Scaling the Social Fabric of Agility: Perspectives, Principles, and Practices

Eric Willeke

@erwilleke | ewilleke@rallydev.com
An organization has integrity – is healthy – when it is whole, consistent, and complete, that is, when its management, operations, strategy, and culture fit together and make sense.

- Patrick Lencioni
Who does your process serve?
“People times process”

- An amplifier for good people
- Designed for people
- Behavioral scaffolding for excellence
- Rich in mechanisms for empathy and trust

“People times process” – credit Don Reinertsen
One goal
It’s all about alignment
When it comes to reinforcing clarity, there is no such thing as too much communication.

- Patrick Lencioni
Clarity of purpose and direction

- Pervasive understanding of “why”
- Align maximum energy against the fewest, most important things
- Maximize decentralization of decisions
Clarity of improvement objectives

- Directed improvement
- Sustainable shortest lead time
- ... of the whole system
GOAL
SUSTAINABLE SHORTEST LEAD TIME

OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

FUNDING DECISION

PLAN & SEQUENCE

ANALYSIS

VALIDATE

DESIGN & IMPLEMENT

DEPLOY

BUSINESS IMPLEMENTATION

BENEFIT REALIZATION
Two axes of engagement

Who do I sit with?
Two choices

Delivery of value
- or -
Mentoring and growth
Flow Efficiency

Resource Efficiency
Guilds, communities of practice, hackathons, code retreats, training days, open space learning forums, internal conferences, external conferences, lunch & learns, webinars, inspirational speakers, training libraries, book exchange programs, book purchase plans, kegs, watercoolers, local meetup sponsorships, training budgets, technical advancement tracks, technical mentorship programs, 20% time, IP sprints, continuous improvement focus, exchange programs, ride-along events, pair programming, group design sessions
Three councils
Shorten the feedback loops
Product [X] Council

- Clarify vision and direction
- Surface misalignment
- Explore future direction
- Highlight cross-X decision impact
- “Steer the train”
Scrum of [X]

- Surface cross-X interaction needs
- Socialize impediments
- Generate trust and relationships
- “Keep the train on the tracks”
Architecture swarm

- Request advice & perspective
- Share decisions & learning
- Escalate critical needs
- Surface unrecognized risks
- “Keep the tracks smooth”
Why three different meetings?

- Everybody
The new gang of four
Leadership is a team sport
Build a leadership team

- Four key perspectives required
  - Direction & vision
  - Technical leadership
  - People management
  - Facilitation & improvement

- In a SAFe release train, these are: Product Manager, System Architect, Development Manager, and Release Train Engineer

- A team of leaders, not a group of leaders
Fist of five (and friends)
Practices for scaling collaboration
A few tools

- Collective editing (10 ppl)
- Group backchannel (50 ppl)
- Private social networks (?? ppl)
- Fist of Five (~100 ppl)
- Paramount objection (?? ppl)
- Big room planning (125 ppl)
- Bigger room planning (?? ppl)
Six supporting roles
Views on flow at scale
Unleash human potential
Who does your process serve?
“People times process”

- An amplifier for good people
- Designed for people
- Behavioral scaffolding for excellence
- Rich in mechanisms for empathy and trust

“People times process“ – credit Don Reinertsen