Agile FTW! Competitive Advantage and Happiness Through Business Agility

John Hughes
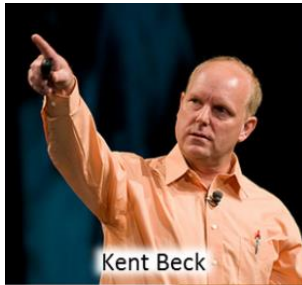
Sevatec, Inc.
2815 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031
www.sevatec.com
571.766.1300

"Agile" – Created by Software People

Kent Beck · Mike Beedle · Arie van Bennekum · Alistair Cockburn · Ward Cunningham
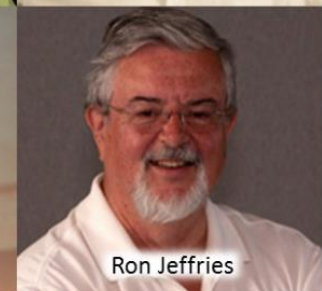
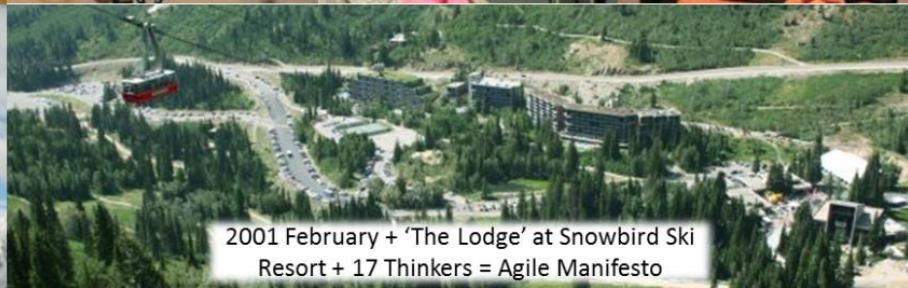Martin Fowler · James Grenning · Jim Highsmith · Andrew Hunt · Ron Jeffries

Jon Kern · 2001 February + 'The Lodge' at Snowbird Ski Resort + 17 Thinkers = Agile Manifesto · Brian Marick

Bob Martin · Stephen Mellor · Jeff Sutherland · Ken Schwaber · Dave Thomas

4 Values - Software Words

Individuals and Interactions	Over	Process and Tools
Working Software	Over	Comprehensive Documentation
Responding to Change	Over	Following a Plan
Customer Collaboration	Over	Contract Negotiation

12 Principles – More Software Words
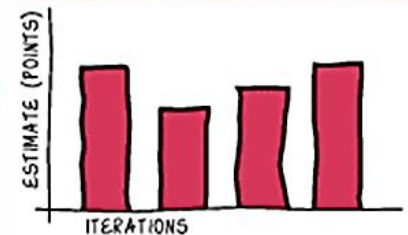
Stop Thinking Agile is Just for Software

Bring It To The Business

Even Your Home!

…but let's just focus on the business for this session

Goals

- Establish and maintain a strong family unit, building strong bonds, and providing comfort so all Know they are loved
- Raise children to be well rounded, thoughtful of others, capable, and happy
- Lasting memories of our children and family
- Education and experiences that set children up for success in life
- Maintain good physical health for all family members
- Professional careers that build experience, knowledge, and confidence in self
- Raise children to be positive contributors to humanity and the planet

Actors

- Nuclear Family
- Parents
- Children
- Bekah
- John
- Extended Family
- Friends
- Classmates
- Teachers

Impacts

- Shared focus time together
- All have household chores and responsibilities
- Involvment in activities and hobbies
- Kid's friends included in our activites
- Spending time with friends
- Travel to new places
- Engaging in projects together
- Being more present
- Healthy activities

Activities

- Friday night game night
- Reading and spending time together before bed
- Family dinner/meals
- John/Bekah focus time
- Date nights
- Traveling to places the kids read about
- Traveling for Spring Break to new locations
- Kings Dominion trip with family and friends
- Playing musical instruments
- Wrestling
- Family hikes
- Family gym time
- Coaching/participating in kids sports/activities
- Kids time without parents
- Hotel stay in the city with friends; no family
- Coding together
- Building gaming computers
- Building guitars/bass
- Build out basement together
- Dishes and laundry

Crossing That Bridge

- A value-driven, data-driven focus
- Frequent touchpoints and collaboration
- Visibility, transparency, and awareness
- Cross-functional mission-aligned teams
- Agile roles to enable the right behaviors
- Fast feedback and continuous improvement
- Agile Mindset
- Corporate DevOps
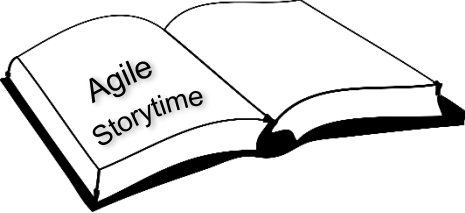
Setting the Stage

- Storyline: Pulling the thread on Sevatec's Strategic Planning initiative to better understand Business Agility

- Character: Sevatec
    - Federal IT contracting firm of about 400 people based in Washington, DC
    - Graduate of 8a Small Business, now a mid-tier company
    - Core competencies in Agile | DevOps Software Development, Cloud, Cyber Security, and Data Sciences

- Challenge: How to thrive as a mid-tier company
    - Wanted to find competitive advantage as a mid-tier player
    - Continuously improve their service to their customers' missions

- Journey: Adopting Business Agility
    - Starting point: Corporate Strategic Planning Initiative

The Chief Strategist Meets the Agile Guy

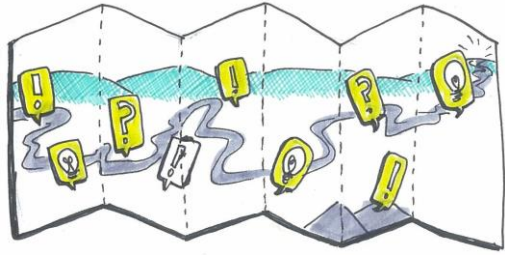# Shaping Ideas Into Value-aligned Initiatives
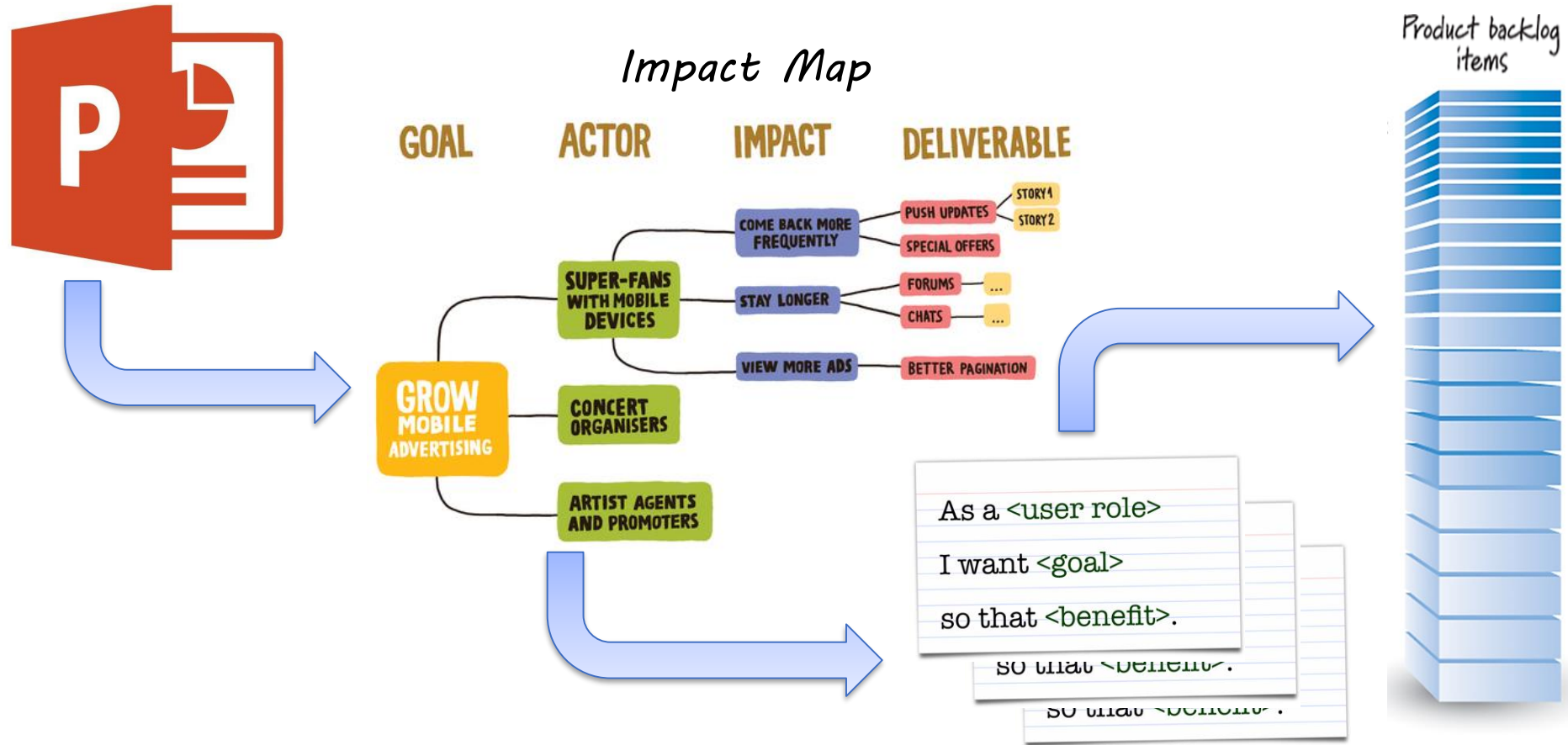
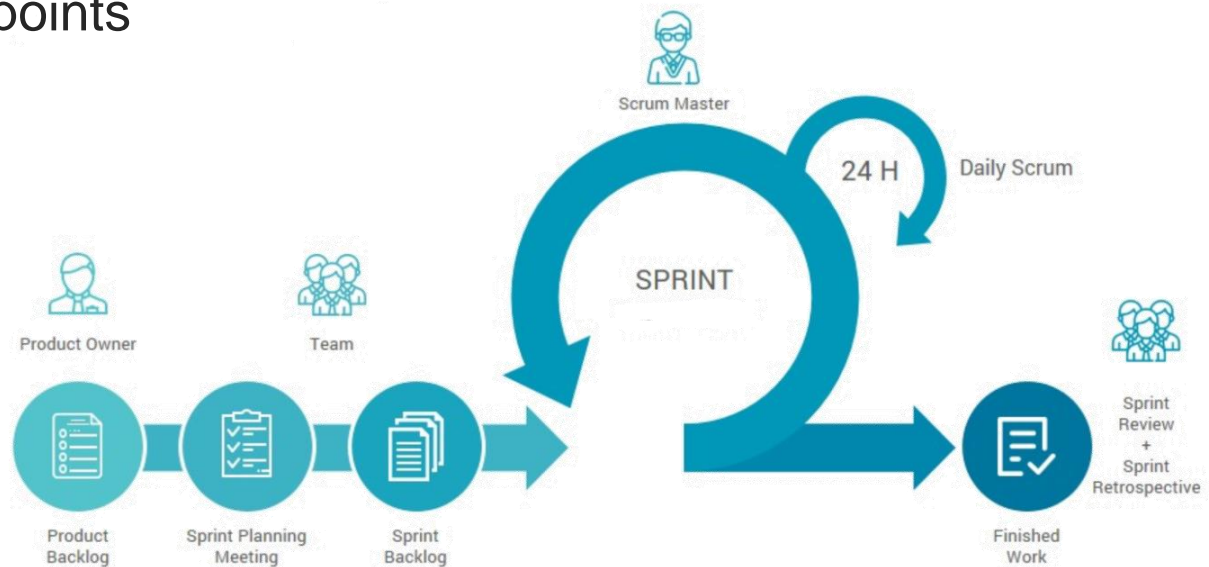# Top Down Champions – BACon 2017

Strategic Planning Offsite

Execute on the Strategic Plan

- Goals, Objectives, Initiatives, and Activities in Jira
- Ordered Strategic Backlog (Jira)
- Strategic (3-Year) Roadmap (Jira)
- Strategic Plan Scrum board (Jira)
- Adopted a mostly Scrum-like Agile practice
  - Planning
  - Standups/Touchpoints
  - Burndowns
  - Review
  - Retrospective

Challenges

"We (PMs) already have full-time jobs managing our customers"

"More frequent conversations?"

Resistance

Too fast and widespread to cement all intended changes

"More collaboration and visibility?"

Lost momentum

Partial Backslides

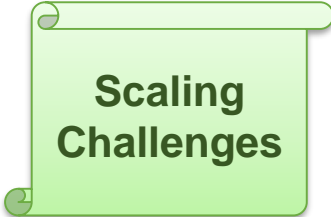"This is a lot of additional overhead and burden!"

Reverted back in some areas

Positive energy dissipated to some degree

Team of changes agents was too small for bite we tried to chew

Would benefit from ramping up more change agents before expanding the reach

Scaling Challenges

Would benefit from establishing stronger community and local change agents

Scaling the movement remains a challenge to the speed and breadth we want for ourselves

SEVATEC SHIFT UP.

Beneficial Highlights

"Let's go completely Agile!"

Modern Leadership

Cross-Functional Touchpoints

Ops Mesh

BD Mesh

Contract Retros

End-to-end Integration

Agile Quality Management

Connecting the Company

Goal

Objective

Strategic Initiative

Strategic Activity

Epics

Stories

Sub-Tasks

<u>Value-driven Acceleration</u>
All functional work can tie back to the highest priority Strategic Goals and Initiatives
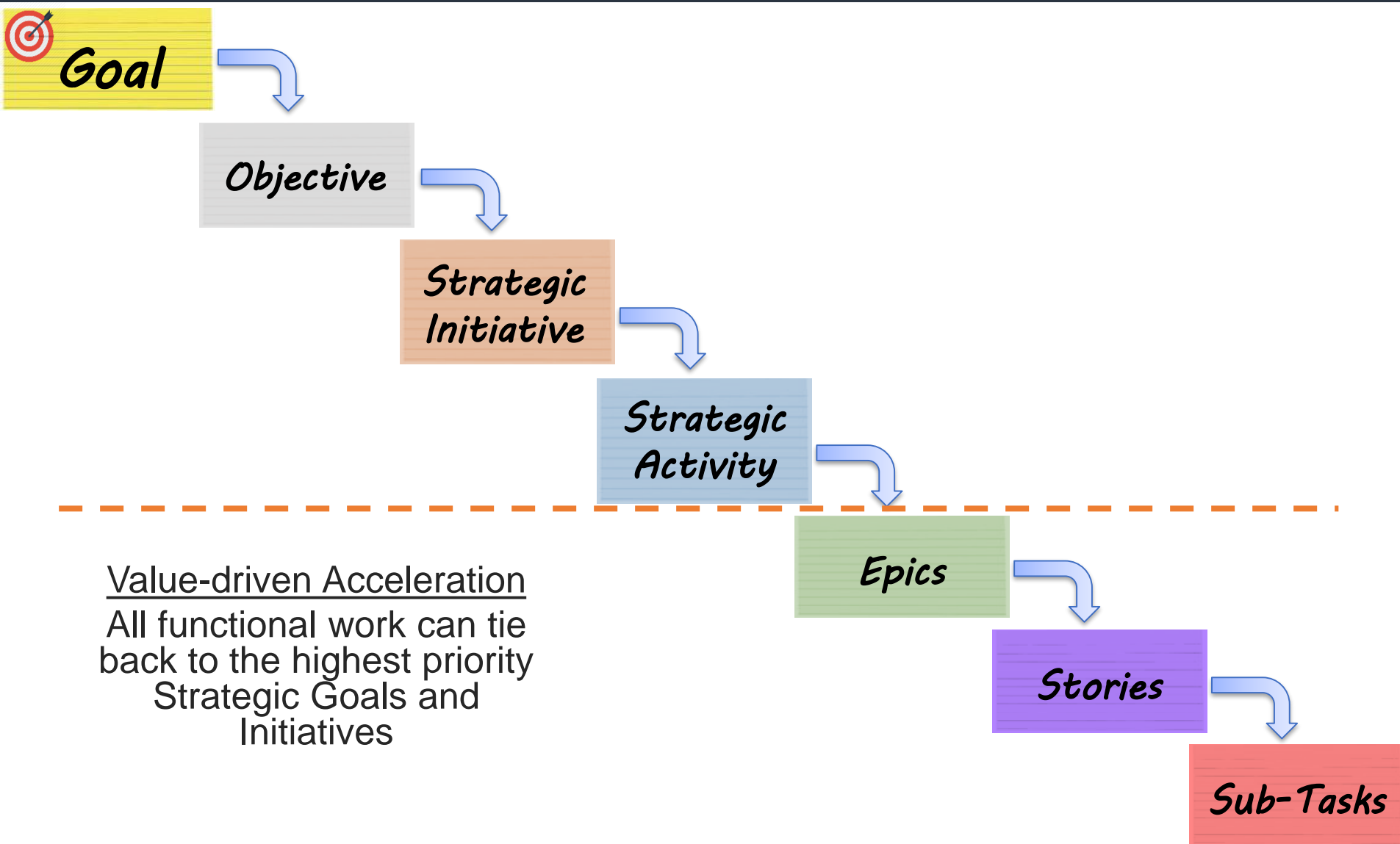
Customer Intimacy and Psychological Safety

Let's Talk A Bit More About the Practices and Behaviors Themselves

Seeing Agile from the Business Lens

Value-driven Focus

- Impact maps
- Value stream maps
- Roadmaps
- Backlogs
- Epics/User Stories
- OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) and CFRs (Conversations, Feedback and Recognition)

Goal

Objective

Strategic Initiative

Strategic Activity

OKR/CFR

Frequent Touchpoints and Collaboration

- Roadmap and Backlog Grooming
- Iteration Planning and Review
- Daily Standups
- Program Increment Planning and Reviews
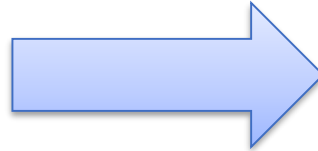- Scrum of Scrums
- Cross-functional "meshes"

Visibility, Transparency, and Awareness

- Kanban Boards
- ALM tools like Jira or TFS
- Chat tools like Slack or MS Teams
- Big Visible Radiators

Cross-Functional Mission Aligned Teams

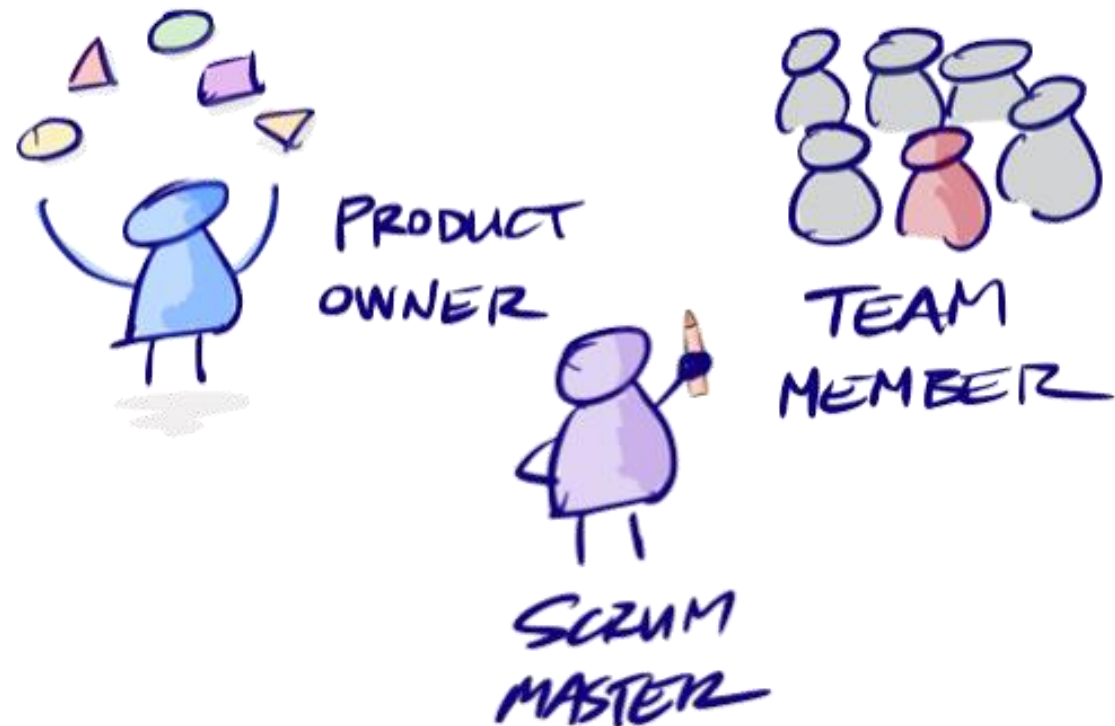**Functional Silos,**
Lack of Communication,
Multiple Handoffs

Cross-Functional Roles,
High Collaboration,
Results Oriented
Owner's Mindset
Customer Intimacy

Agile Roles to Enable the Right Behaviors

- Product Owner Team / Value Team
- Product Owners
- ScrumMasters
- Agile Team members

Fast Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- Retrospectives
  - Cross-functional with customers
  - Internal after iterations
  - After business milestones
  - After issues arise
- Surveys
- Conversations

Mindset

- Culture of transparency and awareness
- Openness and Psychological safety
- Empowerment and self-management
- Focus on customer success
- Happy customer and happy employees
- Wholeness

"Corporate DevOps" - Mindset

- All functional areas working from the beginning of an effort
    - e.g. Proposals, Capture, Pricing, and Recruiting…
- Owners Mindset, not "throwing it over the wall"

"Corporate DevOps" – Technology Practices

- Integrate back-office tools to gain efficiencies
- Leaning out processes through automation
- Predictive analytics
- Monitoring and notifications

"Corporate DevOps" - ChatOps

- Tools like Slack and MS Teams bring everything together in a very consumable, centralized way

Business Agility Benefits

- Benefits of applying Agile and DevOps mindset and practices to the business
  - Customers are more successful
  - Revenue and growth accelerate
  - Corporate processes lean out
  - Employees are more capable
  - Real-time awareness and predictive analytics increase effective decision-making and empowerment
- Employees are happier. Customers are happier. The corporate bottom-line reflects this happiness.

Wrapping it Up
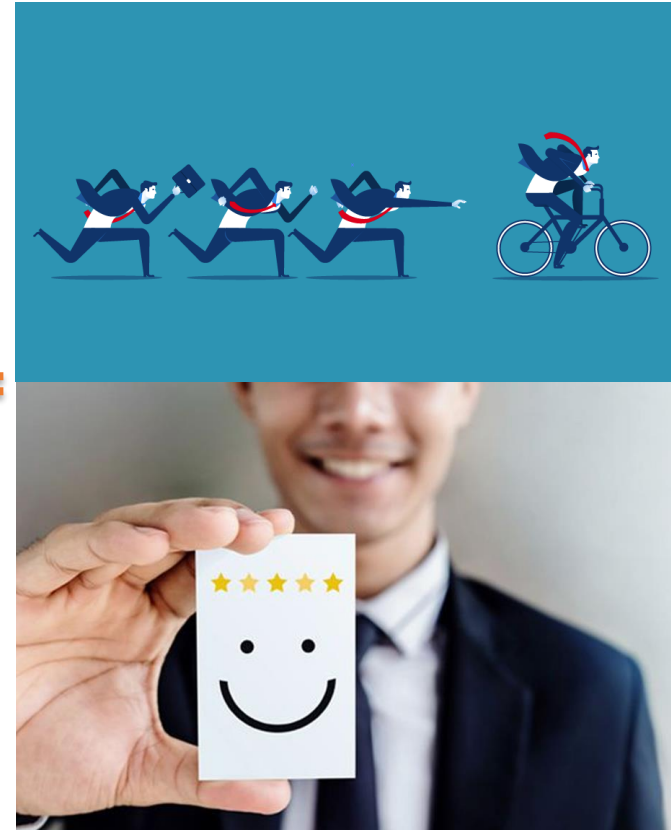
John Hughes
Email: jhughes@sevatec.com
Twitter: @jwhughesjr
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/johnwhughesjr