

# A Pattern for Operating Agile

Colin Macandrew October 2016

[colmacandrew@gmail.com](mailto:colmacandrew@gmail.com)

# Origins

- **The good old days...**
- **Advanced methods...**
- **Scaling Frameworks...**
- **What's next?**

# Theory of Constraints and Queue Theory...

Assuming the you know the goal and you can measure progress:

- Identify the system's constraints
- Decide how to exploit the system's constraints
- Subordinate everything else to the above decisions
- Elevate the system's constraints
- If in the previous steps a constraint has been broken, go back to step 1, but do not allow inertia to cause a system's constraint



Pic from Leanproduction.com  
The 5 steps as applied to Lean Manufacturing

Queue Theory...

Reduce load/utilization

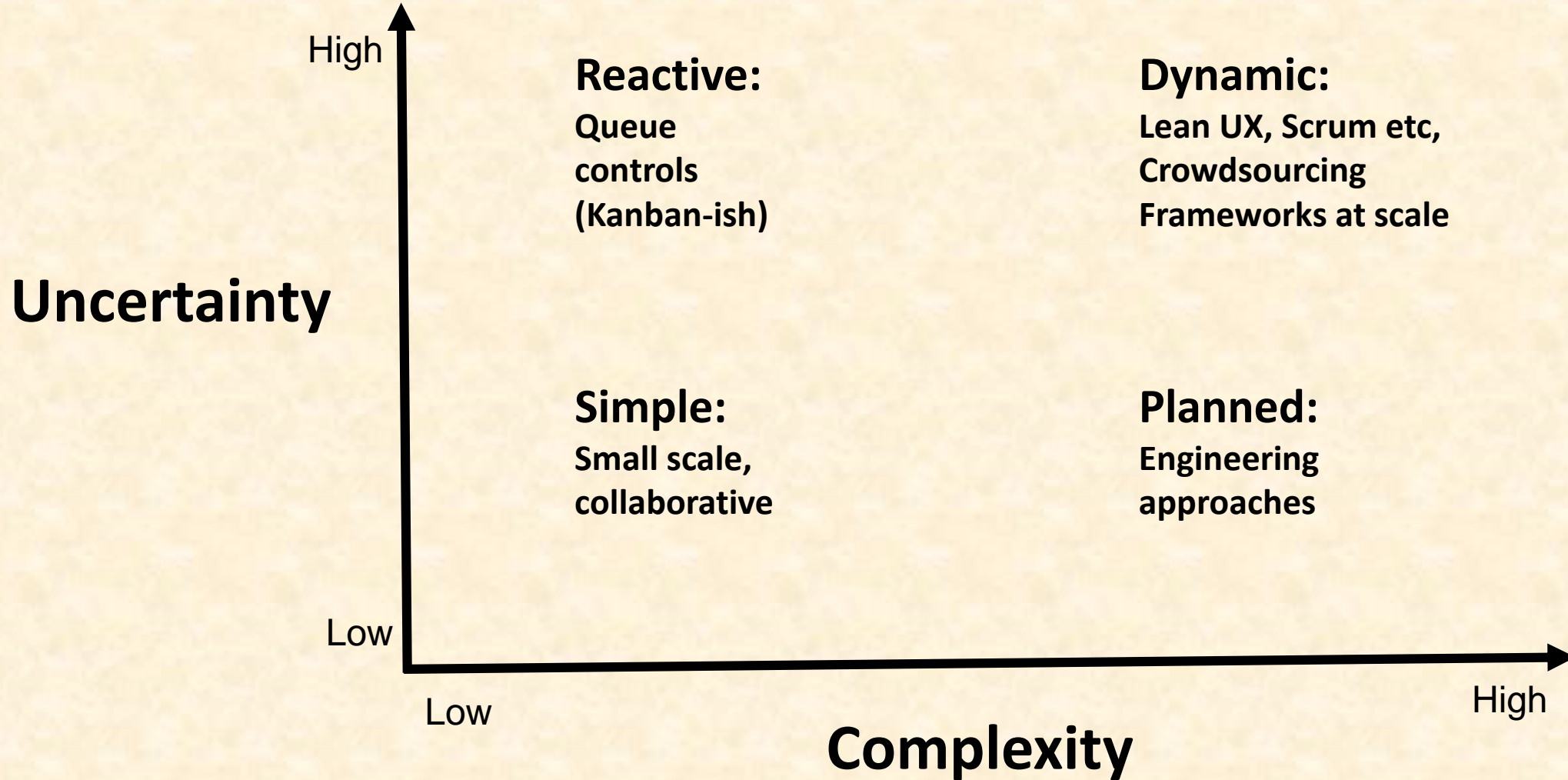
Reduce queue size

Reduce batch size

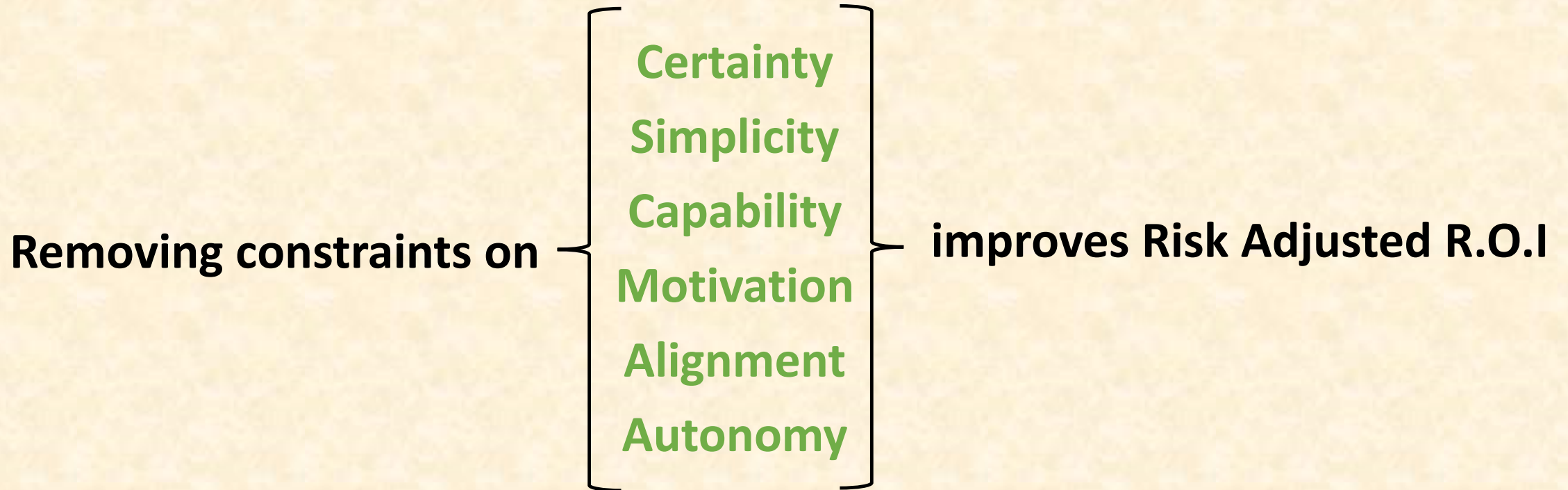
Counter intuitive but true: decrease speed to increase the speed of cumulative flow. Reduce control overheads to spend more time flowing.

Usually ToC approaches suffer from a lack of acknowledgement of metrics. Debt or progress are examples. Queue theory recognises the limits of predictability with increasing complexity.

# Which Method?



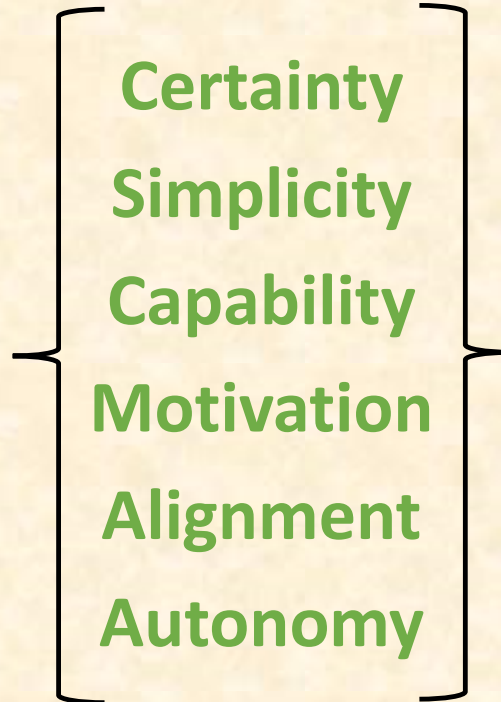
Methods are just shortcuts...



**Optimise these using the ToC steps, but optimise each without breaking any other!**

# Considerations...

- There are strong influences between these improvements
- A large backlog of transformation tasks is unnecessary
- Organisational/role changes have the largest impact
- Create a strong culture of responsibility for this pattern



- It's easy to lose Alignment e.g. The "Voice of the Customer"
- Certainty is hard – exploration is a must have
- Diversity is different from bad behaviour
- Management is not bad, bad management is
- Some things can't be simplified. When that happens, make them easy to use

**This can/should be applied to a whole organisation, not just IT!**

Questions?