





Weaponized Scrum

Michael Marchi
Siemens Building Technologies
Buffalo Grove, IL USA
michael.marchi@siemens.com

Part 1: Introduction



It's the age-old story...

- ▶ Boy meets Agile 
- ▶ Boy takes Agile to meet the Company 
- ▶ Boy and Agile have a couple successful Projects together
- ▶ Company tries to change Agile 
- ▶ Wackiness Ensues... 

Who Am I?

- ▶ Software Developer for 22 years
- ▶ Agile since 2005
- ▶ Agile Practitioner, Coach & Trainer, CSM, CSPO, CSP
- ▶ President of Chicago Chapter of APLN

My Project

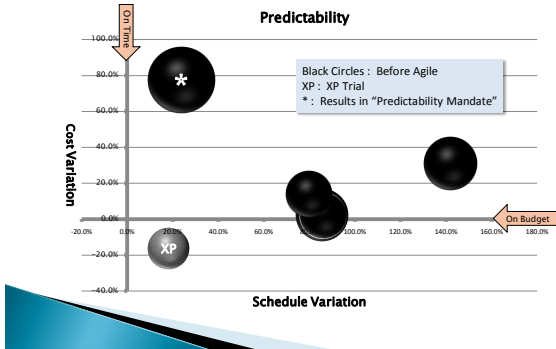
- ▶ Legacy System (12+ years old)
- ▶ 1-year release schedule
- ▶ History of shipping late and over-budget
- ▶ Technical Lead for 7 of last 8 revisions
- ▶ Agile for the last 5*

* The subject of this report - Not so Agile

Dysfunction

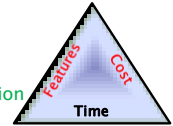
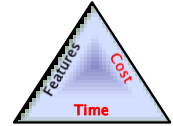
- ▶ Corporate Culture:
 - Gated **Waterfall**
 - Cycle of **Mistrust** resulted in **Heavy Process**
 - Too many requirements, All Critical
 - Bad Estimates, Padded
 - Schedules, Padded
 - Project Plans, Debated
 - Shipping Dates, Dictated
 - Emphasis only at end to do bare minimum
 - Quality suffers (**Technical Debt** piles up)
 - **Death March** every time

Agility Needed

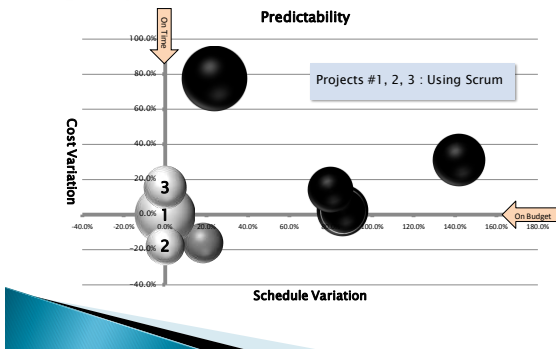


The First Scrum Projects

- ▶ Workstation Product:
 - Fixed Time and Resources
 - Features could shift
 - Goal: Ship On Time
 - Result: On-time, On Budget
- ▶ Data Storage Product:
 - Fixed Features and Resources
 - Delivery Date could shift
 - Goal: Complete Requirements
 - Result: 100% Customer Satisfaction

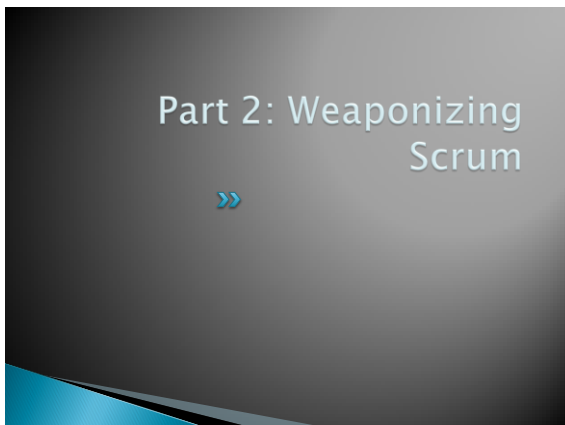


Agility Found



The Grass Takes Root

- ▶ Early Success got us noticed
- ▶ Trained more teams
 - Chicago, Princeton, Switzerland, Italy, India
- ▶ Agile User Group
- ▶ Scrum seemed to be growing with management consent
 - Good visibility
 - Good predictability
- ▶ Results were desirable, but misunderstood

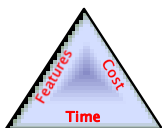


Loading the Weapon



Workstation Project #4

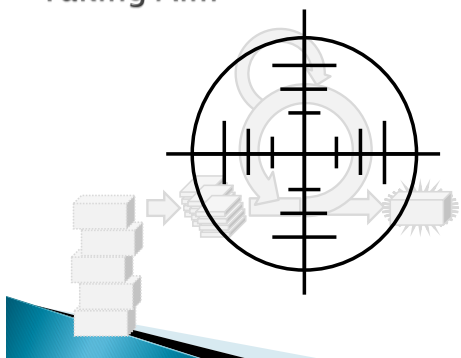
- ▶ 2 on-shore teams, 2 off-shore, 1 firmware
- ▶ Large, visible project with international attention
- ▶ Different Tech Lead
- ▶ Different Product Owner
- ▶ Fixed Ship-Date
- ▶ Fixed Teams
- ▶ Fixed Deliverables



Trying to make it fit

- ▶ Backlog Estimation: October instead of July
- ▶ Trust/Negotiation Cycle
 - Management pushed back on schedule
 - Team insisted estimates were good
 - Product Owner wouldn't negotiate on features
- ▶ Team drew on past experience
 - Showed burn-downs
 - Showed schedule
 - Showed how there was no way to meet the date

Taking Aim



Bullet Point

- ▶ "How do we know they're working as hard as they can?"
- ▶ Agile: *Just visit the team room during a Daily Scrum. Walk around during the day. They are focused.*
- ▶ Weaponize: *Burndown charts show hours remaining on tasks, so simple subtraction will tell you how many hours the team spent working each day.*



Bullet Point

- ▶ "If working 40 hours per week, they can deliver 20 story points per month, how do you bring in the end date?"
- ▶ Agile: *Add teams, decrease features, look for opportunities to optimize team performance.*
- ▶ Weaponize: *Increase 'Velocity' by 50%, to bring in the date 50%.*



Bullet Point

- ▶ "Pair programming and cross-training sound like we're paying twice as much for the same work?"
- ▶ Agile: *Not really. By spending a little more time at the beginning, you shorten the end-game. Plus you're building future expertise.*
- ▶ Weaponize: *Obviously, the teams would go faster if people focus on their own area of expertise!*



Bullet Point

- ▶ **“All these meetings! The planning sessions, the tasking, demos and retrospectives, not to mention that daily waste of time...”**
- ▶ *Agile: Teams need close coordination and an understanding of the full scope so they can work together as a team.*
- ▶ *Weaponize: Why bother planning in groups, if you're just going to work on things individually?*



Pulling the Trigger



Victims of our Past

- ▶ **60 Hour Weeks** (12 Hour Days)
- ▶ Apply **50% More** points into sprints
- ▶ **Assign Work** to Key Experts
- ▶ Shorten Planning Meetings and Demos
- ▶ Unfinished work will roll over to next sprint



Death March

- ▶ “Enhanced Sprint #1”
- ▶ *Everyone digs in, hoping to minimize*
- ▶ *Overtime duration.*
- ▶ *Rely on muscle memory/old patterns*
- ▶ After one Month: Modest gain in Velocity, but no completed sprints!



Death March

- ▶ “Enhanced Sprint #2”
- ▶ *Fatigue*
- ▶ *Short tempers*
- ▶ *Pressure from home*
- ▶ *Schedules became erratic*
- ▶ *Focused on individual tasks*
- ▶ After two Months: work returned to pre-overtime levels, but still putting in the hours



Death March

- ▶ “Enhanced Sprint #3”
- ▶ *Running on **Empty***
- ▶ *Frequent **Conflict***
- ▶ *Some people **Forced** to rest*
- ▶ *General feeling of **Doom***
- ▶ Then a miracle happened...



Part 3: Countermeasures



Disarming the Weapon



Open Space

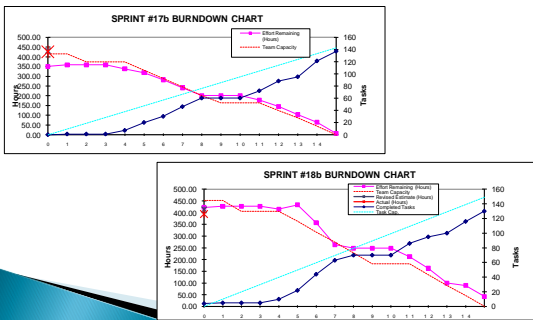
- ▶ 2 Days that changed everything



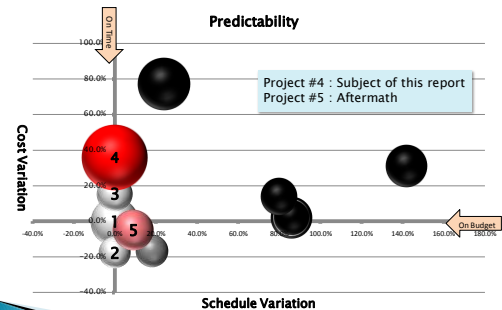
Outcomes from OpenSpace

- ▶ **Removed** “mandatory” hours
- ▶ **The Team** renewed focus on Agile principles
- ▶ List of **Best Practices**
- ▶ List of **Items to Discuss** over the next week
- ▶ List of items to **Consider for Future** revisions

Once more, with feeling!



Outcome



Part 4: Damage Assessment

Lesson: Overtime vs. Team Commitment

- ▶ You get what you measure
- ▶ If you measure Hours, you get Hours
- ▶ Should focus on Finished Stories (i.e. Working Product)

Lesson: Destroying Team Unity



The Long, Slow Road to Recovery



Sustainability

Training is just the beginning

- ▶ New Agile Teams need guidance
 - Rely very heavily on their Scrum Master
- ▶ New Scrum Masters need guidance too



New Role: **Agile Coach & Trainer**

Coaching can provide path to earlier success

- ▶ Agile User Group Meetings
- ▶ Scrum Master Lunches
- ▶ Online Forums
- ▶ Experienced Coaches!



Q & A

Questions and Answers?

Weaponized Scrum
Michael Marchi
michael.marchi@siemens.com
michael.marchi@aplncicago.org

