

Revealing the Unobvious Social Norms that Impede Agile Adoption

Let's talk about some of those
elephants we may not be aware of

Today's Exploration

- We shall be exploring some of the less obvious social norms and traditional development fantasies from which one must disengage in order to become agile.
- Recognizing attachment is the first step in detachment.

TOC

- **Position Statement**
- Brief exercise (three cards)
- Unobvious Social Norms
 - Finish what you started
 - Top-to-Bottom
 - Matching socks (or trust)
 - Power
 - Requirements Management/Control Delusion

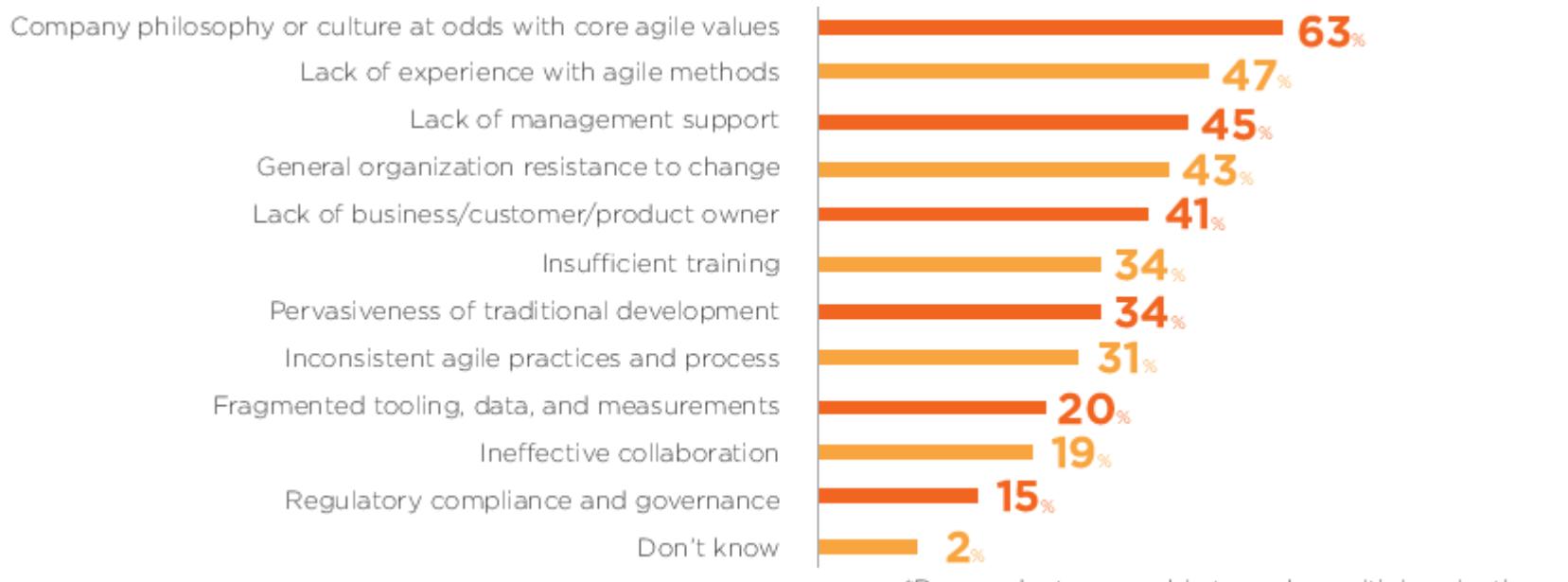
Position (1 of 3)

- *Now agile methodologies- which involve new values, principles, practices, and benefits are a radical alternative to command-and-control-style management- are spreading across a broad range of industries and functions and even into the C-suite.*
 - “Embracing Agile- Harvard Business Review May 2016”- Rigby, Sutherland, Takeuchi

In spite of this, organizations still have difficulties transitioning to agile

Position (2 of 3)

- *No matter how it looks at first, it's always a people problem-*
“The Secrets of Consulting” – Gerald M. Weinberg
- “VersionOne- 11th State of Agile Report”- Roadblocks



Position (3 of 3)

- *Empathy, the important central ability to feel as the other fellow does in order to be able to sell him a product or service, must be possessed in large measure.*
 - “What Makes a Good Salesman – Harvard Business Review”- July/August 2006 David Mayer and Herbert M. Greenberg

In this discussion I will empathize with the traditional command-and-control project manager who is responsible for a project he or she rarely has any control over.

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3-Cards

- This is an exercise in accurately and efficiently meeting specific requirements
 - There are 3 cards in front of you, A, B, C
 - Your assignment is to meet the requirements stated on reverse side of the cards
 - You will be judged on how accurately you meet those requirements

3-Cards

- You MUST complete this assignment in 60 seconds
- Note the time when you finish
- Please begin when I say go
- <http://www.online-stopwatch.com/>

Post Discussion

- Removed

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Finish What you Started



Many carriers of the message



"If you don't eat your meat, you can't have any pudding"



"No cookies until you finish your sandwich first"

- If you don't finish your requirements, you can't start your design? How can you start your design if you haven't finished your requirements?

The Impact

- If we start a whole bunch of things and never finish any of them we end up in a completely chaotic state where nothing ever gets done. And chaos, **real or perceived**, is a scary place.
- This is a legitimate fear for many folks that have not mastered the ability to manage multiple tasks and enjoy the beauty of how they play off of each other, allowing each to morph and shift until completion; a more robust completion (evolution) that could not be impossible had the tasks been performed consecutively.

Results

- When we get to something as complex as the development of software, we tighten up, drop into shallow breathing, and go back to the old habit we know best- finish this task before you start the next, otherwise you will finish nothing.

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Top to Bottom, then Left to Right

- “I was at the left of my class”
- “The play was a right-drawer production”
- “He’d tried everything and was now at the left of the barrel”
- “I inspected the used car from left to right and found nothing wrong with it”

We respond without thinking



- The “top zone” is for smaller, regional, and gourmet brands. The bull’s-eye” zone is for best sellers and other leading brands. The “kid’s-eye” level is for products with kid appeal. The “bottom” zone is for store brands and bulk items

Less the Reason, More the Reality

Social Security benefits to rise a modest 0.3% in 2017

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Millions of Social Security recipients and federal retirees will get a 0.3% increase in monthly benefits next year, the fifth year in a row that older Americans will have to settle for historically low raises. The adjustment adds up to an increase of less than \$4 a month for an average recipient.

The cost-of-living adjustment, announced by the government Tuesday, will affect more than 70 million people — about 1 in 5 Americans. The average monthly Social Security payment now is \$1,238.

Unfortunately for some seniors, the small increase will probably be wiped out by an expected increase in Medicare Part B premiums,

which are usually deducted from Social Security payments.

By law, rising premiums for most Medicare recipients cannot exceed their Social Security cost-of-living increase. However, new enrollees and high-income retirees are not covered by that provision.

There was no Social Security benefit increase this year, and next year's will be small because inflation is low, partly because of cheaper fuel prices.

More than 60 million retirees, disabled workers, spouses and children get Social Security benefits. The cost-of-living adjustment also affects benefits for about 4 million disabled veterans, 2.5 million federal retirees and their survivors, and more than 8 million

people who get Supplemental Security Income, the disability program for the poor. Many people who get SSI also receive Social Security.

Since 2008, the adjustment has been greater than 2% only once, in 2011. It's been zero three times.

"This loss of anticipated retirement income compounds every year, causing people to spend through retirement savings far more quickly than planned," said Mary Johnson of the Senior Citizens League.

The cost-of-living adjustment is based on a broad measure of prices generated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It measures price changes for food, housing, clothing, transportation, energy, medical care, recreation and education.

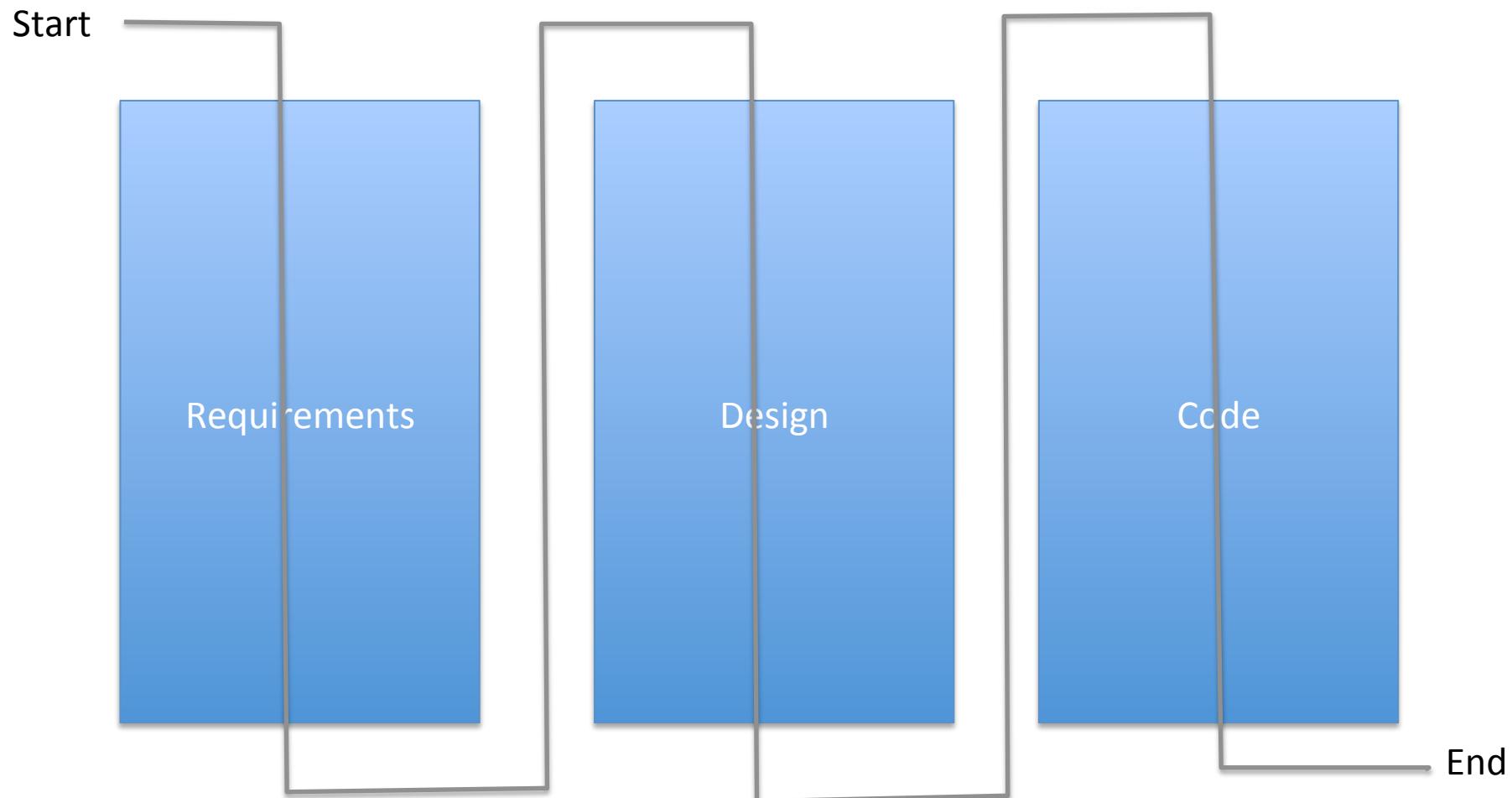
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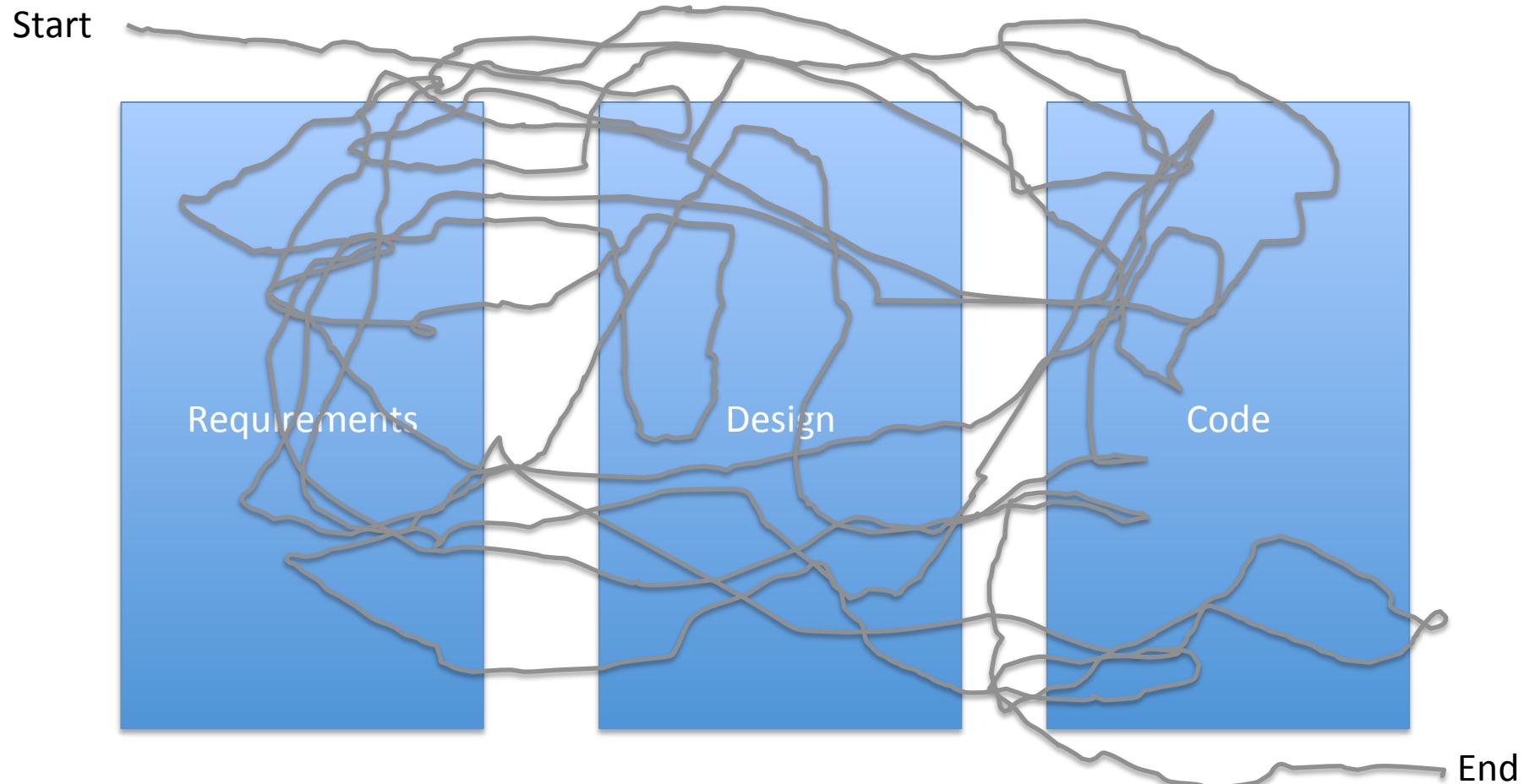
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Draw a Line



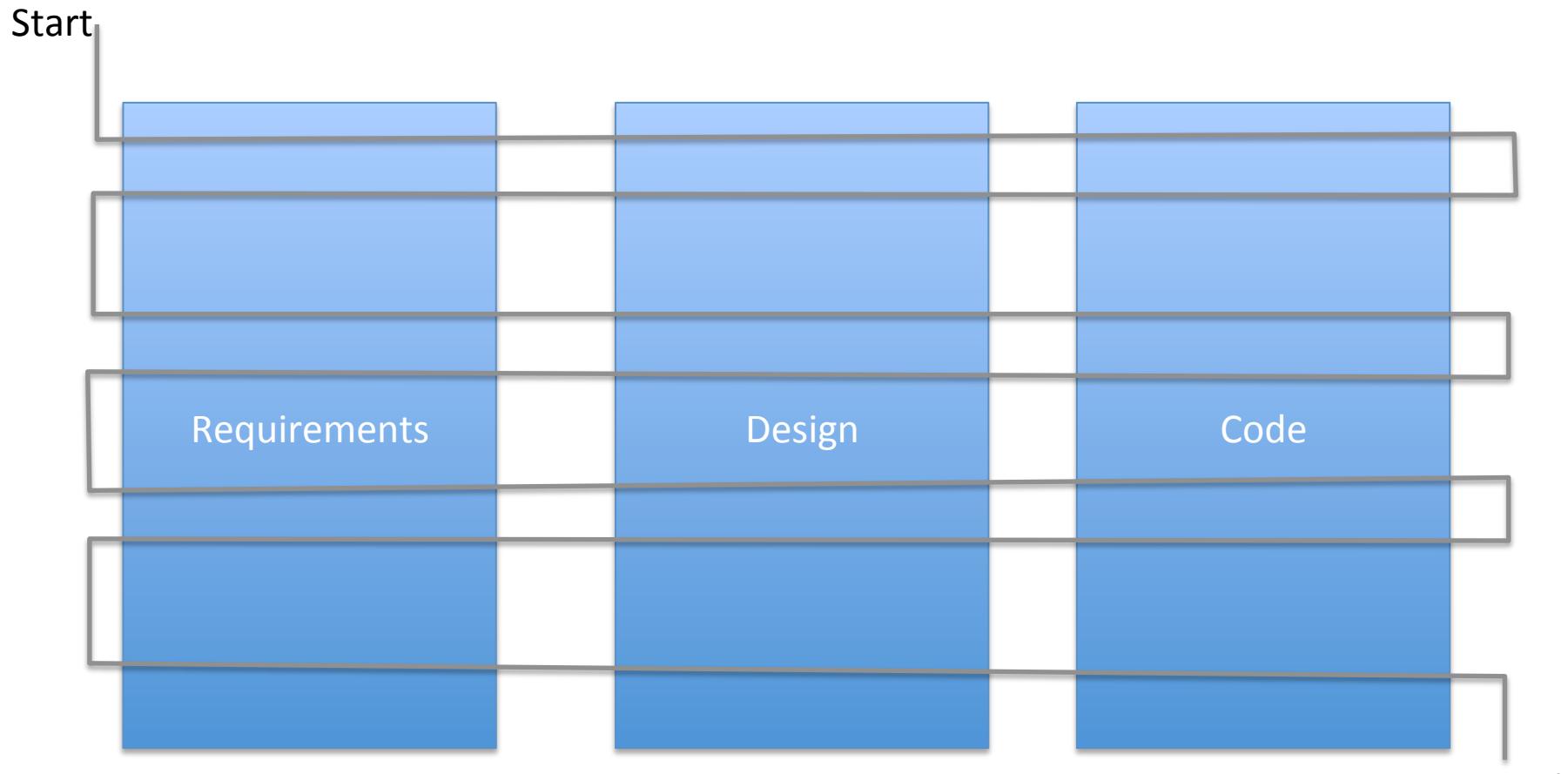
This is traditionally how it is/was done. The risk is that you may not capture the evolution of ideas and thoughts critical to the project.

Draw a Line



**This is what really happens whether traditional or otherwise.
The evolution of thoughts and ideas may be captured.**

Draw a Line



**This is what can happen in an agile enabled development environment.
The traditional program manager, if he/she is ready to let go of
top-to-bottom would consider this a gift.**

Impact

- Top to Bottom and Finish What You Started, put together are a powerful force to beat.
- We can cling vigorously to the top-to-bottom straight line path no matter how inaccurate we know it to be.
- It feels like we are left with no other way to manage.

Results

- Managing a program feels like a constant battle.
 - Needing to refer to “The Art of War” by Sun Tzu to realize success.
- How did you do on the card exercise?

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Trust (or Matching Socks into and un-matching Socks out of the Dryer Syndrome)

- When is the last time you swear the socks you put into the dryer were all matching, only to take out a bunch of socks with two loaners?
- It seems like the dryer ate them for a snack.



The Software Development Dryer

- When using JIRA to support an agile development project, it is typical for a given JIRA ticket to contain:
 - A user story
 - Some derived requirements
 - The design pertinent to the user story
 - Tests and expected results for the user story
 - Test results and any defects
 - Possibly the results of any peer reviews too

Don't Worry Boss..

- ... everything will match when it comes out



Trust

- Can a person really trust the critical elements that describe a critical system to these silly little cards called user stories that are written and ultimately managed by the developers?
- Are you willing to put your professional future and the success of the project into the hands of this group?



Impact

- Lack of trust impacts an entire team at an emotional level that eventually manifests itself in project issues.
- Stress for the project lead is significant and eventually manifests itself in project issues.

Results

- Wasted energy (project inefficiencies)
- Unhappy workplace
- Be very careful of half-agile

Lack of trust was #5 out of 11 challenges for scrum adoption-
“2016 State of Scrum”- Agile Alliance

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Power- having it, keeping it

- *It's good to be the king*
 - “History of the World Part 1”- Mel Brooks



Power

- Power- possession of control, authority, or influence over others
- What is the likelihood that someone in a position of power is willing to give it up?

Projects and Power

- Projects put simply are an exercise where a customer that needs something is desperately trying to do two things at the same time:
 - 1) understand what it needs, and
 - 2) clearly articulate what it needs to the developing group.
- The developing group is desperately trying to do two things at the same time:
 - 1) help the customer understand what they need,
 - 2) actually/eventually develop that which the customer wants.
- In an environment where folks are constantly evolving ideas about their needs and how to best meet them, there simply is no place for “possession of control.”

Agile's Likes and Dislikes

- Likes
 - Flat structure
 - Decisions made by the actors
- Dislikes
 - Isolation of ideas, decisions, actual progress indicators

WAS: Knowledge is power

IS: Collective knowledge empowers the team

Oh No, My Rituals

- One of the many things rituals do for us is remind us of pecking order or status.



Seat location at the table



Sprint Review

There is no table

Impact

- It is hard to ask someone who has been in power to move from the role of powerful leader to that of a “servant leader.”



- Servant Leader? Do I look like a Servant Leader?

Results

- Agile simply abhors any structure that is dedicated to or supports power.
 - The number ills that can come from this are plentiful.

70% of agile adoption tension is due to adherence to command-and-control structures
- 2016 State of Scrum Report- Agile Alliance

As the General Says...

- *I am no longer the chess master and now a gardener because I can no longer see the entire chess board.*
 - “Team of Teams” – General Stanley McChrystal , U.S. Army, Retired

Who is going to tell the General that he is no longer really in charge, at least not the way he is used to.

And who gets to put the “servant leader” title on the door to his office?

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There has been Love in the Air

or Perhaps an Unhealthy Attachment

- Please write down your definition of a contract- 30 seconds
- Please write down your definition of requirements- 30 seconds
- Now draw a Venn Diagram of the overlap between the two- 30 seconds
- On projects how tightly coupled are the requirements and contract? (1-5)

Requirements Dementors

A Dementor is a non-being and Dark creature, considered one of the foulest to inhabit the world. Dementors feed off human happiness, and thus cause depression and despair to anyone near them. They can also consume a person's soul.

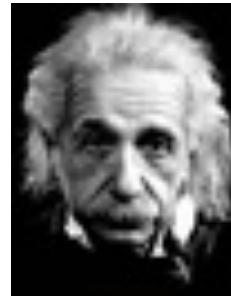
- Defining the problem – the problem statement- rarely complete
- Requirements reside in an unstable space, and are therefore inherently unstable. This space is made up of:
 - Customer wants and desires
 - Provider options
 - World options



We're so sorry, Uncle Albert

- *If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.*"

-- Albert Einstein

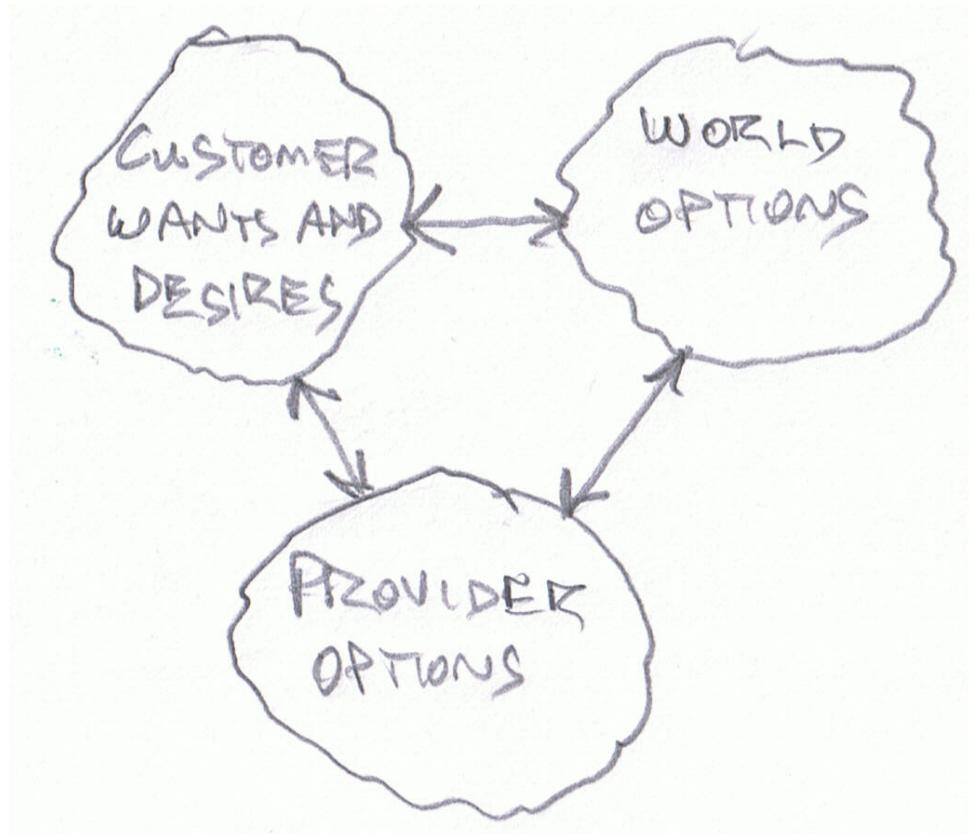


Fools Rush In

- *The fledgling problem solver invariably rushes in with solutions before taking time to define the problem being solved.*
 - *What is the problem? What is the essence of your problem?*
- “Are Your Lights On?”- Gerald M. Weinberg

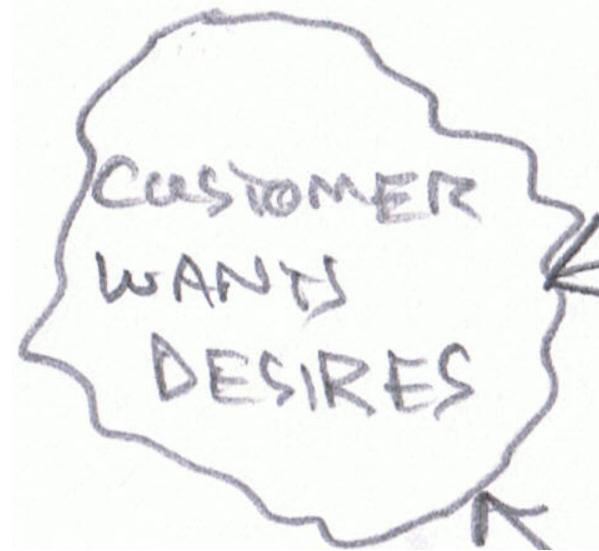
Consider the biggest effort at your workplace.
Is there a documented problem statement?

Three Elements of the Unstable Requirements Space



Wants and Desires Quagmire

- Education- which fosters awareness of what can be possible
- Evolving vision- thinking and re-thinking what is needed for the solution
- Both of these take time
- Perpetually changing



This is a Big Space

- A very large space
- The culmination of all current provider options
- As well as evolving technologies that could impact the “provider” and “customer” spaces
- Perpetually changing

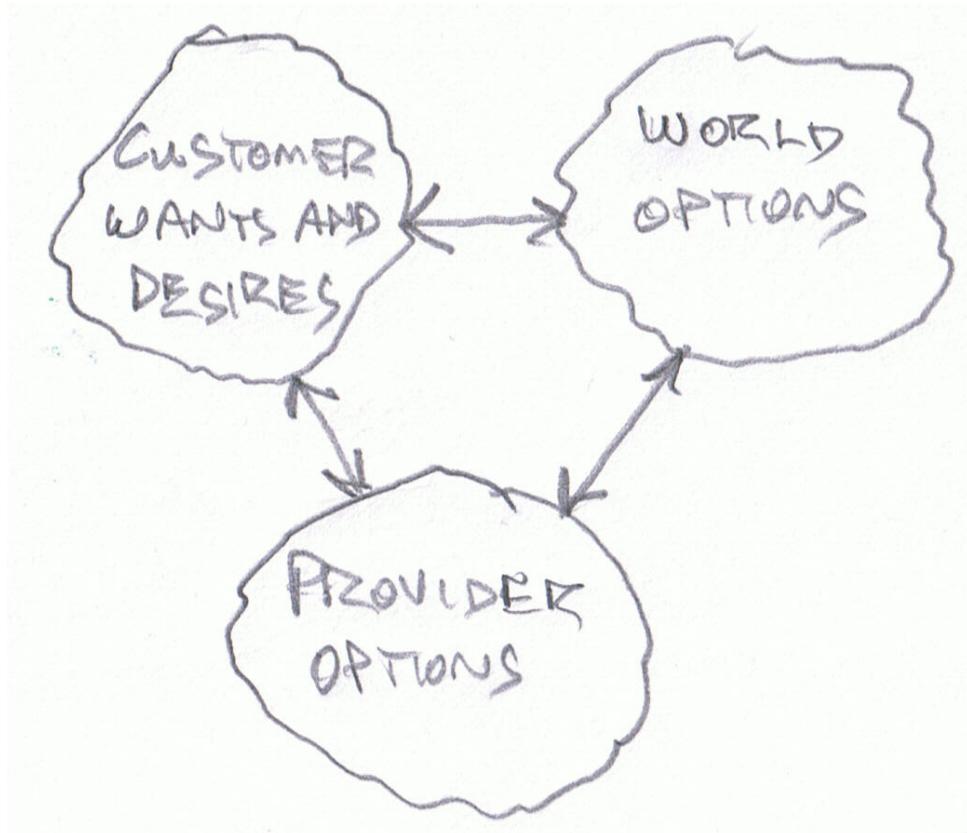


Many Master's to Serve

- All customers current and future
- Shareholders
- Strategic vision
- Perpetually changing



Some Quick Examples



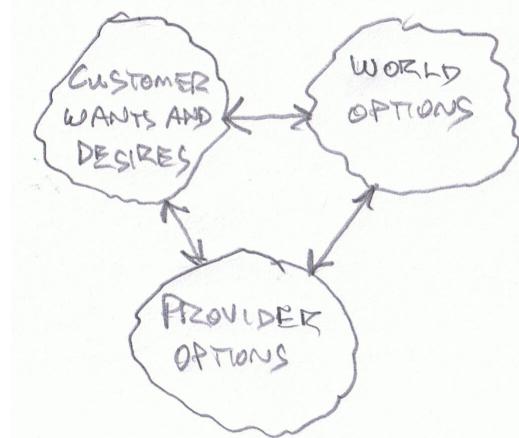
House Painting Nightmare



WARNING - NOT TO SCALE

... and that's the Truth

- Immutable truths:
 1. All 3 are in a constant state of flux
 2. Any change in one causes a change in at least one or both of the others
 3. Ignoring 1 and 2 causes pain on projects



In Summary

- Unobvious Social Norms
 - Finish what you started
 - How can you have any pudding if you don't eat your meat?
 - Top-to-Bottom
 - First, then left to right
 - Matching socks
 - Or trust
 - Power
 - Agile abhors “possession of control”
 - Requirements Management/Control Delusion
 - Requirements dementors- missing problem statement and the three elements of the unstable requirements space

Questions?

“How Big Band Drumming is like Team Leadership”- Agile Alliance Aug 7-11 Orlando, FL

For the complete slide set (and
“Scrum CMMI Level 3 guide”, and
“Synesthesia, high performing teams,
ethnic rhythms, and you” video) go to
jfr-consulting.com

Get Unstuck

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Thank You