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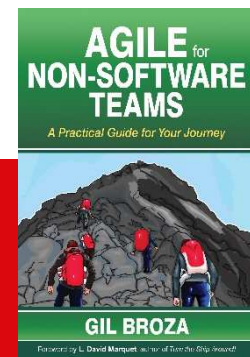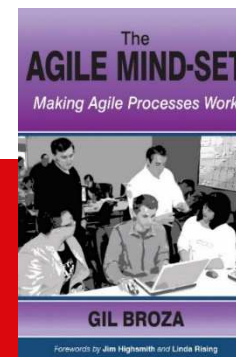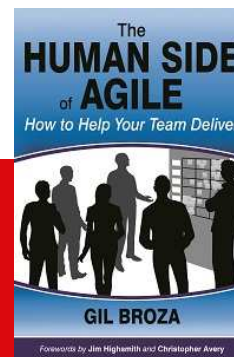
How to Help Your Non-Software Colleagues Adopt Agile

Gil Broza

@gilbroza

new!!

The angle we're taking in this session

The manager of a non-software function or a business unit is interested in Agile for their team(s) and has asked for your help. We'll refer to them as your <u>client</u>.

We'll see how to empower and support them as they consider, start, grow, and sustain Agile ways of working.

The client's pathway to making Agile work for them

1. Articulate the motivation
2. Realize how Agile differs from their current way of working
3. Discuss the possibility with the team & address concerns
4. Determine where to try Agile for the first time
5. Understand that it will be a journey, and it can go wrong
6. Prepare for the journey
7. Learn enough about the Agile principles to get started
8. Design the initial way of working
9. Support the team during the first few months
10. Expand (more teams, more of the value stream, more types of work)

Articulate the motivation around Agile

- Retaining and gaining market share (time to market)
- Fulfilling customers' needs earlier
- Adapting quickly to shifting landscapes
- Greater IT-Business collaboration
- Deliver solutions that better fit their purpose
- Higher transparency within and across functions
- Greater application of team members' skills and smarts
- Increased engagement
- General process improvement
- Less wasted work
- Healthier culture
- Something else?

Only a couple of these will matter to them

The motivation should be clearly tied to improved business outcomes

2. Help your client…
Realize how Agile differs from the current way of working

PURPOSE

OBJECTIVES

Are met by

MINDSET

BELIEFS + **VALUES**

Guide choice of

PRINCIPLES

BELIEFS
What you hold to be true

VALUES
What you consider non-negotiable, most important, or aspirational

PRINCIPLES
Standards that guide your choices, decisions, and actions

Are manifested in

TACTICS

PROCESSES   TOOLS   ROLES

PRACTICES   ARTIFACTS   MEETINGS

way of working

=

mindset

+

tactics

Make sure they understand what they're asking for

Realize how Agile differs from the current way of working

Agile values	What they may value now
Delivering value early and often Adaptation Customer collaboration Putting people first	Getting deliverables right the first time Following industry standards Dates and costs

Agile beliefs	What they may believe now
Team > individuals Team > their manager Don't/can't have all answers upfront	Tasks should be done by specialists Must do what stakeholders want

Discuss the possibility with the team, and address concerns

- Isn't Agile just for IT?
- We do operational work, not product development
- We already follow industry best practices, why change anything?
- Has Agile been tried before for my kind of work?
- What if Agile applies to only a portion of our work?
- Some of the Agile values will not be welcome here
- We are not empowered to make decisions
- What if there are practices we can't do, or can't find equivalents for?
- The company's transforming; shouldn't we follow a standard?
- We're already too busy, we don't need more meetings
- Agile seems to have a high administrative overhead
- What if it doesn't work out?

Address concerns

Listen

Empathize

Respect

Treat Agile as an experiment, not as a binding change.

Determine where to try Agile for the first time

1. Inventory all major deliverables and the work that goes into them
   - products, services, solutions
   - other major responsibilities and activities
   - distinguish sub-cases or variants that are treated differently

2. Narrow down the list to items that
   - require a chunk of the team's effort (but don't bet the farm)
   - have a large development component

3. Pick one target for the first Agile experiment

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: frame the work

Who are the customers?

Example

The organization: An investment fund

The team: Talent Acquisition

The work: Presenting promising candidates to hiring managers

Customers:

- Hiring managers
- Managing directors
- Every candidate we speak to (even if we don't hire them!)

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: frame the work

What's the value to the customers and the organization?

> ### Example
>
> - "We help hiring managers invest the minimal amount of time filling a position with someone great."
> - "We increase the firm's success and affect its culture through hiring."

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: frame the work

What does success look like?

Example

- "The people we hire integrate well, perform well, and stay long-term."
- "We don't lose good candidates through our own actions."

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: frame the work

What are the constraints?

> ## Example
>
> - "Hiring managers' busy schedules cause an otherwise straightforward process to stretch out over a couple of weeks, which can cause us to lose candidates."
>
> - "Our understanding of the work in each department is not enough to answer candidates' questions."

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: values

Different but equivalent elicitation questions:

- Which <u>values</u> will maximize the chance of success?

- As the team works, what should they <u>optimize for</u>?

- What are the top 3-5 values that should <u>guide</u> all choices?

- What about their work is <u>non-negotiable</u>?

- What is <u>critical</u> for their success?

aspirational > current or assumed

Example

- Great candidate experience

- Close collaboration with both hiring manager and candidate

- Taking a holistic, long-term view

Choosing the values using the inventory method

- Delivering value early and often
- Getting deliverables right the first time
- Following industry standards
- Putting people first
- Minimizing cost and time
- Adaptation
- Innovation
- Customer collaboration
- Avoiding disaster
- Being able to replace the workers easily
- Keeping the auditor/regulator happy
- …

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: beliefs

What do we *(or should we)* believe about the people, the work, the customers, the business landscape, and changes?

Current state + beliefs to question + beliefs to try on

Example

- "We try to hire the best people, but we really need to hire the *right* people."
- "Potential often trumps 'hitting the ground running'."
- "The hiring manager may not have asked all the right questions."
- "Our perspective on the manager–needs–candidate triangle may be partial."
- "The first 90 days really matter."
- "Candidates appreciate our honesty with them."

Eliciting beliefs

Different but equivalent elicitation questions:

- "What are some things we take for granted? (and perhaps shouldn't?...)"
- "What sort of things do we usually say to each other about [the work / the customers / the business landscape]?"
- "Which issues keep coming up in our work? What assumptions can explain them? What could we change?"
- "What kind of changes do we face (or regularly get surprised by)?"

> **Current state + beliefs to question + beliefs to try on**

Determine where to try Agile for the first time: alignment

How aligned are your values & beliefs with the Agile ones?

Example

The organization: A facilities management company

The team: IT operations

The work: Deploying software updates to production

Values: correctness, zero user impact, minimize turnaround time, team health
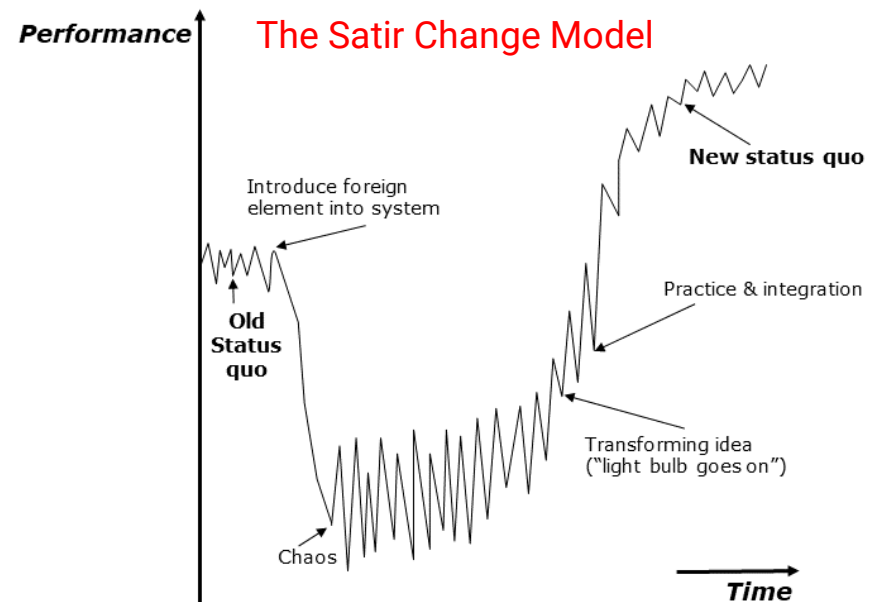
Beliefs:

- The packages we receive are correct
- Sometimes we need to roll back
- All our team members are cross-skilled
- There's no single, obvious customer to talk to
- We don't receive advance notice of need or content, but we *should*

Understand that it will be a journey, and it can go wrong

- Voluntary participation (safety, respect, trust, transparency)
- The experience of change
- Don't start with practices, frameworks, or tools
- Real risk of misalignment

Performance   The Satir Change Model

Introduce foreign element into system

Old Status quo

New status quo

Practice & integration

Transforming idea ("light bulb goes on")

Chaos

Time

The risk of misalignment

Practice/role/artifact	Was designed as	A traditional mindset sees it as
Daily standup	Regular check-in to maximize the team's value output	Daily status for maximizing work-the-plan
Product backlog	Prioritized list of valuable deliverables we might get to	Project plan
Pairing	Collaboration to minimize the risk of employing humans	Under-utilization
ScrumMaster	Servant leader, helping the team succeed as a team	Project manager; process compliance officer
Sprint demo	Feedback – for effectiveness	Frequent deadline for sign-off (and keeping people busy)

Prepare for the journey

- Choose a good time to start

- Get managers and stakeholders on board

- Prepare the team

- Prepare themselves (for Agile leadership)

Learn enough about the Agile principles to get started

Organize around value creation
Collaborate on a product/service/solution
Produce outcomes of value
Always work on what's most important
Get feedback frequently
Keep the cost of change low
Constrain the intake of work
Visualize the work
Break work down
Bounded team autonomy
Self-organization
Collaboration
Continuous improvement

Design the initial way of working: choose the principles

Pick principles that implement the chosen values and beliefs: from Agile, from the current way of working, and others that seem important.

Example

The team: IT operations (shown earlier)

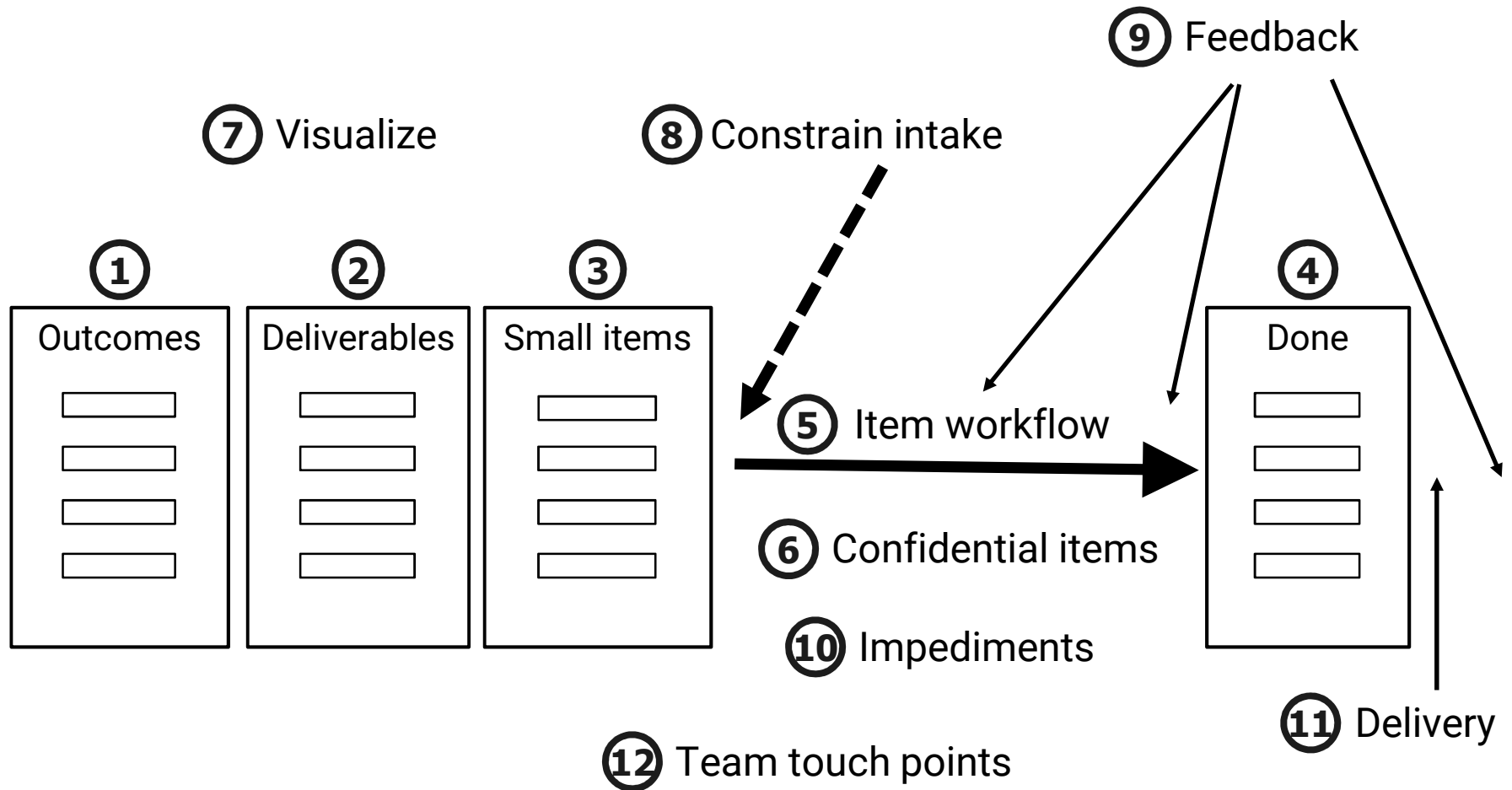| Team empowerment |
| --- |
| Team collaboration |
| Learn from mistakes (ours and devs') |
| Get early notice of deployments |
| Plan each deployment |
| Deploy off-hours |
| Maximize automation |
| Minimize on-call time & off-hours work |

Design the initial way of working: design the workflow

Design the initial way of working: structure the team

Maximize their likelihood of succeeding as an Agile team

- Interpersonal dynamics
- Skills & knowledge
- Availability
- Ability to finish without delay
- Size

Don't lean on them to work in an open space

Design the initial way of working: structure the team

List all current responsibilities, plus

- managing outcomes

- determining and sequencing deliverables

- soliciting and processing feedback

- looking after the way of working

- looking after team health

- removing impediments

- facilitating team meetings

Then identify a "home" for each.

It's an experiment, so don't change formal titles, job descriptions, reporting lines, authority levels, or compensation

9. Help your client…

# Support the team during the first few months

1. Start with a kick-off
2. Mantra: Finish Small Valuable Work Together
3. Make working agreements
4. Stabilize the system (WIP, pull, delays, sustainable pace)
5. Watch for attitudes and behaviors that hamper agility
6. Reflect and improve frequently
7. Lead intentionally
8. Assess how it's going
   - How well are they following their chosen principles?
   - Effect on outcomes? Downsides?

Learn more from me

"Agile for Non-Software Teams": deep-dive into everything covered in this presentation

Get the e-book at AgileForNonSoftwareTeams.com

Print edition to be available around December 2019
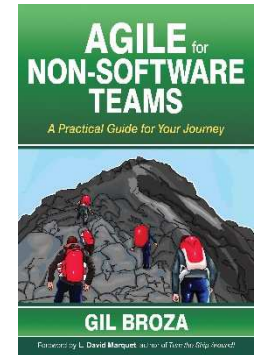
"The Human Side of Agile": how to lead Agile teams of imperfect humans

"The Agile Mind-Set": how to be Agile… without prescribing practices

Both available in print, Kindle, PDF, and audio.

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