Construx
Software Development Best Practices

The Journey to Organization-Wide Scrum

www.construx.com

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Overview

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!

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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 …

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More on My Perspective: A Brief History of Construx and Scrum

Background on SteveMcC and Construx Software

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- 2001 vs. 2011
- Client org's usually in the 100-1000 staff range, some significantly larger

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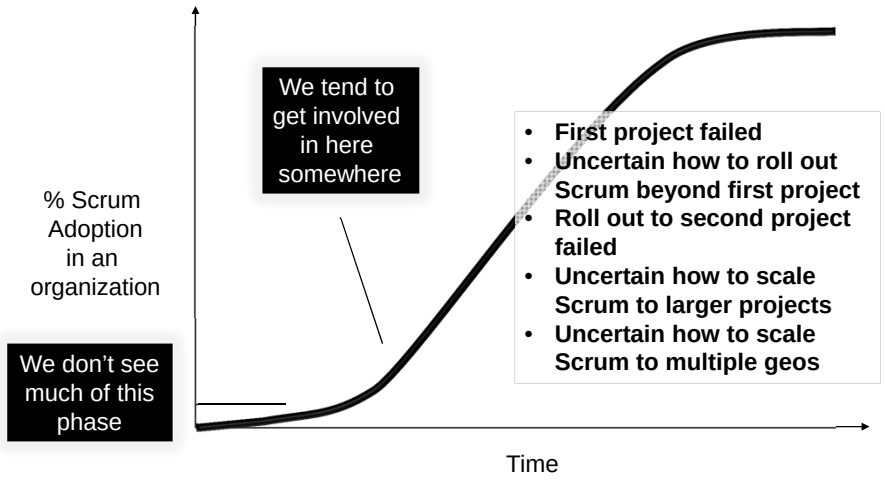
My Vantage Point on Scrum Adoption



- **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**

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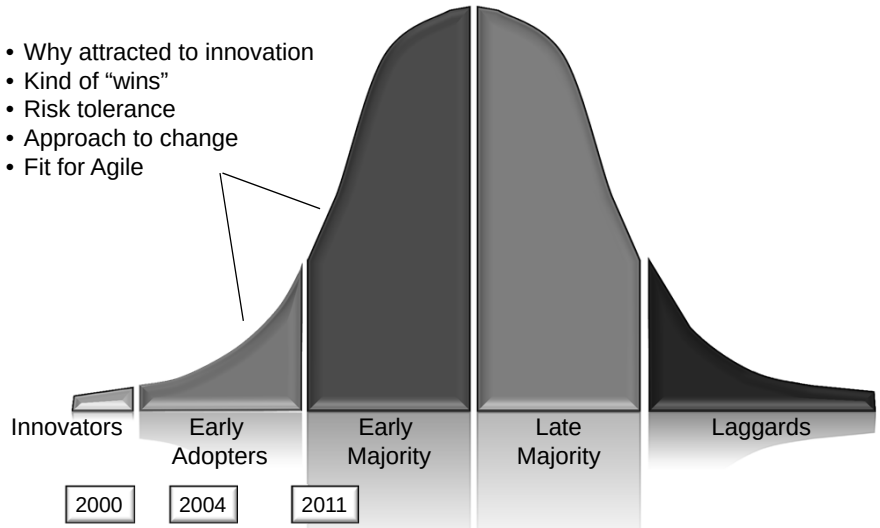
Innovation Adoption Sequence and Scrum

- Why attracted to innovation
- Kind of "wins"
- Risk tolerance
- Approach to change
- Fit for Agile



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Story #1
How Not to do Scrum
RETROSPECTIVE

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.

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Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal

Businesses would rather be wrong than vague.

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Learning #1: Agile is a Strategy, Not a Goal

- Flexibility vs. Predictability
  - Don't <u>assume</u> 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

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Learning #2: Don’t Use Scrum to Avoid Accountability

Businesses Live or Die on the Basis of Their Commitments.

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Learning #2: Don’t Use Scrum to Avoid Accountability

If you are pursuing agility at the expense of making or meeting commitments, you are probably headed toward failure.

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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

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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.

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Story #2

Initial Success Followed by Second Project Failure

Initial Success Followed by Second Project Failure

- First Team
- Attempt to recruit follow-on teams

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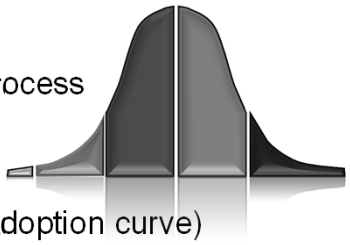
Retrospective

- 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)



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Story #3
Initial Success Followed by … Nothing

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Initial Success Followed by … Nothing

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

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Retrospective

- Scrum != Agile
- Marine Corps doctrine and Scrum as a minimal process

MARINE CORPS

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Story #4
An Early $50 Million Agile Failure

An Early $50 Million Agile Failure

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

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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

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

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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?

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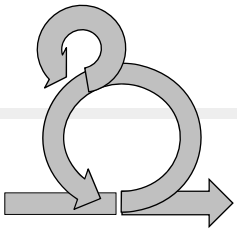
Retrospective



- "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, …

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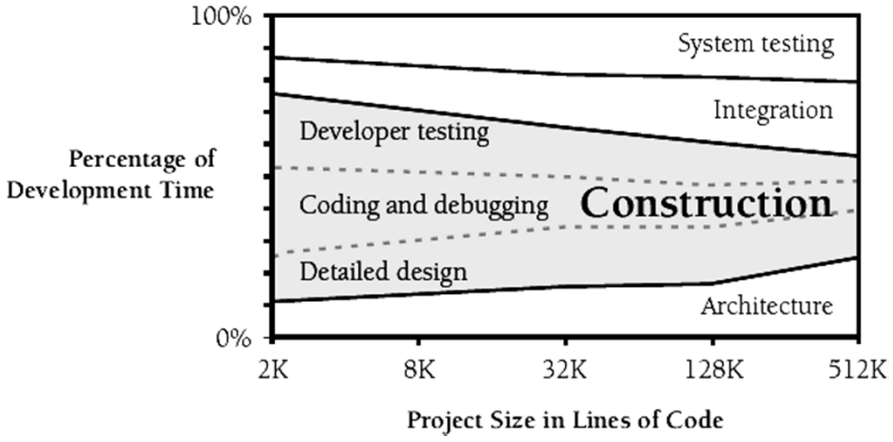
Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 1



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Larger Projects Need Different Work than Small Projects, Part 2

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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.

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Construx Software is committed to helping individuals and organizations improve their software development practices. For information about our training and consulting services, contact

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