Lesson 4

Facilitating Program Execution

1. Exploring the Scrum Master Role in the SAFe Enterprise
2. Applying SAFe Principles: A Scrum Master's Perspective
3. Exploring Agile and Scrum Anti-Patterns
4. Facilitating Program Execution
5. Improving Flow with Kanban and XP
6. Building High-Performing Teams
7. Improving Program Performance with Inspect and Adapt

SAFe® Course Attending this course gives students access to the SAFe® Advanced Scrum Master exam and related preparation materials.

Learning objectives

4.1 Synchronize development with the Agile Release Train

4.2 Organize teams on the train

4.3 Plan the Program Increment

4.4 Execute the Program Increment

4.5 Participate in Inspect and Adapt

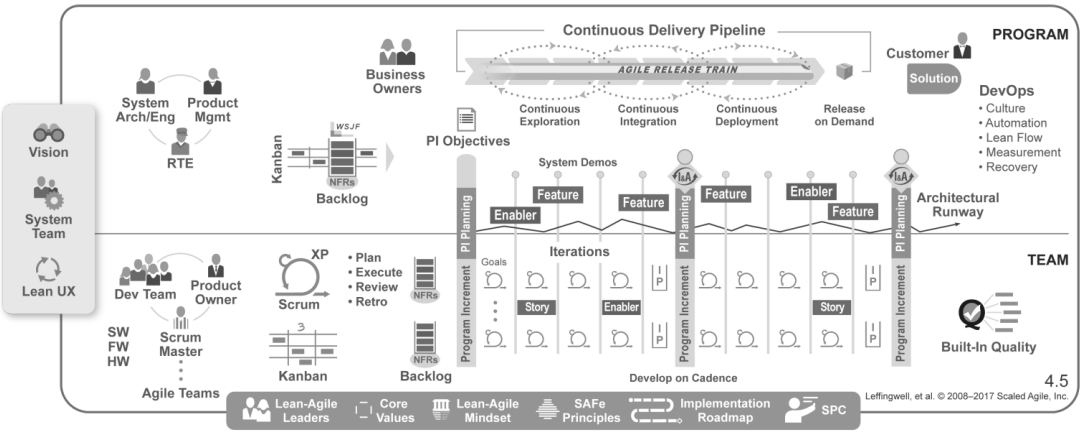
4.6 Release value on demand

4.7 Prepare for the next PI Planning session

4.1 Synchronize development with the Agile Release Train

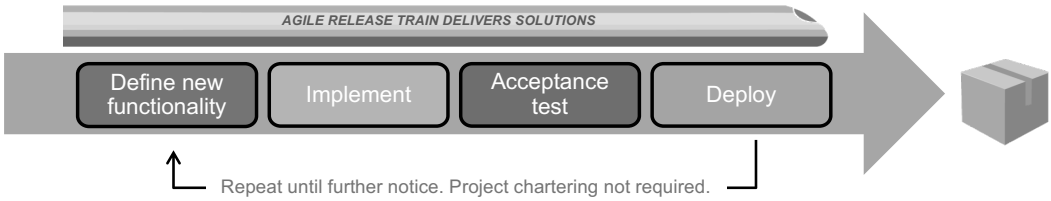
Agile Release Trains deliver Solutions

A long-lived, self-organizing team of Agile Teams.

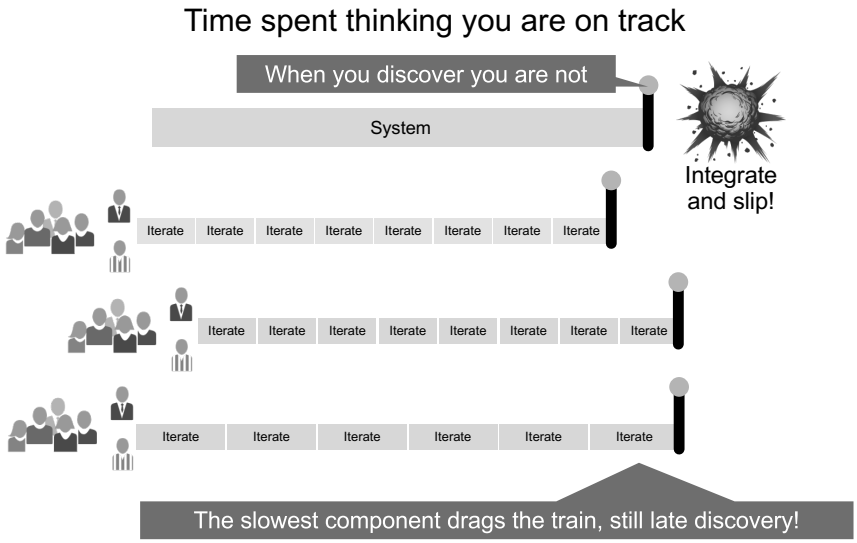


The Agile Release Train

- A virtual organization of 5 – 12 teams (50 – 125+ individuals) that plans, commits, and executes together
- Program Increment (PI) is a fixed timebox; default is 10 weeks
- Synchronized Iterations and PIs
- Aligned to a common mission via a single Program Backlog
- Operates under architectural and UX guidance
- Frequently produces valuable and evaluable system-level Solutions

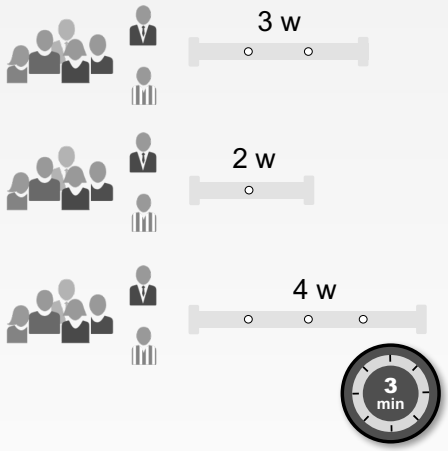


Cadence without synchronization is not enough

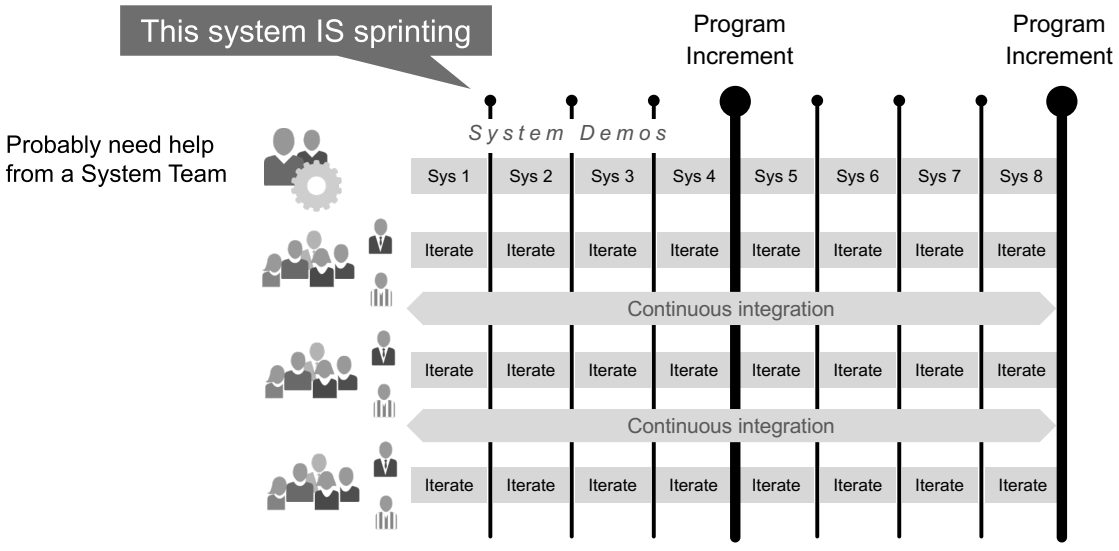


Exercise: Different cadences

- Three teams are working on different Iteration cadences:
  - Team A: 2-week Iterations
  - Team B: 3-week Iterations
  - Team C: 4-week Iterations
- If the teams start at the same time, when is the first point in time they can align on the Iteration outcomes?
- Discuss as a group

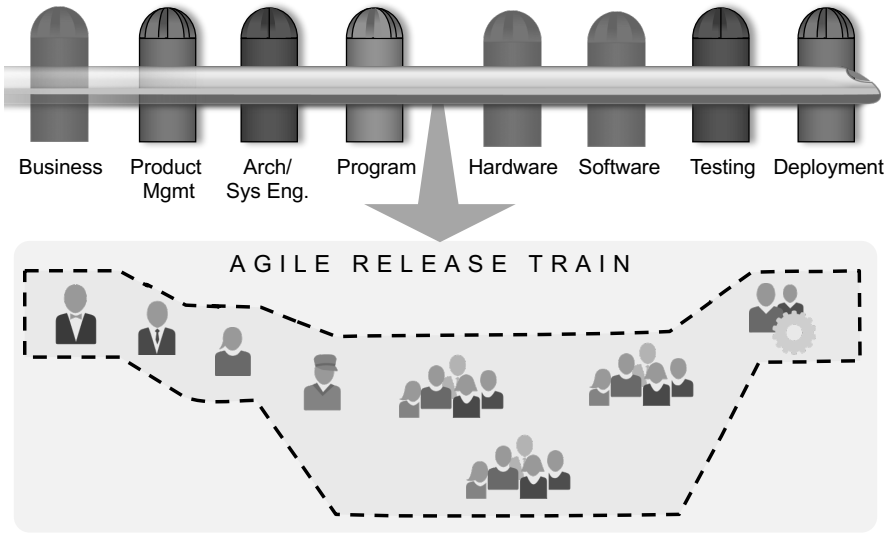


Synchronize to assure delivery



4.2 Organize teams on the train

Build cross-functional Agile Release Trains



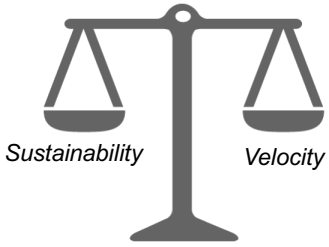
Organizing teams around value

Organize for the larger purpose

- Maximize velocity by minimizing dependencies and handoffs, while sustaining architectural robustness and system qualities

A team can be organized around

- Features
- Components



Far less desirable

- Architectural layer
  - Platform, middleware, UI, DB, business logic, etc.
- Other
  - Programming language, spoken language, technology, location

Finding the right trade-off

Most large programs have a mix.

Lean toward Feature teams:

- Fastest velocity
- Minimize dependencies
- Develop T-shaped skills

Use Component teams when:

- High reuse, high technical specialization, critical NFRs
- Create each component as a 'potentially-replaceable part of the system, with well-defined interfaces'

Generally avoid organizing around architectural layers, as they create team coupling and don't provide a technical separation of concerns.

Other ART roles

Release Train Engineer acts as the Chief Scrum Master for the train.

Product Management owns, defines, and prioritizes the Program Backlog.

System Architect/Engineering provides architectural guidance and technical enablement to the teams on the train.

The System Team provides processes and tools to integrate and evaluate assets early and often.

Business Owners are the key stakeholders on the Agile Release Train.

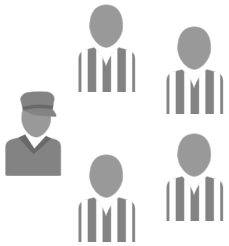
RTE acts as the 'Chief Scrum Master' for the ART

Responsibilities of the RTE include:

- Manage and optimize flow of value through the program
- Facilitate PI Planning readiness and the event itself
- Aggregate and communicate PI Objectives
- Assist with execution and Features completion tracking
- Assist with economic decision-making through Feature estimation and roll-up to Value Stream and portfolio
- Escalate and track impediments
- Foster collaboration between teams and system-level stakeholders; manage risks and dependencies
- Drive relentless improvement via Inspect and Adapt

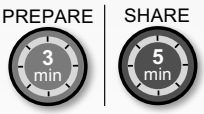
RTE-SM community supports ART execution

- RTE is often best fit to assist Scrum Masters in removing systemic impediments
- RTE and SMs see problems with the train/team structure firsthand
- Together RTE and Scrum Masters are able to take a systems view of the Agile Release Train
- Operating as a community is important:
  - Regularly meet to discuss problems
  - Exchange experiences



Exercise: Scrum Master responsibilities on the train

- What are your responsibilities as a member of the ART Scrum Master/RTE community that go beyond basic Agile Team facilitation?
- What challenges might you face in performing this aspect of your role?
- Be prepared to discuss.



The Product Manager owns the Program Backlog

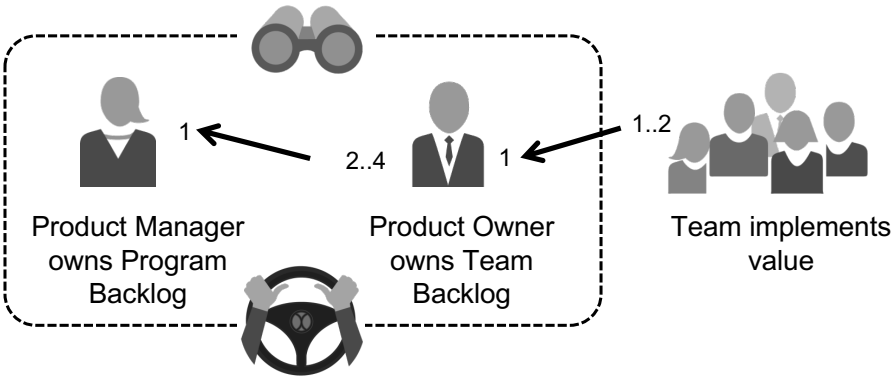
Assumptions about requirements need to be validated. Teams must quickly feed emerging knowledge back into the Solution.

Primary responsibilities of Product Managers:

- Understand customer needs; validate Solutions
- Work with System Architect/Engineering to understand the value of Enablers
- Develop and communicate Vision and Roadmap
- Manage and prioritize the flow of work to the program
- Prepare for and participate in PI Planning
- Define releases and program increments
- Participate in demos and Inspect and Adapt
- Build an effective Product Manager/Product Owner team

The PO/PM team steers the train

At scale, a single person cannot handle product and market strategy while also being dedicated to an Agile Team.



Exercise: Facilitating PO/PM collaboration

- Is your Product Owner effectively collaborating with Product Management?
- Is the Product Owner sufficiently empowered to represent the 'Voice of the customer'?
- How could you help facilitate PO/PM collaboration?
- Be prepared to discuss

PREPARE 5 min | SHARE 3 min

4.3 Plan the Program Increment

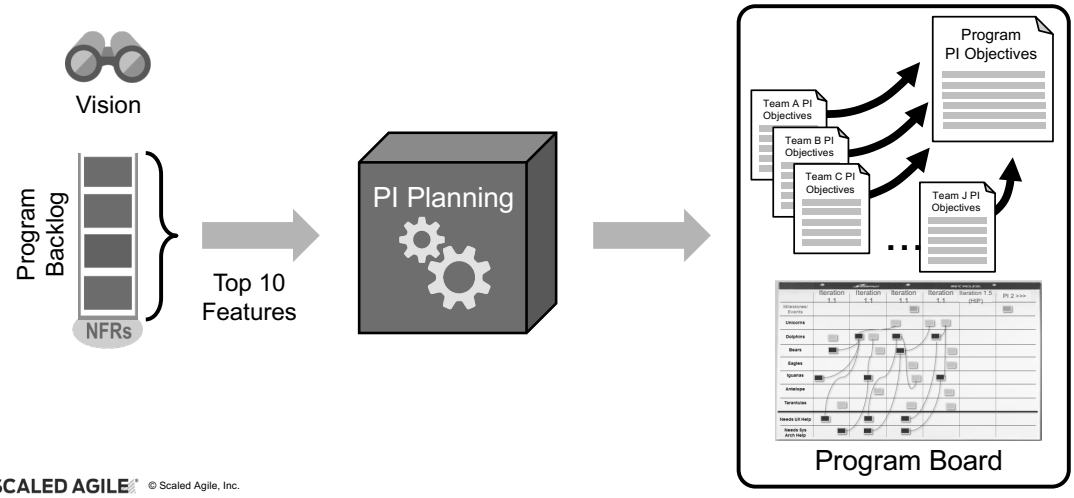
PI Planning

Cadence-based PI Planning meetings are the pacemaker of the Agile Enterprise.

- Two days every 8 – 12 weeks (10 weeks is typical)
- Everyone attends in person if at all possible
- Product Management owns Feature priorities
- Development teams own Story planning and high-level estimates
- Architect/Engineering and UX work as intermediaries for governance, interfaces, and dependencies

The PI Planning process

Input: Vision and top 10 Features
Output: Team and Program PI Objectives and Program Board



Videos: Time lapse and Agile planning implementation

https://vimeo.com/203373064/f879c13218

https://youtu.be/ZZAtl7nAB1M

Day 1 agenda

8:00-9:00	Business context		State of the business and upcoming objectives
9:00-10:30	Product/Solution Vision		Vision and prioritized Features
10:30-11:30	Architecture Vision & development practices		▸ Architecture, common frameworks, etc. ▸ Agile tooling, engineering practices, etc.
11:30-1:00	Planning context and lunch		Facilitator explains planning process
1:00-4:00	Team breakouts	1 2 3 4	▸ Teams develop draft plans and identify risks and impediments ▸ Architects and Product Managers circulate
4:00-5:00	Draft plan review		Teams present draft plans, risks, and impediments
5:00-6:00	Management review & problem solving		Adjustments made based on challenges, risks, and impediments

Business context

To kick off PI Planning, executive leadership shares the state of the business and upcoming objectives.

There is no prescribed format, but some options include:

- The key portfolio priorities are communicated
- The organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) are analyzed

Alex Sun, CEO, Mitchell International
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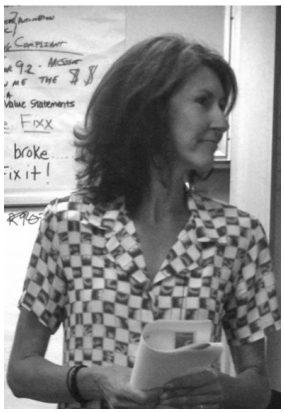
Product/Solution Vision

Product Management presents the Vision and the high-priority Features.



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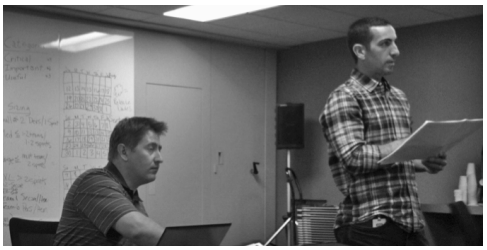
Architecture, User Experience (UX), and development practices

Architecture, UX, and development practices are first-class citizens in PI Planning, not afterthoughts!

- A System Architect presents the Vision for architecture, new architecture Epics, and common frameworks
- Development management may provide updates on Agile tooling and improvements in engineering practices
- UX professionals provide guidance around usability issues



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Team breakout #1

In breakouts, each team breaks down their Features into user Stories that are estimated and placed into Iterations.

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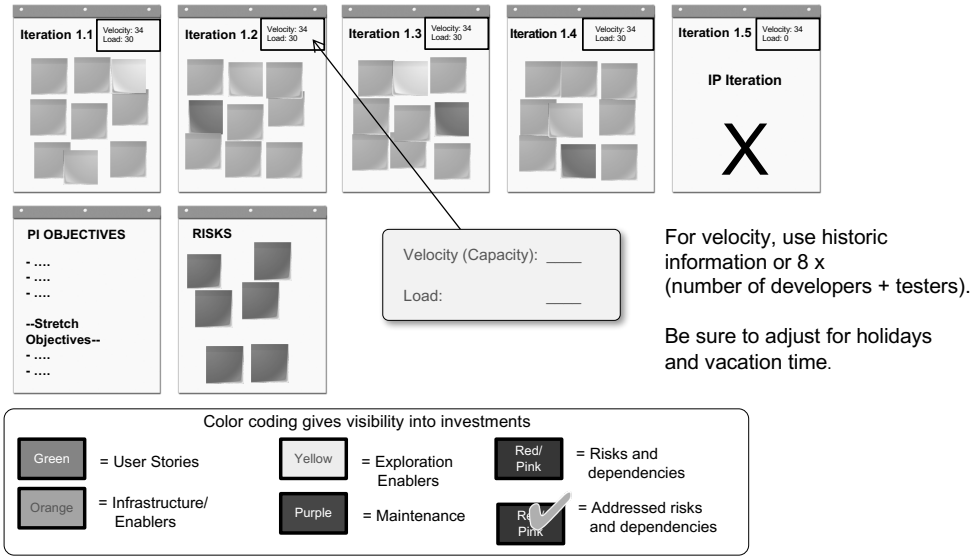
There is a lot of back and forth between the teams, mostly about understanding and minimizing dependencies.

Team plan



Exercise: Estimation

There are nine teams on the train with velocities of 32, 48, 61, 30, 65, 18, 25, 62, 38 in the Iteration. The train operates on a five-Iteration PI cadence (with the last Iteration reserved for Innovation and Planning).

- What is the train's velocity?

NOTE: Each number above is expressed in Story points relevant to that team only, not comparable with other teams' numbers.

Starting fast with normalized Story points

Normalized estimation technique:

- For every full-time developer and tester on the team, give the team eight points (adjust for part-timers).
- Subtract one point for every team member vacation day and holiday.
- Find a small Story that would take about a half-day to develop and a half-day to test and validate. Call it a 1.
- Estimate every other Story relative to that one.
- Never look back (don't worry about recalibrating).

Example: Assuming a 7-person team composed of 3 developers, 2 testers, 1 Product Owner, and 1 Scrum Master, with no vacations, etc.

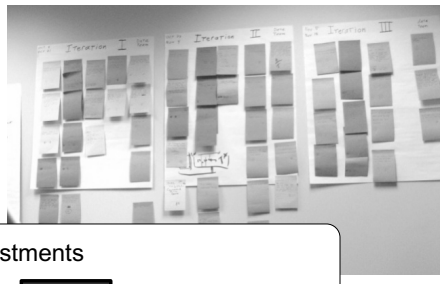
Exclude Scrum Master and Product Owner from the calculation.

Estimated capacity = 5 * 8 pts = 40 pts/Iteration

Color-coding Stories

We color-code the backlog items to give visibility into the investments.

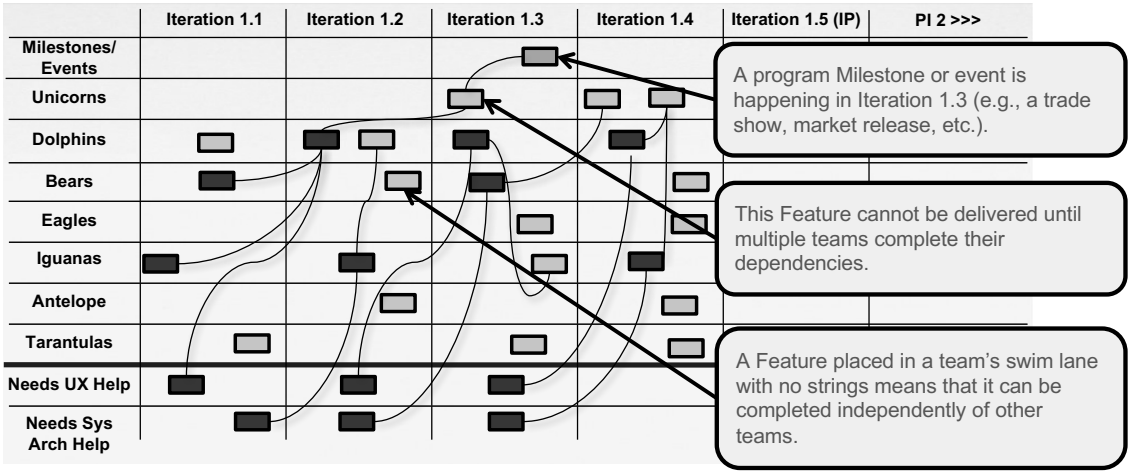
We can visually see that some teams may have significant backlog items dedicated to things like maintenance.



Color-coding gives visibility into investments

Green	= User Stories	Yellow	= Exploration Enablers	Red/ Pink	= Risks and dependencies
Orange	= Infrastructure/ Enablers	Purple	= Maintenance	Red/ Pink ✓	= Addressed risks and dependencies

Program board - Feature delivery, dependencies, and Milestones



Blue = Features

Red/ Pink = Significant Dependency

Orange = Milestone/ Event

Red String = A dependency requiring Stories or other dependencies to be completed before the Feature can be completed

Exercise: Identifying problems

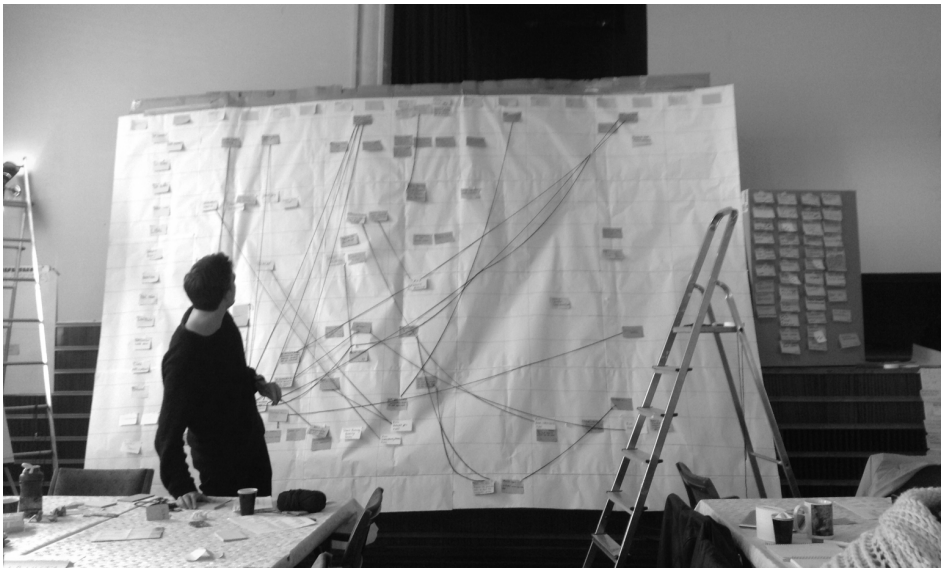
- Find a partner from another table and together review the Program Boards on the following two slides
- What problems can you identify? What can you do during PI planning? What can you do after PI planning?

Problems	Solutions during planning	Solutions after planning

PREPARE 6 min | SHARE 4 min

For reference

A real Program Board



For reference

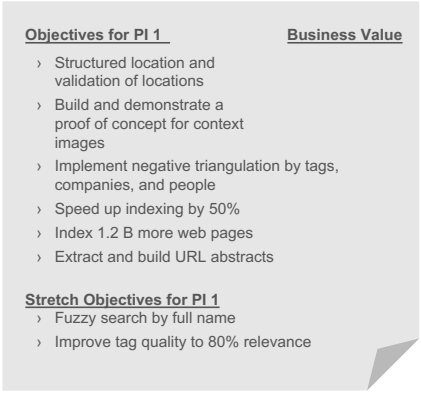
Another real Program Board

Align to a mission with PI Objectives

Objectives are business summaries of what each team intends to deliver in the upcoming PI.

They often map directly to the Features in the backlog, but not always. For example:

- Aggregation of a set of Features, stated in more concise terms
- A Milestone, such as a trade show
- An Enabler Feature needed to support the implementation
- A major refactoring

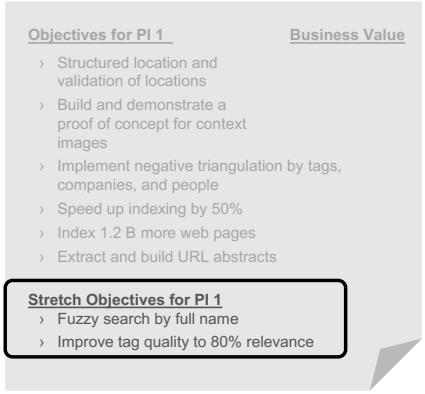


Stretch objectives

Stretch objectives provide a reliability guard band.

Stretch objectives do count in velocity/capacity:

- They are planned; they aren't extra things for teams to do "just in case you have time"
- But they are not included in the commitment, thereby making the commitment more reliable
- If a team has low confidence in meeting a PI Objective, encourage them to move it to stretch
- If an item has many unknowns, consider moving it to stretch, and put in early spikes

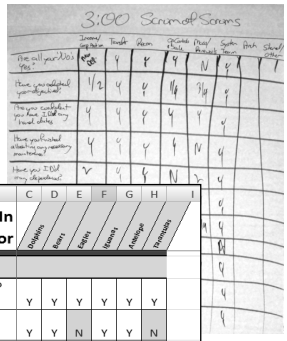


Scrum of Scrums

The hourly Scrum of Scrums checkpoint helps keep teams on track and supports early identification of risk.

Hourly Scrum of Scrums planning checkpoint:

- Keeps teams on track with hourly planning Milestones
- Helps drive out risks, impediments, and dependencies

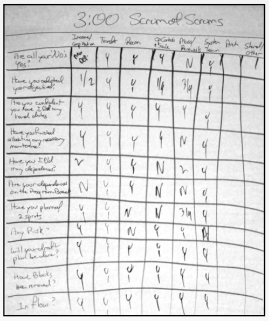


	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1		Scrum Master Check-In Planning Radiator	Dolphins	Bears	Eagles	Hawks	Antelope	Hummers	
3		**Day 1, Check-In 1**							
4		Do you understand the planning requirements?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
5		Do you know who your team is for the whole Iteration?	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	
6		Is your working space setup?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
7		Do you have a ScrumMaster & PO?	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
8		Do you have access to the teammembers and stakeholders you need?	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
9		Do you understand (and can find) the vision that drives your Iteration backlog?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
10		Have you identfied your 4+1 velocities?	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	

Simple planning radiators

Exercise: Getting back on track with planning

- You are at the second SoS meeting. The planning radiator shows that your team is quite behind:
  - Some Stories are estimated but none of the Iterations are completely planned and the team is way too far from formulating the PI Objectives
  - This happened because the team got into too much detail with the first bunch of Stories they considered
- The RTE made a clear suggestion that you need to use any tools at your disposal as well as any people in the planning room, but the team has to provide a draft plan at the end of the breakout.
- Your next steps? Use sticky notes and a team dot vote



PREPARE 10 min | SHARE 5 min

Draft plan review

Plans are peer reviewed by all teams.

Draft plan review agenda:

1. Velocity (capacity) and load
2. Draft PI Objectives
3. Program risks and impediments
4. Q&A

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Management review and problem-solving

At Day 1 end, management meets to make adjustments to scope and objectives based on the day's planning.

Common questions during the managers' review:

- What did we just learn?
- Where do we need to adjust Vision? Scope? Resources?
- Where are the bottlenecks?
- What Features must be de-scoped?
- What decisions must we make between now and tomorrow to address these issues?

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Day 2

8:00-9:00	Planning adjustments		Planning adjustments made based on previous day's management meeting
9:00-11:00	Team breakouts	1 2 3 4	▸ Teams develop final plans and refine risks and impediments ▸ Business Owners circulate and assign business value to team objectives
11:00-1:00	Final plan review & lunch		Teams present final plans, risks, and impediments
1:00-2:00	Program risks		Remaining program-level risks are discussed and ROAMed
2:00-2:15	PI confidence vote		Team and program confidence vote
2:15-???	Plan rework if necessary	1 2 3 4	If necessary, planning continues until commitment is achieved
After commitment	Planning retrospective & moving forward		▸ Retrospective ▸ Moving Forward ▸ Final Instructions

Make planning adjustments

Based on the previous day's management review and problem-solving meeting, adjustments are discussed.

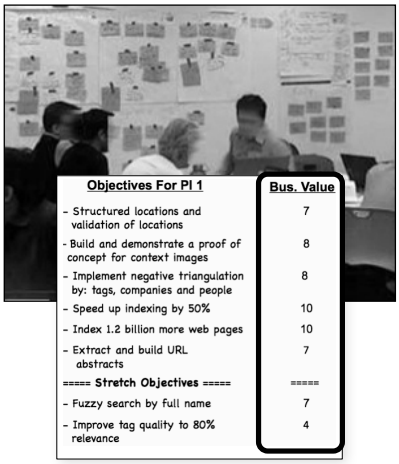
Possible changes:

- Business priorities
- Adjustment to plan
- Changes to scope
- Movement of resources

Team breakout #2

Based on new knowledge (and a good night's sleep), teams work to create their final plans.

- In the second team breakout, Business Owners circulate and assign business value to PI Objectives from low (1) to high (10)
- Teams finalize the Program Increment plan
- Teams also consolidate program risks, impediments, and dependencies
- Stretch objectives provide the capacity and guard band needed to increase cadence-based delivery reliability



Exercise: "We just don't see much business value in it..."

- Your team is at breakout session on Day 2
- Business Owners ranked a PI Objective of "Building batch processing mechanism for indexing" as 2 and requested that you move it to stretch objectives, while in fact this function provides a critical architectural enablement to the entire program in this PI
- The team is clearly disappointed and concerned that an important technical item is ranked so low. "We just don't see much business value in it," said the VP of Product.
- What are your steps for solving this problem?

Objectives For PI 1	Bus. Value
- Structured locations and validation of locations	7
- Build and demonstrate a proof of concept for context images	8
- Implement negative triangulation by: tags, companies and people	8
- Speed up indexing by 50%	10
- Index 1.2 billion more web pages	10
- Extract and build URL abstracts	7
===== Stretch Objectives =====	=====
- Fuzzy search by full name	7
- Improve tag quality to 80% relevance	4

PREPARE 5 min | SHARE 5 min

Final plan review

Teams and Business Owners peer-review all final plans.

Final plan review agenda:

1. Changes to velocity (capacity) and load
2. Final PI Objectives with business value
3. Program risks and impediments
4. Q&A

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Building the final plan

- Final plans are collected at the front of the room
- Final plans are reviewed by all teams
- Business Owners are asked whether they accept the plan
- If so, the team's plan and program risk sheet are brought to the front of the room
- If not, the plans stay in place and the team continues planning after the review

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Addressing program risks

After all plans have been presented, remaining program risks and impediments are discussed and categorized.

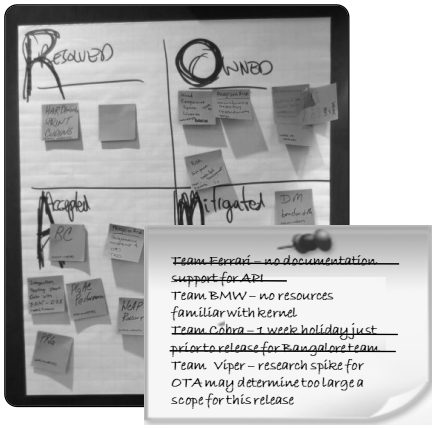
ROAMing risks:

Resolved – Has been addressed; no longer a concern

Owned – Someone has taken responsibility

Accepted – Nothing more can be done. If risk occurs, release may be compromised.

Mitigated – Team has plan to adjust as necessary



Confidence vote: Team and Program Levels

After dependencies are resolved and risks are addressed, a confidence vote is taken at the Team and Program Levels.

'Fist of five' confidence vote

- Range of 1-5
- 1 = No confidence
- 5 = Very high confidence

A commitment with two parts:

1. Teams agree to do everything in their power to meet the agreed-to objectives
2. In the event that fact patterns dictate that it is simply not achievable, teams agree to escalate immediately so that corrective action can be taken

Plan rework if necessary

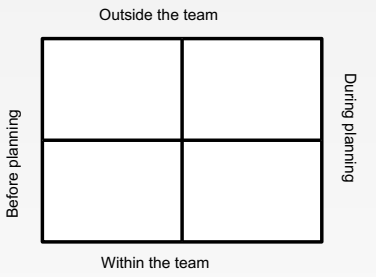
What happens if there is low confidence? Rework!

The program timebox:

- Just as the Iteration Planning Meeting is timeboxed, so is the PI Planning Meeting.
- Leaving the two-day planning meeting without a committed plan is not an option. Teams stay to rework their plans and 'ROAM' their risks and impediments.

Exercise: Being proactive about the confidence vote

- Working as a team, explore the key factors that impact the team's confidence vote
- Create a list of action items that you, as a team facilitator, would consider to proactively enable a high confidence level on your team
- Be ready to present the list



Hint: Split the sheet into four quadrants and explore action items in each quadrant.

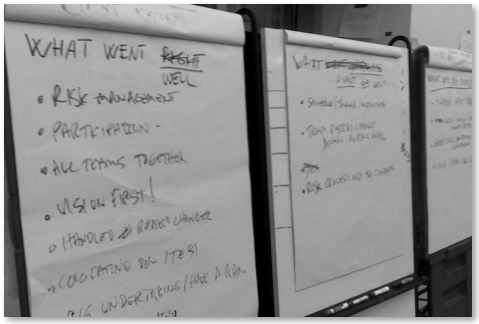
PREPARE 5 min | SHARE 5 min

Run a Planning Meeting retrospective

The PI Planning Meeting will evolve over time. Ending with a retrospective will help it continuously improve.

The Planning Meeting retrospective

1. What went well
2. What didn't
3. What we can do better next time

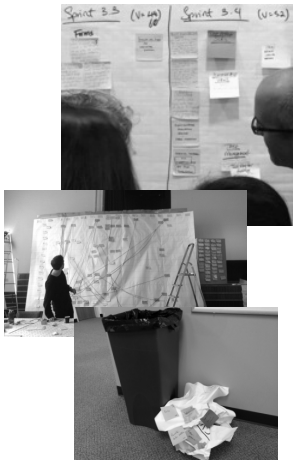


Add the action items to your Program Backlog and take action!

Moving forward

The moving-forward portion describes what happens after PI Planning ends.

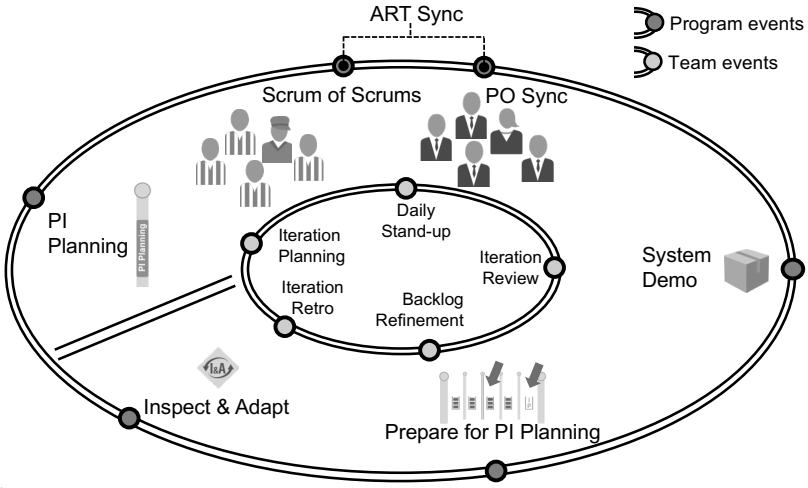
- Capturing objectives and Stories in Agile project management tooling
- Aggregating Team PI Objectives to Program PI Objectives
- Setting Scrum of Scrum cadence, Release Management Team cadence, System Demo cadence, etc.
- Program Backlog refinement and next PI Planning preparation events
- Summarizing changes to engineering practices
- Cleaning up the room



4.4 Execute the Program Increment

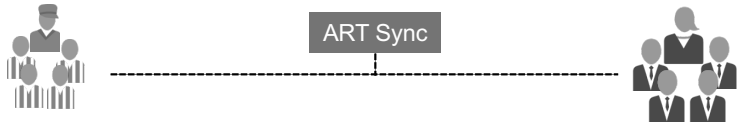
Program events drive the train

Program events create a closed-loop system to keep the train on the tracks.



ART Sync is used to coordinate progress

Programs coordinate dependencies through sync meetings.



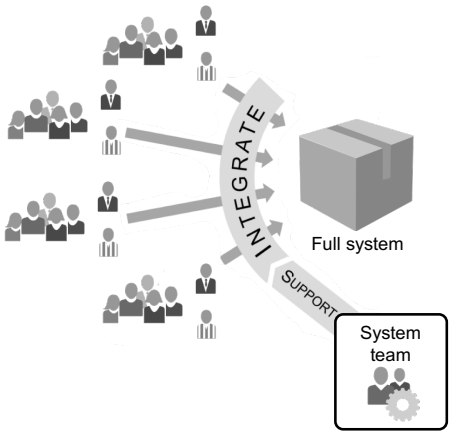
Scrum of Scrums

- Visibility into progress and impediments
- Facilitated by RTE
- Participants: Scrum Masters, other select team members, SMEs if necessary
- Weekly or more frequently, 30–60 minutes
- Timeboxed, and followed by a “meet after”

PO Sync

- Visibility into progress, scope, and priority adjustments
- Facilitated by RTE or PM
- Participants: PMs, POs, other stakeholders, and SMEs as necessary
- Weekly or more frequently, 30–60 minutes
- Timeboxed, and followed by a ‘meet after’

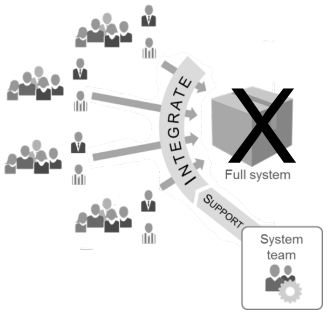
Demo the full system increment every two weeks



- Features are functionally complete or ‘toggled’ so as not to disrupt demonstrable functionality
- New Features work together, and with existing functionality
- Happens after the teams’ demo (may lag by as much as one Iteration, maximum)
- Demo from a staging environment, resemble production as much as possible

Exercise: “You let us down ...”

- This time the System Demo did not happen
- All teams that had new product functionality merged their changes and your team was the last to merge theirs...and the process didn’t go well
- You have nothing to show at the demo and other Scrum Masters are giving you a look
- Suggest the next steps



PREPARE 5 min | SHARE 5 min

Innovation and Planning Iteration

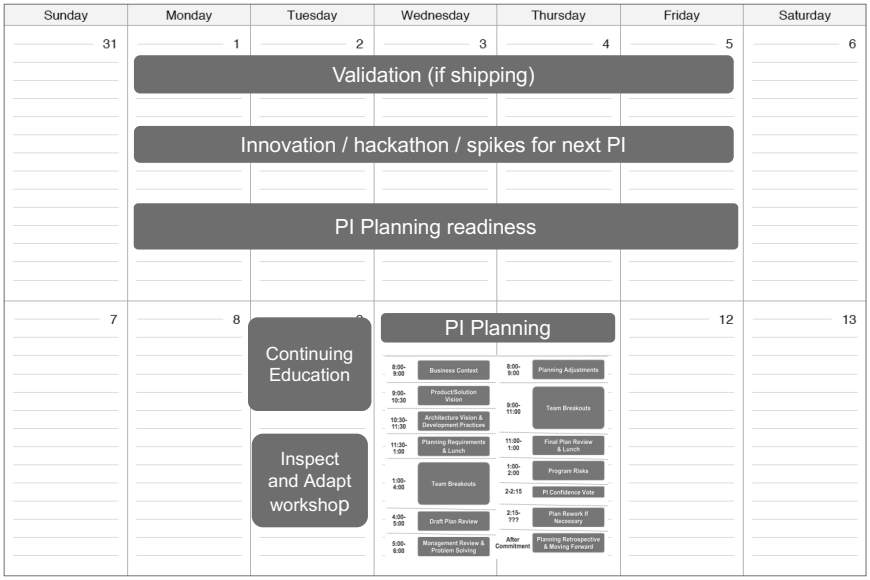
Facilitate reliability, Program Increment readiness, planning, and innovation

- Innovation: Opportunity for innovation spikes, hackathons, and infrastructure improvements
- Planning: Provides for cadence-based planning
- Estimating guard band for cadence-based delivery

Provide sufficient capacity margin to enable cadence.

—Don Reinertsen, Principles of Product Development Flow

IP Iteration calendar



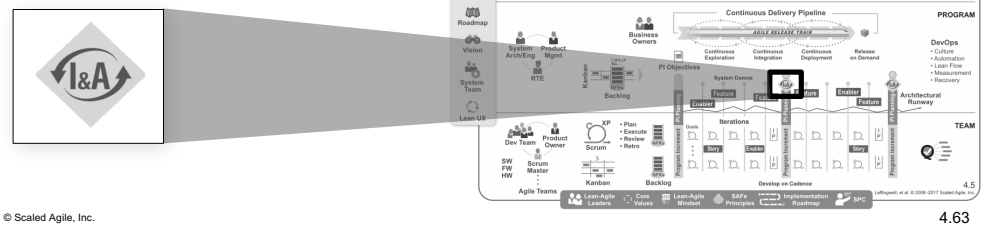
4.5 Participate in Inspect and Adapt

Inspect and Adapt

Three parts:

1. The PI System Demo
2. Quantitative measurement
3. The Problem-Solving Workshop

- Attendees: Teams and stakeholders
- Timebox: 3–4 hours per PI



PI System Demo

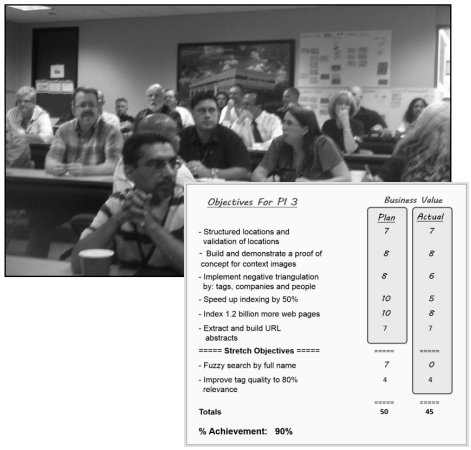
At the end of the PI, teams demonstrate the current state of the Solution to the appropriate stakeholders.

- Often led by Product Management, POs, and the System Team
- Attended by Business Owners, program stakeholders, Product Management, RTE, Scrum Masters, and teams

Program Performance Reporting

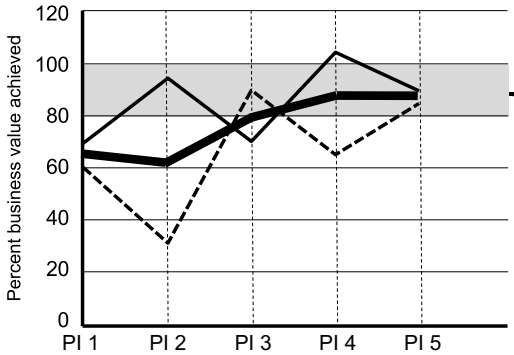
As part of the Solution Demo, teams compare planned vs. actual PI Objectives.

- Teams meet with their Business Owners to self-assess the business value they achieved for each objective
- Each team's planned vs. actual business value is then rolled up to the Program Level in the Program Predictability Measure



PI Predictability Measure

The PI Predictability Measure shows whether achievements fall into an acceptable process control band.



- Target: effective process control range
- Predictability sufficient to run the business
- Handles common variations
- Special causes may still cause excess variation

Team A (out-of-control development)
Team B (controlled development)
Program

Exercise: “What is our performance goal?”

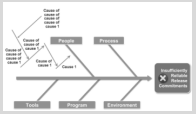
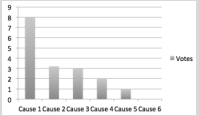
- In this PI, your team accomplished 78% of their total value on the PI Objectives
- The team is frustrated, especially since a few teams on the train scored above 95%
- How would you articulate to the team what this number is for and what their real performance goals should be like?

Objectives For PI 3	Business Value: Plan	Business Value: Actual
- Structured locations and validation of locations	7	7
- Build and demonstrate a proof of concept for context images	8	8
- Implement negative triangulation by: tags, companies and people	8	6
- Speed up indexing by 50%	10	5
- Index 1.2 billion more web pages	10	8
- Extract and build URL abstracts	7	7
===== **Stretch Objectives** =====	=====	=====
- Fuzzy search by full name	7	0
- Improve tag quality to 80% relevance	4	4
Totals	**50**	**45**
% Achievement: 90%		

PREPARE 5 min | SHARE 5 min

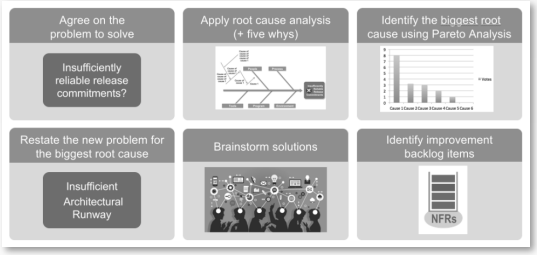
The Problem-Solving Workshop

Teams conduct a short retrospective, then systematically address the larger impediments that are limiting velocity.

Agree on the problem to solve	Apply root cause analysis (+ five whys)	Identify the biggest root cause using Pareto Analysis
Insufficiently reliable release commitments?		
Restate the new problem for the biggest root cause	**Brainstorm solutions**	**Identify improvement backlog items**
Insufficient Architectural Runway		

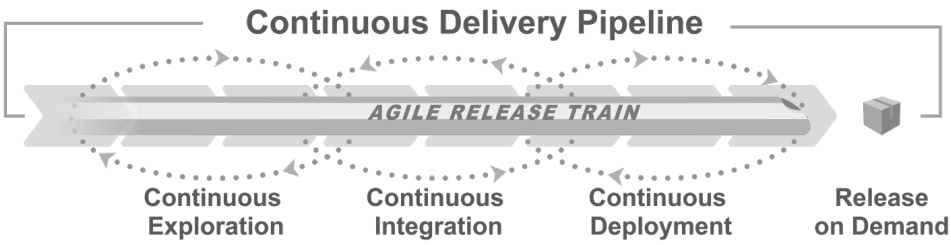
Exercise: Prepare for the Problem-Solving Workshop

- In two days, your team will be attending the Problem-Solving Workshop with the rest of the program
- What kind of preparation would you do with your team for that event?



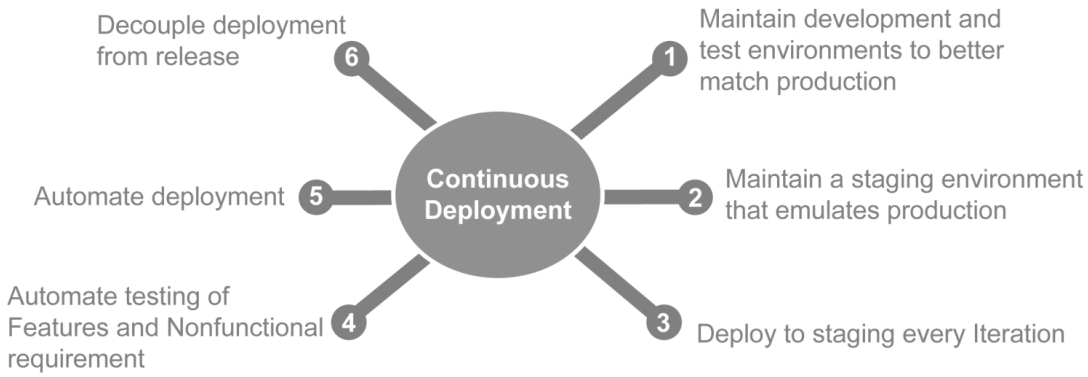
4.6 Release value on demand

ARTs continuously deliver value



Six Recommended Practices for Continuous Deployment (CD)

CD is an important practice for every team member, the team, and the ART.

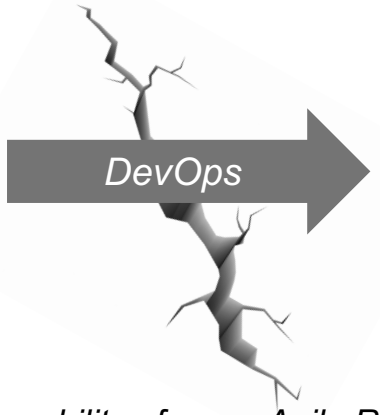


What is DevOps?

An Agile approach to bridge the gap between development and operations to deliver value *faster and more reliably.*

Development:

- Create Change
- Add or Modify Features



Operations:

- Create Stability
- Create or enhance services

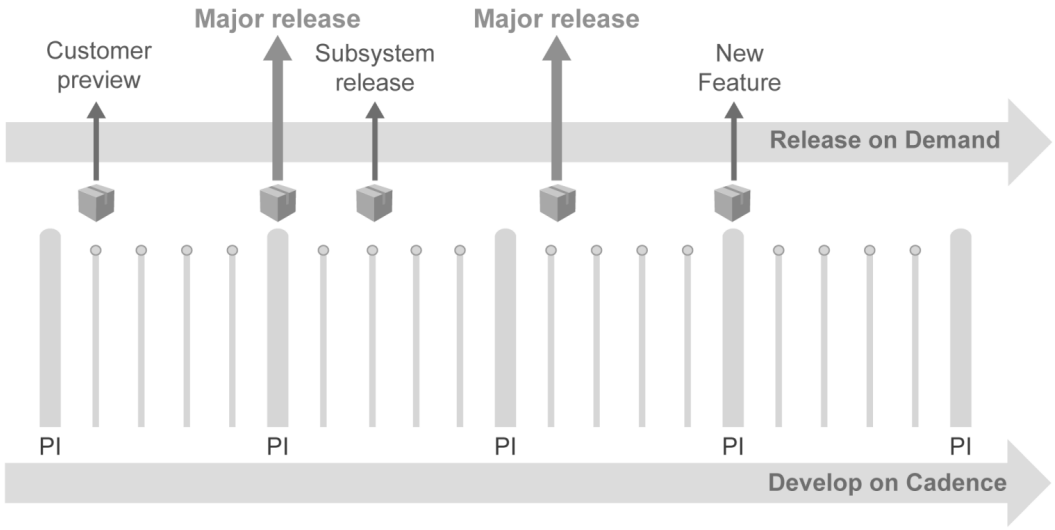
DevOps is a capability of every Agile Release Train

A CALMR approach to DevOps

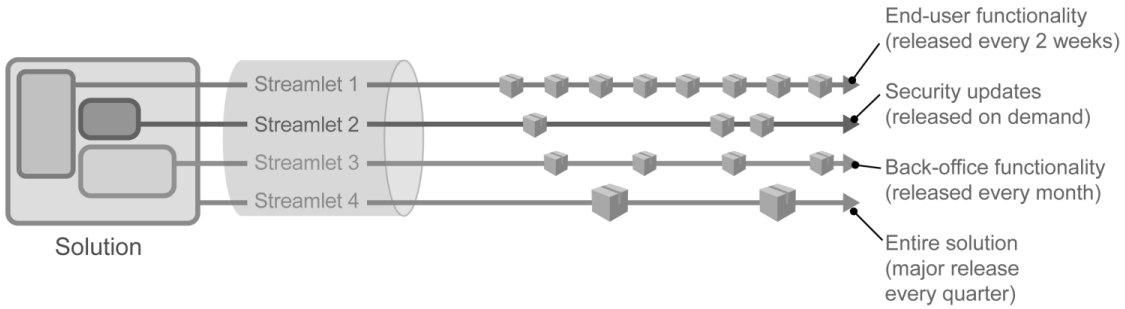
- **C**ulture Establish a culture of shared responsibility for development, deployment, and operations
- **A**utomation Automate the Continuous Delivery Pipeline
- **L**ean flow Keep batch sizes small, limit WIP, and provide extreme visibility
- **M**easurement Measure the flow through the pipeline. Implement application telemetry.
- **R**ecovery Architect and enable low-risk releases. Establish fast recovery, fast reversion, and fast fix-forward.

Bing: Continuous Delivery
https://youtu.be/3sFT7tgyEQk
3:28

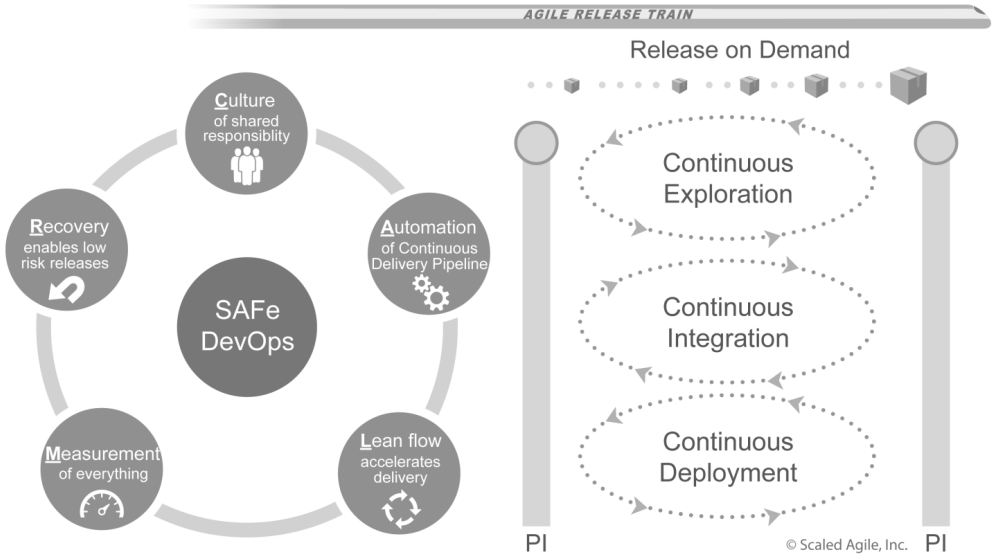
Decouple deployment from release



Decouple release elements from the total solution

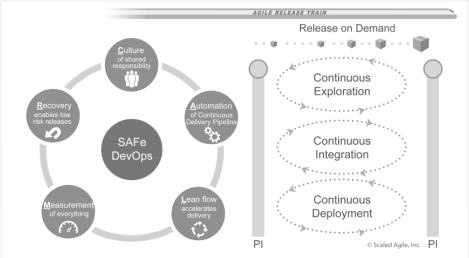


DevOps enables Continuous Delivery



Exercise: A Scrum Master's Job

- Find another person
- Come up with three ideas that you can implement to improve the flow through the Continuous Delivery Pipeline and DevOps.
- Find a new person and share the three ideas you've had with each other.
- Prepare to share ideas.



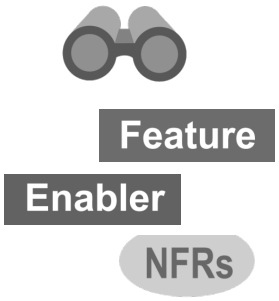
PREPARE 10 min | SHARE 2 min

4.7 Prepare for the next PI Planning session

Key stakeholders prepare briefings

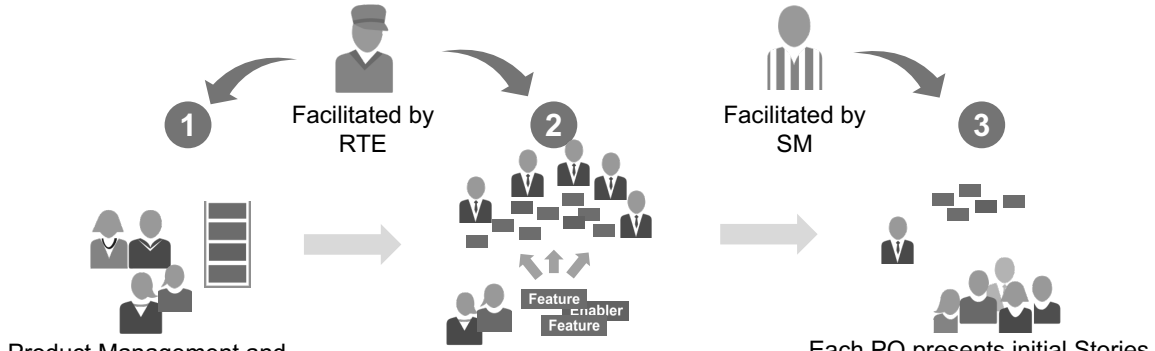
In preparation for PI Planning, leadership creates a series of briefings to set context.

- Executive briefing – State of the business and upcoming objectives
- Product Vision briefing(s) – Vision and top 10 Features
- Architectural Vision briefing – Vision for architecture, new Architectural Epics, common frameworks, etc.
- Development context – Changes to standard practices, new tools and techniques, etc.



New PI content should not be a surprise

Upfront presentation of content to the teams solves a lot of problems later, during PI Planning.



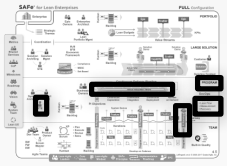
Exercise: Your next move

- Let's recap what we learned in this lesson
- As a team (table), move through every step in the board game
- At each step, discuss the activity and what the Scrum Master has to do to make it more efficient

Lesson summary

In this lesson, you:

- Learned how Agile Release Trains are built
- Explored how Scrum Master can help trains plan, execute, and review the results more effectively
- Learned how teams deliver value on demand



Suggested Scaled Agile Framework reading:

- *"Agile Release Train" article*
- *"PI Planning" article*
- *"Release Train Engineer" article*
- *"Program Level" article*
- *"DevOps" article*