



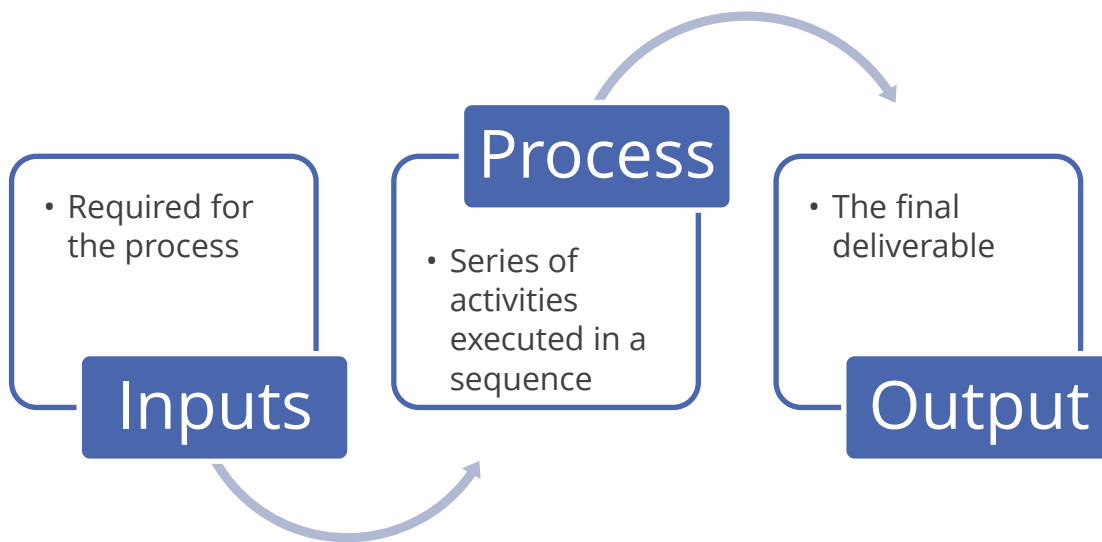
Agile Project Management

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How to deliver Projects successfully in Agile?

Empirical Process Control

- A defined process takes certain inputs and runs a series of activities to arrive at expected results. If you give the same inputs and follow the same sequence of activities, the results would be the same.



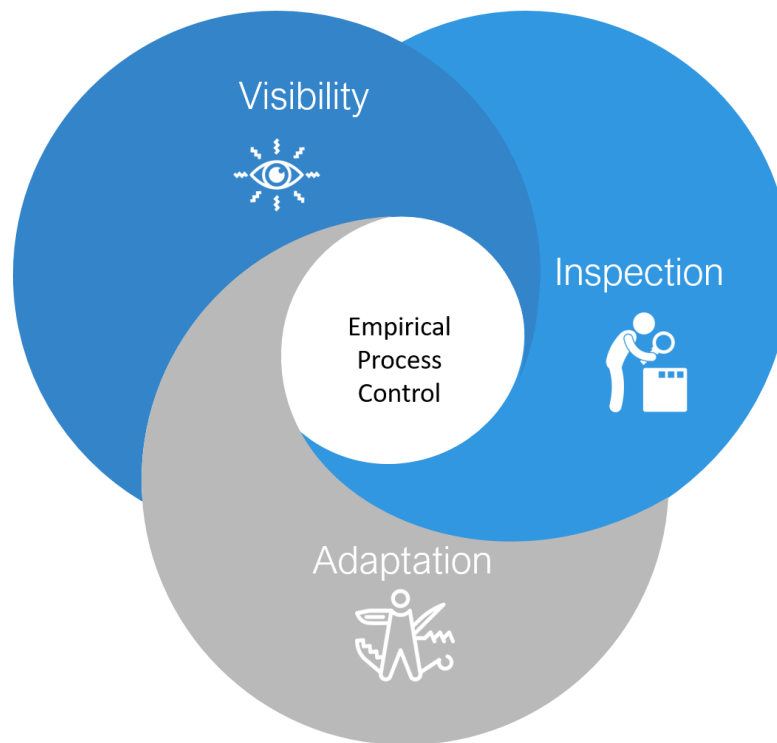
- Laying out a process that is repeatable, producing acceptable quality output is called **defined process control**.
- In software development, Waterfall methodology is a **defined process control**.
- Example: Let us look at Project Management Institute's Project Management Body of Knowledge. It has a series of processes (47 in 5th version). Each process takes some input, and uses some tools and techniques to produce the output.



Source: <https://www.safaribooksonline.com/library/view/a-guide-to/9781935589679/images/fig5-2.png>

- When you cannot achieve defined process control because of the complexity of the intermediate activities, you must employ **empirical process control**.
- In the long run, making successful products the first time using empirical process control turns out to be much cheaper than reworking on unsuccessful products using defined process control.

Three Components of Empirical Process



Visibility

- Those aspects of the process that affect the outcome must be visible to those controlling the process.
- Not only must these aspects be visible, but what is visible must also be true. There is no room for deceiving appearances in empirical process control.
- **Example:**
 - In traditional software development projects, the team uses Gantt chart or Critical Path Method to assess the progress. These may not reflect the actual status of the project accurately. Moreover, there is a possibility that these progress indicators may be visible only to a few stakeholders.
 - In Scrum, the project progress indicators are publicly visible. Anyone who is passing by can see the project progress.

Inspection

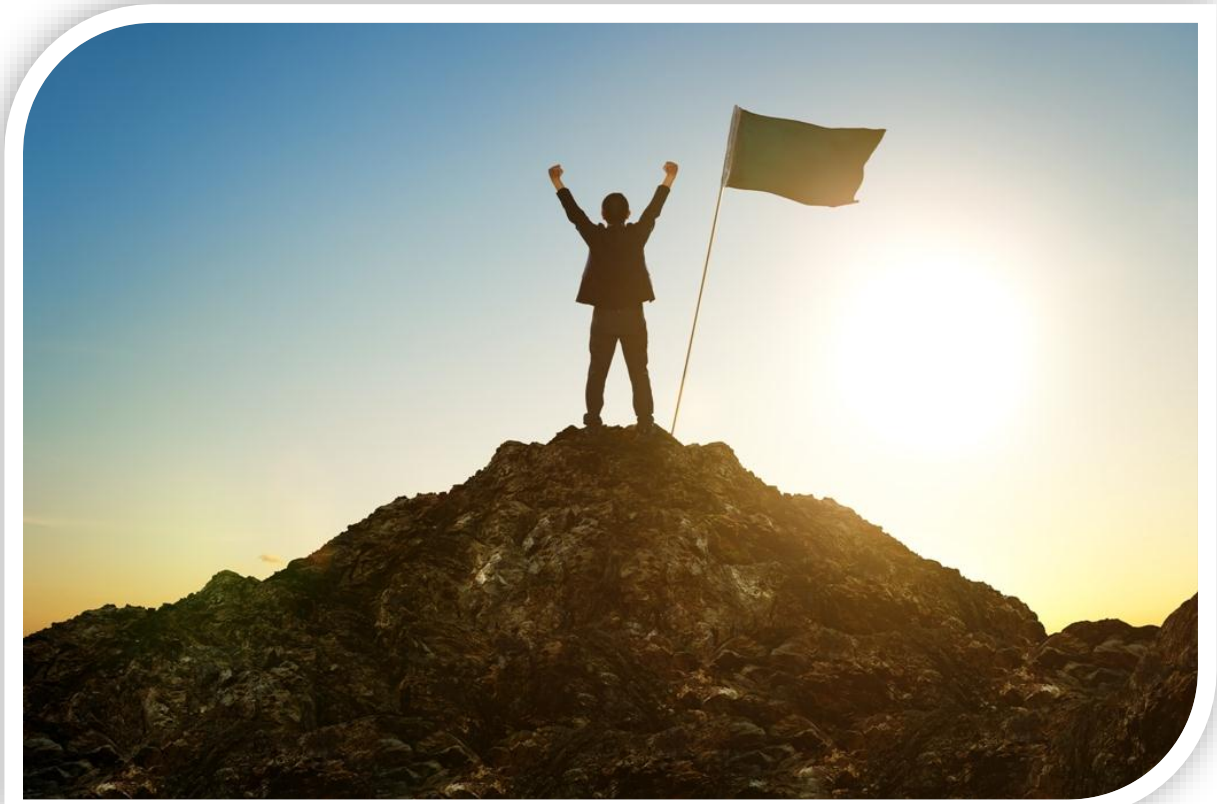
- The various aspects of the process must frequently be inspected to detect unacceptable variances in the process.
- The frequency of inspection must take into consideration that processes change by the very act of inspection.
- **Example:**
 - In traditional software development projects, project review and team performance reviews happen mostly toward the end of the project.
 - In Scrum, at the end of each Sprint (with a duration of 2 to 4 weeks), the team inspects how it has performed in the Sprint and looks for areas of improvement.

Adaptation

- If the team determines from the inspection that one or more aspects of the process are outside acceptable limits and that the resulting product will be unacceptable, the team must adjust the process or the material being processed. The adjustment must be made as quickly as possible to minimize further deviation.
- **Example:**
 - In traditional software development projects, teams work in Command and Control environment; that is, they take orders from Project Managers who assign tasks. Team members may not look for areas of improvement on their own. In addition, a few corporate functions like Quality department may collect a few metrics and ask the team to show some improvements and adaptability.
 - In Scrum, the team constantly reflects on their behavior and looks for adaptation so that they can deliver expected software increments at regular intervals.



Successful Scrum Adoption



Guidance for Individuals – Overcoming Resistance

- Change can create resistance. This resistance comes from Individuals but not from departments.
- Let us see some effective techniques to overcome resistance by some individuals.

Anticipating Resistance

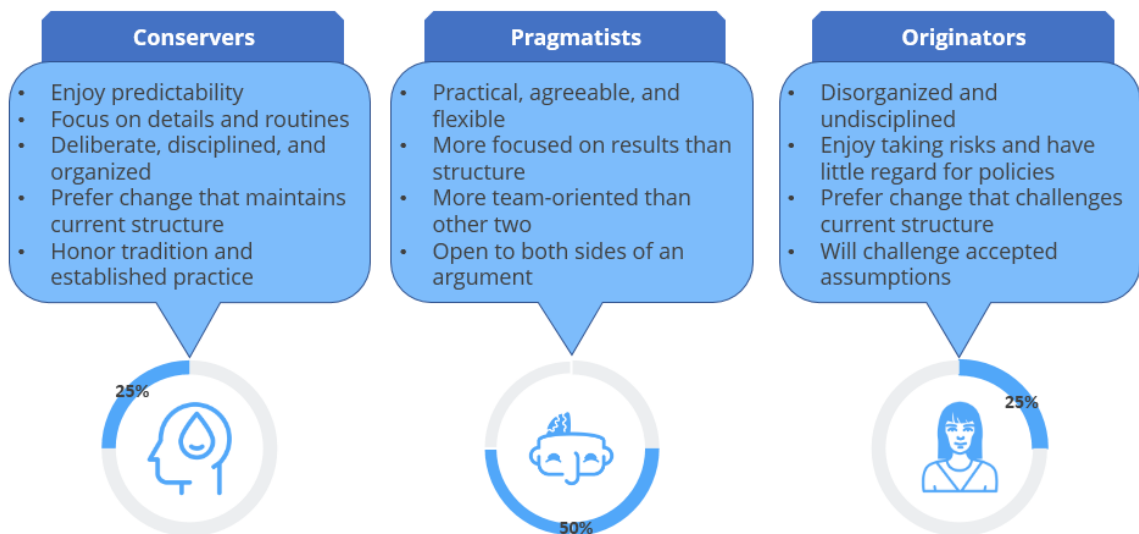
- Some people resist changes.
- When an organization undertakes an Agile transition, a few things happen to individuals. Responsibilities may broaden or shrink, reporting hierarchies may be altered, and so on.
- Some individuals gain from these changes while others may lose.
- In the following table, let us see why people resist changes—the results of a study conducted with managers and employees.

Rank	Employees	Managers
1	Lack of awareness	Fear of losing control and authority
2	Fear of the unknown	Lack of time
3	Lack of job security	Comfort with status quo
4	Lack of sponsorship	No answer to “What’s in it for me?”
5		No involvement in solution design

Conservers, Pragmatists, and Originators

- To anticipate who will resist, we need answers for these two questions:
 - Who will lose power, prestige, and clout if the transition to Scrum is successful?
 - What coalitions are likely to form to oppose the transition?
- Target individuals can be identified from those who may lose something or form coalitions.
- A study categorizes the individuals based on their disposition to change as shown in the graphic below:





- Conservers make up about 25%, Pragmatists make up about 50%, and Originators make up the remaining 25% of individuals impacted by the change.
- Conservers will resist transition to Scrum. Some pragmatists also may show resistance.
- By laying an early groundwork for success, pragmatists can be turned into Scrum advocates. The following activities can help to achieve the same:
 - Include pragmatists in the team and run a pilot project
 - Ensure that other pragmatists who are not on the pilot project see the results
 - Train the pragmatists
 - Let pragmatists attend conferences, Agile interest groups, etc. to interact with other companies and gain knowledge about their successes
 - Be ready and open to accept the drawbacks and challenges of Scrum
 - Build an Improvement Community with the pragmatists

Waterfallacies

- Waterfallacy is a **mistaken belief or idea** about Agile and Scrum created after working too long on waterfall projects.
- Examples of Waterfallacies:
 - Scrum teams don't plan, so we cannot make commitments to customers
 - Scrum has no specialist roles; everyone is a generalist
 - In teams spread across the globe, self-organization clashes with some cultures makes us non-agile

- In teams spread across the globe, face-to-face communication required by Scrum is not possible
- Architecture is ignored in Scrum, so the result can be disastrous
- Scrum works for simple websites, but not for complex projects such as the ones we are working on

Agile Phobias

- An Agile phobia is a **strong dislike or fear** about Agile practices caused by uncertainty of change
- Examples of Agile phobias:
 - I am afraid I will have nothing to do
 - I am afraid I will be fired if the decisions we make don't work
 - I am afraid of conflict and trying to reach consensus
 - I am afraid that people will see how little I do
 - It is much easier and safer when someone (read PM) tells me exactly what to do
 - It is much easier and safer when I can tell people exactly what to do (thinking like a PM)

Communicating about Change

- As highlighted in ADAPTING Scrum, Communication is very vital in any Agile transformation.
- This communication can be delivered in multiple ways and at multiple times.
- Some messages are better heard when shared by leaders while others are better heard when shared by peers.

Hearing from Leaders

- It is a generic tendency of employees to expect any messages related to change, such as transition to Scrum, to be delivered from someone high up in the organization.
- The employees also expect their managers and/or bosses to communicate the change again.
- When communicating about Transition as a leader:
 - Anticipate a lot of questions, such as, "will this transition lead people to be laid off?"
 - Listen for any stated or implied objections

Hearing from Peers

- There will be plenty of opportunities for unconvinced employees to hear from their peers.



- People look at their peers, listen to them, and try to follow them.
- These peer-to-peer communications can be informal and spontaneous.
- Managers select those who can convey messages to their peers effectively. Also, an experienced old hand in similar situations is also used to convey the messages to peers.

Why do individuals resist and how do they resist?

- People resist changes due to many reasons, such as:
 - Scrum makes them work out of their current comfort zone and old ways of working.
 - There is a fear of unknown or dislike or distrust of Scrum.
- People resist changes in different ways such as:
 - By presenting well-researched and reasoned logic backed by fierce arguments.
 - By sabotaging, that is, backstabbing the idea or change effort.
 - Passive resistance by continuing with older ways of working.

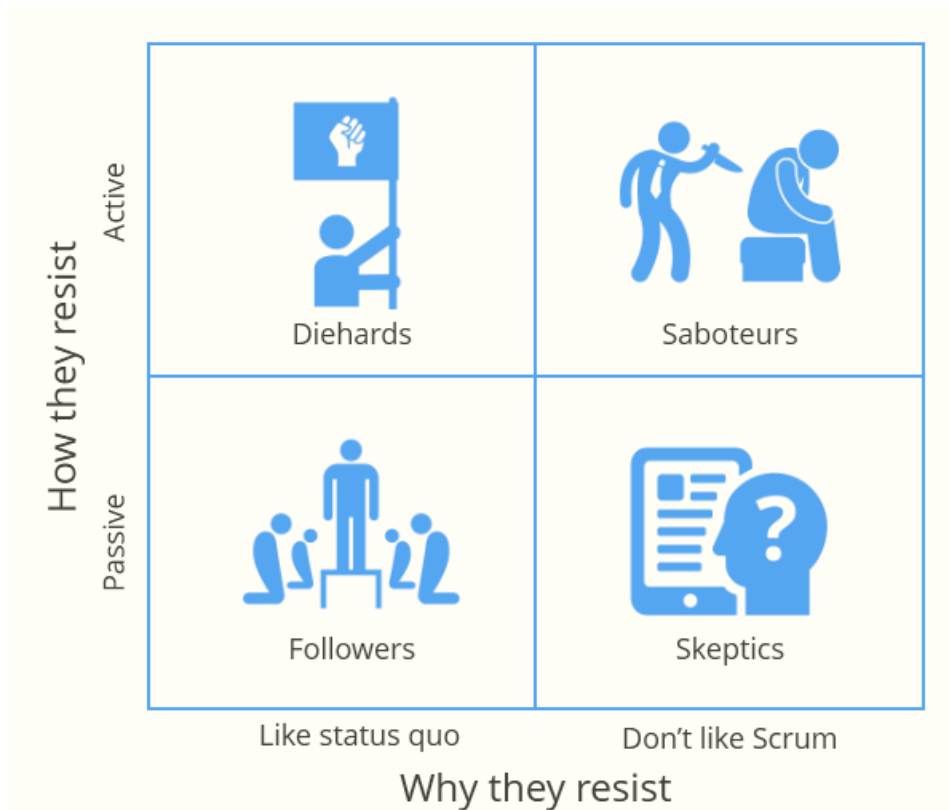
Grouping the reasons for resistance – Why individuals resist?

- We can group the reasons for resistance to Scrum into two categories:
 - They like the **status quo**
 - These people are in defense of current approach. Some examples are:
 - I like whom I work with
 - My current role has prestige and power
 - My training has taught me to do it like this and this is the only way I know
 - I don't like any sort of change
 - Change initiatives always fail, so I don't want to start another change initiative
 - They **don't like** Scrum
 - They argue against some technical practices and implementation of Scrum. Some examples are:
 - I think Scrum will fail, and we will switch back
 - Scrum doesn't work with our Product development; it is a bad idea
 - I am in my zone most of the time, using headphones listening to music. I don't like face-to-face communication

- Our team is distributed, so no way Scrum can work with our team

Categorizing the ways of resistance – How do these individuals resist?

- Active resistance occurs when some individual takes a specific action with the intention of derailing or breaking the transition.
- Passive resistance occurs when some individual says he/she will do something negative to disrupt the transition, but fails to do so.

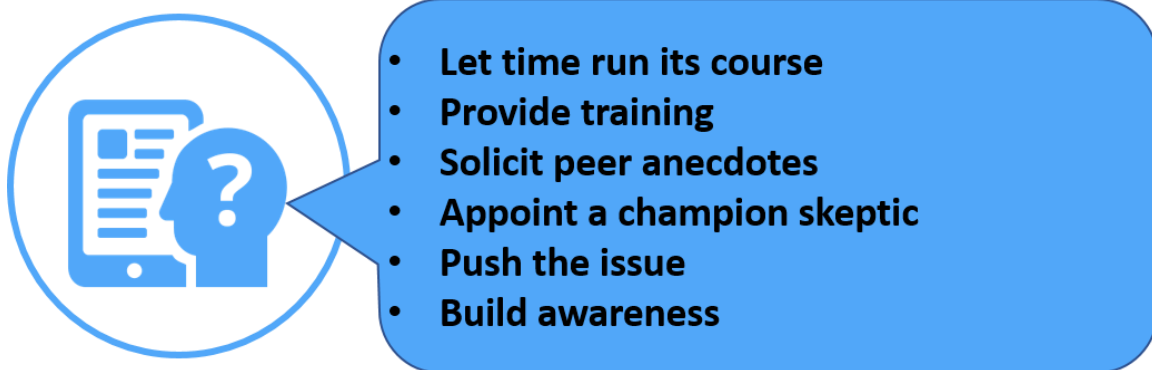


- **Skeptics**
 - Skeptics don't agree with the principles or practices of Scrum and passively resist transition.
 - They politely resist and argue against Scrum and may skip a few daily Scrum meetings.
- **Saboteurs**
 - These individuals resist Scrum because they don't like it.
 - These individuals actively resist Scrum by undertaking a few Non-scrum activities such as insisting on lengthy documentation and design upfront.
- **Diehards**



- These individuals resist Scrum because they like the status quo, that is, they want the current situation to continue.
- They work comfortably with their team members, peers, and business users. They only show resistance when a change is introduced that puts their current situation at risk.
- These diehards rally with others to prevent transition.
- **Followers**
 - These individuals resist change passively.
 - They would like current status quo to continue. They expect recent changes, like Scrum, to be like passing showers and hope that Scrum fades and loses popularity over a period of time.

Tools that can be used to overcome resistance shown by Skeptics



Let time run its course

- As the transition continues, the benefits of using Scrum will become more and more evident.
- This evidence can lessen the resistance of skeptics.

Provide training

- Some skeptics resist because they are not aware of Scrum or have not worked on Scrum before.
- Training can help skeptics to gain firsthand experience on Scrum and its associated benefits.

Solicit peer anecdotes

- When skeptics hear from peers about how Scrum is used and its benefits, it may lessen their resistance.
- Success stories from teams can be shared with the team members who worked on those projects, so skeptics can hear and resonate with these success stories.

- If required, an organization can even invite an external experienced Agile outsider to share his or her experiences as well.

Appoint a champion skeptic

- A champion skeptic is an individual who is influential, respected, and well-connected, but doesn't show open hostility toward the transition.
- Identify and invite these champion skeptics to all meetings and give them opportunities to point out the problems. After hearing the problems, address them.

Push the issue

- Put the skeptic in charge of some part or some task of the transition.
- For example, if someone is skeptical about how design evolves over sprints in Scrum, let that person work on the design (if that is person capable enough).
- With the task on hand, this skeptic has no other option but to understand how design evolves over time and showcase it to rest of the team.

Build awareness

- An Agile transition using Scrum could be triggered by both internal and external causes. For example, internal causes include teams continuously missing schedule deadlines, inferior products or services repeatedly delivered, etc. External causes include market conditions, competitor push, and contractual obligations.
- If the team members are made aware of the triggers for Scrum adoption, skeptics may understand and see the big picture; thus, the resistance may fade away.

Tools that can be used to overcome resistance shown by Saboteurs

- In addition to the tools suggested for skeptics, the following can be used.



- **Success**
- **Reiterate and reinforce commitment**
- **Move them**
- **Fire them**
- **Be sure the right people are talking**

Success

- Saboteurs post doubts about success of projects conducted using Scrum. They may insist or showcase previous successful projects that did not use Scrum.
- The easiest way to overcome this resistance is to showcase the Scrum success stories from all kinds of projects.

Reiterate and reinforce commitment

- Saboteurs must know the organization is committed toward the transition to Scrum.
- If presented with any weakness, these saboteurs will try to take the most out of it.
- When there are many saboteurs, a strong message from higher executives can make them realize that their resistance may not work.

Move them

- If possible, relocate the saboteurs to other projects.
- They may become productive team members on other teams.

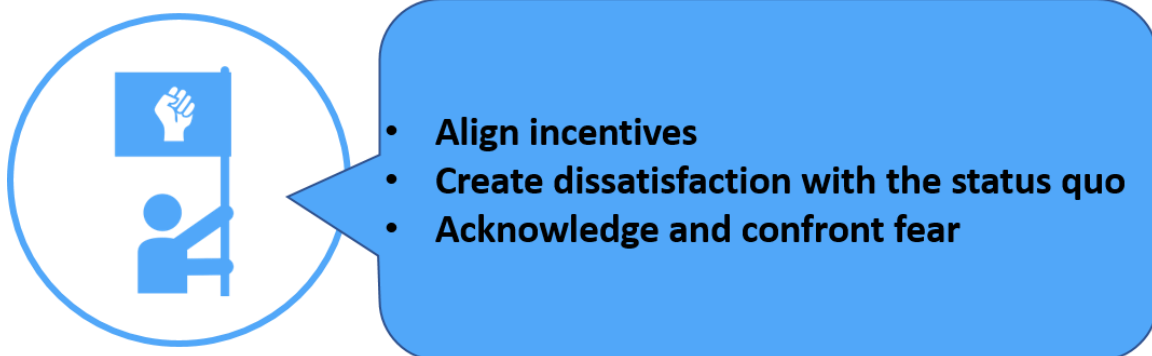
Fire them

- This is the extreme end tool for resistance.
- If someone is opposing the corporate direction toward Scrum transition by actively resisting, firing them could be one quite possible solution.

Be sure that that right people are talking

- Getting improvement communities to share success stories from Scrum projects might convince saboteurs to lessen their resolve to resist.

Tools that can be used to overcome resistance shown by Diehards



- Diehards employ a common technique to stall Scrum transition by controlling resources. As most diehards operate at middle and upper levels of management, they will have enough status and want to keep it.
- Tools presented for saboteurs work with diehards also; in addition, the following tools can be used.

Align Incentives

- Diehards may be attached to status quo due to some benefits (for example, performance bonuses on project completion) they may get.
- Review all incentive schemes in an organization and align them as necessary to promote Scrum (for example, individual rewards versus team rewards)
- Also, consider offering non-financial incentives such as recognition awards, promotions, etc.

Create dissatisfaction with status quo

- Diehards like the status quo and oppose Scrum because they like how things are before Scrum transition.
- Creating dissatisfaction with status quo can help to lessen the resistance shown by diehards.

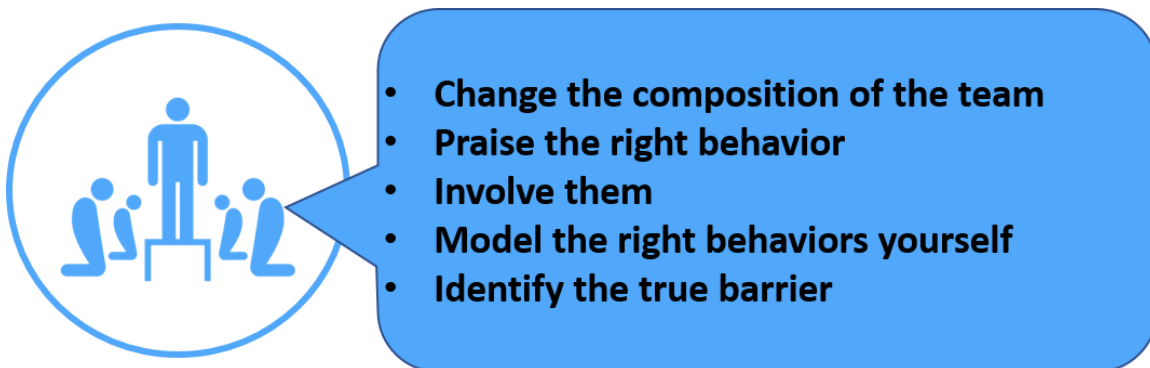
Acknowledge and confront fear

- Diehards are usually happy with their current position and offer resistance because of the fear of uncertainty.
- They may have certain questions: What will be the change in my role? What will be my next career move? How will I be evaluated?
- If answers to such questions are known, don't hesitate to provide them. This will help to drive away the fear.
- If answers are not known, commitments can be given to drive away fear.
- Setting right expectations also may help to overcome resistance.

Tools that can be used to overcome resistance shown by Followers

- Followers show passive resistance to changing the status quo rather than opposing Scrum.
- Fortunately, they are not that vigorous in their resistance.
- The tools presented above can also be used with followers. In addition, the following tools can be used.





Change the composition of the team

- Changing the composition will change the nature of resistance. For example, if the team members who are resisting Scrum transition are moved out, resistance might come down.

Praise the right behavior

- Instead of focusing on changing a behavior, focus on appreciating the right behaviors exhibited.
- This will help the followers to take notice and lower resistance.

Involve them

- Involving the followers in the process and Improvement communities might lessen their resistance to Scrum.

Model the right behaviors yourself

- Followers, as the name suggests, require a role model whom they can follow.
- If you or a team member models the right behavior, such as insisting on and engaging in face-to-face communication, setting up information radiators, etc., followers might take the lead from these behaviors and follow. This will reduce the resistance.

Identify the true barrier

- Using the ADAPT model presented earlier, find out what is causing resistance: lack of awareness, no desire, no ability, and so on.
- Provide appropriate support to break through the barrier.

When an employee resists, an effective leader looks at the employee not as a problem to be solved, but as a person to be understood.
