

From 30 to 12,000: The 16 Year Journey of an Internal Community of Practice (CoP)

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What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a common scope of work or passion about a topic and want to share ideas, insights, information, best practices, solve problems, advise each other, and deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an on-going basis.

Benefits and Value of Community



Develop knowledge

- Provide a forum across silos
- Create timely solutions
- Enhance partnerships
- Foster interaction across experience levels



Share knowledge

- Promote knowledge generation
- Convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge
- Facilitate identification of knowledge and skills



Preserve knowledge

- Promote intellectual assets and best practices
- Improve retention of organizational memory
- Provide a “safe place”

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” - Helen Keller

Active Communities of Practice at Northrop Grumman

Lean-Agile
CoP

Site
Reliability
Engineering
CoP

User
Experience
(UX) CoP

Instructional
Designer
CoP

Product Line
Engineering

Common
Products

GPU
Community
of Practice

Atlassian
CoP

Dev*Ops
CoP

DOORS
CoP

MBSE CoP

Leading in
the Digital
Age CoP

Citizen
Automator
Community

AI
Community
of Practice

At least 80+ CoPs have existed since 2003

How the Northrop Grumman Agile CoP Started

A Problem to Solve

Scaling agile to the systems level



Leadership Support

A Vice President who empowered us

An Aligned Team

Vision and committed to the mission



Corporate Sponsorship

Aligned with corporate initiatives

Learning Culture

Continuous learning and improvement mindset

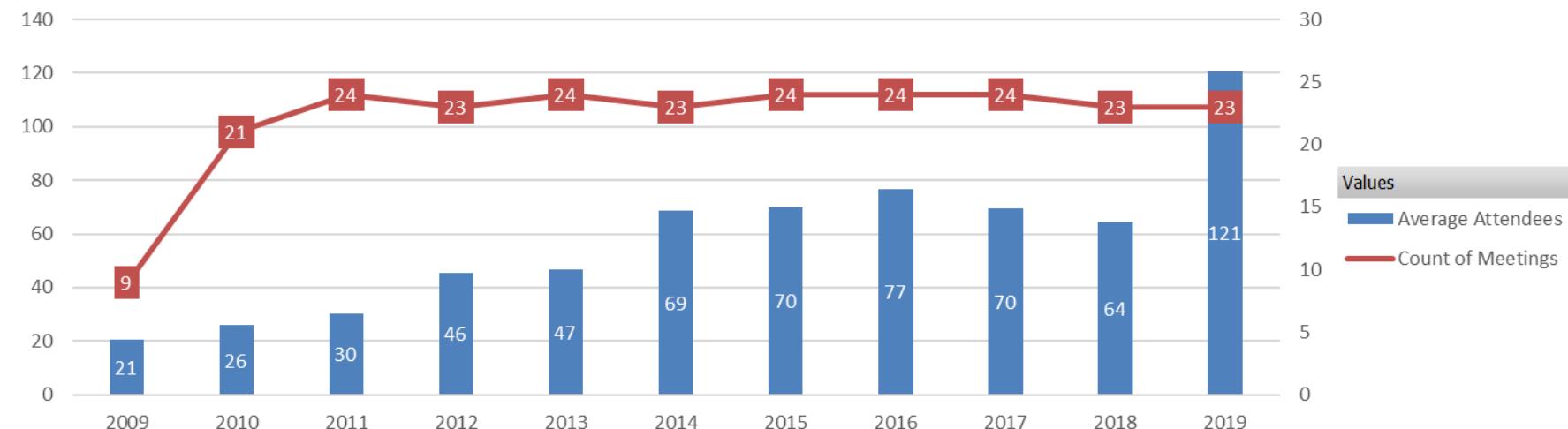


Initial SEAG Agile SE CoP Charter 2008

- Scope:
 - Cross-Sector participation
 - Both hardware and software development
 - CMMI process areas and System Engineering Agility
- Objectives:
 - Document and mature Agile development methods
 - Share knowledge, educate and train organizations on Agile technologies and practices
 - Provide input on Agile methods to the NGC Systems Engineering Handbook
 - Establish a core group of Agile SMEs
 - Identify tools and implementation methods
 - Capture lessons learned on Agile implementation
 - Recommend project management approaches for planning and monitoring and control
 - Investigate and recommend best practices for melding CMMI and Agile practices
 - Develop communications briefs and training materials

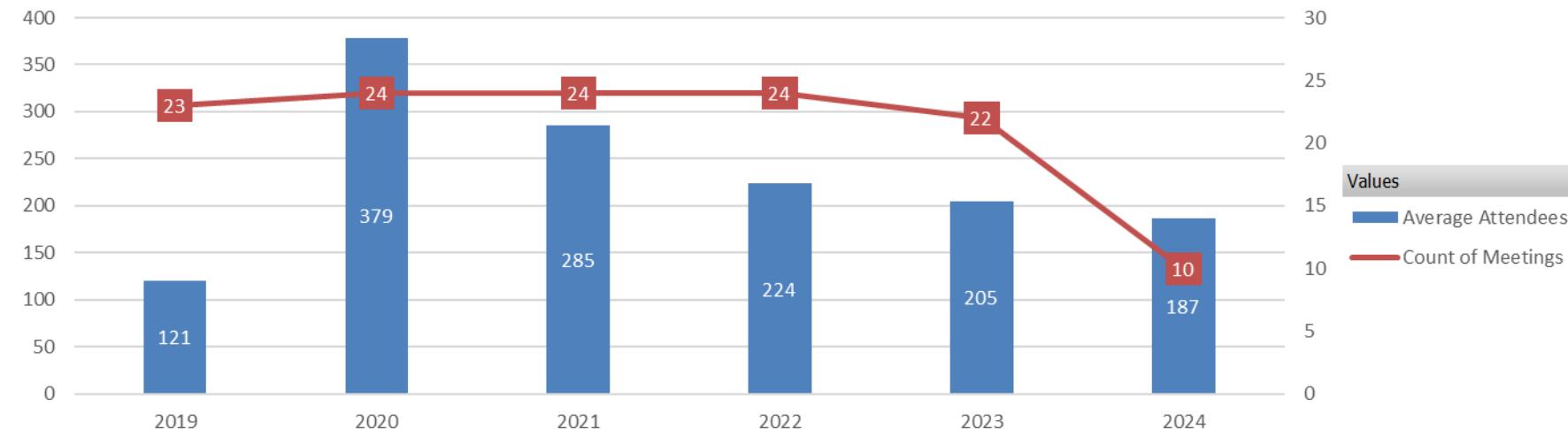
2008 – 2019: Before Agile Transformation Initiative

- Meetings held every other week for a hour
 - 12pm – 1pm Eastern
 - Primarily internal speakers with occasional speakers from industry
 - Focused on Agile topics
 - Lync, Skype, and WebEx (external speakers)
 - Yearly survey started in 2013 to gather feedback
- Organic growth
 - Mailing list grew to around 1,000 members

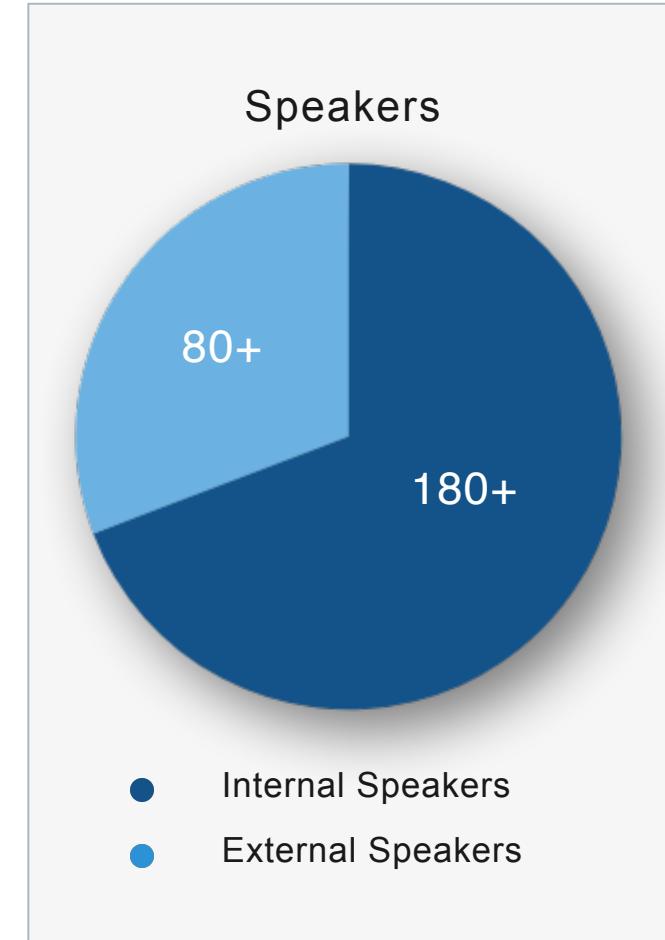


2019 – 2024: Agile Transformation Initiative

- Meetings held every other week for a hour
 - Alternate between 12pm – 1pm and 3pm – 4pm Eastern
 - Primarily internal speakers with occasional speakers from industry
 - Renamed to Lean-Agile CoP and started to include more Lean presentations
 - Skype Large Meetings and ZoomGov Webinar
- Intentional growth
 - Mailing list grew to over 12,000 by adding employees who took introductory Agile training classes



Lean-Agile CoP 2008 - 2024



Lessons Learned

- Care
- Get leadership backing
- Send regular communications
- Reach out to champions
- Build relationships in industry
- Include adjacent topics
- You need more than one person to sustain the CoP
- Pick a cadence and stick to it
- Don't cancel meetings, especially if only meeting once a month
- Gather measures to track how the CoP is performing
- Conduct a survey at least once a year to gather feedback
- Show appreciation



Sample measures

- | |
|---|
| <i>Attendance and length on call by attendee</i> |
| <i>Unique attendees over time and repeat attendees</i> |
| <i>Mailing list adds / removes / attrition</i> |
| <i>Demographics of attendees (sector, job title, level, location)</i> |
| <i>Views on Lean-Agile CoP internal website</i> |
| <i>Net Promoter Score (NPS)</i> |

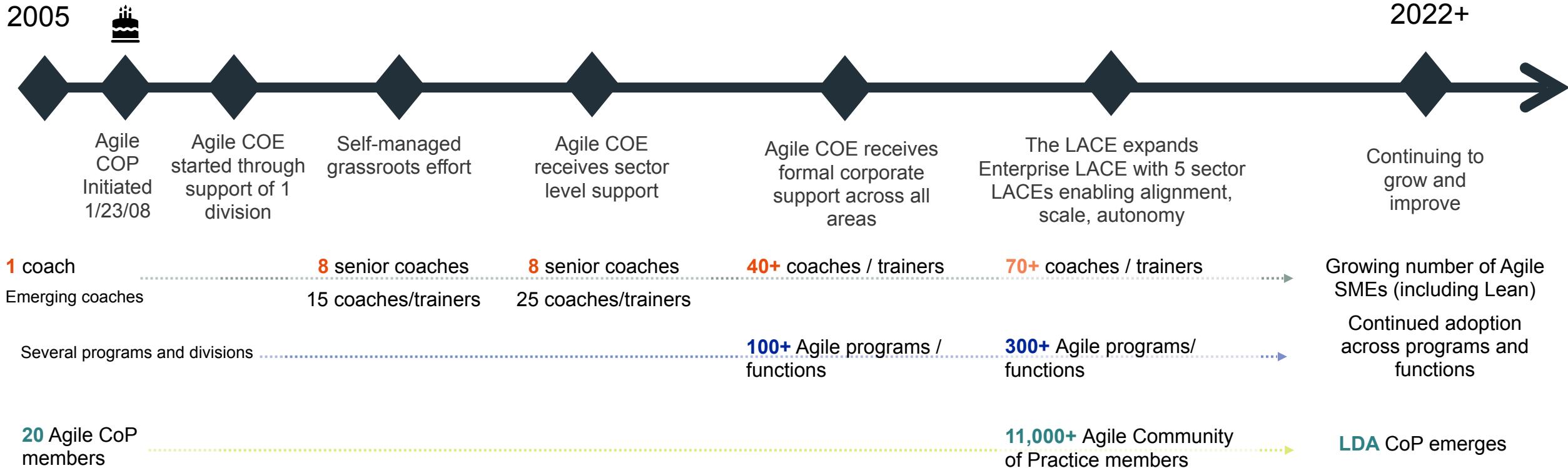


How Has the Lean-Agile CoP Contributed to the Business

Lean-Agile COE

From Grassroots to Growth & Sustainability

Lean-Agile provides the foundation for billions \$ of business



Demand-driven, organic growth has shaped future path

Closing

*Fostering a community of practice,
empowers employees
to learn, grow, and innovate
resulting in an organization that can
thrive in an evolving and ever-
changing world*



NORTHROP ▶
GRUMMAN ▶