SKYLINE

Agile Transformation Pain Points (and how to avoid or manage them)

skylinetechnologies.com

262-522-8081

About Me

- Started Life as a Front-end Web Publisher at Netflix (when it was a start-up) back in 1998

- Transitioned to Business Analysis in 2005

- Joined Skyline Technologies in 2013

- CBAP® certified since 2015

- PMI-PBA® certified since 2017

- CSM with Scrum Alliance

- PSM with Scrum.org

- (And I blame my husband for my last name...)

SKYLINE

Rachael Wilterdink

Learning Objectives

- To help you understand the possible pain points involved in transitioning to agile

- To provide you with ways to *avoid* these problems when *getting started* with agile

- To give you *guidance* on how to best execute while *being* agile

SKYLINE

Who Is This For?

Anyone who is about to embark on an agile transformation journey

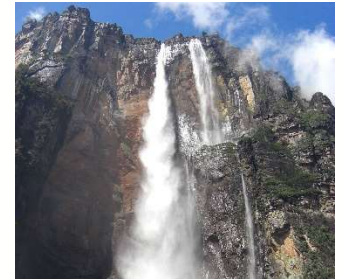**Those who have just started their agile transformation**

SKYLINE

EVERYONE

SKYLINE

Getting Started…

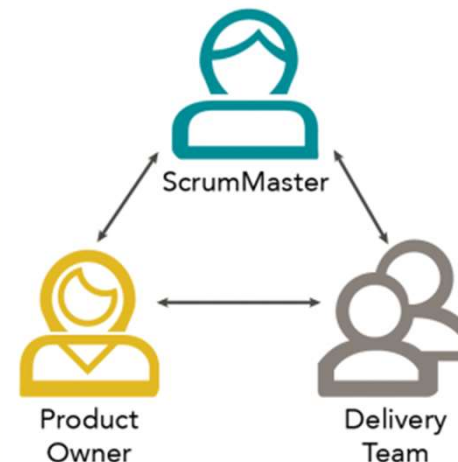SKYLINE

Unable to escape the Waterfall mindset

- Culture shift is required
- Executive buy-in is critical (top-down support)
- Relative estimation and "points" can be difficult to understand
- Other metrics also need to change
- Understanding that estimates are NOT commitments
- Triple constraint is flipped upside down
- Trade-offs must be made when things change

Fixed Constraints →

Variable Constraints → COST

Traditional Projects

SCOPE

(QUALITY)

TIME

Agile Projects

COST   TIME

(QUALITY)

SCOPE

SKYLINE

Resistance to change

- Change is difficult; address it
- Manager fears loss of control
- People feel threatened
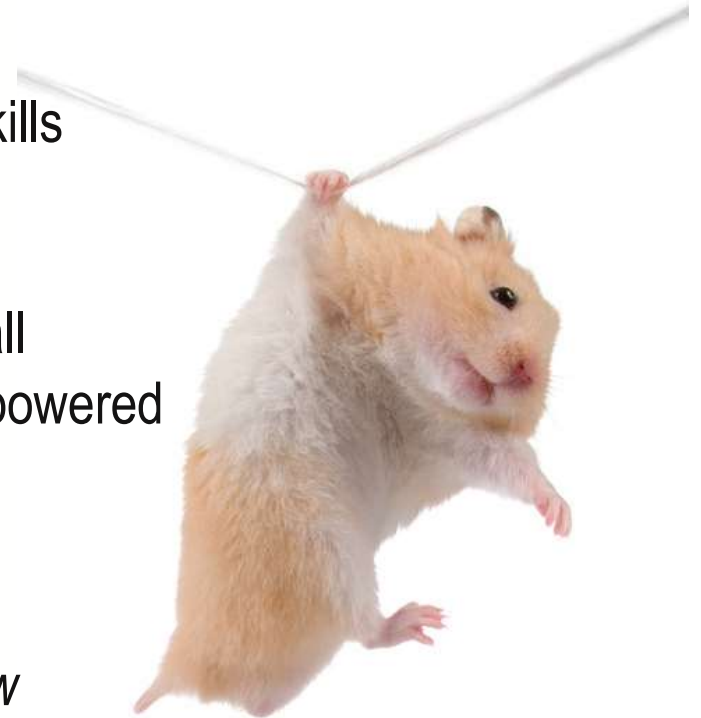
- Titles don't matter anymore
- It's not about "me"

Denial	Commitment
"It's not happening to me" "I don't have to do this"	"This is how I work now" "This is a better way"
Letting Go	*The New Beginning*
Resistance	Exploration
"This will never work" "I want to go back to the old way"	"OK, maybe this can work" "There might be a way..."
	The Neutral Zone

ScrumMaster

Product Owner

Delivery Team

SKYLINE

Hanging on to old roles

- Need flexible team members with cross-functional skills
- Less specialization, more generalization
- Ensure clear roles & responsibilities
- Get the right team together - not too big, not too small
- Product Owner must be engaged, authorized, & empowered
- Scrum Master is a servant-leader
- Allow team to self-organize
- Avoid people playing multiple roles
- PO should prioritize the *what*, but not specify the *how*

SKYLINE

Poor (or lack of a) Product Owner

- The product owner must:
  - Own the vision for the product
  - Be trained in what it means to be a product owner
  - Be available to the team to answer questions
  - Participate in all of the required scrum ceremonies
  - Regularly groom & prioritize the backlog
  - Ideally, be an individual person (not a committee)
  - Willing to make trade-offs when necessary
  - Be aware of market drivers and conditions

SKYLINE

Part-time team members / split responsibilities

- Team members should be allowed to focus on the task at hand, and not be distracted by other responsibilities
- Avoid dual roles / conflicts of interest
- Context switching causes inefficiency
- Plan for "production" or support work that can't be predicted or anticipated

SKYLINE

Trying to go it alone

- Some say to just start, but without guidance a lot can go wrong
- Hire professionals - get a coach with a lot of experience
- Embed team members who already have agile/scrum experience
- Shadow/model team after others within your organization
- Seek advice

SKYLINE

Getting training, but *without* follow-up support

- Training alone will not ensure a smooth agile transformation
- Organizational support must be provided during the transition
- Experienced agilists and/or professional scrum coaches can help guide and support teams
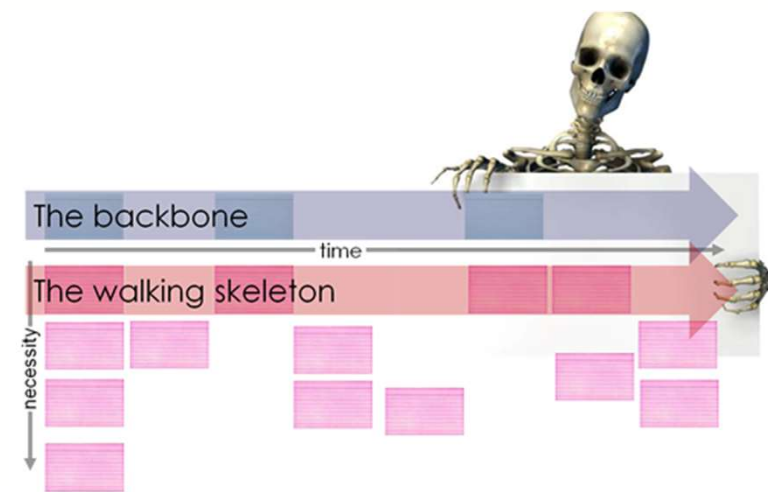- Join an agile meet-up or go to agile conferences

SKYLINE

Being Agile…

SKYLINE
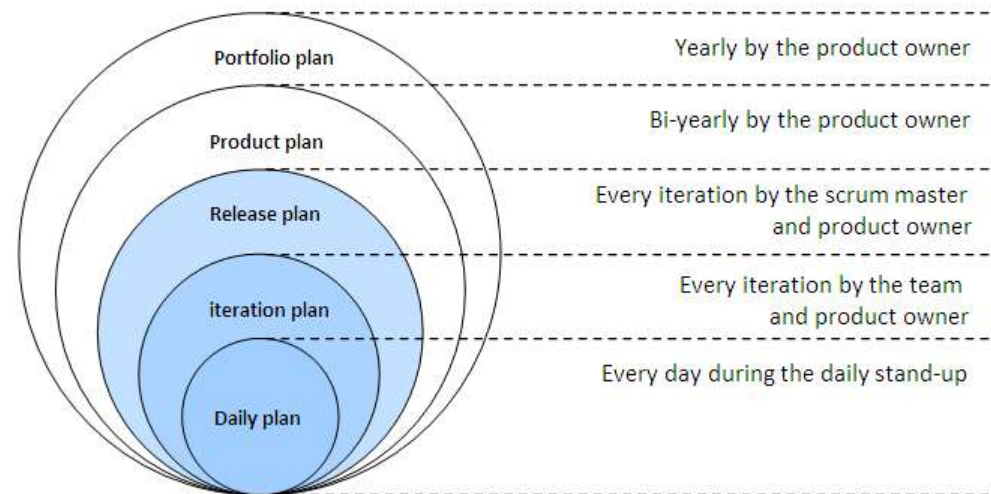
No Planning / Too Much Planning

- Prepare a "walking skeleton", but only flesh out work for a couple of sprints
- Use the onion planning concept

The backbone

time

The walking skeleton

necessity

Portfolio plan	Yearly by the product owner
Product plan	Bi-yearly by the product owner
Release plan	Every iteration by the scrum master and product owner
iteration plan	Every iteration by the team and product owner
Daily plan	Every day during the daily stand-up

# Relying too much on tools (& Technology)

- Literally start with sticky notes on a wall
- Then, you can consider tools:
    - Kanban boards (Leankit, Trello)
    - Fun retrospective tools (FunRetro)
    - Agile requirements management tools (such as Rally, Jira, VSTS, etc.)
    - Planning poker (Planningpoker)
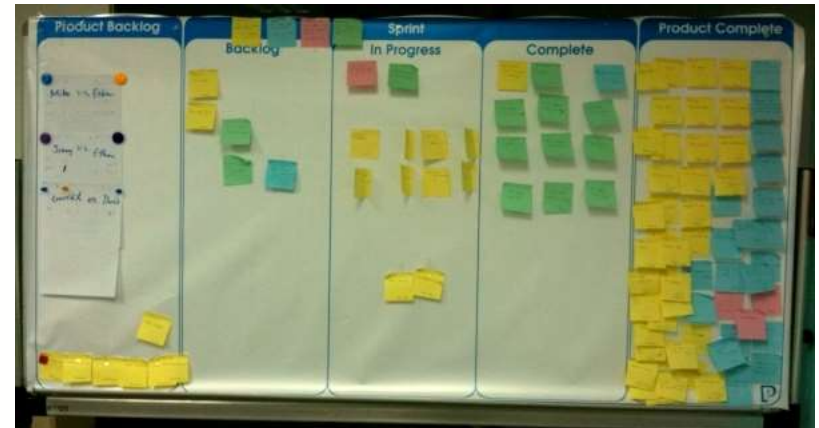
SKYLINE

Struggles with story writing

- Write from the user/business perspective
- Don't write from a dev/tech perspective
- Use vertical rather than Horizontal slices

- Don't forget to include the "why"
- Write stories at just the right size
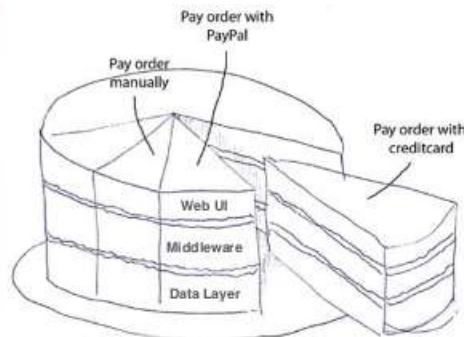
SKYLINE

Forgetting to have the "conversation"

- The story card is just a reminder to have a conversation
- Acceptance criteria is part of confirming that conversation
- Clearly identify what conditions must be true in order for acceptance to be given

Card
- The story itself
- A promise to have a conversation at the appropriate time

Conversation
- The requirements themselves communicated from the Product Owner to the Delivery Team via a conversation
- Write down what is agreed upon

Confirmation
- The Acceptance Criteria for the story
- How the Delivery Team will know they have completed the story

SKYLINE

Not having a definition of "Done" or "Ready"

- Stories need to have sufficient detail to be actionable
- Don't allow stories that are not "done" to be considered done if they don't meet ALL criteria
- A story is either "Done" or "Not Done"

SKYLINE

Taking on too much work in a sprint

- Take just what you realistically think you can get done
- Don't overestimate your team's velocity
- Aim for keeping up a "sustainable pace"
- Consistently meet sprint goals

SKYLINE

Pre-assigning work to team members

- Team members should volunteer to do work, not be assigned
- Allow the team to be self-organizing
- Volunteering for tasks gives team members the opportunity to grow
- Just because one person has the expertise doesn't mean someone else shouldn't have the opportunity to cross-train

Mis-using Scrum ceremonies

- Avoid runaway scrum meetings
- Don't invite the wrong people when they shouldn't be involved
- Stick to time-boxes, and don't repurpose meetings

- Be prepared for review or planning
- Don't use retros as "blame game"
- Follow through by acting on action items

SKYLINE

Skipping over quality

- Quality should be "baked in" - consider acceptance test-driven development
- Use peer checking / pair programming
- Don't wait until the end of the sprint, leaving no time to fix things (thereby preventing work from getting to "done" within the sprint)
- There are no "testers" in agile, but there is a lot of testing
- Automate testing whenever possible

SKYLINE

Focusing on projects rather than products

- Projects are temporary endeavors with a beginning and an end
- Ultimate goal is continuous development and integration, and an ever-evolving product, based on the needs of its users
- Newer agile teams tend to focus on projects, which is a good way to prove out agile and get started, but then the team breaks up and all the forward momentum, efficiency, and knowledge can be lost

SKYLINE

Accruing Technical Debt

- Some technical debt is likely; mitigate it from piling up by tackling some of it in each sprint
- Make wise (and conscious) decisions about what technical debt to accrue
- Don't let it build up to the point where you'll never dig out of it

Distributed Global Challenges

- Co-location is better, but…
- Establish working rules such as overlapping working hours
- Make use of communication technologies such as video-conferencing
- Use collaboration tools such as Slack or the VSTS team room
- For those who are co-located, create a collaboration space: tear down the walls

SKYLINE

Inspect & Adapt…

SKYLINE

Skipping inspection and adaptation

- Don't skip this!
- If it becomes mundane, switch it up
- Review your previous action items at the beginning of each session
- Actually take action on things the team decides to change
- Have the courage to be honest

SKYLINE

Questions?

Solutions Consulting

- **Discovery Services**
- **Product Setup**
- **Better Requirements Training and Coaching**
- **Business Analysis**
  - **Coaching and Mentoring**
  - **Maturity Assessments**
  - **Staff Aug Opportunities**
- **Agile Enablement Services**

SKYLINE

Rachael Wilterdink, CBAP®, PMI-PBA®, PSM, CSM
rwilterdink@skylinetechnologies.com

For more about Skyline Offerings contact us at letstalk@skylinetechnologies.com

Industries Served

- Business Services
- Financial Services
- Manufacturing
- Education
- Health Care

- Banking
- Insurance
- Retail
- Municipal
- Non-profit

"Skyline brought together not only the intrinsic skill sets that we sought to add to our project, but more importantly these skills came attached to approachable, thoughtful, honest human beings."

Neil Perry, Director of Technology SASED