Hello Mr. McVeto and ACME Inc. My name is Sheldon Mattson and I am an Agile consultant. I understand that ACME is considering switching to an Agile process and that you, Mr. McVeto, are skeptical. This is understandable. Today I will discuss what Agile is, the benefits of an Agile process, and how this can be implemented by ACME to help ease any uncertainty.

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Let’s start with what is Agile. Agile is an umbrella term for a variety of methods and frameworks that utilize an iterative approach to management and development with a focus on frequent inspection to allow for frequent adaptation. Agile is similar to Lean in that both strive for continuous improvement, reducing defects and waste. While Lean is about improving the processes in order to build better products, Agile is about building better products.

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Looking at the processes of Agile vs Waterfall. Waterfall is a linear, sequential approach that is completed in phases (requirements, design, development, testing, deployment). There is one testing phase after development before the product is released. This can lead to a snowball effect of bugs and other issues right before a deadline, in turn delaying the product. Waterfall results in one product launch, which limits the scope of the project and any potential feedback. Ever found out after development that new needs were identified or the desired product overall was changed.

In contrast Agile is an iterative approach completed in what are often called sprints. The process is requirements, design, development, testing, deployment and repeats until the overall product is completed. This allows for frequent testing and results in a cumulative and continuous product deployment that allows for frequent feedback. This in turn improves collaboration and engagement between the team and users or stakeholders and makes the project scope adaptable.

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So why Agile? Agile is more cost effective than Waterfall as we will see on the next slide, increases team engagement and motivation which in turn increases efficiency, and provides the user or stakeholder with continuous cumulative product deployment. This makes it highly adaptable to necessary changes (from testing or feedback such as a change in the needs)

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The Standish Group conducts surveys of IT projects every two years since 1994. In their 2018 report they reported that Agile projects were about 2 times more successful and a had third of the failure rate, with challenged projects were about the same, as compared to Waterfall. This was based on three constraints: schedule, cost, and scope with successful meeting all three constraints, challenged met two of the three, and failed as either cancelled or never used.

I could not find the numbers from their 2018 report, but from their 2015 report it was reported that Agile is ~4 times cheaper than Waterfall, broken down into Analysis and Design about 3 times cheaper, Development 2x, Project management 9x, QA 2x, and Meetings 5x.

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So how should you adopt Agile. One benefit of Agile is that there are a variety of methods to scale Agile to your companies needs. SoS and LeSS are based on the Scrum method while SAFe is a wider framework and allows for different teams to choose their methodology. From my understanding you currently have three teams each, with their own focus. Based on this understanding I recommend the Scrum method for ACME which is the most common methodology.

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Scrum is organized with three distinct roles. The Scrum Master serves the team by removing impediments, eliminating both internal and external distractions, and encourages and supports the team. The Product Owner is responsible for developing, managing, and prioritizing the sprint backlog. They are the one who is responsible for maximizing the Return on Investment for the project. The development team should be self-organizing and autonomous. They define what is in each sprint from the backlog provided.

Scrum starts with a Sprint planning meeting. This is done at the beginning of every Sprint and is where that specific sprint backlog is developed from the overall backlog and the overall goal is communicated to the team by the Product Owner.

Everyday there should be a daily scrum meeting, timeboxed to 10-15 minutes, that discusses what has been accomplished, today’s tasks, and identify any impediments.

The Sprint Review and Retrospective are done after the Sprint. The review os where the product functionality is demonstrated, often to the Product Owner and stakeholders. The retrospective is used to review what went right and wrong in the Sprint and to identify and reflect on any possible improvements for the next Sprint.

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When organizing your Scrum teams try to limit teams to 5-9 team members, or what are known as two pizza teams. Focus on feature teams over component teams and reduce potential multitasking. This will limit Work In Progress and increase efficiency. Since your company is multi-national be careful to take into account any geographic or cultural differences such as when dinner time is. Try to start meetings with discussions, such as the news, and set strict time limits for the meetings to ensure the meetings and members stay focused.

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I hope I have eased any worries about adopting Agile and this helps you on the journey. Thank you.