

# Let's Stop Calling It an Agile “Transformation”

---

BEN RODILITZ

AGILE COACH, STELLAR SOLUTIONS

11 NOVEMBER 2020

I'm Ben

---

# And...

---

The obligatory Agile Coach's Trophy Wife:



It started with...

---

Here's what I found when looking for Project Management Methodologies back in the day...

... at any point in time, over 80% of a company's projects are substantially "in flight"

# How About You?

---

# Our Journey

---

We'll take a look at 7 engagements that were all labeled “Agile Transformations” and consider what the “as is” was when we started, our approach, and lessons learned

# Quick Inventory

---

Dealer.Com: SaaS offering; no-pilot go-for-it Scrum then SAFe

Teradata: Extreme legacy code caught between 2 "shiny object" groups

DirecTV/AT&T: 7 ARTS – working at it for a while (on PI-16)

Chevron #1 – GoM: Mostly non-SW producing teams with almost no interaction

Google: 2 products with development done by - and run by - consultants

Chevron #2 – SJV: 4 "teams" with 3 to 5 "devops squads"

Space and Missile Systems Command: Space Force: 11+ teams focused on overseeing acquisitions on massive system: FORGE

# Dealer.Com

---

## **A Company's Transformation to Agile: 1-year Retrospective**

Agile SoCal: The Southern California Agile User Group  
October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Ben Rodnitz, [Dealer.Com](http://Dealer.Com)

# Dealer.Com

---

- At the start: New teams, new structure (products), new methodology
- Our approach: Train everybody, go slowly and consistently
- Lessons learned: It worked!
  - Over-exuberance at the beginning
  - Good mix of capabilities, backgrounds, etc.
  - Positive engagement from execs to team level

# Teradata

---

- At the start:
  - - Legacy "Plumbing" tools - some 15+ years old
  - - Some 1 to 3 person teams - all over the map
  - - One team of 8 - 3 offshore testers
- Our approach: Agreement to transition only if/where it made sense
- Lessons learned:
  - Understanding "Why" accelerates buy-in
  - Stop pasting agile/scrum where it is not needed

# DirecTV/AT&T

---

- At the start:
  - PI 16
  - Multiple ARTS
  - Time/revenue pressure
- Our approach:
  - Focus on the ART/Team level
- Lessons learned:
  - Hard to overcome:
    - Relentlessly changing priorities
    - Legacy code rework

# Chevron #1: Gulf of Mexico: *Competing Initiatives*

---

- At the start:
  - New ART - 9 teams
  - Very little inter-team interaction at all
  - Almost no SW dev
- Our approach: Work with teams and eventually go to team-of-teams
- Lessons learned: Hard to overcome multiple, uncoordinated coaching entities/consultancies

# Google: *Who's in charge here?*

---

- At the start:
  - 7 teams - 2 products
  - Each Product run by external consultants
  - Googlers are the smartest folks around
- Our approach: Emphasize the “why” at every level
- Lessons learned: Sponsor/owner needs to command

# Chevron #2: SJVIT: *Bit by Bit*

---

At the start:

- Change Fatigue: Agile Teams (1 year ago) to Agile DevOps Teams (6 months ago)
- Prior: Part-time Agile coaching
- ...And now a(nother) new guy.

# Chevron #2: SJVIT – the Asks

---

- From the Sponsor:
  - No SAFe
  - No academics/theory → actionable experience from the trenches
  - Get the teams on a firm foundation – knowledge and practices
  - DevOps
- From Supervisors:
  - I want to be able to know what's going on
  - I want to be able to see improvement
  - No coachy-coach approach; no “Wild West”
- From Change Agents:
  - Educate us and include us so we can help you.

# Chevron #2: SJVIT: Approach

---

- Agreement to focus at the Team Level
- From the start: Sponsor/Supervisor/Captains: What does success look like?
- \* Adaptive training
  - No big-room, multiple-hour, 1-size-fits-all sessions
  - Training topics decided upon by/with Captains
  - Created 15+ training modules often tweaked for different teams
  - All trainings 1 hour or less
- Led the pivot to WFH

# Chevron #2: SJVIT: Why it worked

---

- Approach was not as a reboot – instead, assessed and focused accordingly
- Adaptive, Responsive, Right-sized training.
- Empirical learning (i. e. No DoR or DoD at first)
- No cookie-cutter, overly-general, or “fundamentalist” coaching
- Relentlessly emphasized the “WHY” (with a dash of “What’s in it for me”).
  - Teams – Sprint Flow, Sprint Execution
  - Product – Faster availability of smaller chunks of the right stuff.

# Chevron #2: SJVIT: Lessons Learned

---

- Experiential learning sticks
- Re-think Training approach
- Alignment (and recalibration) with leadership presages success
  - Long-term over Short-term improvement
  - Global over Local optimization
  - Patience/Balance.

# Chevron #2: SJVIT: Best Metric Ever...

---

- Since our IT folks have been “doing their agile stuff”:
  - I am getting asked more questions
  - I’m getting things closer to what I want
  - It works much better first time out of the box
  - AND, I’m getting it quicker.

# Space Force: FORGE: *Fit to purpose*

---



- Complex satellite data compilation and dissemination system
- Working with Acquisition teams
- Military, government, and consulting participants

# Space Force: FORGE

---

- The approach is heavily “Fit to Purpose”
- What elements of Scrum and, especially, SAFe do we need?
- How do we level out understanding and capabilities?
- Account for military at all levels cycling out every two years

# Path to Agility (P2A)

---

- The P2A Framework depicts the journey that a company goes through during an Agile Transformation. It can be applied on top of other Frameworks.
- It is the product of Agile Velocity <https://agilevelocity.com/>

## It provides:

- **Guidance For Your Agile Transformation**
- **An Outcome-Based Assessment**
- **The Ability To Measure Progress**
- **Tangible Transformation Next Steps**

# Path to Agility - Framework

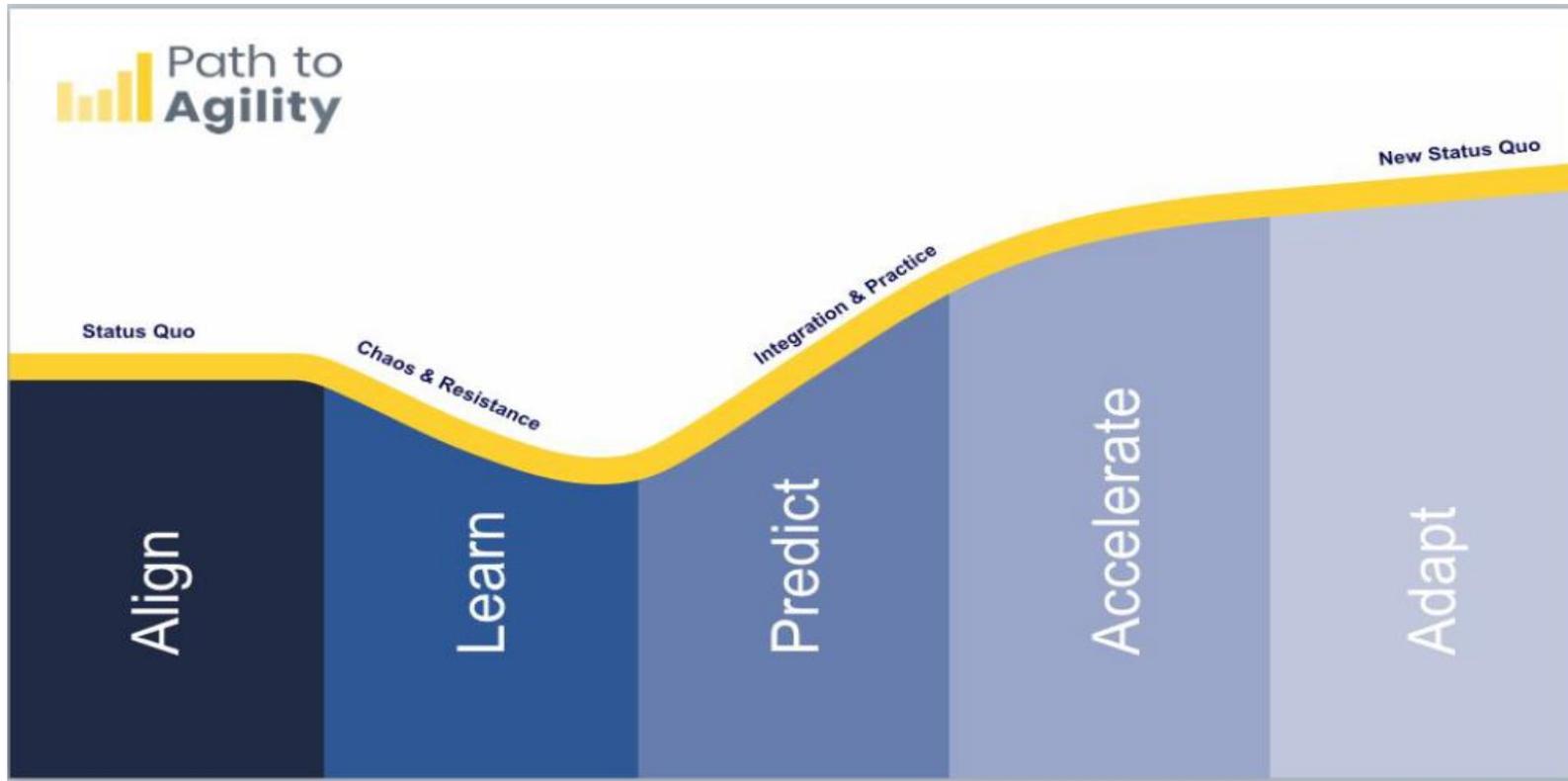
---

The P2A Framework is broken down into several dimensions:

- **5 Stages:** Align, Learn, Accelerate, Predict, and Adapt.
- **3 Levels:** Organization, System, and Team.
- **30 Outcomes:** Each outcome is made up of several capabilities. Each outcome is assigned to both a level and a stage.
- **Capabilities:** Several capabilities make up each outcome and will indicate whether or not the outcome has been achieved by the client.

# Path to Agility - Stages

---





# Path to Agility – Team/Learn: Team Ownership

---

Learn | Team  
**Team Ownership**

 Path to  
Agility

The team is self-organizing to collaboratively take ownership of their work and improving continuously to deliver value more effectively.

Path to Agility® 2.2.2 | [pathtoagility.com](http://pathtoagility.com)

## **Business Outcomes & Agile Capabilities**

Accomplishes:

- Predictability, Quality, Productivity, Continuous Improvement

Driven by:

- Backlog Refinement
- Daily Synchronization
- Delivery Team
- Iterative Planning
- Product Ownership
- Retrospect Regularly
- Team Coaching

# Path to Agility –Team Ownership: Retrospect Regularly

---

Learn | Team | Team Ownership

## Retrospect Regularly



Healthy teams pause periodically to self reflect and identify opportunities for improvement. A focus on improved quality, speed, and team health will yield long term benefits that outweigh the investment in time.

Path to Agility® 2.2.2 | [pathtoagility.com](http://pathtoagility.com)

### Acceptance Criteria

- Teams are clear on how their work ties into the larger whole
- Teams understand their impact on other teams
- Team level decisions take into account their impact on the overall Team of Teams efforts
- Teams come together at a regular cadence to coordinate the upcoming work
- The plan is visible to all teams
- Various events are scheduled to ensure ongoing coordination of the cross-team initiatives (e.g., Scrum of Scrums, Big Room • • • Planning, and Product Owner Sync)

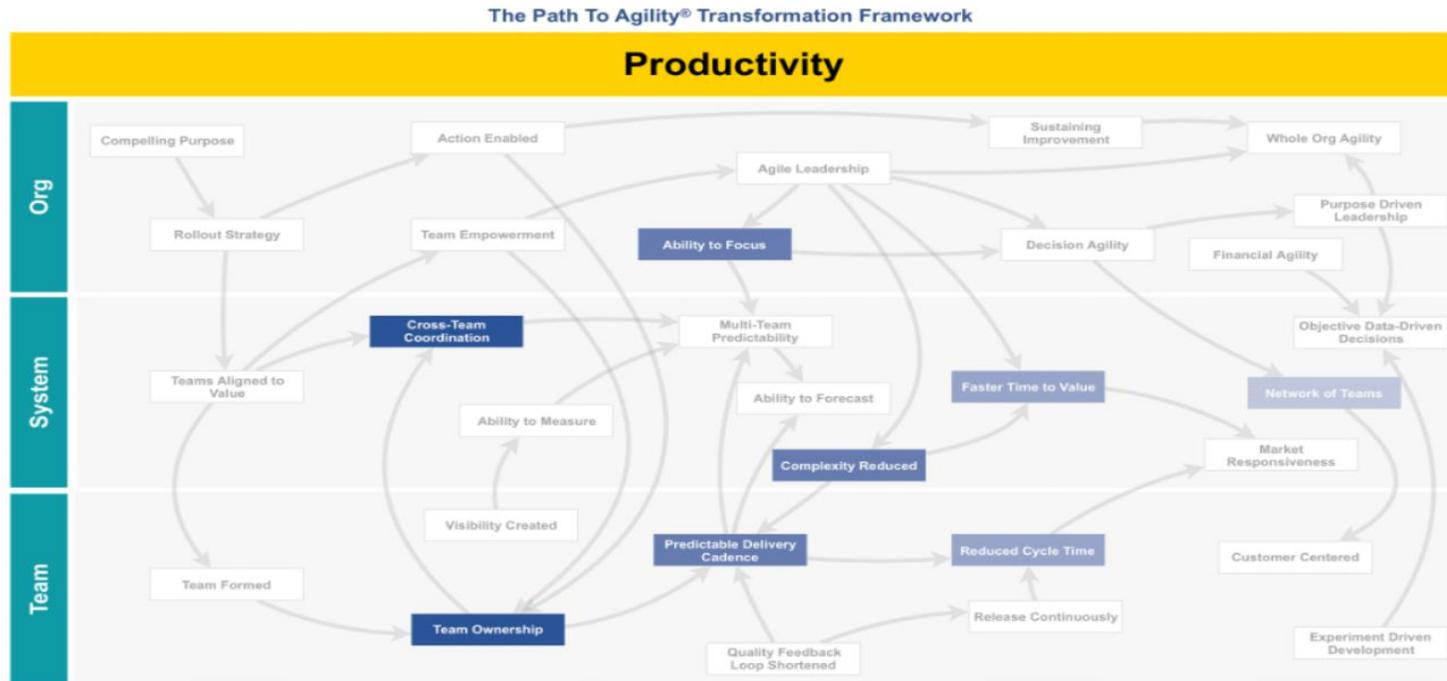
# Path to Agility – Business Outcomes

---



Path to Agility<sup>®</sup> 2.2.2 Framework: © 2017-2020 Agile Velocity, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

# Path to Agility – Business Outcomes



Path to Agility® 2.2.2 Framework: © 2017-2020 Agile Velocity, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

# Path to Agility – One way...

---

- Prioritize Business Outcomes
- Identify the Agile Outcomes that support the top Business Outcome(s)
- Check where you are in each Agile Outcome by assessing the appropriate Capabilities (and their acceptance criteria)
- Pick the Capabilities you'd like to focus on for improvement
- Periodically reassess and compare

## So – What does it all mean?

---

- Start by doing nothing
- Set Expectations → Agree on Expectations
- Pragmatic/Experiential journey (Pull > Push)
- Meet them where they're at (P2A?)

Finally ...

---

**What word would you use in place of "Transformation"?**

Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code 58 19 73 2

Thanks for your participation

---

**Ben Rodilitz**

[BRodilitz@Verizon.net](mailto:BRodilitz@Verizon.net)

**@BenRodilitz**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ben-rodilitz/>