



Developing an Agile Product Strategy That Works

Chris Shinkle

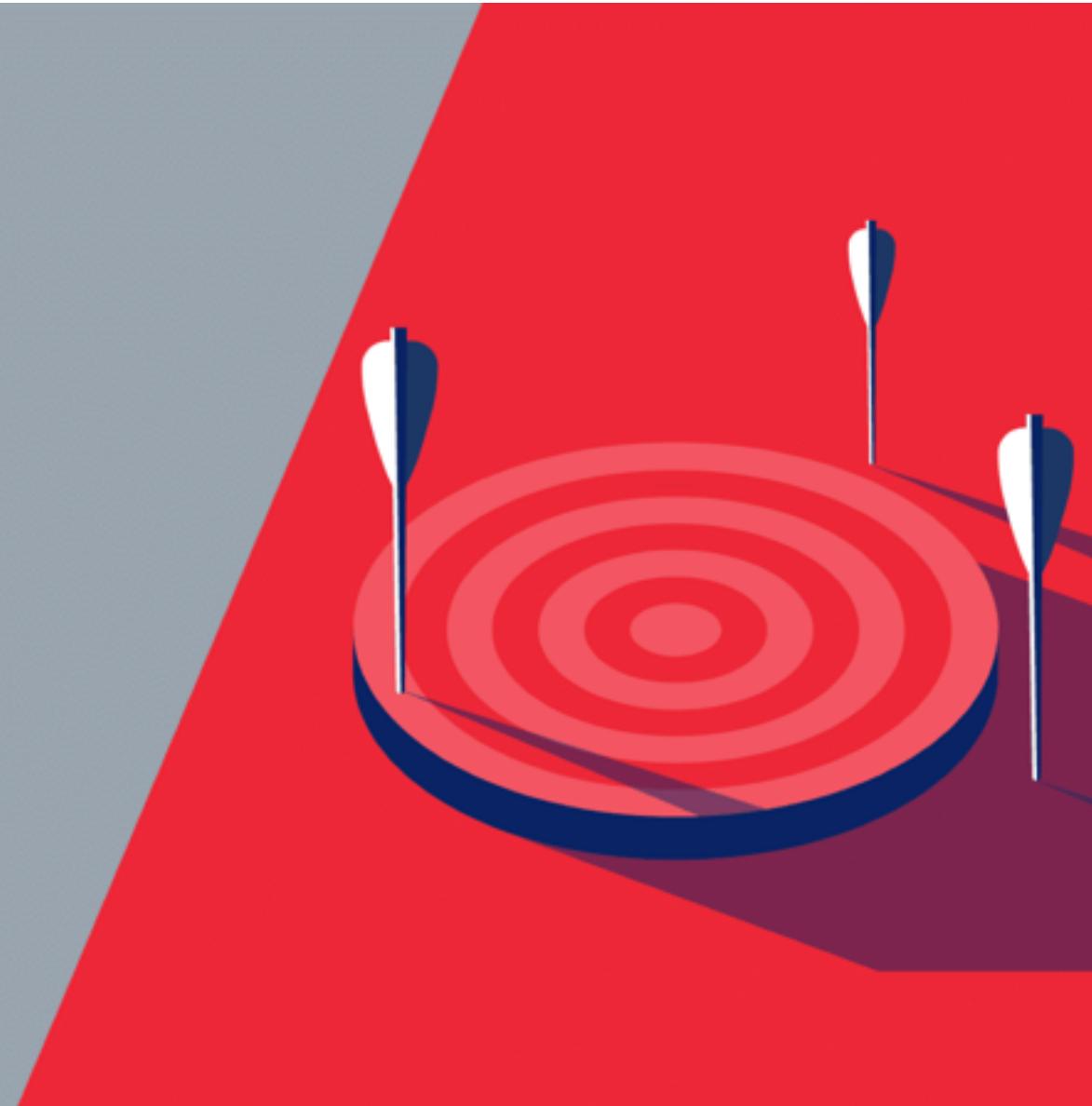
Director of Innovation

@chrissinkle | cmshinkle@sep.com

The Big Lie of Strategic Planning



**Harvard
Business
Review**



THIS IS MY FRIEND...



Don

(not Don's real picture)



Don's Office

(not Don's real office)



Don's Product

(not Don's real product)

DON WAS HIRED AS VP OF PRODUCT...



He was excited:

- The company was doing well financially
- He had functioning agile teams
- He was told they "just needed a trustworthy and reliable roadmap"

A ROADMAP IS...

A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL

@chrissinhinkle

- Bruce McCarthy, C. Todd Lombardo, Product Roadmaps Relaunched

A ROADMAP IS...

A STATEMENT OF INTENT AND DIRECTION

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- Bruce McCarthy, C. Todd Lombardo, Product Roadmaps Relaunched

DON QUICKLY REALIZED HE HAD SOME CHALLENGES...

- stakeholders were frustrated and impatient with infrequent and incorrect deliveries
- delivery teams faced constantly changing priorities
- NO ONE was happy and no one was winning



but how Don
actually felt

not an actual
stakeholder

Dear Roadmap,

I've been putting so much energy to get this relationship working, but it feels like I only give and never get any value back from you!

- You are always out of date
- There is no way to get all the info in and keep it looking nice and readable
- You are all about solutions and not about the needs and problems
- You are never good enough for all the different stakeholders.

This is it! I'M GOING BACK TO MS PROJECT!

- C. Todd Lombardo,
Roadmaps Are Dead, Long
Live Roadmaps! MTPC 2018

STOP THE CHURN CYCLE



PROBLEMS WE IDENTIFIED:

- Fuzzy high level business and product strategy - no clear direction
- Poor communication between teams and the business
- Team morale low - don't know why they're building or if they can be successful
- Engineering and UX team members brought into process too late
- Obsessed with delivering features, not generating value
- Too much work in progress
- Team throughput (and velocity) is low and unpredictable
- Can't make or meet time based commitments
- For items we ship, quality needed improved
- Work halts after it starts because team's lack clarity
- Continuous shifting priorities
- Low visibility into team progress

THINGS WE NEEDED:

1. Clarity about what we're building and not building
2. Whatever we built must help our business goals and meet
our customer's needs
3. Stop working on too many things at once
4. Make all of this highly visible and promote
conversations across the organization

WE GOT THIS



1

Feature
Story
Map

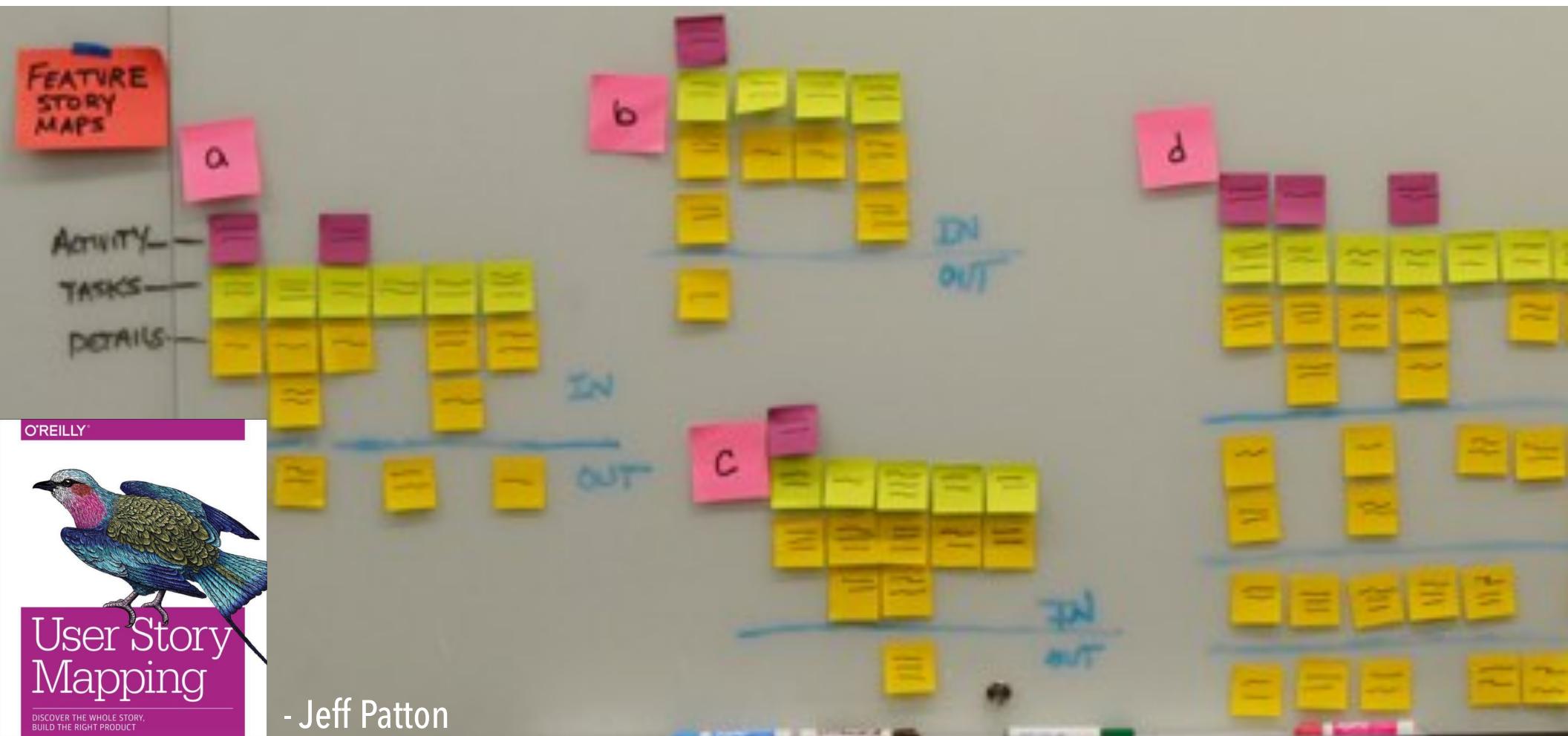
2

Opportunity
Solution
Tree

3

Kanban
System

FEATURE STORY MAPS



FEATURE STORY MAP

Feature 2

ACTIVITY



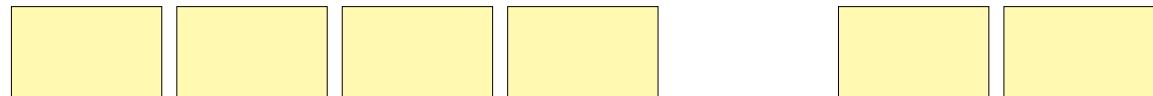
TASK



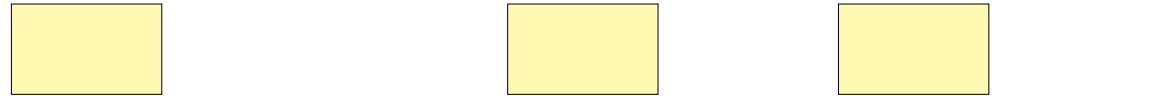
DETAILS



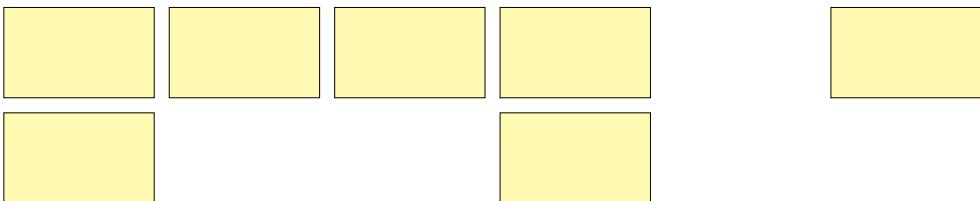
RISK/SPIKES



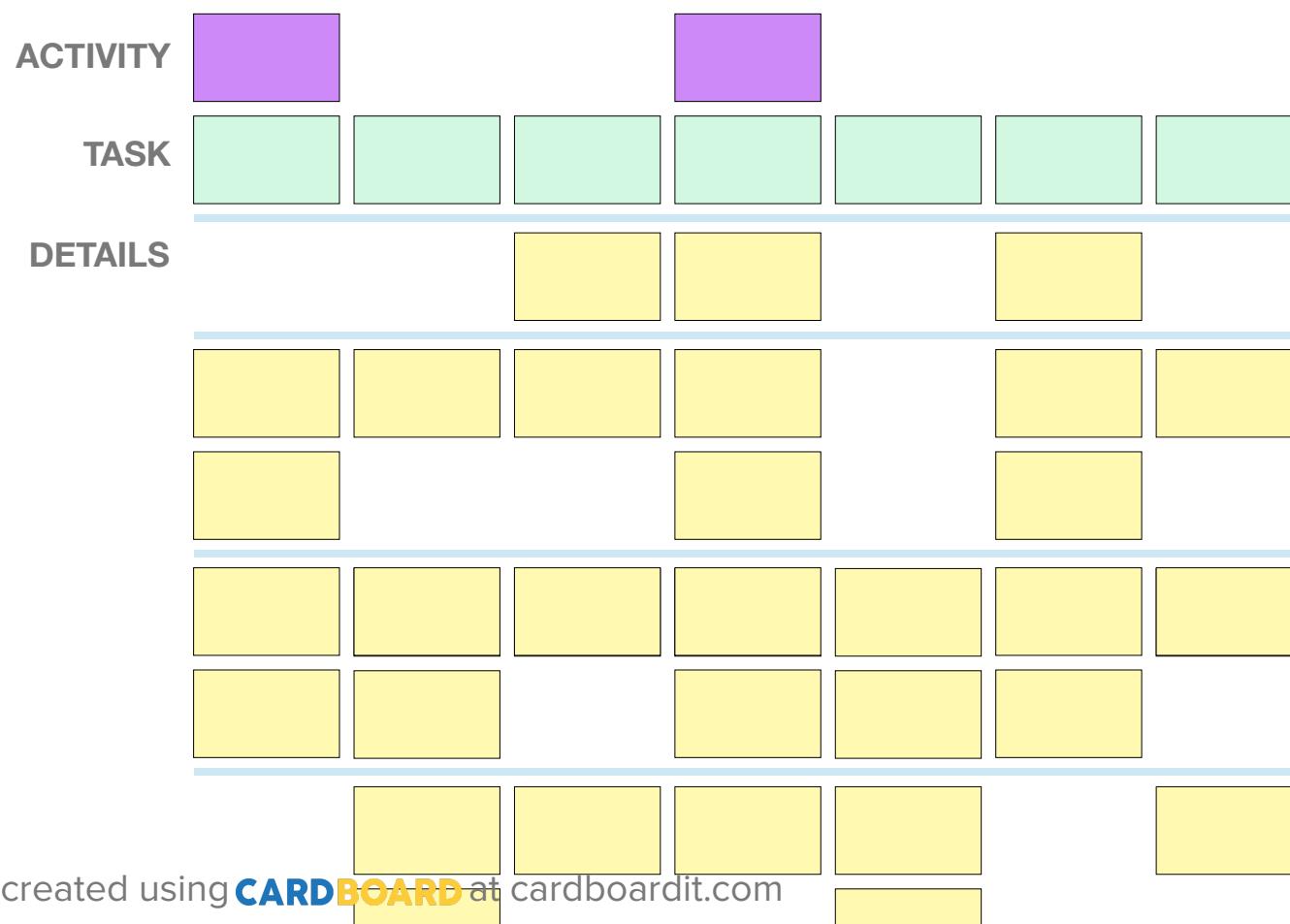
MVP



OUT OF SCOPE



FEATURE STORY MAP



@chrissinkle

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FEATURE STORY MAPS

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DON COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS WORKING

OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREES

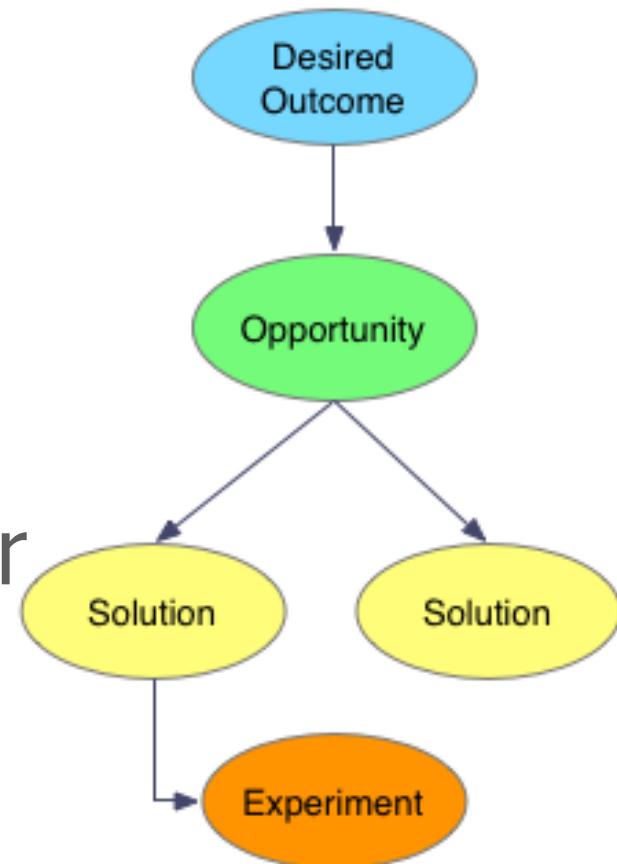


OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREE



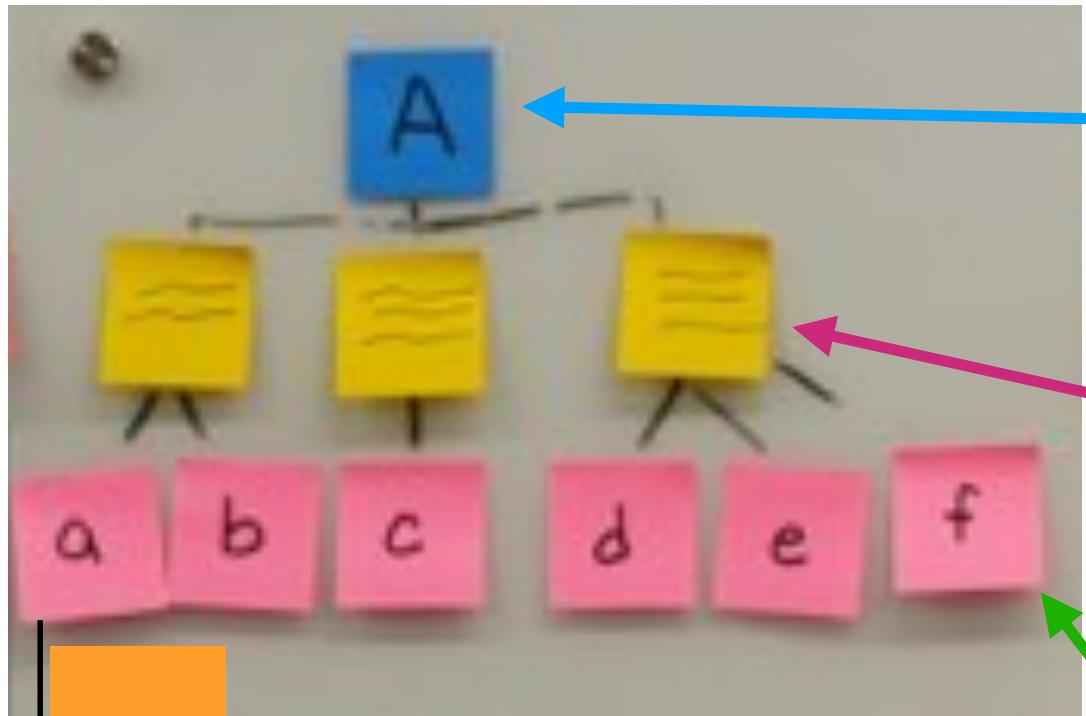
Teresa Torres
producttalk.org

It's a simple way of visually representing how you plan to reach a desired outcome. It helps you to make your assumptions explicit.



- Teresa Torres, Why This Opportunity Solution Tree is Changing the Way Product Teams Work

OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREE



OBJECTIVE
(desired outcome)

OPPORTUNITIES
(customer problem, needs, or wants)

FEATURES
(solutions that deliver on these opportunities
and desired outcome)

Experiments
(what things do we need to learn or test)

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OBJECTIVE

(desired outcome)

Business strategy
happens here.

OPPORTUNITIES

(customer problem, needs, or wants)

How we frame the problem. This is
where product strategy happens.

FEATURES

(solutions that deliver on these
opportunities and desired outcome)

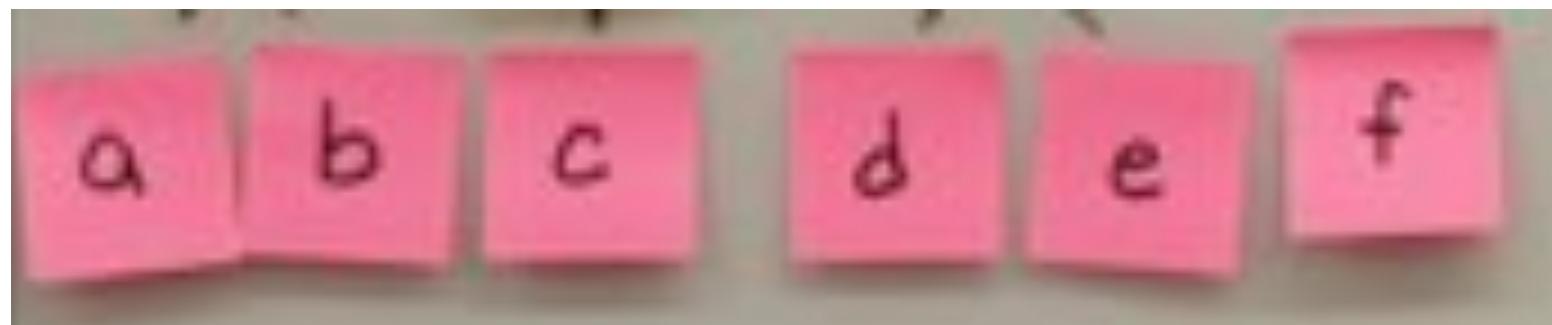
Discover solutions that deliver on these
opportunities and drives outcomes.

EXPERIMENTS

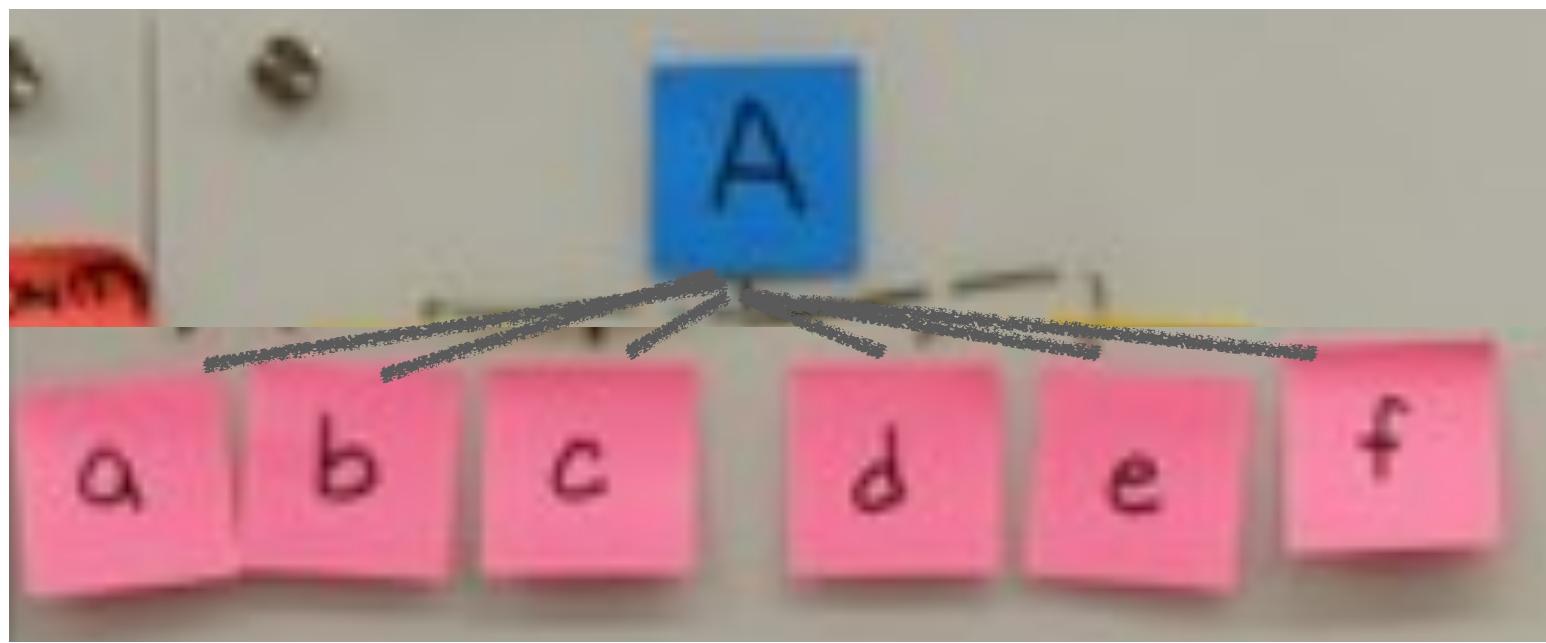
(things we need to learn)

Execute experiments to increase
confidence and reduce risk.

ALL SOLUTIONS = DIFFICULT TO PRIORITIZE



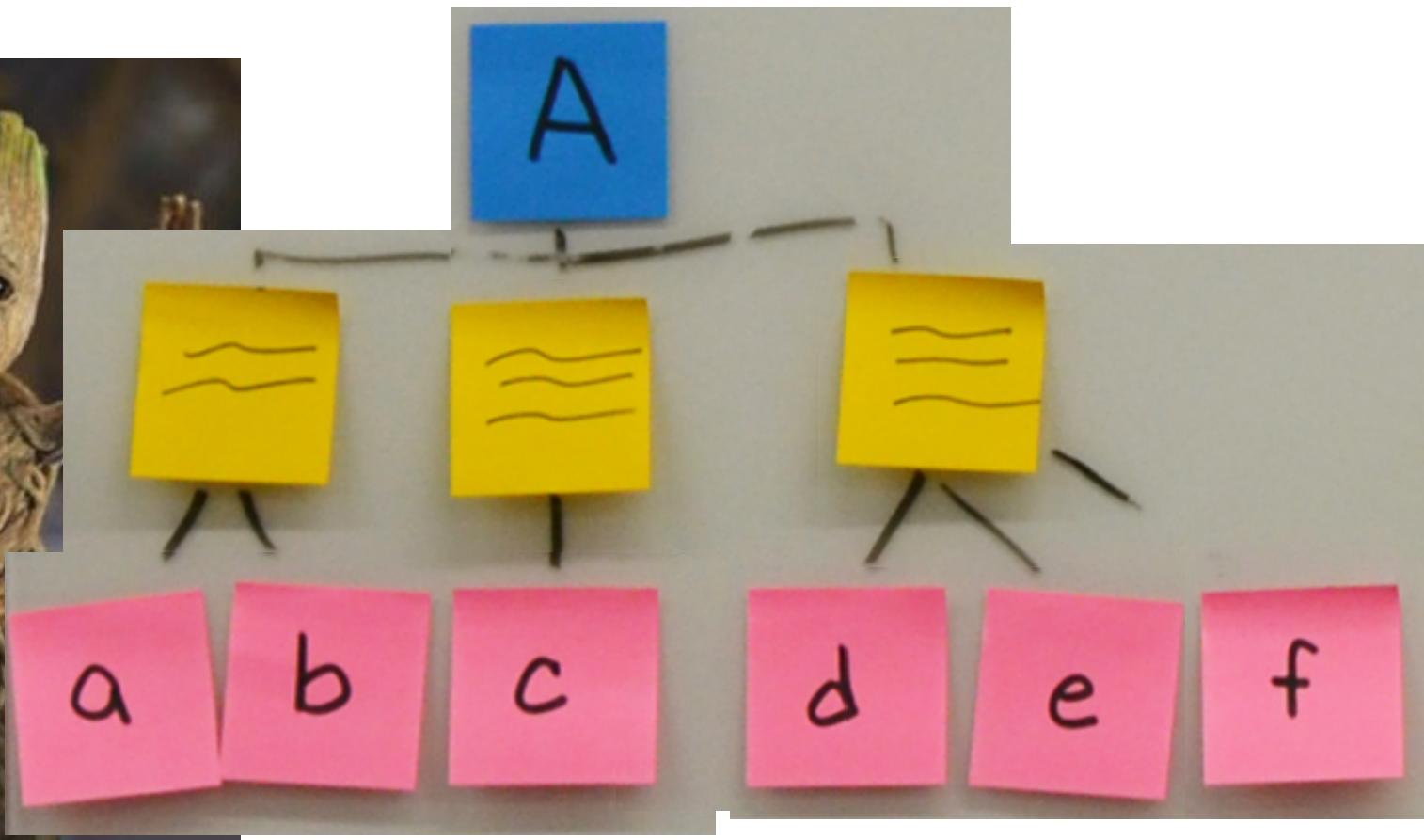
NO OPPORTUNITIES = FAILURE TO EXPLORE PROBLEM SPACE



CONNECT SOLUTIONS



WALKING THE TREE



COMPARING FEATURES



Opportunity Canvas

Title:

Date:

Iteration:

Users & Customers What types of users and customers have the challenges your solution addresses? Look for differences in user's goals or uses that would affect their use of the product. Separate users and customers into different types based on those differences that make a difference. It's a bad idea to target "everyone" with your product.	Problems What problems do prospective users and customers have today that your solution addresses? 1	Solution ideas List product, feature, or enhancement ideas that solve problems for your target audience. 1	User Value If your target audience has your solution, how can they do things differently as a consequence? And, how will that benefit them? 4	User Metrics What user behaviors can you measure that will indicate they adopt, use, and place value in your solution? 5
Solutions Today How do users address their problems today? List competitive products or work-around approaches your users have for meeting their needs. 3			Adoption Strategy How will customers and users discover and adopt your solution? 6	
Business Problems What problem for your business does building this product, feature, or enhancement solve for your business? 7	Budget What's it worth to you? 9		Business Metrics What business performance metrics will be affected by the success of this solution? These usually change as a consequence of behavior metrics changing. 8	- Jeff Patton

Opportunity Canvas

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Solutions Today How do users address their problems today? List competitive products or work-around approaches your users have for meeting their needs. 3			Release Strategy How do you intend to release the project? As an MVP followed by smaller releases, as a single released, etc.	
Business Problems What problem for your business does building this product, feature, or enhancement solve for your business? 7	Budget What's it worth to you? 9		Business Metrics What business performance metrics will be affected by the success of this solution? These usually change as a consequence of behavior metrics changing. 8	- Jeff Patton

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OH YEAH!



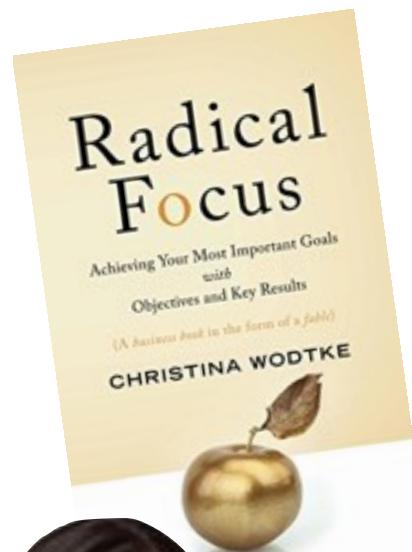
6 Practices of KANBAN

1. Visualize
2. Make policies explicit
3. Manage flow
4. Implement feedback loops
5. Limit WIP
6. Improve collaboratively

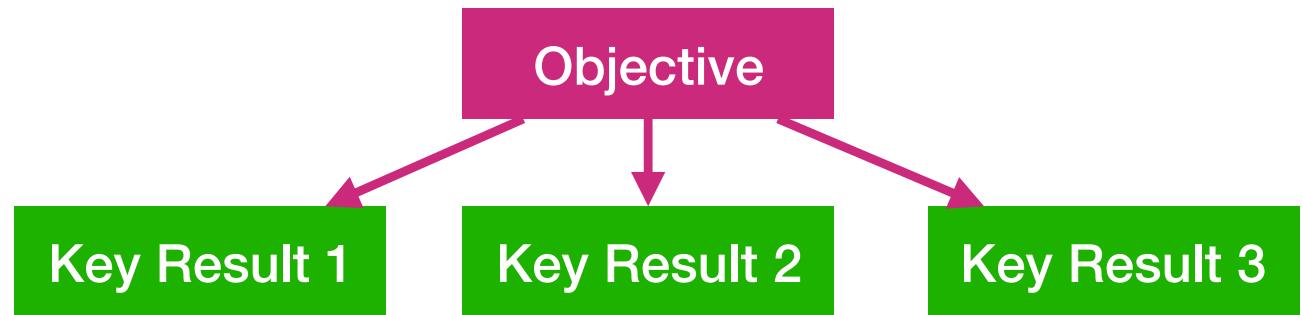
KANBAN SYSTEM



OBJECTIVES & KEY RESULTS (OKRs)



Objective: a single sentence that's qualitative and inspirational.



Key Result: quantitative measure of progress toward achieving the objective

—Christina Wodtke, *Radical Focus*

@chrissinkle

TIME TO PLACE YOU BETS...

**BETS CAPTURE THAT PERFECT
INTERPLAY BETWEEN
ASSUMPTIONS, DESIRED
OUTCOMES, EXPERIMENTATION,
RISK, AND REWARD.**

@chrissinhinkle

- adapted from John Cutler blog post “Place Your Bets”

WHY DOES THE WORD “BET” WORK?

1. A bet can be tactical or strategic, prescriptive or descriptive.
2. Bets can be loose or strict.
3. Bets are by definition outcome focused. We bet that something will happen, and ask “how is the that bet working out?”. But they also suggest experimentation and learning
4. By calling it a bet, we are admitting that “losing” the bet is an option.
5. Bets have odds.
6. There are big and small bets.
7. Timeframe matters. When will we know if the bet paid off?
8. Talking about bets will inevitably trigger good discussions around risk, information availability, learning, validation, and outcomes.
9. By placing small bets (with a short timeframe) we can “buy” information that clarifies the odds for larger bets
10. You can have a “portfolio” of bets, each with different risk profiles, hedges, etc.
11. We consider the ideal number of concurrent bets (“bets in progress”).

- adapted from John Cutler blog post “Place Your Bets”

KANBAN SYSTEM



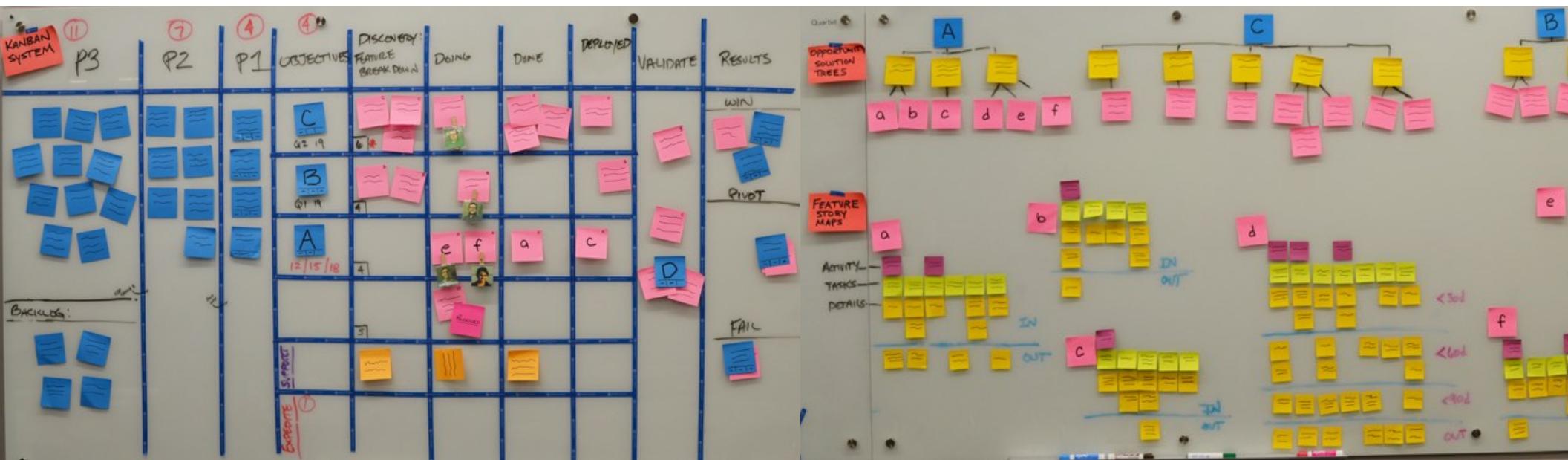
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AT TIMES, DON FELT LIKE THIS



ROADMAP WALL



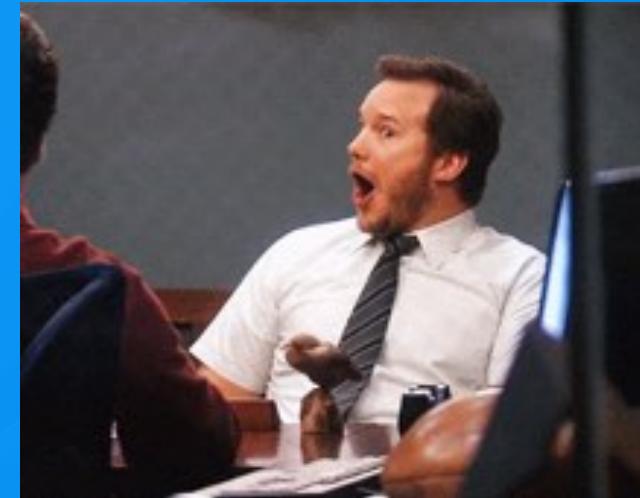
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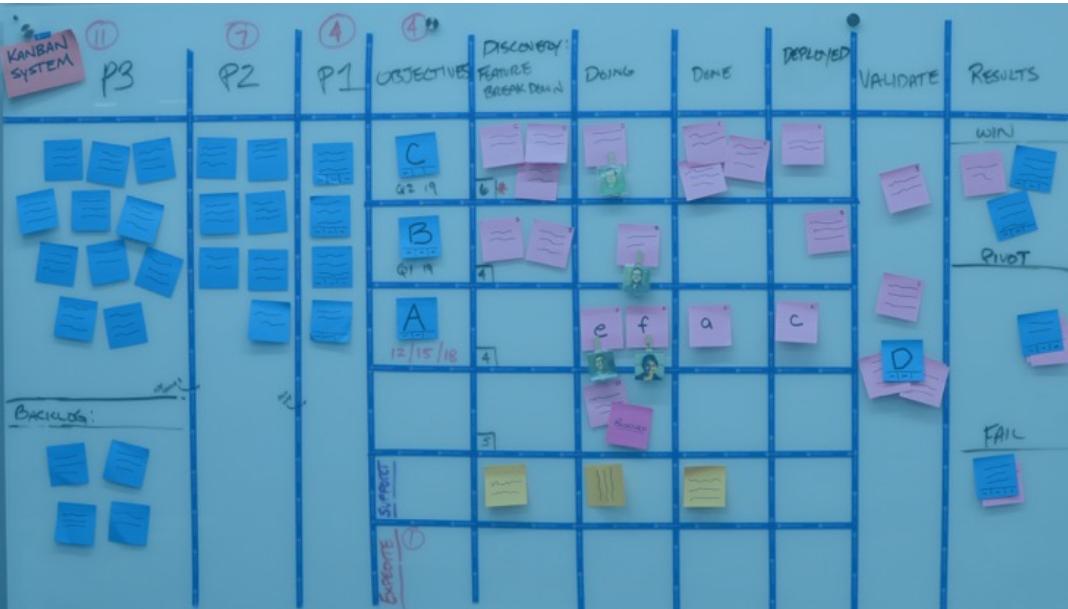
DON WAS THRILLED!

COMMON OBJECTIONS:

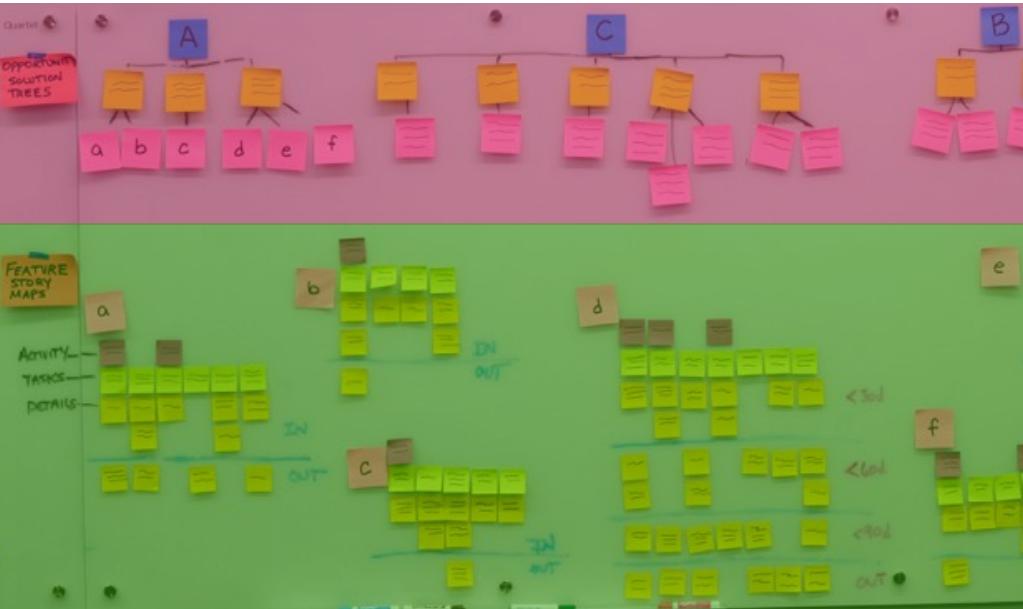
- "I can't do this at my company"
- "I don't have the authority to make these changes"
- "*They won't let me*"
- "I've already tried it and it doesn't work"

Start with what you can control...

OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREES



KANBAN SYSTEM



FEATURE STORY MAPS

TAKEAWAYS

- Start with what you can control
- Use Story Maps to promote clarity, communication, and collaboration
- Use Opportunity Solution Trees to make assumptions explicit
- Use a Kanban system to manage flow and WIP

Chris Shinkle

chrisshinkle@sep.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/chrisshinkle

Twitter: @chrisshinkle

Download slides at:

info.sep.com/milehigh2019

