Getting Your Agile Team Unstuck

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THE GOALS OF THIS SESSION

Talk about the common challenges faced by agile teams I've worked with

Share some of the tells I've noticed of when things have "gone off the rails"

Review some ways to brush off the dirt and get back in there
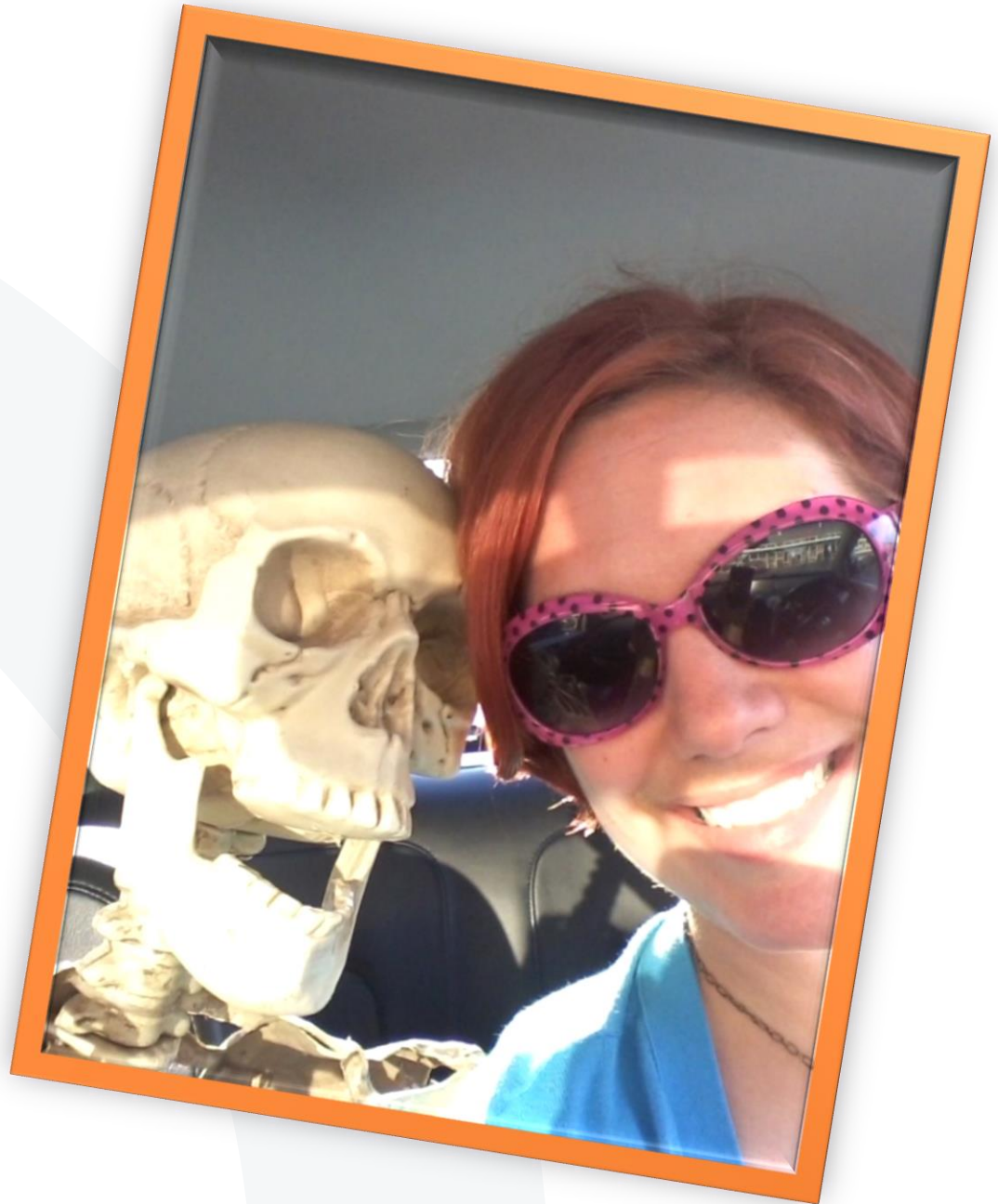
THE STRUGGLE

IS REAL

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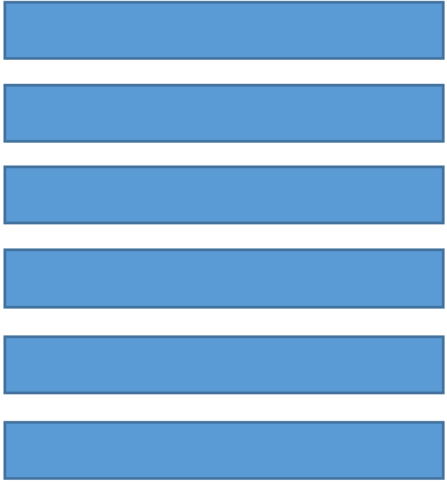
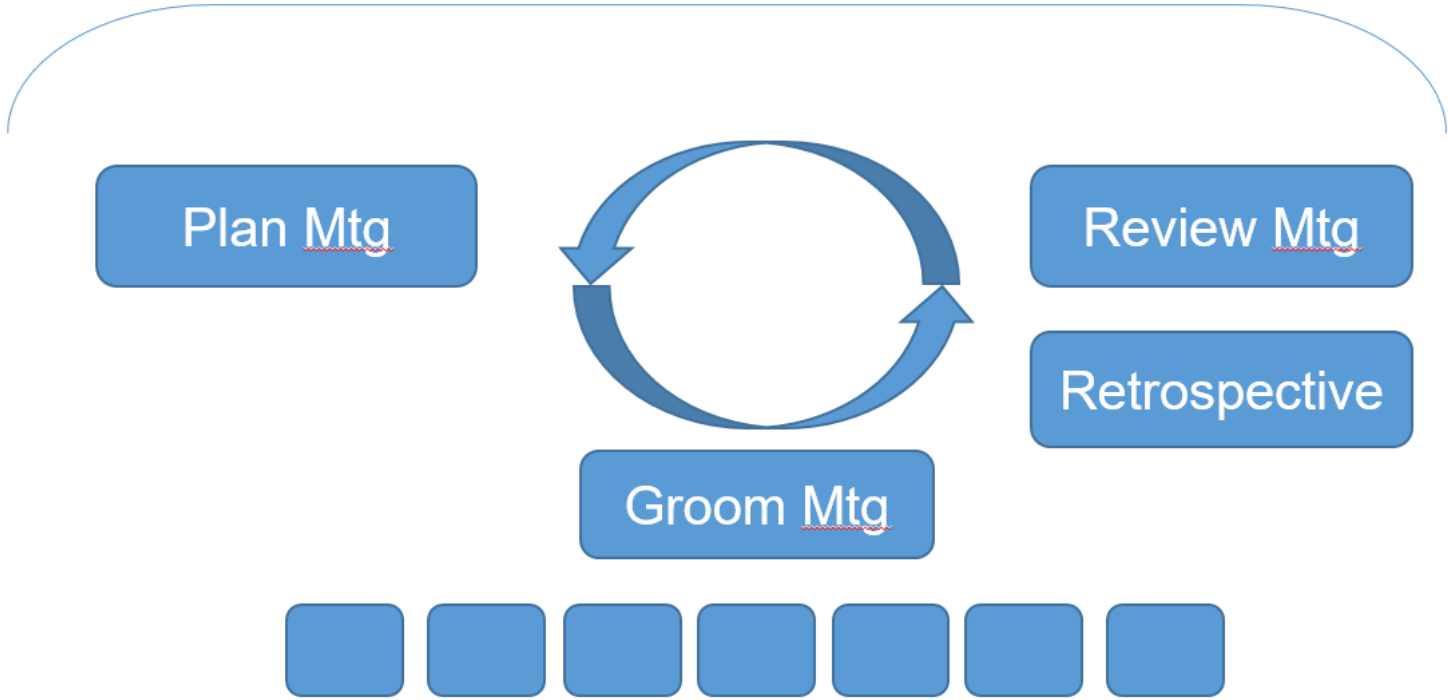# WHAT DOES AGILITY LOOK LIKE?

Agile software development describes a set of principles for software development under which **requirements and solutions evolve** through the **collaborative effort** of **self-organizing cross-functional teams**.
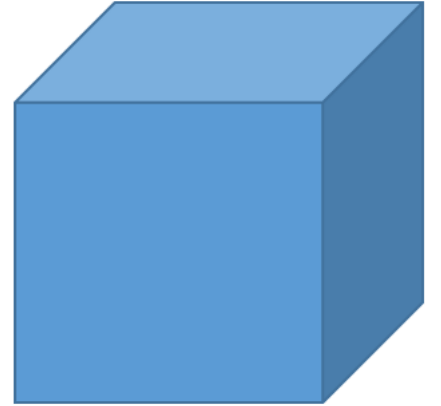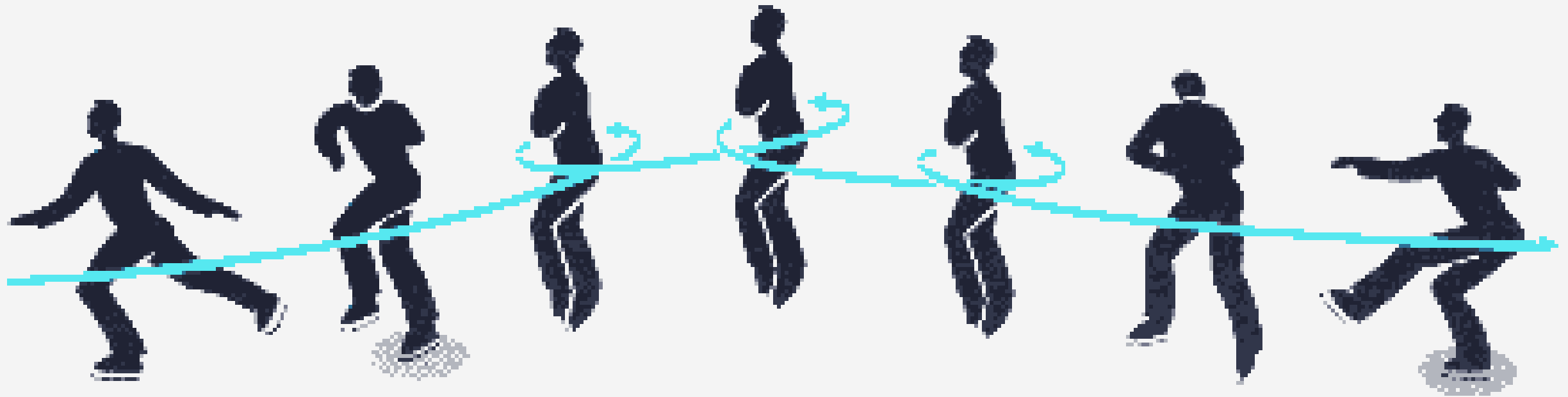
Sprint (1-4 Weeks)

Product Backlog

Working Software

Plan Mtg

Groom Mtg

Review Mtg

Retrospective

Daily Standup Meetings

backward approach   toe pick   three rotations   lands on right

AXEL IS A JUMP IN FIGURE SKATING FROM THE OUTER FORWARD
EDGE OF ONE SKATE WITH 1.5 TURNS TAKEN IN THE AIR AND A
RETURN TO THE BACKWARD EDGE OF THE OTHER SKATE.
THE JUMP IS NAMED AFTER AXEL PAULSEN, A NORWEGIAN
FIGURE SKATER, WHO FIRST PERFORMED THE JUMP IN 1882.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

CONTINUE
SKATING

START WITH
CROSSOVERS

GLIDE BACKWARD
ON AN EXTENDED
OUTSIDE EDGE

STEP FORWARD AND
BEND THE SKATING KNEE.
MAKE SURE ARMS ARE BACK.

BRING ARMS FORWARD AND
JUMP OFF THE ICE AT THE SAME
TIME YOU SWING YOUR
FREE LEG FORWARD TO
PERFORM 1.5 TURNS.

GLIDE INTO BACK OUTSIDE
EDGE. EXTEND YOUR LEG
AND ARMS AS YOU LAND THE JUMP.

WHAT PROMOTES SUCCESSFUL AGILE?

commitment

discipline

meaningful collaboration

adaptive planning

experimentation

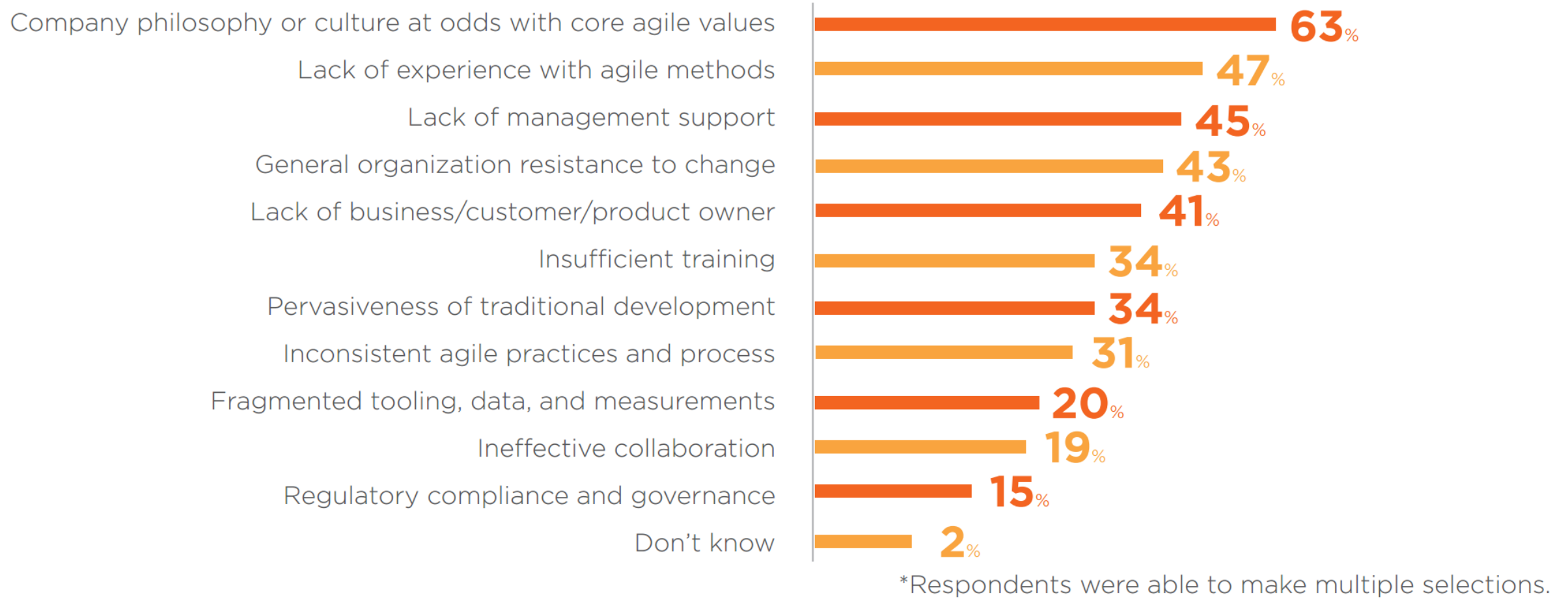permission to fail

continuous improvement

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No wonder agile is so freaking hard!

TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

So why does every agile team eventually go off the rails?

Company philosophy or culture at odds with core agile values	**63**%
Lack of experience with agile methods	**47**%
Lack of management support	**45**%
General organization resistance to change	**43**%
Lack of business/customer/product owner	**41**%
Insufficient training	**34**%
Pervasiveness of traditional development	**34**%
Inconsistent agile practices and process	**31**%
Fragmented tooling, data, and measurements	**20**%
Ineffective collaboration	**19**%
Regulatory compliance and governance	**15**%
Don't know	**2**%

*Respondents were able to make multiple selections.

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COMMON CHALLENGES

1. Expectations management
2. Quality
3. Communication breakdown
4. Lack of ownership

EXPECTATIONS MANAGEMENT

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

MISMANAGED EXPECTATIONS SMELLS

THINGS EVERYONE CAN DO

1. ACTUALLY TALK TO EACH OTHER

2. Create safe spaces for sharing status, issues, feedback

3. No assumptions based development / testing / deployment

4. Review progress with the PO/Stakeholders as early and often as possible

QUALITY

QUALITY

QUALITY SMELLS

THINGS EVERYONE CAN DO

1. Ask clarity questions early in the process

2. Document decisions made in-flight

3. Examine the process to determine why quality wasn't delivered

4. Review outcomes often, so that divergences are caught early

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION SMELLS

THINGS EVERYONE CAN DO

1. Remove artificial boundaries between people

2. Encourage the team to get to know one another

3. Listen to what your team mates are saying and NOT saying

4. Accept mistakes as readily as successes (maybe more!)

OWNERSHIP

OWNERSHIP SMELLS

THINGS EVERYONE CAN DO

1. Implement a fist of five approach to validating team commitments BEFORE committing

2. Make sure everyone on the team feels empowered to solve problems

3. Make sure everyone on the team has permission to fail

4. Take ownership of the big picture, not just your part in it

5. Reward team success, not individual success*

Get people talking!

More Stuff to Check Out

Fail Forward: https://www.admittingfailure.org/

Lean Coffee: http://leancoffee.org/

Drive: The Suprising Truth about What Motivates People: https://www.amazon.com/Drive-Surprising-Truth-About-Motivates/dp/1594484805

Coaching Agile Teams: https://www.amazon.com/Coaching-Agile-Teams-ScrumMasters-Addison-Wesley/dp/0321637704/

How to find me!

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Thank you

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