Crossing the Chasm in Scrum Transition

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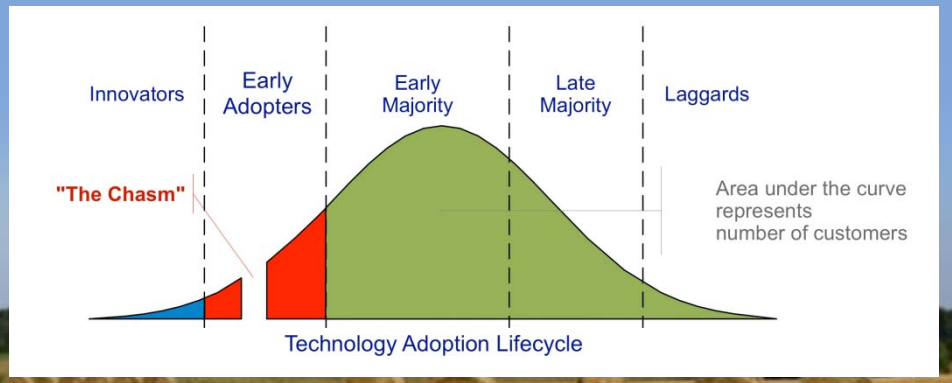
Background

- It is common for large organization to first have pilot Scrum implementation in the smaller scope.
- After pilot is successful, management decides to start adoption in the whole organization

- However, …



Roadblock from reality

- We have to keep our commitment
- People are lazy
- Efficiency comes from specialization
- We cannot get item done
- We do not have automated tests
- ...

Unrealistic commitment

- Roadblock
  - We made unrealistic commitment, then we have to keep it
- Quick fix
  - Done slows us down, we go fast by loosening it
  - Overtime
  - Higher efficiency by minimize learning
- Contrast to Scrum
  - Team commits how much to do
  - Done (not done, no demo)
  - Sustainable pace
  - Continuous improvement

Lazy people

- Roadblock
  - People are lazy, and they will commit less
- Quick fix
  - Micro-management
  - Management (or experts on behalf of management) makes the estimate
  - Set incentive for sprint result
- Contrast to Scrum
  - Basic truth: People always do the best they can
  - Scrum obstacle: the illusion of command and control
  - Self-managing
  - Transparency

Efficiency from specialization

- Roadblock
  - We cannot lose efficiency, while single specialization is the norm
- Quick fix
  - Keep component team and single function team, use feature project rather than feature team
  - Prioritize based on efficiency, rather than value
- Contrast to Scrum
  - Cross-functional feature team
  - Generalizing specialist
    - No role does not mean no specialization though

Partially done

- Roadblock
  - We cannot get item done by the end of the sprint
- Quick fix
  - Count part of the item as done
    - While root cause is: the team does mini-waterfall in the sprint
  - Product backlog item for integration
    - While root cause is: the team only has the capability for part of the feature
- Contrast to Scrum
  - Done to get velocity
  - Potentially shippable product increments by the end of each sprint

Automated tests

- Roadblock
  - We have few automated tests in our legacy feature regression
- Quick fix
  - Regression test team
  - Test automation team
- Contrast to Scrum
  - Cross-functional feature team
  - Done

How to cross the chasm?

1. Manage your commitment
2. Develop your people
3. Change your organization

Manage your commitment

- Inspect and adapt with transparency
  - This works better than blind commitment!
- What if your customer still wants it?
  - We shall make the commitment realistic

Make realistic commitment

1. Agile planning
   - Measure velocity
   - Estimate size
   - Derive duration
2. Risk management
3. Technical debts (legacy code, tests, etc.)
   - No new technical debts
   - Pay the debts in neighborhood and most problematic area

Remember: deliver more value with less feature!

Develop your people

- Scrum Master development
  - Leading change
  - System thinking
  - Community, internal and external
  - Scrum coach
- Engineering practices
  - Continuous integration (more than a system)
  - TDD and unit test
  - Acceptance TDD and agile specification
  - Test automation
  - Community of Practice
  - Engineering coach

Change your organization

1. Transform management
2. Transform team structure

- How to change
  - Keep challenging the norms and assumptions behind
  - Move with desired state in mind

Transform management

- Distribute project management
  - Content, schedule and cost?
  - Remove impediment?
  - Task assignment?
- Change the focus of line manager
  - Line manager teaches, coaches and supports team
  - Organizational impediment backlog

Transform team structure

- From component based matrix organization to Scrum organization
  - From feature project to cross-functional feature team
  - Requirement Area for scaling
- Challenges in all-at-once transition
  - Over-specialization
  - Lack of engineering capability
  - Lack of confidence
- Not optimal but may be necessary as intermediate steps
  - Long-term team formed around part-of-the-feature inside big component based area
  - Short-term project team formed around the whole feature, while still maintaining the component based organization

Thank you!
Good luck on crossing the chasm!