Agile Improvement Method
Andrew Griffiths
Agile and Lamri

• We have a strong heritage of application
• We help organizations scale Agile practices
• We have four service lines we provide to clients
  – Agility Profiling Framework
  – Agile Integration Governance
  – Agile Process Deployment
  – *Agile Improvement Method*
This presentation is about how to apply agile thinking and techniques to process improvement.
Why do we need an agile improvement method?

Improvement deployment is often delivered sequentially – failing to meet the needs of agile teams

Agile puts people ahead of process but making a way of working stick requires behavior and organizational change this creates an alignment challenge
Only 3 out of 20 improvement projects succeed

What are the most common failure points for process improvement projects?
Failure to demonstrate rapid progress towards addressing improvement needs

Failure to recognize how progress is really achieved

Failure to deploy frequently losing opportunities to obtain feedback
Sound familiar?

Challenges

Failure to demonstrate rapid progress towards addressing improvement needs

Failure to recognize how progress is really achieved

Failure to deploy frequently losing opportunities to obtain feedback

Agile Manifesto

Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software

Working software is the primary measure of progress

Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale
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How might the agile improvement manifesto read? - 2

Agile Improvement Manifesto

The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within the improvement team is face to face conversation.

Early and rapid response to continuous direct feedback from the organization enhances agility.

The organization and the improvement team must work together daily throughout the improvement project.

Agile Manifesto

The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face to face conversation.

Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.

Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.
Agile Improvement

How might it look?

Initiate  
Mobilize  
Deliver

Co-ordination & Assurance

Team 1  
Team 2  
Team 3
Initiate Phase

Getting off to the right start
Start at the top – initiate

Our highest priority is to satisfy the organizations improvement needs by rapid delivery of useful and deployed processes = Benefit delivery

- Diagnose
  - Understand the real need for the improvement
  - Establish the “instinctive” case for change
  - Demonstrate strategic alignment
- Charter the improvement project correctly
  - Agile improvement project, adapting to needs
  - A joint improvement team will be established
  - We will address needs in order of priority and deliver often
  - We will continuously re-align with the needs of the business
- Seek investment for a relatively contained scope with active sponsorship
Initiate

**Demonstrating strategic alignment - example**

**Benefits**
- Increase profitable sales
- Operational cost reduction
- Perception of the brand, “squeaky clean” etc

**Desired outcomes**
Deliver IT projects reliably to enable the business strategy to launch XXX services in XXX timeframe

**High level deliverable**
Deployed improved working practices, base on agile supporting incremental delivery

**Measures**
- Early benefit delivery
- Cost transparency
- Customer satisfaction

Agree the measures early and follow through
Active Sponsorship

What can you do to enhance engagement?
Mobilize
Setting up for success
By definition the scope of an improvement project is complex – multiple stakeholders, different political agendas and possible cost reduction objectives!

Transparency, Effective Communication and Focus are all challenged in this environment.
Mobilize
The challenge

While we value process and tools, we value Individuals and Interactions more.

To deal with scale and complexity get the structure right and support the improvement with light weight tools and process.
Mobilize

Establish Single Gap Backlog Pipeline
Mobilize
Get the improvement “gaps” the right size

Frequently deliver improvements, partition the improvements to deliver in days or weeks rather than months

• This is critical!
  – Improvement gaps that are too large will
    • Tend to delivery iterations that are too large
    • Make it too easy for organization staff to never finish
    • Make estimation impossible!
  – Split the “intellectual” side of improvement from the deployment side of improvement
    • Decompose deployment into appropriate “chunks”
  – Draft assurance criteria for each gap
• CMMI does offer an advantage here, improvement gaps are atomic as an output of an appraisal
  – But even here deployment decomposition is essential
Mobilize
Beware…

Atomic gaps make tracking easier, however keep in mind the end to end

• Empowered improvement teams are critical!
  – Where empowerment is weak the end to end is often lost

• When improvements are focused on improving the organization the risk of poor end to end integration decreases

• Centrally controlled process architecture can be used as a counterpoint – preferably within the project
  – This risks diluting agility
  – If at corporate level can become a “dead hand”
Mobilize

Establish your outcomes

• Engage with your sponsor
  – Establish key pain points
  – Establish route map for outcomes with dates
  – Establish regular review principle with sponsor
    • “Releasing funding” as rationale to ensure engagement
    • Define what you will report

• Plan for the delivery of benefits
  – Focus initially on visible pain points
  – Establish measures to ensure improvements can be visualized
Package gaps to deliver a business outcome or address a pain point

Packages that do not include any deployment actions do not deliver business outcomes or benefits

BO1- Increase End User Satisfaction with Development Group

**Enhancement**
- G1- Develop end user support materials
- G2- Develop end user training materials

**Deployment**
- G3- Integrate EU onto XXX project support via coaching
Mobilize

What is the gap lifecycle?

- Allocate to BO
- Allocate to Team & Sprint
- Confirm assurance criteria
- Do
- Check & Mark Closed
- Assure Closed
- Mark as Assured Closed
- Deploy

Evidence

Co-Ordination & Assurance

Team

Project & Organization

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Mobilize

Remember the team is wider

The organization and the improvement team must work together daily throughout the improvement project

Building integrated teams is essential to ensuring effective communication
Mobilize

Leverage power of time boxes

• Define initial sprints for each team using the single gap backlog pipeline
  – Ensure they are small enough to be delivered in a tight timebox (less than 2 weeks preferably no more than 4 weeks)
  – **Sprints do not need to be the same length!**
  – Focus on business priorities

• Establish tracking system to enable transparent reporting
  – Measure closed gaps from the team perspective
  – Measure gaps verified from improvement project perspective
Deliver Phase
Managing the Heavy Lift
Deliver
Doing the heavy lift

Single Backlog Pipeline

Co-ordination, Assurance, reporting

Team
Team
Team

Project / Organization

Delivering Business Value
Deliver
Managing the overall improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Backlog</th>
<th>Next Sprint</th>
<th>In Action</th>
<th>Assured Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BO – 1</td>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>G1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1, G2, G3, DG1</td>
<td>DG1</td>
<td>G2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO – 2</td>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4, G5, DG2</td>
<td>G4</td>
<td>G3</td>
<td></td>
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Co-ordination, Assurance and reporting
Deliver
At the team level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team 1</th>
<th>Next Sprint</th>
<th>In Action</th>
<th>Complete</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DG1</td>
<td>G2</td>
<td>G1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team 2</th>
<th>Next Sprint</th>
<th>In Action</th>
<th>Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G4</td>
<td>G3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Deliver
Management Reporting – Big Picture

![Graph showing the progress of three business outcomes with one complete and two ongoing](image-url)
Deliver

Management Reporting – Against Units being changed

Projects

- Project Management: 25
- Quality Audit: 17
- SEPG: 12
- Delivery Directors: 7
- Measurement: 7
- Functional Management: 14

Gaps

- Late
- Open
- Conditionally closed
- Closed
Deliver
Sponsor engagement enhanced
**Deliver**

**Management Reporting – Team Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>AMBER</th>
<th>GAPS HIGHLIGHT</th>
<th>ASSURANCE HIGHLIGHT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>• Seven gaps closed this week (eight gaps due).</td>
<td>• Good start to green evidence collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>• FOUR LATE GAPS.</td>
<td>• 15% green evidences CHECKED successfully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Eight gaps must be closed by xxxxx.</td>
<td>• 20% green evidences collected but not yet checked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>• Three gaps closed this week (seven gaps due).</td>
<td>• Green evidence collection started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>• FOUR LATE GAPS.</td>
<td>• No green evidences yet checked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 11 gaps must be closed by xxxxx</td>
<td>• 22% green evidences collected but not yet checked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 3</td>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>• Six gaps closed this week (eight gaps due).</td>
<td>• Green evidence collection started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>• TWO LATE GAPS.</td>
<td>• No green evidences yet checked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 11 gaps must be closed by xxxx</td>
<td>• 44% green evidences collected but not yet checked.</td>
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**RAG**

- **Red**: Problems in need of urgent action
- **Amber**: Potential or current problems in recovery
- **Green**: All is well
- **Blue**: Plan complete

- Status improved from last week’s report
- Status unchanged from last week’s report
- Status worsened from last week’s report

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Deliver

Ensuring cross team co-ordination

Every team presents its results and status at combined sprint reviews. These provide intra-team co-ordination points.

Co-Ordination sprints = period between combined sprint reviews
Results
Driving Improvement Faster

<table>
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<th>Change Approach</th>
<th>Initial Approach</th>
<th>New Approach</th>
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Results
Making improvements visible

- Measurements provide CTO with project visibility
  - Quality/Cost of product
  - Quality/Cost of process
- Input for Board meetings
Only 3 out of 20 improvement projects succeed

Adopting agile principles for your improvement project will help ensure you succeed
### Agile Development / Agile Improvement

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<td>Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.</td>
<td>Welcome changing business priorities within the improvement journey. We will harness change to focus and ensure the improvement journey delivers competitive advantage.</td>
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<td>Working software is the primary measure of progress.</td>
<td>Deployed processes that improve performance (preferably measurably) are the primary measure of progress.</td>
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<td>Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.</td>
<td>Agile processes promote sustainable improvement. The sponsors, improvement team, and the organization should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.</td>
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<td>Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.</td>
<td>The organisation and the improvement team must work together daily throughout the project.</td>
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<td>Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.</td>
<td>Build an improvement journey around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.</td>
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<td>Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.</td>
<td>Early and rapid response to continuous direct feedback from organization enhances agility.</td>
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<td>Simplicity -- Improvements must be clear, straightforward and in the context of the capabilities of the organization.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The best improvement emerges from self-organizing, empowered teams.</td>
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<td>At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior.</td>
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