Ignore middle-managers at your peril!
Why middle-managers hold the key to successful Agile transformations
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From: Ken Schwaber  To: XXX XXXXX, CEO for XXXXXXX Corporation

On one hand, Scrum offers some very attractive possibilities increased productivity, a better working environment, increased competitiveness, and a higher quality product. On the other hand, it is hard to implement. The amount of change engendered by a Scrum implementation is significant and difficult.

Even though the change is difficult for the developers and customers (product owners), they have immediate payback through increased job satisfaction. This helps them through times of stress and anxiety. Middle management, however, is stressed without immediate reward. They are asked to help transition an organisation from traditional approaches to leaner approaches without a clear vision of a personal end point what will I do and where will I fit into the new organisation. This question is particularly difficult and fraught with danger since middle management will be fashioning the new organisation. The potential for conflict and politics is daunting.

My experience with top-down, enterprise implementations of Scrum has led me to believe that the differentiator between success and failure is you. Your ability to vision the future and help communicate it to your management, your ability to patiently guide them through the change, and your ability to assure your middle management of their value and form them into a team will differentiate your ability to absorb the change and realize the benefits, or not.”

Ken Schwaber: A CIO’s Playbook for Adopting the Scrum Method of Achieving Software Agility With Dean Leffingwell & Hubert Smits
Discussion Points

• Why Agile transformations are challenged
• Why middle managers resist change
• The impact of middle management on large scale transformations
• Understanding the difference between mandated change and collaborative change
• The importance of change management
• How to transform middle management into change agents
• Enabling Lean-Agile Leadership
Transformation Failures

70% of large-scale change transformations fail

37% Unanticipated execution / change management challenges
36% Lack of management / employee buy-in & support

Forbes Insights – 2014 (Global Survey)
What about Agile transformations?

"I spent $174 million on a website and all I got was this bad press."

Someone, somewhere in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

For many organisations a **second wave of agile adoption** is starting to happen, with a focus on the disciplines and technical practices and an emphasis on "do it properly this time"

*InfoQ*
LEADING CAUSES OF FAILED AGILE PROJECTS
10th state of Agile Survey – 2016: VersionOne

Barriers to Further Agile Adoption
As in previous years, respondents continued to increasingly cite organizational culture and a general resistance to change as their biggest barriers to further agile adoption. Concerns about organizational culture increased from 44% in 2014 to 55% in 2015, and concerns about a general resistance to change increased from 34% in 2014 to 42% in 2015.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS WHEN ADOPTING SCRUM
The 2015 State of Scrum Report: ScrumAlliance
A third of participants in a 2011 benchmarking study undertaken identified middle level managers as the most resistant group to change.

Prosci – Best Practices in Change
Management – 2012 Edition
Challenging their power base

“A person responsible for controlling or administering an organisation or group of staff”

*Oxford Dictionary definition of manager in English: noun*
Understand the challenges introduced by the Agile Manifesto

- **Individuals and Interactions**
- **Processes and Tools**
- **Working Software (Solutions)**
- **Comprehensive Documentation**
- **Customer Collaboration**
- **Contract Negotiation**
- **Responding to Change**
- **Following a Plan**

**Welcome changing requirements**

- Working software is the primary measure of progress.
- Business people & developers must work together daily
- Build projects around motivated individuals.
- Promote sustainable development.
- The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.
Not understanding implications of the change

Lack of Shared Vision / Understanding the urgency for change?

Silver Bullet syndrome - unrealistic expectations

Mandated Change

Too many managers, not enough leaders

Challenging their power base

Not Anchoring Changes in the Corporation’s Culture

Not enabling the removal of Organisational impediments
Align

Needs

before

Values

before

Principles

before

Practices

before

Tools

Understand & share the need for change

Spine Model – a sense-making framework for human work systems

http://spine.wiki/
Mandated Change

- It kills openness
- It kills initiative
- It kills engagement
- It kills any sense of control
- It kills any sense of progress
Managing Expectations

Agile

IQbusiness
Our team. Your advantage.
Managing Expectations

- Mind the Gap
- Managed Change
- Minimum level of acceptable performance
- Expected level of acceptable performance

*Adapted from John D. Adams (1990)
Not enabling the removal of organisational impediments
Persistent & Transient Change Management
Effective Change Management

Considering how individuals and organisations adapt to change, we can track how ‘Managing Change’ can make a difference in performance.

- Managed Change
- Minimum level of acceptable performance
- Unmanaged Change

Closing the Gap

*Adapted from John D. Adams (1990)
You want to affect organisational change...

- Grow Change from an Individual Level

The Philosophy of Change

Expected Outcome of the change

Organisational Change

Individual Behaviour

...but you have to start at an individual level.

1. Change the individual behaviour
2. Change the ‘Organisational Way’
3. Increased Revenue, Reduced costs, Happier customers
Ensure Alignment

First 'Top Down'

Organisation

Then 'Bottom Up'

Executive Leadership

Sponsor

Change
Team
Change
Network

Individual

IQbusiness
Our team. Your advantage.
It’s all about the people

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Our team. Your advantage.
Engaging and involving the people

1. Develop mutual trust
2. Appreciate them
3. Stimulate their growth
4. Converse with them
5. Make their roles clear
6. Involve them in decisions
Simon Sinek – Start with Why?
• Any transformations are challenging including Agile
• Middle management are the biggest resistors – challenging their power base
• Agile is not the outcome – it’s the enabler
• Not just about the process – very much about the people
• Adopt an Agile persistent and transient change management approach
  • As Agile coaches we are change agents
  • Manage expectations of the change
  • Understand individual implications of the change - “What’s in it for me?”
  • To change organisational culture we need to start with individual behaviours
Any questions?

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