



# The Journey to Organization-Wide Scrum

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# Overview

## Introduction: My View of Scrum

- ❖ Scrum has emerged as the best of breed of Agile practices
- ❖ My company, Construx Software, is pro Scrum, recommends it often, and provides training and consulting in Scrum
- ❖ Overall, we see far more successes with Scrum than failures
- ❖ We learn more from failures than from successes, so emphasis of this talk is on failures
- ❖ That should not be interpreted as being negative about Scrum!

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# Story #1

## A Case Study in How Not to Implement Scrum

### How Not to Implement Scrum

- ❖ Project Launch: Do Scrum by the Book
- ❖ Iterations 1-2: Project in Flight
- ❖ Iteration 3: Questions from the Business
- ❖ Iteration 4: The Outside Consultant
- ❖ Iteration 5: Project Shut Down

*Retrospective to follow ...*



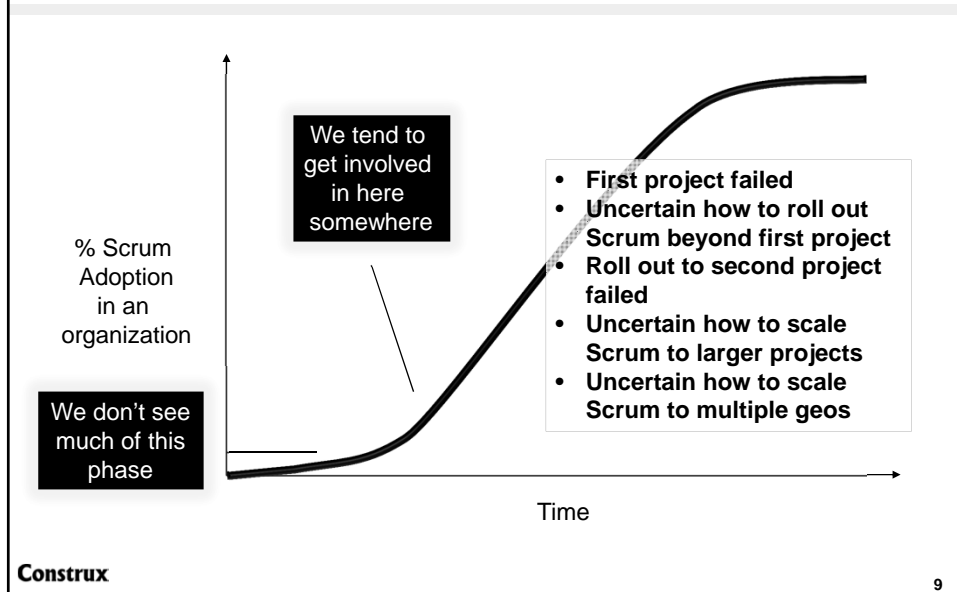
# More on My Perspective: A Brief History of Construx and Scrum

## Background on SteveMcC and Construx Software

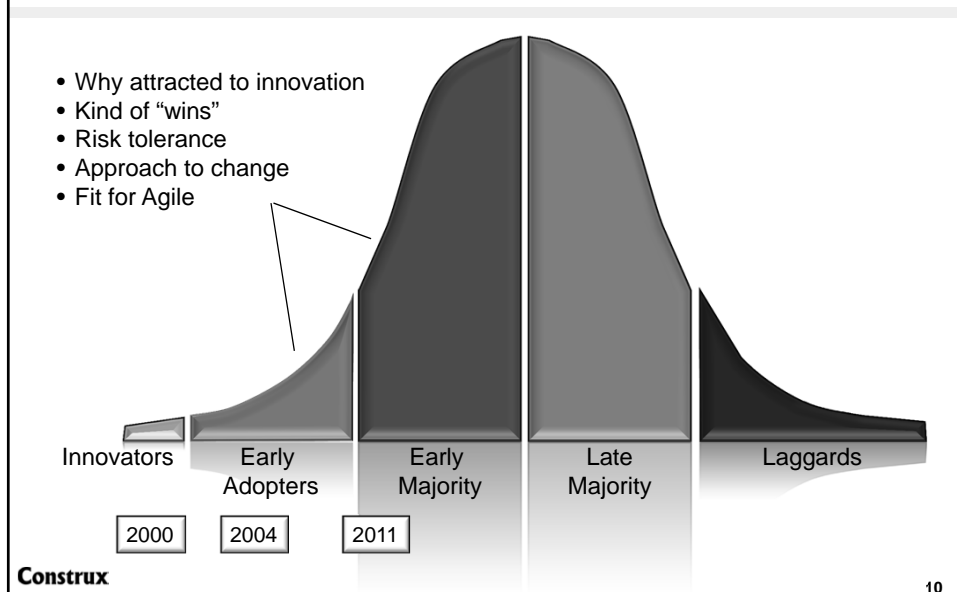


- ❖ 2001 vs. 2011
- ❖ Client org's usually in the 100-1000 staff range, some significantly larger

## My Vantage Point on Scrum Adoption



## Innovation Adoption Sequence and Scrum



# Story #1 How Not to do Scrum **RETROSPECTIVE**



## Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal

Do not pursue agility at the expense of predictability unless you are sure your business wants that.



## Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal



Businesses  
would rather be  
wrong than  
vague.

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## Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal


- ❖ Flexibility vs. Predictability
  - ◆ Don't assume the business needs or wants flexibility in requirements
  - ◆ Don't assume the business will trade predictability for flexibility
  - ◆ Summary of conversations with C-levels about predictability and flexibility
- ❖ Agile is not all or nothing
  - ◆ Agile requirements vs. agile planning
  - ◆ Scrum/agile can either support or undermine predictability

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## Learning #2: Don't Use Scrum to Avoid Accountability



# Businesses Live or Die on the Basis of Their Commitments.

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## Learning #2: Don't Use Scrum to Avoid Accountability

If you are pursuing agility at the expense of making or meeting commitments, you are probably headed toward failure.

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### Learning #3: "Trust Us, We're Doing Scrum" Doesn't Work

- ❖ The pattern is not "Trust and then Verify"; trust has to be earned first
- ❖ The team tried to start with the end state
- ❖ Many businesses don't trust their software function
- ❖ Build the track record first, then move toward a higher trust relationship

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### Learning #4: Scrum Does Not Give You the Ability to Boil the Ocean

- ❖ Schwaber: "Scrum doesn't solve your problems; it exposes your problems" (paraphrase)
- ❖ True, but you don't need to attack every problem you see
- ❖ The business might not agree that the "problems" you see are really problems.

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## Story #2

# Initial Success Followed by Second Project Failure

## Initial Success Followed by Second Project Failure

- ❖ First Team
- ❖ Attempt to recruit follow-on teams

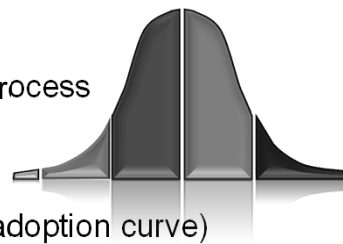
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## Retrospective



- ❖ Unfaithful Scrum implementations may fail
- ❖ Construx's official position on Scrum
- ❖ Moving beyond success with early adopters often requires a different approach
  - ◆ Training
  - ◆ Coaching
  - ◆ Mistakes
  - ◆ Tolerance of faults in the process
  - ◆ Ability to close gaps
  - ◆ Initiative in closing gaps
  - ◆ Etc. (apply the innovation adoption curve)



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## Story #3 Initial Success Followed by ... Nothing

## Initial Success Followed by ... Nothing

- ❖ First Team
- ❖ Second Team
- ❖ Follow on (or lack thereof)



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## Retrospective

- ❖ Scrum != Agile
- ❖ Marine Corps doctrine and Scrum as a minimal process

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## Story #4 An Early \$50 Million Agile Failure

### An Early \$50 Million Agile Failure

- ❖ Huge organizational commitment
- ❖ By the book implementation
- ❖ Project underway
- ❖ Consequences of failure

## Retrospective



Some familiar causes of failure:

- ❖ Agile is not the goal, it's a strategy
- ❖ "Begin with the end in mind"
- ❖ Hiking analogy
- ❖ Lack of comprehensive project vision
  - ◆ Most common cause of Scrum failure
  - ◆ Comparison to traditional requirements challenges

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## Story #5 Success on Small Projects Doesn't Scale to Large Projects

## Success on Small Projects Doesn't Scale to Large Projects

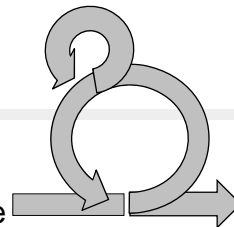
- ❖ First project succeeds
- ❖ Second, third, fourth projects succeed
- ❖ What happens with multi-site project with 150 people?

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## Retrospective

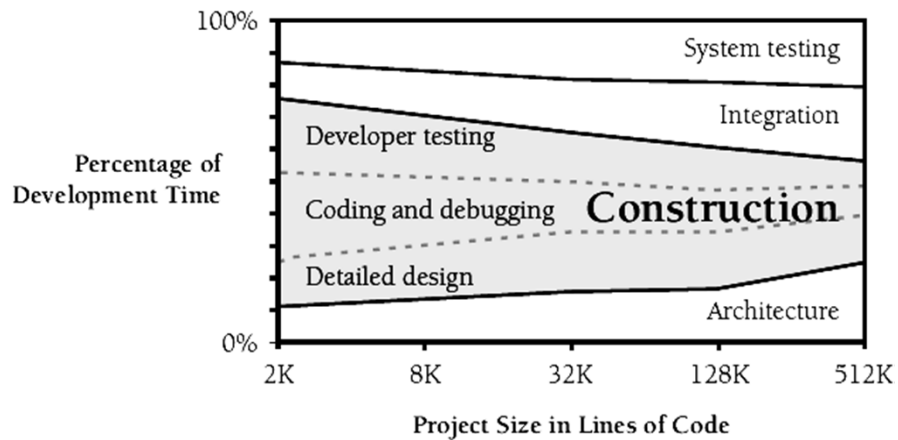
- ❖ "This is Not Your Father's Scrum"
- ❖ Scrum is a method for managing the top-level workflow at the team level
  - ◆ Many failures can be explained by applying this definition
- ❖ Scrum of Scrums is not the best approach (or at least we've seen it fail too often)
- ❖ Fear of "non-Agile" practices
- ❖ Large projects need more Product Owners / Ownership, Architecture, Planning, Communication, ...



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## Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 1



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## Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 2



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# Tapping into the Power of Scrum

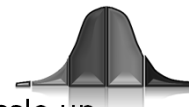
## Keys to Success

- ❖ If at first you don't succeed, go back to first principals (i.e., RTM!)
- ❖ Remember Scrum's area of applicability: workflow management at the team level
- ❖ Vision, Product roadmap, and Release roadmaps are key to avoiding the most common Scrum failure mode
- ❖ Consider where you are on the innovation adoption curve



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- ❖ The elephant explains a lot! As you scale up, phase in traditional large-project management best practices.





Construx Software is committed to helping individuals and organizations improve their software development practices. For information about our training and consulting services, contact [stevemcc@construx.com](mailto:stevemcc@construx.com) +1(425)636-0107 (direct line)

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