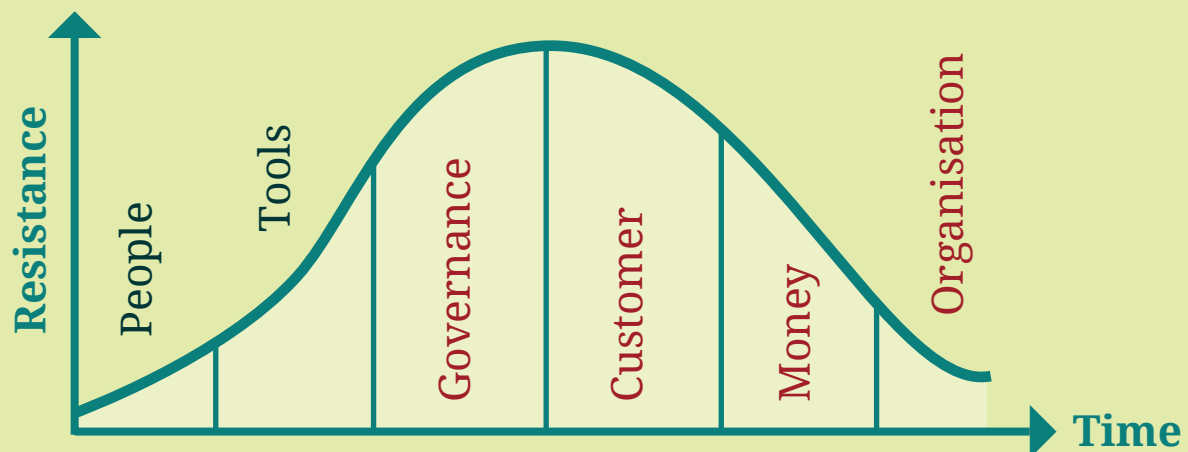When a company adopts agile methodologies, problems surface. The areas which are problematic often follow a pattern: Things "break" in a common order regardless of industry, company size, location, ...

Agile Adoption Patterns

1) Agile initiatives are met with people resisting "crazy ideas". Some adapt early, others later, some never. Still, companies usually emerge on the other side of this stage.

Once people accept and prefer the new way, their tools can turn out to 2) hinder collaboration and small iterations, rather than support them. Replacing these tools often means letting go of big investments of time and money.

3) Agile teams report differently - more often and hopefully more honest - than traditional teams. Also they need decisions faster. This means a big adjustment for most higher level steering groups. Half-hearted adoptions never even reach this stage.

By now things are working nicely for the company. It's faster in both 4) development and management decisions. These mature teams start to demand frequent feedback from the customer - a commitment that many customers are not ready for.

5) At this stage, the business side appreciates the degree of control they have over delivery. But what use is this control if you can't change budget mid-year and products are planned and approved a year in advance?

The org chart becomes your biggest impediment. Management structure, 6) reward models, etc. have to adapt to reap the best return on investment.