have an opinion!
Why is scaling so hard?
- Local optimisations don't roll up
- Agile doesn't have an opinion!
- Some of these things are not like the others...!
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Once upon a time...
Agile Adoption Patterns

-Richard Durnall, 2009
Agile Adoption Patterns

- Richard Durnall, 2009

Stage 1: The People break
Agile Adoption Patterns

-Richard Durnall, 2009

Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Agile Adoption Patterns

- Richard Durnall, 2009

Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Stage 3: The Governance breaks
Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Stage 3: The Governance breaks
Stage 4: The Customer breaks
Agile Adoption Patterns

Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Stage 3: The Governance breaks
Stage 4: The Customer breaks
Stage 5: The Money breaks

-Richard Durnall, 2009
Agile Adoption Patterns

- Richard Durnell, 2009

Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Stage 3: The Governance breaks
Stage 4: The Customer breaks
Stage 5: The Money breaks
Stage 6: The Organisation breaks
Agile Adoption Patterns

- Richard Durnall, 2009

Stage 1: The People break
Stage 2: The Tools break
Stage 3: The Governance breaks
Stage 4: The Customer breaks
Stage 5: The Money breaks
Stage 6: The Organisation breaks
The Journey of Change

Resistance

People

Tools

Governance

Customer

Money

Organisation

t
The Journey of Change

Resistance

People

Tools

Governance

Customer

Money

Organisation

$t$
What do we mean by Governance?
What do we mean by Governance?

Execution
What do we mean by Governance?

Delivery Assurance

Execution
What do we mean by Governance?

Governance

Delivery Assurance

Execution
What do we mean by Governance?

Portfolio Management

- Governance
- Delivery Assurance
- Execution
What happens in Execution?
What happens in **Execution**?

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Adapt

Diagram: Arrow moving from Plan to Do to Check to Adapt.
What happens in **Execution**?

- Think it
- Build it
- Ship it
- Tweak it
What happens in **Execution**?

- Think it ➔ Build it ➔ Ship it ➔ Tweak it ➔ Team-scale, locally optimised
What happens in Execution?

Think it → Build it → Ship it

Tweak it ← Team-scale, locally optimised

We're good at this!
What happens in Delivery Assurance?
What happens in Delivery Assurance?

- Cross-team concerns
What happens in Delivery Assurance?

- Cross-team concerns
- Product trade-offs
What happens in Delivery Assurance?

- Cross-team concerns
- Product trade-offs
- Technical trade-offs
What happens in Delivery Assurance?

- Cross-team concerns
- Product trade-offs
- Technical trade-offs

We’re sometimes good at this.
What happens in Governance?
What happens in Governance?
- Organisational concerns
What happens in Governance?
- Organisational concerns
- Investment trade-offs
What happens in Governance?
- Organisational concerns
- Investment trade-offs
- Portfolio balancing
What happens in Governance?
- Organisational concerns
- Investment trade-offs
- Portfolio balancing

We rarely experience this
Surfacing the right information

- Governance
- Delivery Assurance
- Execution
Surfacing the right information

Governance → Delivery Assurance → Execution

Governance
Surfacing the right information

Governance → Delivery Assurance → Execution
What matters to Delivery Assurance?
What matters to Delivery Assurance?

"Have we learned anything new that might materially affect the delivery?"
What matters to Delivery Assurance?

“Have we learned anything new that might materially affect the delivery?"

“Are we nearly there yet?!!”
What matters to Governance?
What matters to Governance?

“Are our investments aligned with our objectives?”
What matters to Governance?

"Are our investments aligned with our objectives?"

"Is there anything we should be doing differently?"
Contextual Consistency
Contextual Consistency
Create and share a clear vision
Contextual Consistency
Create and share a clear vision
Establish guiding principles
Contextual Consistency
Create and share a clear vision
Establish guiding principles
Requires strong, consistent leadership
Contextual Consistency

Local decisions guided by global principles
Contextual Consistency

Local decisions guided by global principles

Transparent, accountable decision-making
Contextual Consistency

Local decisions guided by global principles

Transparent, accountable decision-making

Strong, collaborative leadership
Contextual Consistency: Given the same context and the same constraints we are likely to make the same decisions.
Some of my Guiding Principles

Never the Expert!  
Share your Toys  
Look where the action isn't  
Difference is Data  
Travel in Pairs
Wrapping Up
Wrapping Up

Scaling is more than just small things bigger
Wrapping Up
Scaling is more than just small things bigger. We need guiding principles and strong leadership.
Wrapping Up

Scaling is more than just small things bigger. We need guiding principles and strong leadership. Crossing the Chasm of Credibility is hard!
Thanks for listening!

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