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# Mindset and Behaviors Required of Agile Leaders

**Your Guides:**

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# Abstract

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Most **leaders** in this current climate understand the need for more agility, but don't always understand the changes necessary for this. New ways of working require a new mindset and new behaviors. In this session, you'll learn about some of the critical mindset and behavioral shifts that are important for leaders. Additionally, you'll learn what types of conversations need to take place with various stakeholders to put your teams on the path to effective agility.

# Agenda

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- Introduction
- Part I: A brief introduction to Agile processes and benefits
- Part II: Leadership qualities that create positive outcomes
- Part III: Agile metrics for leaders
- Part IV: Call to action
- Q & A

Assumption: Participants have a general understanding of Agile, including terminology and ceremonies

# Introductions

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- Take 5 Minutes
- Turn to a Person Near You
- Introduce Yourself
- Business Cards

# Leaders in the room?

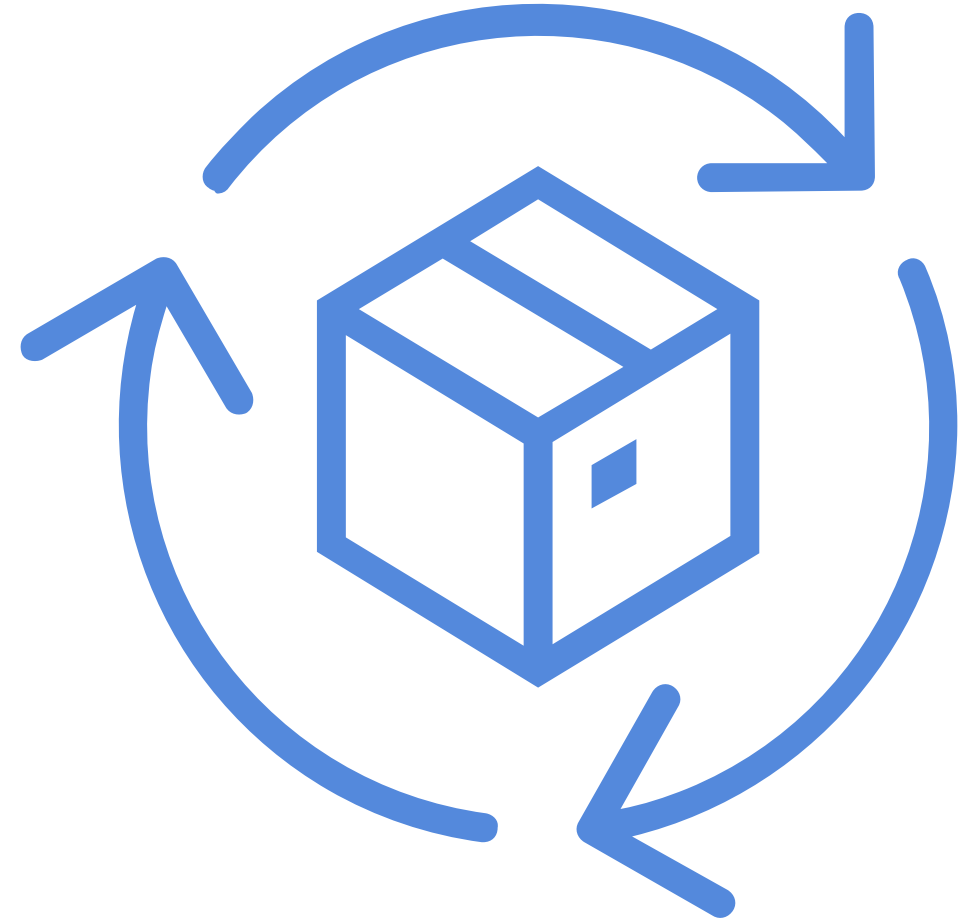


# Part I: A Brief Introduction to Agile Processes and Benefits



# What is Agile?

- A framework for managing work that measures success as **value achieved** (an outcome) rather than **work/tasks completed** (an output).
- **A lightweight, iterative project management framework** for helping teams successfully execute and deliver the highest business value in the shortest time.
- Particularly well suited to environments **where requirements are subject to change and/or where requirements are not fully understood**.



# The Philosophy Behind Agile



**YOU CAN'T PREDICT OR PLAN WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY** WHAT YOU WILL DELIVER, WHEN YOU WILL DELIVER IT, AND WHAT THE COST WILL BE.



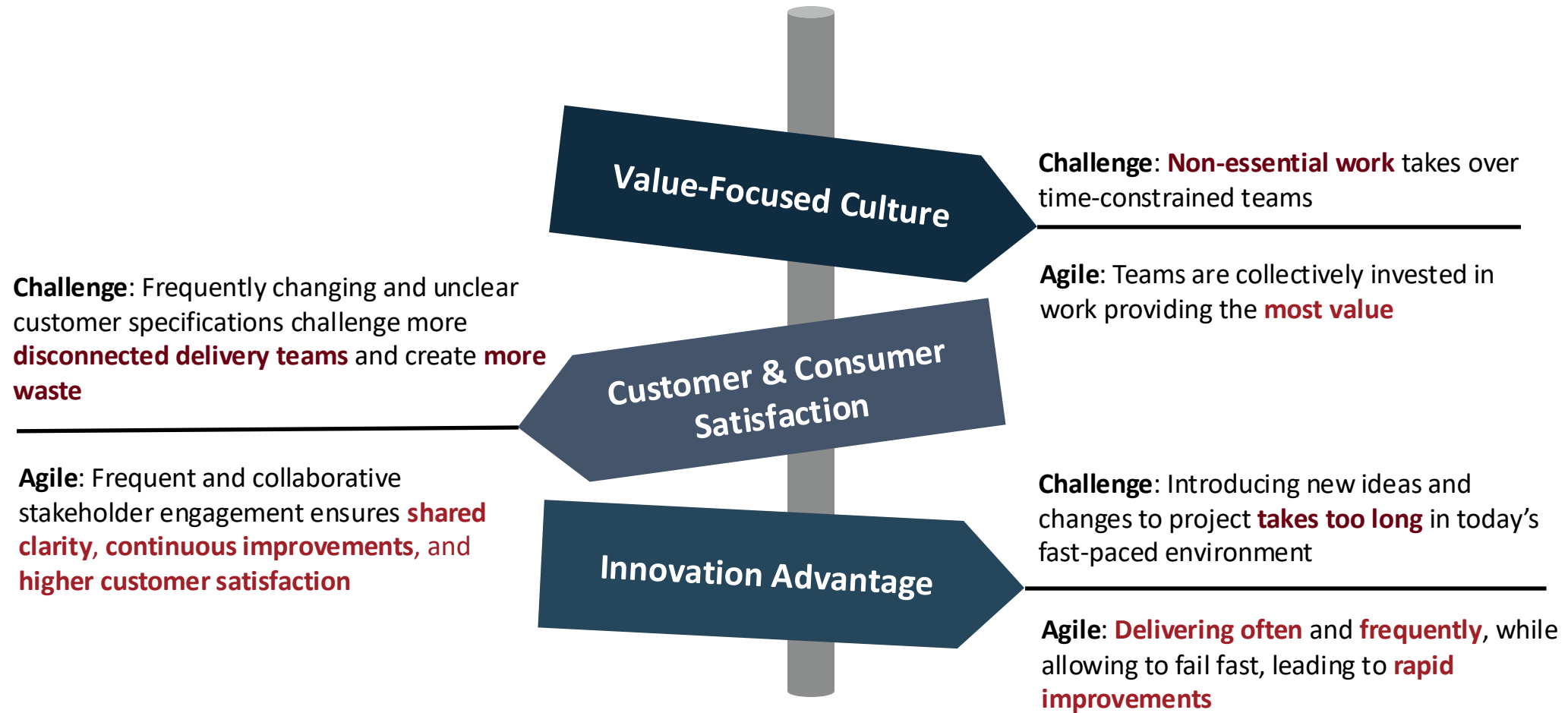
**START WITH INITIAL PLANS** SURROUNDING ESTIMATES, DATES & SCOPE, **BUT THEN FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS REVISIONS** OF THESE CONSTRAINTS AS YOU PROCEED.



**THE GOAL IS TO DELIVER THE BEST POSSIBLE SOFTWARE GIVEN THE CONSTRAINTS**, BUT ANY COOKBOOK APPROACH WON'T IMPROVE WHAT "BEST" IS.

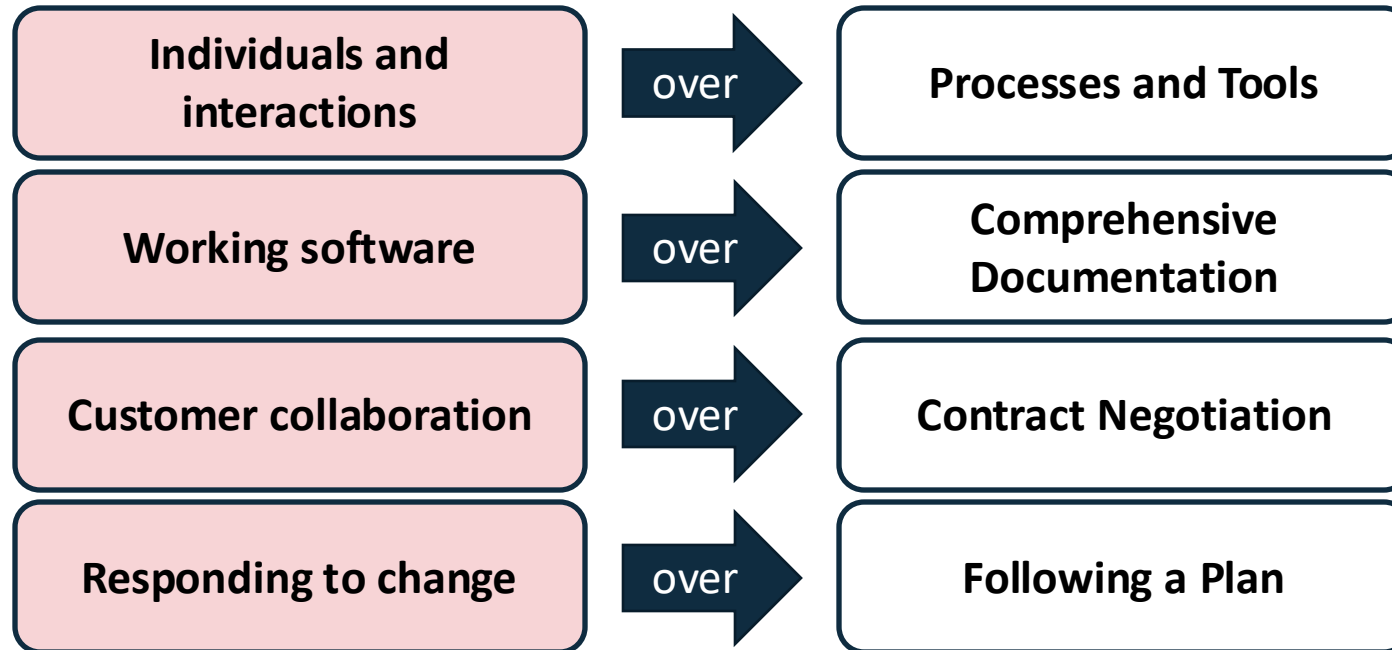


# Why Agile?



# The Agile Manifesto (2001)

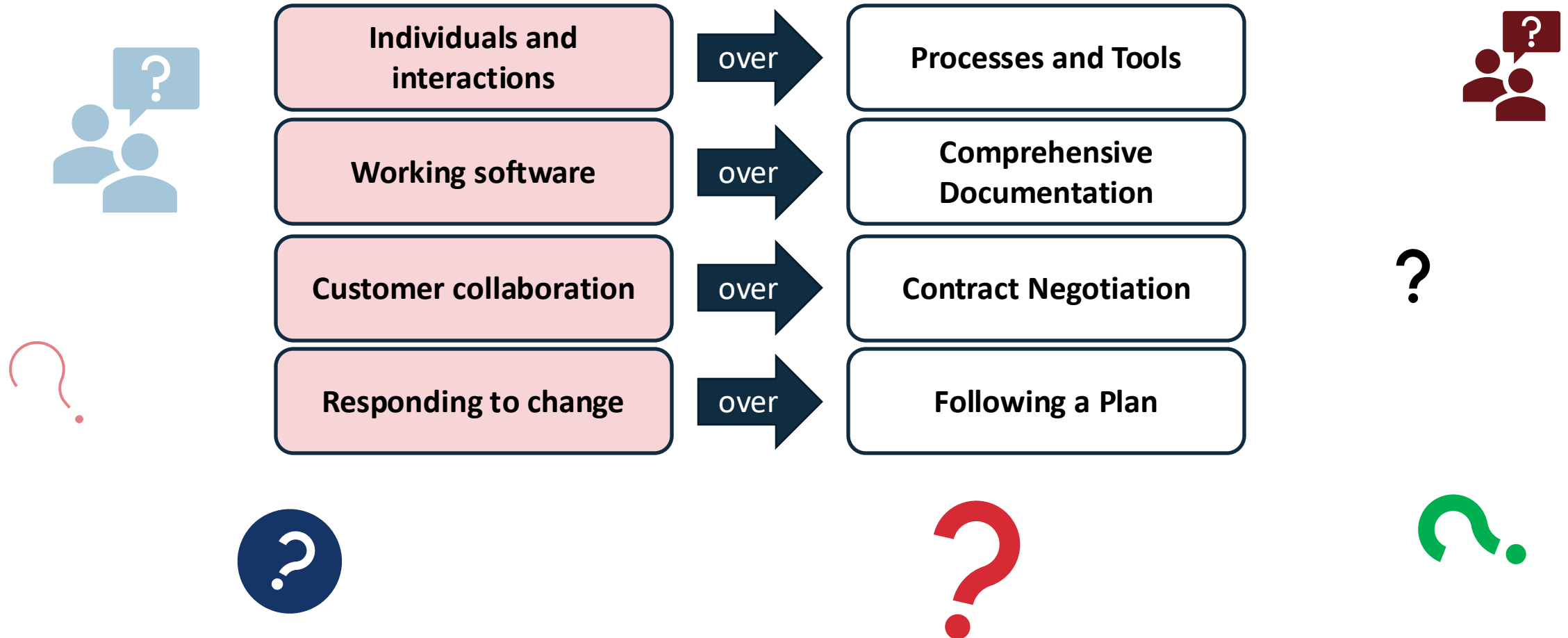
The Manifesto does NOT advocate abandoning the practices on the right



While there is value in the items on the RIGHT,  
We value the items on the LEFT more.

# Leaders support the Agile Manifesto by their actions

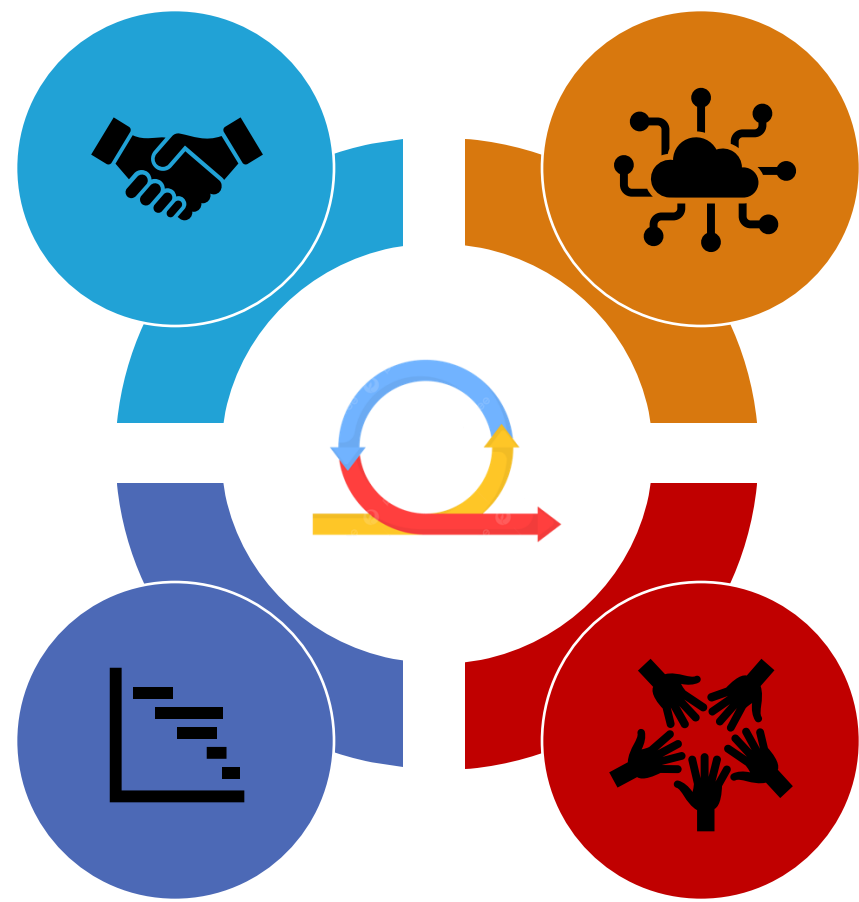
Class Question: What processes or Ways of Working (WoW) do you think leaders can introduce to support the Agile Manifesto? Why?



# How leaders can support the Agile manifesto

## Individuals and interactions OVER processes and tools

- Let go of micro-managing every aspect of delivery
- Encourage teams to solve their own problems



## Working Software OVER comprehensive documentation

- Ensure documentation is included in every sprint
- Embrace and allow experimentation to flesh out the best outcome

## Responding to change OVER following a plan

- Embrace fast failure
- Ask for updates in terms of outcomes, not outputs (RAG, % Complete, etc.)

## Customer collaboration OVER contract negotiation

- Embrace and allow experimentation to flesh out the best outcome
- Allow time for the delivery team to talk to customers/users

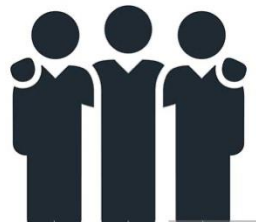


# General Agile Roles & Responsibilities



Leaders

- Define, align, and communicate the organization's 'North Star' (strategy and vision)
- Create a Continuous Learning culture
- Embrace and facilitate a Growth Mindset and Systems Thinking
- Participate in strategic Scrum ceremonies

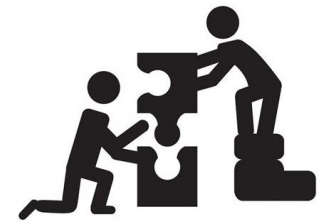


Stakeholders/  
Business



Product  
Owner

- Defines Intent to the Product Owner (PO)
- PO converts 'Intent' into major workstreams (Epics and Features)
- Writes tactical User Stories
- PO prioritizes work



Delivery  
Teams

- Derives activities from User Stories to build value
- Delivery Teams are self-managed and *they* define what they commit to
- Through structured ceremonies, team continuously improves delivery efficiency

Teams are created to facilitate collaboration and sharing of information through widely-established, repeatable and regular ceremonies

# General Agile principles (defined with the Manifesto)

1. **Customer satisfaction through early and continuous software delivery** – Customers are happier when they receive working software at regular intervals, rather than waiting extended periods of time between releases.
2. **Accommodate changing requirements throughout the development process** – The ability to avoid delays when a requirement or feature request changes.
3. **Frequent delivery of working software** – Scrum accommodates this principle since the team operates in software Sprints or Sprints that ensure regular delivery of working software.
4. **Collaboration between the business stakeholders and developers throughout the project** – Better decisions are made when the business and technical team are aligned.
5. **Support, trust, and motivate the people involved** – Motivated teams are more likely to deliver their best work than unhappy teams.
6. **Enable face-to-face interactions** – Communication is more successful when development teams are co-located.
7. **Working software is the primary measure of progress** – Delivering functional software to the customer is the ultimate factor that measures progress.
8. **Agile processes to support a consistent development pace** – Teams establish a repeatable and maintainable speed at which they can deliver working software, and they repeat it with each release.
9. **Attention to technical detail and design enhances agility** – The right skills and good design ensures the team can maintain the pace, constantly improve the product, and sustain change.
10. **Simplicity** – Develop just enough to get the job done for right now.
11. **Self-organizing teams encourage great architectures, requirements, and designs** – Skilled and motivated team members who have decision-making power, take ownership, communicate regularly with other team members, and share ideas that deliver quality products.
12. **Regular reflections on how to become more effective** – Self-improvement, process improvement, advancing skills, and techniques help team members work more efficiently.

# Agile Practices Have Many Benefits

- A. Facilitates continuous planning and improvement
- B. Empowers team members to perform at their highest levels
- C. Removes silos and enforces collaboration across functional teams
- D. Puts decision making (priority, estimates, etc.) where the information resides (with the teams)
- E. Ensures the organization is achieving goals by developing customer value rather than activity outputs
- F. Creates traceability between strategic imperatives and the work
- G. Ensures you are responding to customer needs rather than developing products in a vacuum
- H. Forces your organization to focus on deliverable products rather than projects by helping to transform the organizational structure to support a product-centric mentality
- I. Helps align the organization around the corporate priorities and strategy
- J. Creates transparency and accountability from bottom-to-top
- K. Helps align initiatives to the strategy
- L. Is a natural way of maturing the organization to where you want to be

# As a leader of an Agile organization.... What's in it for me?

- Allows your organization to flexibly respond to changing customer needs
- Creates a bi-directional culture of accountability and commitment
- Changes the 'discussion' from outputs to outcomes
- Agile creates a culture of collaboration and empowerment by breaking down functional silos – which reduces escalations
- Enables you to prioritize based upon value provided to customers



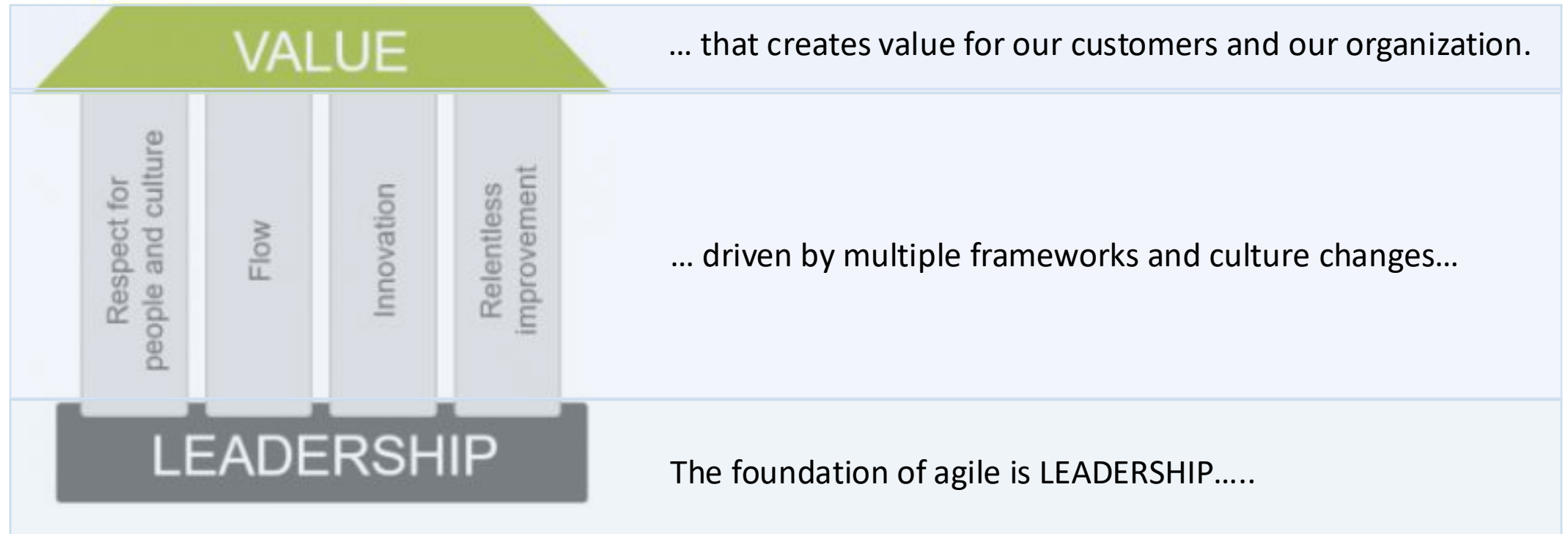


# Part II: Leadership Qualities that Create Positive Outcomes



# Leadership is foundational to Agile success

Agile frameworks are very mature with multiple components: a framework and a cultural shift from bottom to top



# To facilitate an Agile environment, leaders should...

**Move away from...**

**Move toward...**

Coordinating individual contributions



Whole team self-managing and collaborating

Acting as individual subject matter expert (I shaped)



Being a broad team or multi-disciplinary skill set (T shaped)

Driving toward specific outcomes



Being invested in the team's overall performance

Knowing the answer



The team finding their own way and collaborating

**Move away from...**

**Move toward...**

Waiting or directing



Guiding and self-managing

Talking about deadlines and technical options



Focusing on business value delivery

Driving the 'right' individual decisions



Doing the 'right' thing for the business – right now

Escalating and waiting on management to fix problems



The team is actively engaged in solving the problem themselves

Source: Lyssa Adkins, Coaching Agile Teams

# Leaders change the way Agile delivery is done...

Move away from...

Fixed mindset



Move toward...

Growth mindset

Centralized decision-making



De-centralized decision-making

Manage delivery and people utilization



Inspire and build a culture of trust & continuous learning

Focus on "How" or "What"



Focus on "Why"

Move away from...

Being transactional (meeting objectives and delegating tasks)



Move toward...

Being transformational (developing a vision and a way forward)

Being work-focused (get things done, task management)



Being people-focused (care about them, help them succeed)

Managing subordinates (lead through authority and task mgmt.)



Managing followers (Lead through inspiring and circles of influence; involve and motivate)

"Do things right" (follow the rules and maintain status quo)



"Do the right things" (shape the culture and act with integrity)

Source: Lyssa Adkins, Coaching Agile Teams

# Leadership mindset shift is required to succeed



# Agile leaders converse about intent, not specifics



ACTIVITY

10 mins

# Part III: Agile Metrics for Leaders

# Which Agile metrics/reports are important for leaders

Class Question: What metrics or reports do you think top leadership wishes to see? Why?





# Agile metrics/reports for **teams** and **leaders**

## Teams

1. Velocity
2. Cycle time
3. Lead time
4. Cumulative flow diagram
5. Epic and release burn down

## Leaders

1. Customer satisfaction score
2. Net promoter score
3. Delivery speed
4. Planned-to-done ratio
5. Team happiness
6. Team turnover
7. Value delivery
8. Exception reporting

# Part IV: Call to Action



# Leadership is not just for leaders!

Encourage leadership at all levels by instilling these principles into the teams and supporting them as they succeed and fail

**How to be an AGILE LEADER NO MATTER WHAT YOUR ROLE**

**1 MODELING LEARNING CULTURE**  
An Agile Leader is someone who is COMMITTED to LEARNING.

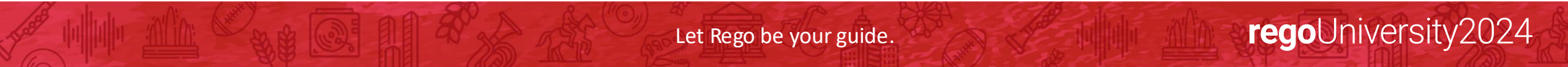
**2 PEOPLE OVER PROCESS**  
Celebrate OTHERS. Use the intelligence of ALL the people around you to fully COLLABORATE and unlock genius.

**3 RESPONDING TO CHANGE**  
Let go of the plan and LISTEN! Examine and respond to what's happening moment to moment.

**4 BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH UNCERTAINTY**  
EVOLVE your mindset to embrace the UNCERTAIN instead of letting it block your success.

**BE THE CHANGE**  
ANYONE can be an Evolutionary Leader. SHIFT how YOU show up and others will follow.

[adapted from scrumalliance.org](https://www.scrumalliance.org)



# Agile Mindset, Values & Principles

Agile isn't the "wild, wild west."

Agile frameworks are very mature and provide a roadmap on how to achieve success:

- Adopt a cultural shift from bottom to top and top to bottom
- Adopt a pre-built framework to define activities, ceremonies, and process outputs
- Adopt a leadership mindset focused on growth

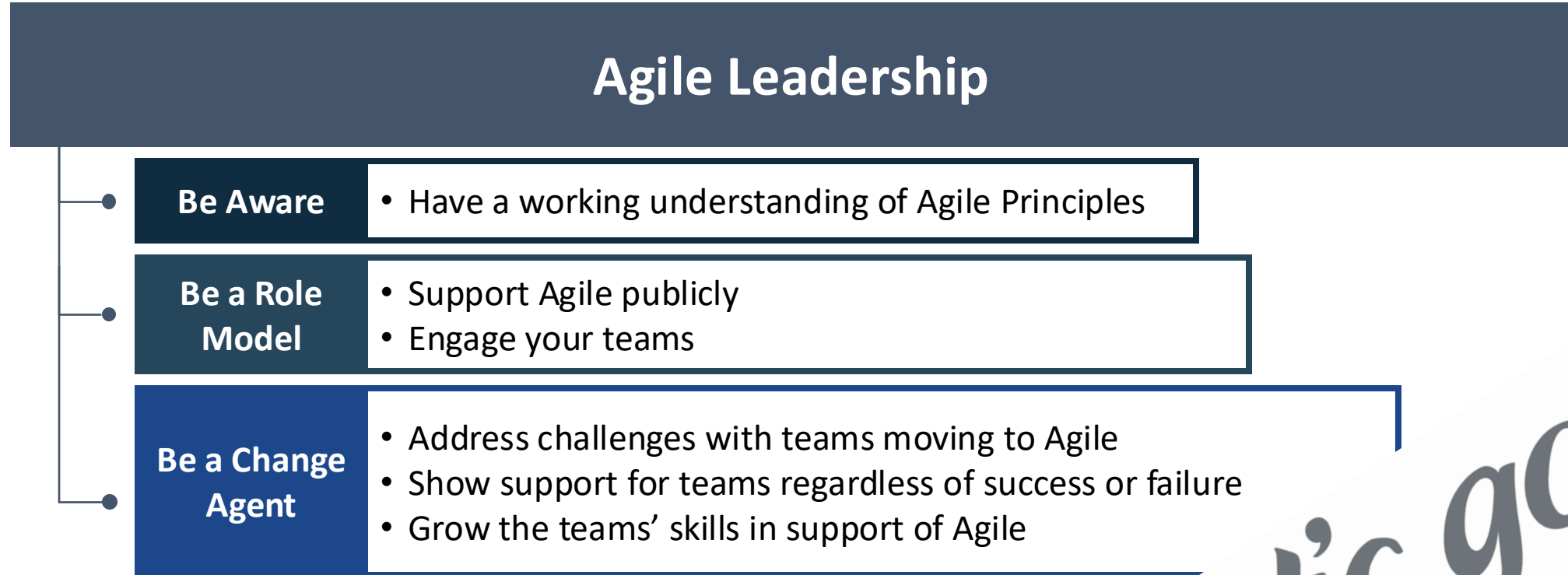


# What should leaders do next?

Class Question: Name some actions a leader could take next to bring Agile to the organization? Why?



# Shifting to Agile Requires Committed Leaders. Start here!



Let's go!

# Questions?





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- ✓ **Completion:** 12 units per certification track
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## Important Reminder:

To have your certification **credits tracked**, ensure you **complete the class surveys in the app** after each session. This step is critical for certification progress.

# Surveys

Please take a few moments to fill out the class survey.  
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