Construx Presentation

The Journey to Organization-Wide Scrum

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Introduction: My View of Scrum

- Scrum has emerged as the best of breed of Agile practices
- My company, Construx Software, is pro Scrum, recommends it often, and provides training and consulting in Scrum
- Overall, we see far more successes with Scrum than failures
- We learn more from failures than from successes, so emphasis of this talk is on failures
- That should not be interpreted as being negative about Scrum!
Story #1
A Case Study in How Not to Implement Scrum

How Not to Implement Scrum

- Project Launch: Do Scrum by the Book
- Iterations 1-2: Project in Flight
- Iteration 3: Questions from the Business
- Iteration 4: The Outside Consultant
- Iteration 5: Project Shut Down

Retrospective to follow …
More on My Perspective: A Brief History of Construx and Scrum

Background on SteveMcC and Construx Software

- 2001 vs. 2011
- Client org’s usually in the 100-1000 staff range, some significantly larger
My Vantage Point on Scrum Adoption

% Scrum Adoption in an organization

We tend to get involved in here somewhere

First project failed
Uncertain how to roll out Scrum beyond first project
Roll out to second project failed
Uncertain how to scale Scrum to larger projects
Uncertain how to scale Scrum to multiple geos

We don’t see much of this phase

Time

Innovation Adoption Sequence and Scrum

• Why attracted to innovation
• Kind of “wins”
• Risk tolerance
• Approach to change
• Fit for Agile

Innovators Early Adopters Early Majority Late Majority Laggards

2000 2004 2011
Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal

Do not pursue agility at the expense of predictability unless you are sure your business wants that.
Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal

**Businesses would rather be wrong than vague.**

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**Flexibility vs. Predictability**
- Don't assume the business needs or wants flexibility in requirements
- Don't assume the business will trade predictability for flexibility
- Summary of conversations with C-levels about predictability and flexibility

**Agile is not all or nothing**
- Agile requirements vs. agile planning
- Scrum/agile can either support or undermine predictability
Learning #2: Don’t Use Scrum to Avoid Accountability

Businesses Live or Die on the Basis of Their Commitments.

If you are pursuing agility at the expense of making or meeting commitments, you are probably headed toward failure.
Learning #3: “Trust Us, We’re Doing Scrum” Doesn’t Work

- The pattern is not “Trust and then Verify”; trust has to be earned first
- The team tried to start with the end state
- Many businesses don’t trust their software function
- Build the track record first, then move toward a higher trust relationship

Learning #4: Scrum Does Not Give You the Ability to Boil the Ocean

- Schwaber: “Scrum doesn’t solve your problems; it exposes your problems” (paraphrase)
- True, but you don’t need to attack every problem you see
- The business might not agree that the "problems" you see are really problems.
Story #2
Initial Success Followed by Second Project Failure

- First Team
- Attempt to recruit follow-on teams
Retrospective

- Unfaithful Scrum implementations may fail
- Construx’s official position on Scrum
  - Moving beyond success with early adopters often requires a different approach
    - Training
    - Coaching
    - Mistakes
    - Tolerance of faults in the process
    - Ability to close gaps
    - Initiative in closing gaps
    - Etc. (apply the innovation adoption curve)

Story #3
Initial Success
Followed by …
Nothing
Initial Success Followed by … Nothing

- First Team
- Second Team
- Follow on (or lack thereof)

Retrospective

- Scrum ≠ Agile
- Marine Corps doctrine and Scrum as a minimal process
Story #4
An Early $50 Million Agile Failure

- Huge organizational commitment
- By the book implementation
- Project underway
- Consequences of failure
Retrospective

Some familiar causes of failure:
- Agile is not the goal, it’s a strategy
- “Begin with the end in mind”
- Hiking analogy
- Lack of comprehensive project vision
  - Most common cause of Scrum failure
  - Comparison to traditional requirements challenges

Story #5
Success on Small Projects Doesn’t Scale to Large Projects
Success on Small Projects Doesn’t Scale to Large Projects

- First project succeeds
- Second, third, fourth projects succeed
- What happens with multi-site project with 150 people?

Retrospective

- “This is Not Your Father’s Scrum”
- Scrum is a method for managing the top-level workflow at the team level
  - Many failures can be explained by applying this definition
- Scrum of Scrums is not the best approach (or at least we’ve seen it fail too often)
- Fear of “non-Agile” practices
- Large projects need more Product Owners / Ownership, Architecture, Planning, Communication, …
Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 1

Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 2
Tapping into the Power of Scrum

Keys to Success

- If at first you don’t succeed, go back to first principals (i.e., RTM!)
- Remember Scrum’s area of applicability: workflow management at the team level
- Vision, Product roadmap, and Release roadmaps are key to avoiding the most common Scrum failure mode
- Consider where you are on the innovation adoption curve
  - The elephant explains a lot! As you scale up, phase in traditional large-project management best practices.
Construx Software is committed to helping individuals and organizations improve their software development practices. For information about our training and consulting services, contact stevemcc@construx.com
+1(425)636-0107 (direct line)

Construx

10900 NE 8th Street, Suite 1350
Bellevue, WA 98004
+1 (866) 296-6300
www.construx.com