How’s That Working for You?

Stories about Inspecting and Adapting an Agile Process

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My World

- Safety critical
- Regulated
- Product development
  - Software part of a larger system
- Process matters, but not as heavy as some
- Need for planning
- Strong culture
- Our application of Agile is a mixture of Scrum and XP, but that’s mostly name-dropping
  - Since 2002-ish, still evolving
How’s that thing you’re doing now working for you?

- Is there something motivating you to change?
  - What is bugging you now?
  - Is the house burning? Or just a little beat up?
- What are your barriers to change?
  - Things are working fine as they are?
  - We’ve tried changes before that haven’t worked?
And what are we going to do about that?

- Think differently
  - Or maybe not so different after all
- How big of a change is it?
  - Evolution, or revolution
- Epiphanies
Yeah, right! <or>
Here’s a list of why this won’t work

› A partial list
  ? It’s a fad
  ? It’s an excuse to sell books and consulting services
  ? It’s for hackers, not for us professionals
  ? You’re supposed to throw out process, and we need our process cuz ...
  ? FDA will never go for it, <insert your evil empire> will never go for it
  ? Agile says you don’t need a plan, you’re done when you’re done
  ? We can’t afford pairing
  ? It’s too touchy-feelie

› And furthermore
  ? “If we do this <insert dumb thing that I will hate>, then it will be dumb and I’m going to hate it.”
The Agile Manifesto

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- **Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools
- **Working software** over comprehensive documentation
- **Customer collaboration** over contract negotiation
- **Responding to change** over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

Manifesto for Agile Software Development, [www.agilemanifesto.org](http://www.agilemanifesto.org)
And what are WE going to do about that?

- Who is “We”?
  - Top down
  - Bottom up
  - Middle out
And what are WE going to do about that?

- Who is “We”?
  - Top down
  - Bottom up
  - Middle out
“Let’s get Mikey! He won’t eat it, he hates everything.”

- Dealing with skeptics and naysayers
  - Listen, but not too much
  - Avoid, but not too much
  - Convince, but not too much
  - Accommodate, but not too much
- Some people just won’t adjust to Agile
  - You’ll have to find something else for them to do
- Put more energy into trail blazing and grooming
  - The skeptics will have an easier time traveling the path
“The Code is not so much rules, but more what you’d call guidelines. Arrrghhhh”

- New learners want clear rules, can’t deal with vague concepts and principles
- Experts work with visions and principles, and are inhibited by stifling rules
- And those can’t always communicate

- “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change the way you think about it.”
What is Agile? (aka, What are we talking about?)

- Principles
  - Why is it the way it is?
  - Guidance
- Benefits
  - Why are we doing this?
  - What do we hope to gain?
- Practices
  - How does it work?
  - What do we do?
Is this a good thing?
Prove it!

- Objective Evidence
  - What are you using now?

- Subjective Opinions
  - If everyone is telling you you’re drunk, then you’re probably drunk (That’s too negative)
  - If all of your smart people are telling you it’s a good thing, what more proof do you need?
Failing to succeed: Where Agile won’t work

- Insufficient understanding of the practices and the principles behind them
- Misalignment with some Principles
  - Visibility, empowerment, rapid iteration, adaptive planning
- Disbelief in the value
- Failure to apply the Inspect and Adapt principle
  - Unwilling to experiment with something new
  - Making bad choices, and not recognizing or doing something about it
Succeeding at failing  <or>  Enabling “Inspect & Adapt”

- Tolerance of failure, if learning occurs
- Setting expectations
- Willingness to give things a try
  - Without a guarantee of success
  - With an escape clause
One final story: What works, and what doesn’t

- It depends
- Anything can work, any barrier can be removed
- Except one
- You must want to inspect and adapt. If you don’t, Agile will not work.