

Top 10 Dysfunctions With Scrum

Don't Shoot the Messenger

Mike Vincent

MVA Software

mikev@mvasoftware.com



Mike Vincent

- Architect, ALM and Agile Coach
- Over 24 years as software developer and architect
- Marketing director, construction project manager and structural engineer previously
- Worked with Visual Studio Team System since initial beta releases
- TFS implementation and training experience in corporate and public organizations
- Microsoft MVP - Visual Studio ALM
- Passion for community
 - INETA
 - IASA
- Professional Scrum Developer Trainer
- Professional Scrum Product Owner



Agile / Scrum Sessions

- VAS01: Scrum Fundamentals
 - Do It Right
- VAS02: Top 10 Dysfunctions with Scrum
 - Don't Shoot the Messenger
- VAS03: The Scrum Product Owner
 - Big Responsibilities
- VAS04: Herding Pigs
 - Managing Self Organizing Teams

What you will learn

Identify and deal with these dysfunctions

- Silver Bullet
- Scrum Master Issues
- Product Owner Issues
- Team Issues
- Working as a Team
- Challenging Stakeholders
- Definition of Done
- Sprint Backlog Issues
- Velocity Issues
- Retrospective Issues
- Technical Debt
- Transparency
- Executive Commitment
- Worrying About Problems
- Scrum Smells

Assumptions

- You want to practice Scrum the right way
 - You're getting started and want learn more
 - You are using it but not getting results
 - you want to learn how to identify problem areas
 - you want to learn how to correct problems you find
- You want to improve ...
 - Get your whole organization on board with Scrum
 - Make your ALM process better
 - And keep improving
- You are here to learn
 - This is not a debate

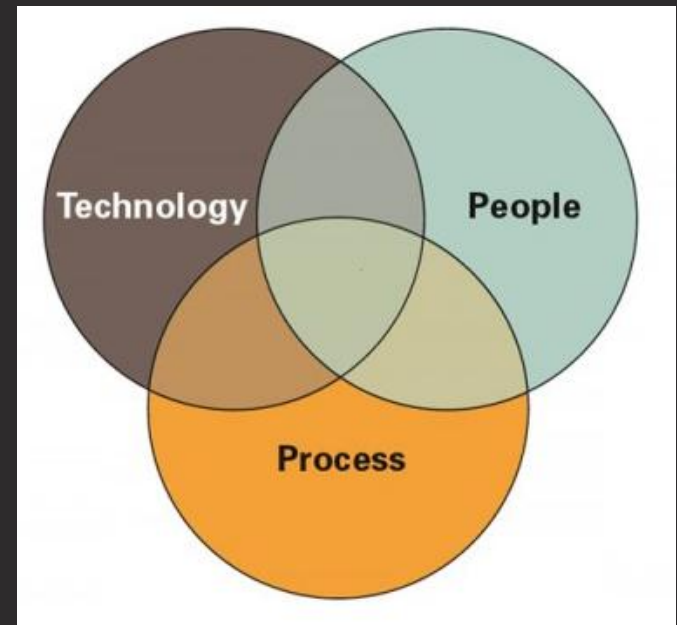
What Can Go Off Track?

- *Scrum* as a silver bullet
- Bad acceptance criteria
- Poor interaction with PO
- Lack of executive support
- Dealing with mistakes
- Team dysfunction
- No Product Owner
- Manager disrupts Scrum process
- I don't have all the requirements
- Old waterfall habits
- Bad estimation
- Not saying NO
- Over commitment
- Not working at sustainable pace
- Scope creep
- Conflicts
- Missing skills
- Not dealing with impediments
- Weak Scrum Master
- Lack of organizational commitment



Overcoming Dysfunction

- **Dysfunction Triad – People is the wildcard here**
 - People come from different cultures
 - People have different personalities
 - People work at different speeds
 - People are not machines
 - People have emotions
 - People have bad days
- **These facts are immutable and are not dysfunctions in and of themselves**



My Top 10 List (plus some bonus items)

1. Silver Bullet
2. Scrum Master Issues
3. Product Owner Issues
4. Team Issues
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Silver Bullet

- **The Mistake**
 - Belief in magic
 - No real commitment to change
- **Impact**
 - Nothing ever really changes
 - Looking for the next silver bullet
- **The Solution**
 - Since Scrum is all about team empowerment and “letting the team decide,” a top down implementation requires thoughtful consideration and preparation



Silver Bullet

Dear Silver Bullet Seeker,

I understand that you want a guarantee that using a new process will make everything better. Who wouldn't want to claim great improvements with little to no effort on your part? Unfortunately, your team is likely comprised of human beings, which means that the Team's behavior is non-deterministic, as is your own.

We can help your team understand Scrum, how it works, and the tools Scrum makes available. We can even help you understand how to work *with the Team using the Scrum framework and this can be a life-changing event in your organization. It can be another tangent you take for a year or so until you ultimately discard Scrum in favor of Yet Another Potential Silver Bullet. It takes about a year for the average Scrum failure case to understand that Scrum will not do their jobs for them.*

Teams and organizations that actually modify their behavior causing Scrum to thrive report increased value being delivered to their customers, deliberate progression in accomplishing goals, and improved quality in the products they ship. Teams dedicated to genuine change report dramatic changes in these qualities and improved culture within the broader organization. Best of all, Scrum-driven organizations report a renewed ability to proceed deliberately rather than reactively in their business.

Teams and organizations that merely declare Scrum is in place and continue exhibiting old behaviors are far more common than those who realize the afore-mentioned benefits of Scrum. It isn't that Scrum itself is hard, but changing ingrained behaviors often is. Indeed, more organizations misuse or fail with Scrum than succeed, because Scrum asks everyone involved to:

Commit to new behaviors

Jettison ego in favor of rational decision making

Trust that everyone will do their jobs to best of their ability

Think of people as people, not resources

David Starr scrum.org.



Silver Bullet

- Project and Development teams learn how to build software using Scrum
- Impediments are identified and removed
 - Creation and delivery of software by the Scrum teams is optimized
- This is challenging hard work
- Full Scrum implementation may take up to five years
- Scrum is transparent
 - Scrum's daily and monthly inspection and adaptation cycles make everything visible - the code, the process, and the company's impediments
- So, don't shoot the messenger!



The Scrum Tradeoff

Know where you are every day with Scrum

- or -

Think you know where you are on your well-formed plan and discover that you are very wrong, very much later

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Scrum Master Issues

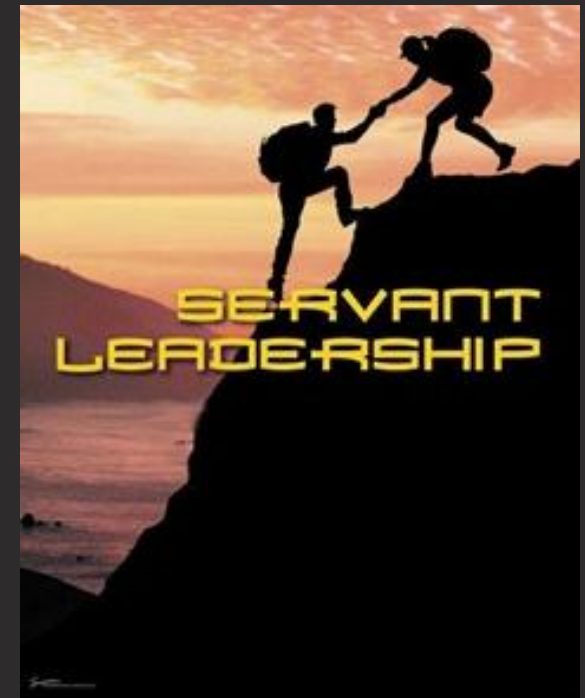
- Doesn't know Scrum
- Not dedicated to the team
- Is a tech guru (and makes sure you know it)
- Hangs on to old waterfall habits
- Is overly dominant (a line manager)
- Ineffectually flaccid
- Doesn't have an impediment backlog
- Is too busy for real Scrum stuff with the team

Does the weak Scrum Master have to go?



A Good Scrum Master ...

- Knows Scrum and facilitates its adoption
- Deals with impediments
- Provides leadership and coaching to help the team do it's best
- Helps the team handle mistakes
- Manages conflicts
- Facilitates good communication
- Scrubs old waterfall habits
- Keeps the team working at a sustainable pace
- Helps resolve missing skills
- Manages managers and other stakeholders
- Promotes team effectiveness
- Manages scope



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Product Owner Issues

- PO hasn't invested in the Product Backlog, poor preparation, not prioritized
- PO's agenda doesn't align with the business
- No power or domain knowledge
- Doesn't interact with Team
- Doesn't work closely with business stakeholders
- Only available at the start/end of sprints, surprised at demos
- Bottleneck on product decisions, indecisiveness
- Too many product owners
- Bad acceptance criteria
- Old waterfall habits
- Bad estimation
- Over commitment
- Scope creep



A Good Product Owner ...

- Manages project features and release to optimize return on investment (ROI)
- Prioritizes features according to market value
- Inspects increment and makes adaptations to project
- Can change features and priority every 30 days
- Creates and maintains the Product Backlog
- Defines Product features and functionality
- Chooses what and when to release
- Represents the stakeholders to the Team
- Defines the features of the product
- Communicates project progress and status



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Development Team Issues

- Team commitment
- We don't have all the requirements
- Team member(s) dominates
- Team member(s) too quiet, doesn't participate
- Engineering dysfunctions (i.e. unit testing, inappropriate refactoring)
- Not dealing with mistakes
- Not dealing with impediments
- Slackers
- Conflicts
- Blaming and displacing
- Bad estimation
- Bad listening
- Missing skills
- Old waterfall habits
- Over reaching developer responsibilities
- Not working at sustainable pace



The Development Team

- Responsible for *forecasting* what it can deliver and *crafting a Sprint Goal* each sprint
- Cross-functional
- Self-organizing
- No titles
- Optimal size of 7 plus or minus 2
- Ability to do whatever is needed to meet forecasted commitment
- Adheres to professional ethics
- Demonstrates Sprint output
- Turns Product Backlog into increments of potentially shippable functionality every Sprint



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Working as a Team

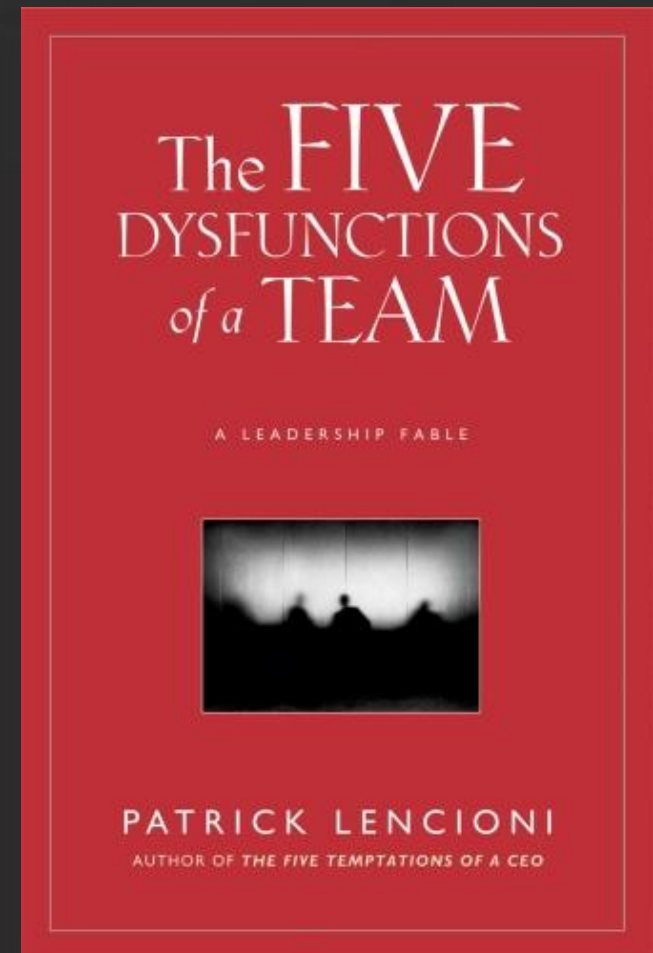
- Communicating
- Listening
- Complementing each other's skills
- Shared objectives
- Individual space
- Solving problems together
- Compassion and respect
- Continual learning and improvement
- Trust (has to be earned)
- Ethics (believes in company goals/products)



Five Dysfunctions of a Team

- Absence of trust
- Fear of conflict
- Lack of commitment
- Avoid accountability
- Inattention to team results

From the book written by Patrick Lencioni
(<http://bit.ly/9aBX4U>)



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Challenging Stakeholders

- **The Mistake**

- Old waterfall habits
- Bad acceptance criteria
- They inject their own version of Scrum
- They disrupt the Scrum process
- No requirements
- Bad estimation
- Over commitment
- Expect you to work at a unsustainable pace
- Team members required to attend their status meetings
- They want hours, not story points
- Scope creep in Sprint
- Everything is priority 1
- Just add more people!
- Conflicts
- Not saying NO

- **Impact**

- Nothing ever changes around here

- **The Solution**

- Scrum education
- Skilled, diplomatic Scrum Master
- Willingness and commitment to change



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Definition of Done

- **The Mistake**
 - Don't have a definition of done
 - Not obeying your definition of done
 - Everybody has a different definition of done
 - Influenced beyond the team's control
- **Impact**
 - The team doesn't know what it has really completed
 - Customers and stakeholders don't know what to expect
 - Technical debt increases
- **The Solution**
 - Everyone agrees on a definition of done, respects it, obeys it
 - Visible to all, updated as needed



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Sprint Backlog

- **The Mistake**

- Not owned by team
- Not updated daily, no burndown
- Overly complex
- Not decomposed enough
- Not used during daily scrum
- Doesn't exist

- All stories implemented in parallel
- Personal backlogs
- Not managing from sprint data

- **Impact**

- Sprint commitments not being met
- Nobody knows where we are

- **The Solution**

- Coaching, Scrum Master attention
- Working as a team

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Velocity Issues

- **The Mistake**
 - Isn't known, used, measured
 - Death marches
 - Team pressured for promise dates
 - Scope creep
 - Yo-yo velocity
- **Impact**
 - When will we be done?
 - How can you estimate future work?
- **The Solution**
 - Keep SBI and PBI data updated daily
 - Reflect upon in Retrospectives
 - Take action for continuous improvement



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Retrospective Issues

- **The Mistake**
 - Not doing Retrospectives, “we’re too busy”
 - Retrospective meetings just a ceremony, not attended by all on team
 - Improvement action items not created, acted on, or followed through
 - Unwanted people attending meetings
 - Team members not speaking up
- **Impact**
 - How can you improve, make things better if you don’t look back?
- **The Solution**
 - Follow the rules of Scrum and do retrospectives at the end of each sprint. This is the key to adaption to empirical inspection

Sprint Retrospective

- **Look back**
 - What did we do well?
 - What didn't we do well?
- **Look forward**
 - Generate actions for the next sprint
 - Tasks for next backlog
 - Add to a wall chart in team area
- **Is our Product Owner Happy?**
- **Metrics**
 - Look at key reports
- **Whole team participates**
- **Scrum Master facilitates**



Some Bonus Items

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Technical Debt

- **The Mistake**

- Unfinished work
- Not respecting Definition of Done
- “We can do it later”
- Letting it pile up
- Ignoring it

- **Impact**

- Missed delivery commitments
- Cost over-runs
- Poor quality
- Lost credibility

- **The Solution**

- Stop it!
- Slow down, work at a sustainable pace
- Start repaying debt, SBI’s each sprint



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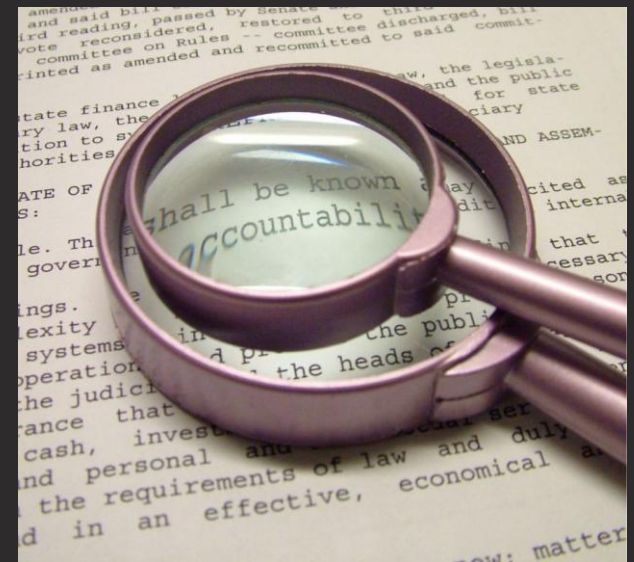
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Transparency

- The Mistake
 - Not making project information (all of it) available to all
- Impact
 - Mistrust, misunderstanding, miscommunication
- The Solution
 - Everyone should be able to inspect ...
 - The team's Definition of Done (DoD)
 - The product backlog (user stories)
 - The sprint backlog (tasks)
 - The impediments
 - Deployments
 - Test results
 - Bugs



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Executive Commitment

- **The Mistake**
 - Executives traditionally lean toward waterfall, especially if the going gets tough with deadlines, competitive threats
 - Part of the organization is trying to be agile, part with big design up front command & control
- **Impact**
 - Internal friction, too many things going on at once but nothing getting across the finish line with high quality
 - Extra work that doesn't have a high ROI
- **The Solution**
 - Executive Scrum education and coaching
 - Build commitment toward Scrum
 - Use Scrum to build Scrum
 - Don't try to boil the ocean

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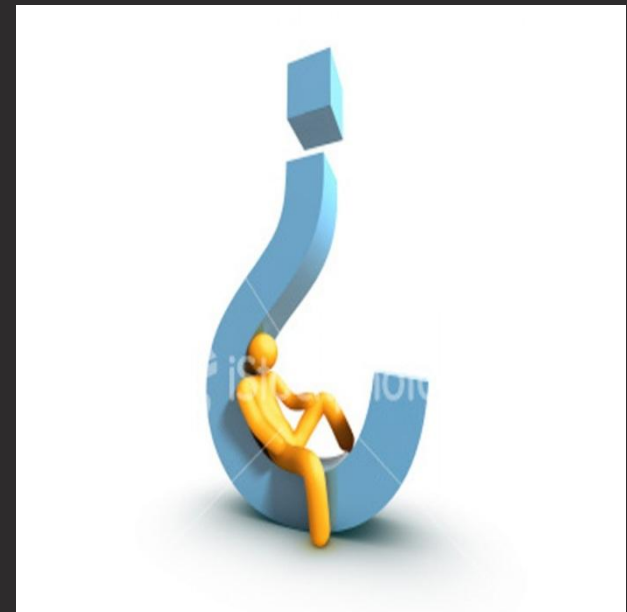
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Worrying About Problems

- **The Mistake**
 - Not recognizing that problems are normal
 - Panic and despair
- **Impact**
 - Wasting time and resources
 - “Deer in the headlights”
- **The Solution**
 - Anticipate and look for problems
 - Record as impediments
 - Prioritize and fix, one at a time
 - Reflect and learn (aka inspect and adapt)



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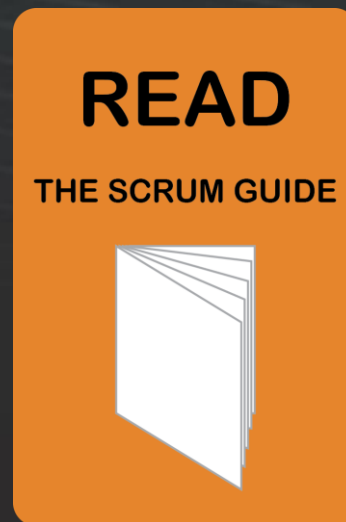
Scrum Smells

- Is It Really Done?
- Failing Backlog Management
- Persistent Signatures
- Scrum Master Assigns Work
- The Daily Scrum is For the Scrum Master
- Specialized Job Roles
- Testers will not integrate with Team
- Reluctance to estimate Backlog Items
- No One Wants to Attend Retrospectives
- Loss of Rhythm
- Talking Chickens
- Missing Pigs
- Technical Debt
- No Sprint Goal
- Executive Pressure
- Gorilla in the Room
- Not Acting Like a Team
- Missing Sprint Commitment
- No Engineering Practices
- Nothing Ever Changes Around Here

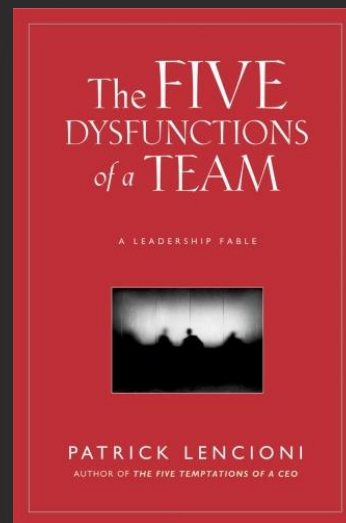


Resources for More Information

- <http://www.scrum.org/scrumguides/>



- [The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable \(J-B Lencioni Series\)](#) by [Patrick Lencioni](#) (Hardcover - Apr 11, 2002)
Buy new: ~~\$24.95~~ \$14.97



Questions



Mike Vincent

MVA Software

mikev@mvasoftware.com

www.mvasoftware.net



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desk.

Thank you!

