AGILE COACHING IS DEAD.  
LONG LIVE AGILE PRACTICING!

by Mariya Breyter, Agile Coach
Hello!

I AM MARIYA BREYTER

I am here because I build relationships

You can find me at: @mbreyter
Poll

✗ Have you ever been part of an Agile team?
✗ Are you currently or have you ever been an Agile Coach?
✗ Do you consider Agile Coaching your profession?
✗ Do you expect to stay in this profession for 3 years or longer?
1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Agile Coaching is becoming a commodity…
Five years ago

- Agile Coaching jobs were filled with people who actually knew how to coach teams
- There were few Agile Coaches who mastered the art of Agile coaching
- Proven success with Agile transformation was considered a requirement for the role

Today

- Anyone who has been on an Agile team is eligible for Agile Coaching positions
- Terms “ScrumMaster” and “Agile Coach” are used interchangeably
- Staff augmentation firms have started their own Agile practices and offer coaches at $60/hr

Why would I say so?
Scrum Roles: pigs, chickens, and ...
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What do you think a pigeon represents?
What is an Agile Coach?

“All coaching is, is taking a player where he can’t take himself”

“Offensive linemen are the guys on the team who are the most selfless… These are the types of guys who make great coaches”

Bill McCartney, American Football Coach

“A coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment”

John Woodall, American Basketball Coach
What about data?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% AGILE ADOPTION</strong></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LARGE COMPANY (&gt; 20K ppl.)</strong></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISTRIBUTED TEAMS</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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*Source: State of Agile Survey by VersionOne*
2013 Breakdown

- 80%: No dedicated coaching
- 11%: In-house Agile coaches
- 9%: Consulting coaches

Source: State of Agile Survey by VersionOne
2. How to avoid commodization?

How to stand out as an Agile Coach
…in a complex distributed environment?
<table>
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<th>Before</th>
<th>Now</th>
<th>Future</th>
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<tr>
<td>Few Agile Coaches created and defined the market. Prestige was high and the specialization was rare.</td>
<td>Agile Coaching is becoming a commodity due to increasing demand and practical experience.</td>
<td>Agile Coaching will become a specialized skill again. Knowledge of Agile practices is not sufficient. Ability to influence others without authority, motivate teams and programs at scale, working with distributed teams, and adding practical value will become most important.</td>
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What makes you a successful Agile Coach today and in the future?
What does it mean from a skill/experience perspective?

**Practical abilities**
Agile Practitioners will replace Agile Coaches.

**Inspiration**
Motivate, do not prescribe.

**Global Experience**
Ability to work successfully with highly distributed teams and incorporate external experience.

**Empathy**
Put yourself in other people’s shoes.

**Support**
Be here now.

**Positive Attitude**
Always assume good intent and start from curiosity. Understand gravity.
Retrospective: Agile Coaching as a profession

WHAT IS WORKING GREAT?

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

WHAT CAN EACH OF US DO TO INCREASE PRESTIGE?
It Couldn’t Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn’t be done,
But, he with a chuckle replied
That “maybe it couldn’t,” but he would be one
Who wouldn’t say so till he’d tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: “Oh, you’ll never do that;
At least no one has done it”;    
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he’d begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle it in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That “couldn’t be done,” and you’ll do it.

— Edgar Albert Guest
Let’s re-brand Agile Coaching

LONG LIVE AGILE

PRACTICING
Thanks!

ANY PARTING THOUGHTS?

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Credits

✗ Coaching Agile Teams: A Companion for ScrumMasters, Agile Coaches, and Project Managers in Transition” by Lyssa Atkins
✗ State of Agile Survey by VersionOne, Inc. 2013 and 2015
✗ “Agile Coaching” by Rachel Davis and Liz Sedley
✗ How to be an Agile Coach at Spotify
https://labs.spotify.com/2014/01/07/how-it-is-to-be-an-agile-coach-intern-at-spotify/
✗ Ben Linders “What is Agile Coaching”
✗ “Is Agile Becoming a Commodity Profession?” published on AgileDevelopment.org
http://www.agiledevelopment.org/agile_talk/is-agile-coaching-becoming-a-commodity-profession

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