Say YES to NO!
The Power of the “No” in Agile

Laura M. Powers
@ LauraPowers
Agile.
It’s simple. But not easy.
How Was That?
400 times a day

@LauraPowers
What about the average Exec?
Unicorn Agility
Say Yes

“and the team lived happily ever after”

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How’s that working for you?

@LauraPowers
Brainstorm at Your Table:
Why is Saying “NO” so Difficult?
Agile Culture

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
Working software over comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
Responding to change over following a plan

That is, we value individuals and their interactions over processes and tools, working software over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation, and responding to change over following a plan.

Have we have come to value “Yes” over “NO”?
Readiness
For the tough conversation
Skills to say NO
How?
There’s more than one “no”
7 Steps
5 No’s
1. Listen
Repeat
Confirm
2. Are you the person to decide?

Yes

No...Not Me
3. Do You Have Enough Info?

No...Not Yet

Yes
4. Work the issue… together
5. Decide

Yes when...

No...

Not Now

Later

Now

Yes
or you may decide... No
6. Communicate
(to everyone)
7. Inspect and Adapt
7 Steps

1. Listen, Repeat, Confirm

2. Can I Decide?
   - Yes
   - No
     - No not me

3. Enough Info?
   - Yes
   - No
     - No not yet

4. Work the Issue

5. Decide
   - No
     - No not now
   - Yes

6. Communicate

7. Inspect & Adapt
5 No’s

“No not me”

“No not yet”

“No not now”

“No
Waiting
for this?
No Career Limiting Move
5 No’s

- No not me
- No not yet
- No not now
- No
- #&*@

...and more.
Ready for some practice?
Think of a “No” Situation

Requestor: My boss
Receiver: Me (Laura)
The Request: Teach Agile Foundations tomorrow even though I am booked on other appointments
Game Play

Requester: My boss
Receiver: Me (Laura)
The Request:
Teach Agile Foundations tomorrow even though I am booked on other appointments

Stack of Requests for the table
Response cards for each player
Game Play

Player #1:
Read a request card to the table
(yours or one of the prepared ones)

Each Player at table:
Play response card - why?

Rotate to next person at the table
If you play this card - your table may vote to "fire" you.

A potentially career-limiting move. Use with caution.
How Was That?
A Stakeholder, a Customer, & a Salesperson
What Do They Want?

What am I going to get?

When am I going to get it?
What Do They Want?

No

No not yet

No not now

No

Yes

A Straight Answer

#&*@

Not me
“What you don’t do determines what you can do.”

~ Tim Ferriss
A “real” YES requires A “real” No
Share - one situation where you will practice a “real” No
Questions?
Thank YOU!

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