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SAN DIEGO · 2023

What to Expect in an Agile Transformation

Your Guides:

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Ask Why

- The first question before you start your Agile journey is to ask why we're making this change

Common Reasons Given for Agile Transformations

Good Reasons to go Agile

- We hope to increase employee morale and engagement

- We need to be more responsive to sudden changes in the market

- What we are doing now is not working

- We believe in the Agile values and principles

Bad Reasons to go Agile

- I heard Agile can help teams deliver faster

- Our competitors are doing it

- We need to cut costs, going Agile will help us reduce headcount

- We can change direction and drop new work in at no cost because we'll be adaptable

- Agile is only for development teams, we'll operate the rest of the organization the same way we always have

- Agile will solve all our problems
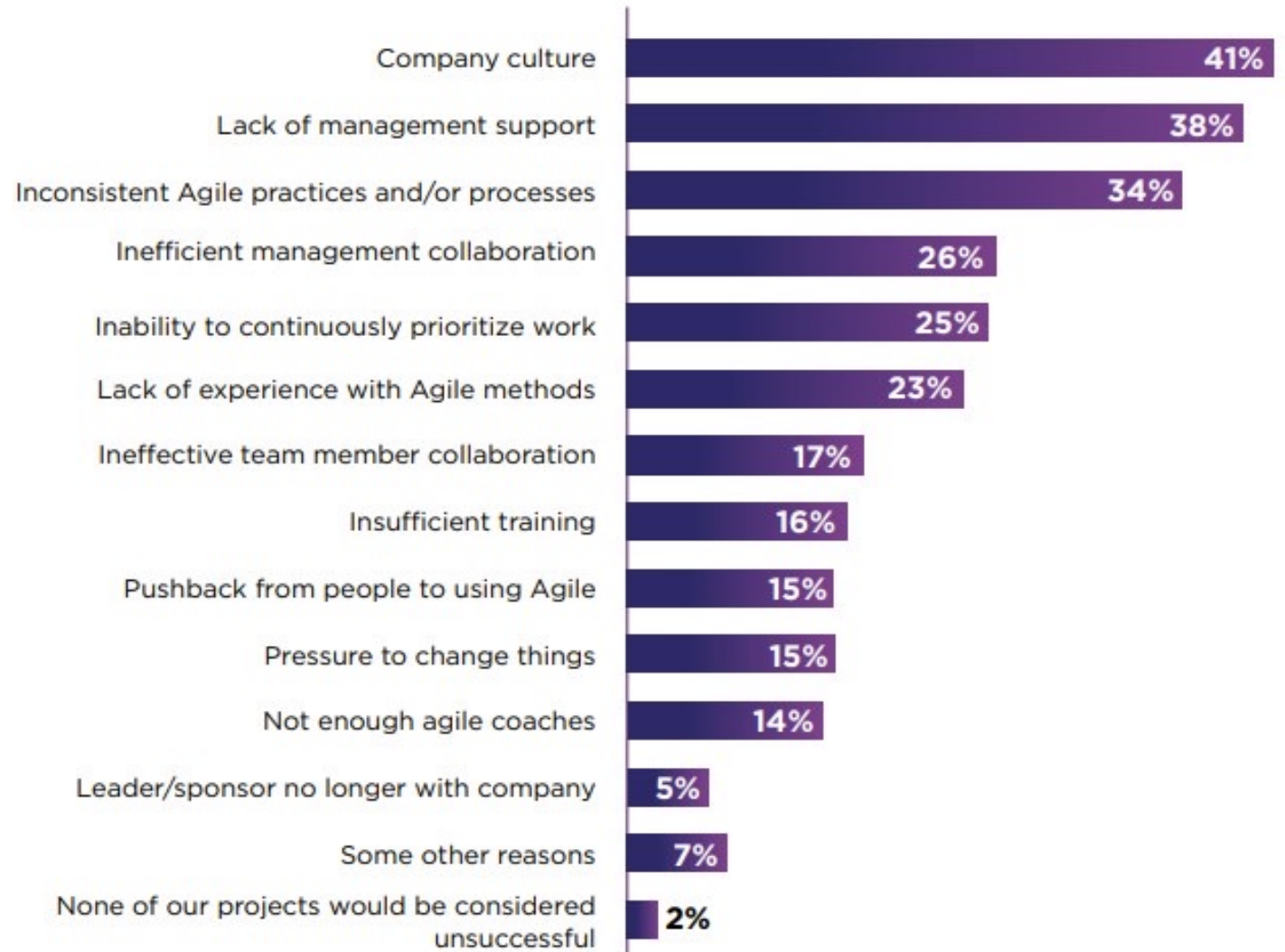
Have a Clear Purpose

Organizations that do not have a clear purpose or fail to tie that purpose to business outcomes will likely fail or only have limited success.

Agile is a Disruption of the Status Quo

- Agile is more than a set of ceremonies and doing your work in Sprints. It is a mindset change for the organization and it will be disruptive to the way you're operating now.

Common Transformation Challenges

Company culture — 41%
Lack of management support — 38%
Inconsistent Agile practices and/or processes — 34%
Inefficient management collaboration — 26%
Inability to continuously prioritize work — 25%
Lack of experience with Agile methods — 23%
Ineffective team member collaboration — 17%
Insufficient training — 16%
Pushback from people to using Agile — 15%
Pressure to change things — 15%
Not enough agile coaches — 14%
Leader/sponsor no longer with company — 5%
Some other reasons — 7%
None of our projects would be considered unsuccessful — 2%

From the 16th State of Agile Report (2022)

Find an Experienced Leader for the Transformation

- Many companies start an Agile transformation with the people they have. Often this runs aground quickly because they do not have anyone who has been through or led a transformation previously. Either hiring an experienced Enterprise Agile Coach or contracting one is key to knowing how to proceed and be successful.

There Will be People who are Excited to Change

Parts of your company will be excited to make the transformation. They understand the value and benefits that Agile brings and they are eager to get started. They may not know the amount of effort it takes to make it successful however…

If a large enough population of your company is eager to get started you may have to rein them in and remind them that we need to go slowly and make adjustments.

There Will Also be People who are Anxious

Change is scary and Agile is a huge change. People will be concerned they will lose their jobs, or power/status/control.
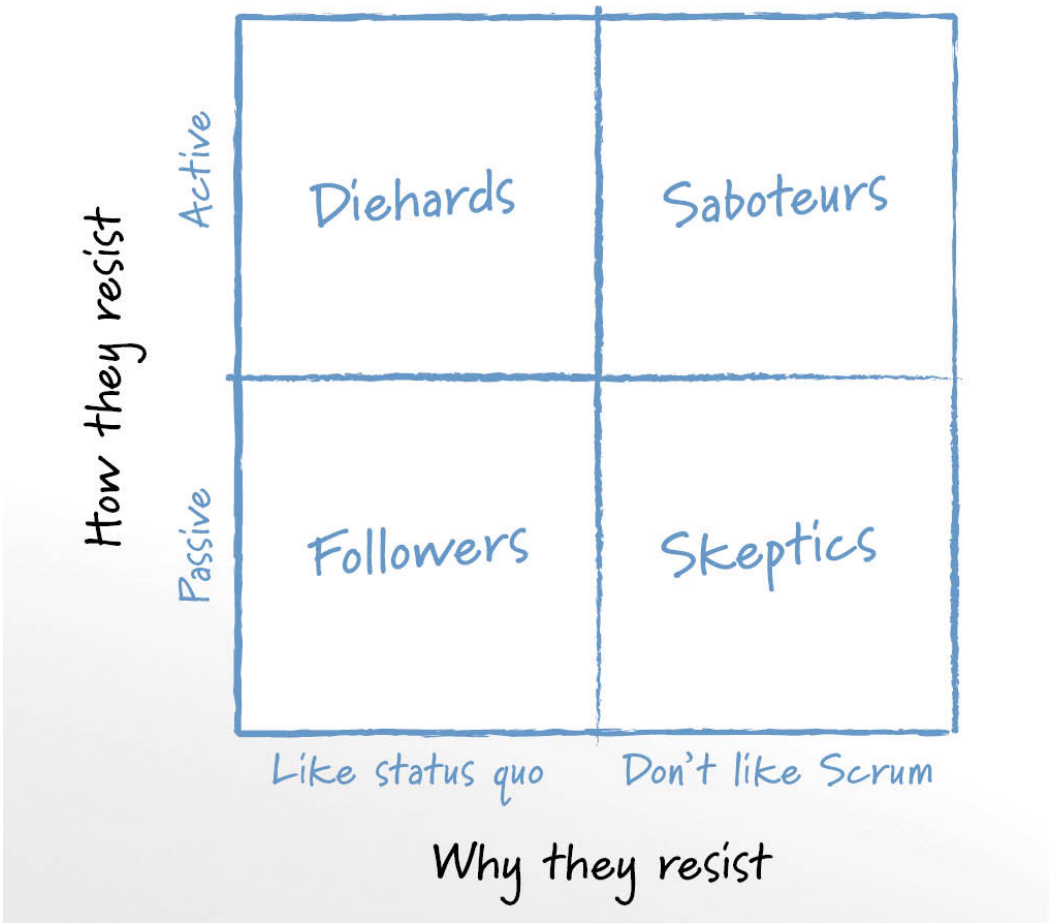
Communication is Key

Before anything else, build a communication plan. Communicate early and often. Repeat the goals of the change and that the people will be safe.

Expect and Plan for Resistance

Some people will not be happy about the change. Expect and plan for this to happen.

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Types of Resistance

Be Selective When Starting the Transformation

The problem is: How do you find the ones that get it

Create Psychological Safety

- People need to feel safe to express concerns. Create forums where people can talk about concerns and have them addressed. Care will need to be taken to keep the meetings from being hijacked by people against the change. Encourage sharing ideas and talking through concerns.

Agile Without Trust is Just Waterfall Relabeled

Training and Coaching

- In order to make your transformation successful, you need both coaching <u>and</u> training. If you only train and provide no coaching afterwards, the teams will lose their way. If you provide only coaching, the teams will not have the foundations they need to understand what is being asked of them.

Once you Start the Transformation

- Continue to communicate often, repeating information until it takes hold

- Leadership commitment and engagement is key

- Create a common lexicon of terms so everyone speaks the same language

- Expect that people will evaluate themselves as farther along than they really are (doing Agile v. being Agile)

- Getting decentralized decision making can be hard
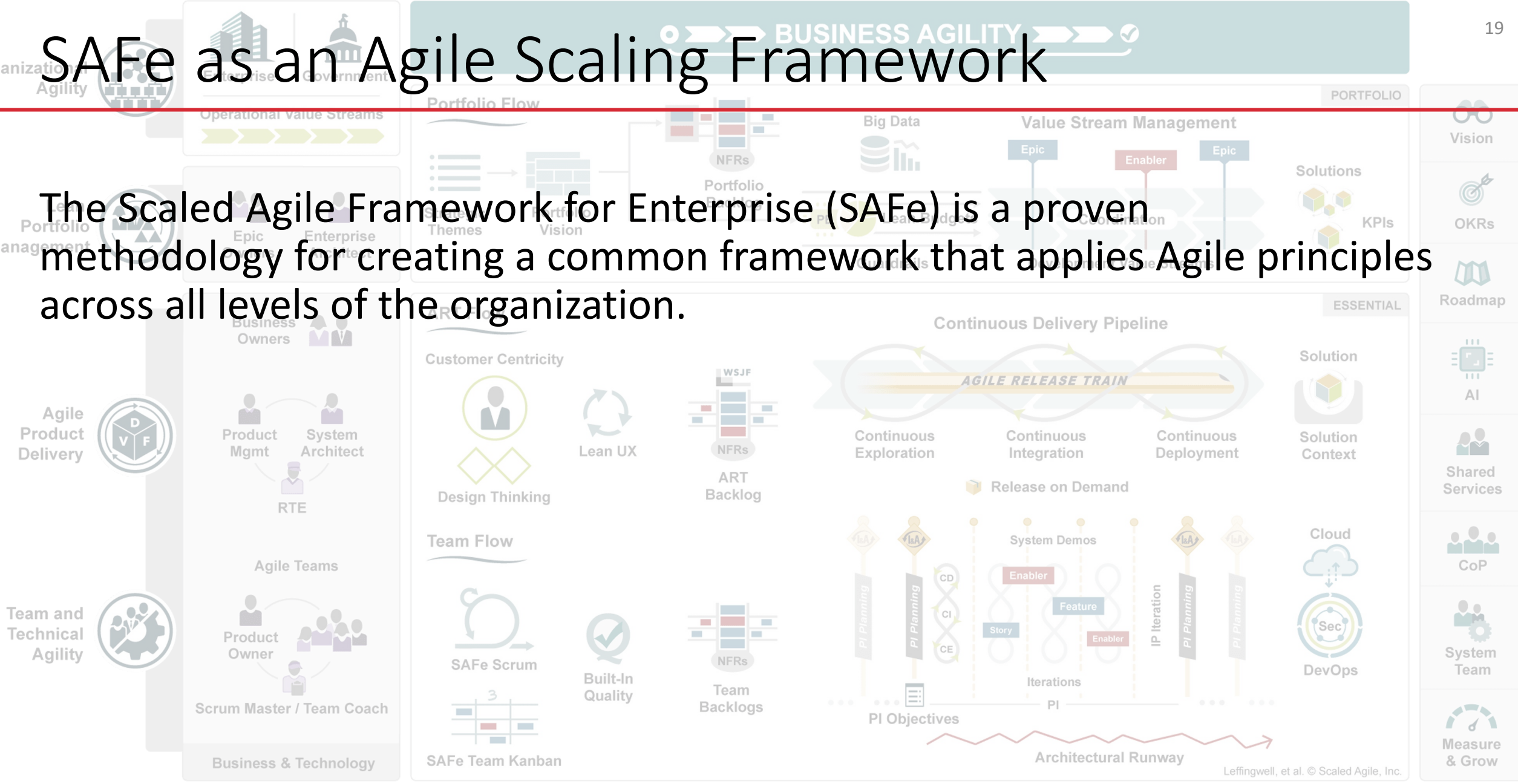
Agile is not Only for Teams

- The common assumption is "Agile is for teams, the rest of the organization does not need to change". To really be successful, you will need an Agile scaling framework to help you apply Agile principles across all levels
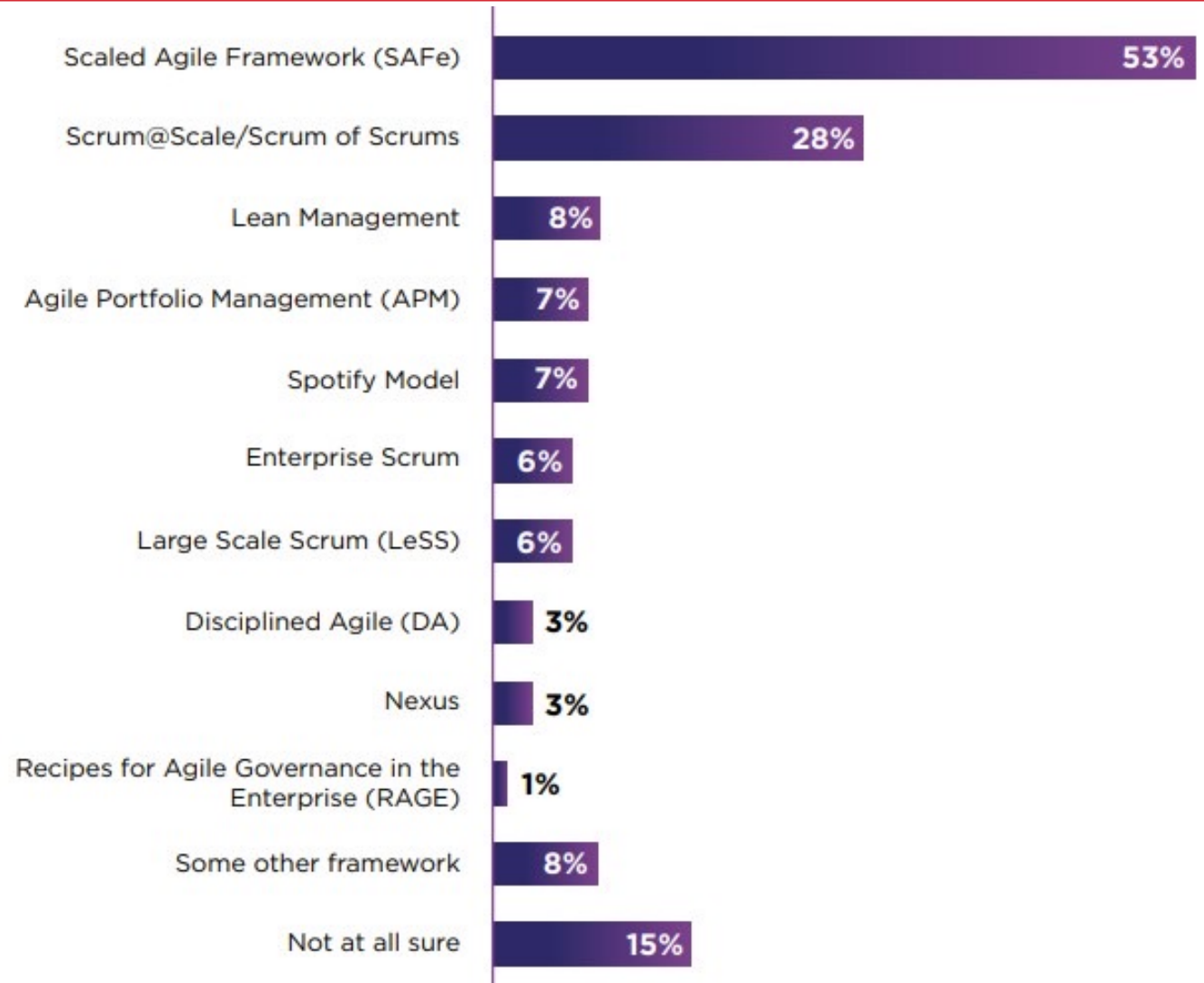
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SAFe as an Agile Scaling Framework

The Scaled Agile Framework for Enterprise (SAFe) is a proven methodology for creating a common framework that applies Agile principles across all levels of the organization.


Leffingwell, et al. © Scaled Agile, Inc.

Comparison of Companies Using Scaling Frameworks

Framework	Percentage
Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)	53%
Scrum@Scale/Scrum of Scrums	28%
Lean Management	8%
Agile Portfolio Management (APM)	7%
Spotify Model	7%
Enterprise Scrum	6%
Large Scale Scrum (LeSS)	6%
Disciplined Agile (DA)	3%
Nexus	3%
Recipes for Agile Governance in the Enterprise (RAGE)	1%
Some other framework	8%
Not at all sure	15%

From the 16th State of Agile Report (2022)

The SAFe Implementation Roadmap

SAFe® Implementation Roadmap
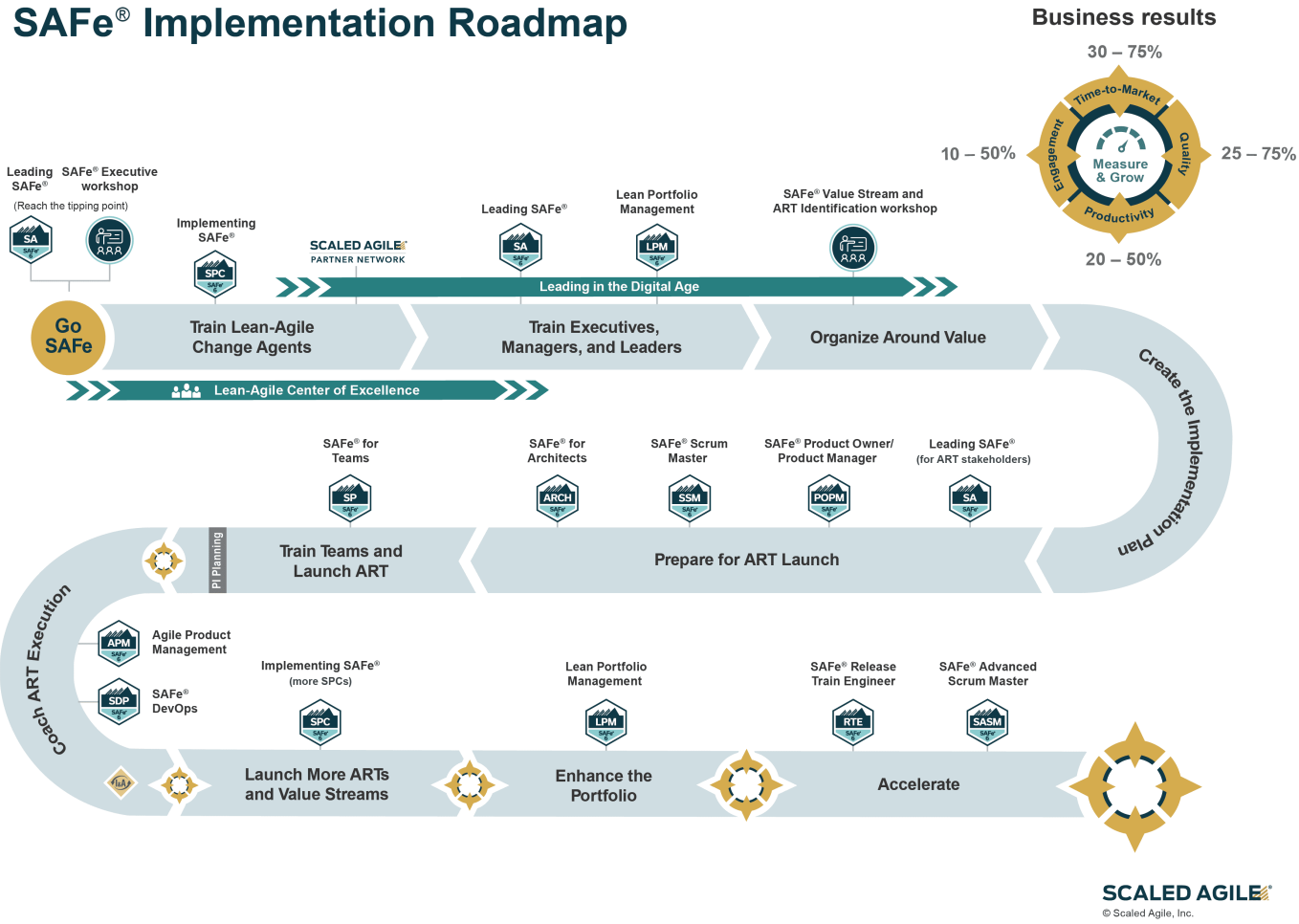
Questions?

Surveys

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Your feedback is extremely important for future events.

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