

A surreal, futuristic landscape where a team of six people is working. They are gathered around a massive, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots. The scene is set on a grassy, rocky outcrop. In the background, several floating islands with lush vegetation and futuristic structures are visible against a blue sky. The people are dressed in modern business casual attire. Some are seated at desks with large monitors, while others are standing and discussing documents. The overall atmosphere is one of collaborative work in a dreamlike, high-tech environment.

How to Start With an Agile Transformation

Experience Reports of LeSS & LeSS Huge Adoptions

Global LeSS Conference 2025, Amsterdam, Netherlands, October 9–10, 2025, Sofia Pelzl

Who I am

Sofia Pelzl, Agile/Organizational Coach from Munich, Germany

My LeSS journey began in 2017 with the intention of helping companies stay competitive and develop an organization capable of succeeding in an ever-changing environment

Certified LeSS Basic Trainer, CLBT, Candidate Certified LeSS Trainer. CCLT
Certified Scrum Master, A-CSM & CSP SM, Certified Agile Coach
Certified Agile Leadership, CAL-O, -T, -E, Certified Product Owner, CSPO
ICF Professional Certified Coach (PCC)



Content

Let's dream!

Agile Transformation in LeSS context

How to start - Theory

Insights from agile transformations

General Challenges and Problems

Strategies to overcome obstacles

Conclusion & Final Thoughts

Q&A



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Let's dream!

What does the perfect product organization look like?



Martin Luther King, August, 28th 1963

A Vision for Agile Transformation

It would be great,

- if **resources** could always be **utilized** to **create** the **highest customer value**
- if **scaling** in the organization takes **easily** place in **both directions**
- if the **hierarchies** are **flat** for **fast decision-making** and employees are **self-organized**, while **aligned with the overall strategy/goals**
- if we could **change** on **low costs**





Agile Transformation

in LeSS context

What is LeSS?



LeSS is an organizational system for product development aimed at maximizing an organization's adaptiveness.



LeSS is multi-team Scrum

Agile transformation with LeSS

Agile Transformation in the context of LeSS refers to **comprehensive change a large organization** undergoes to adopt and implement the structures, principles, and practices of **Agile at scale**.

This transformation involves a significant shift in

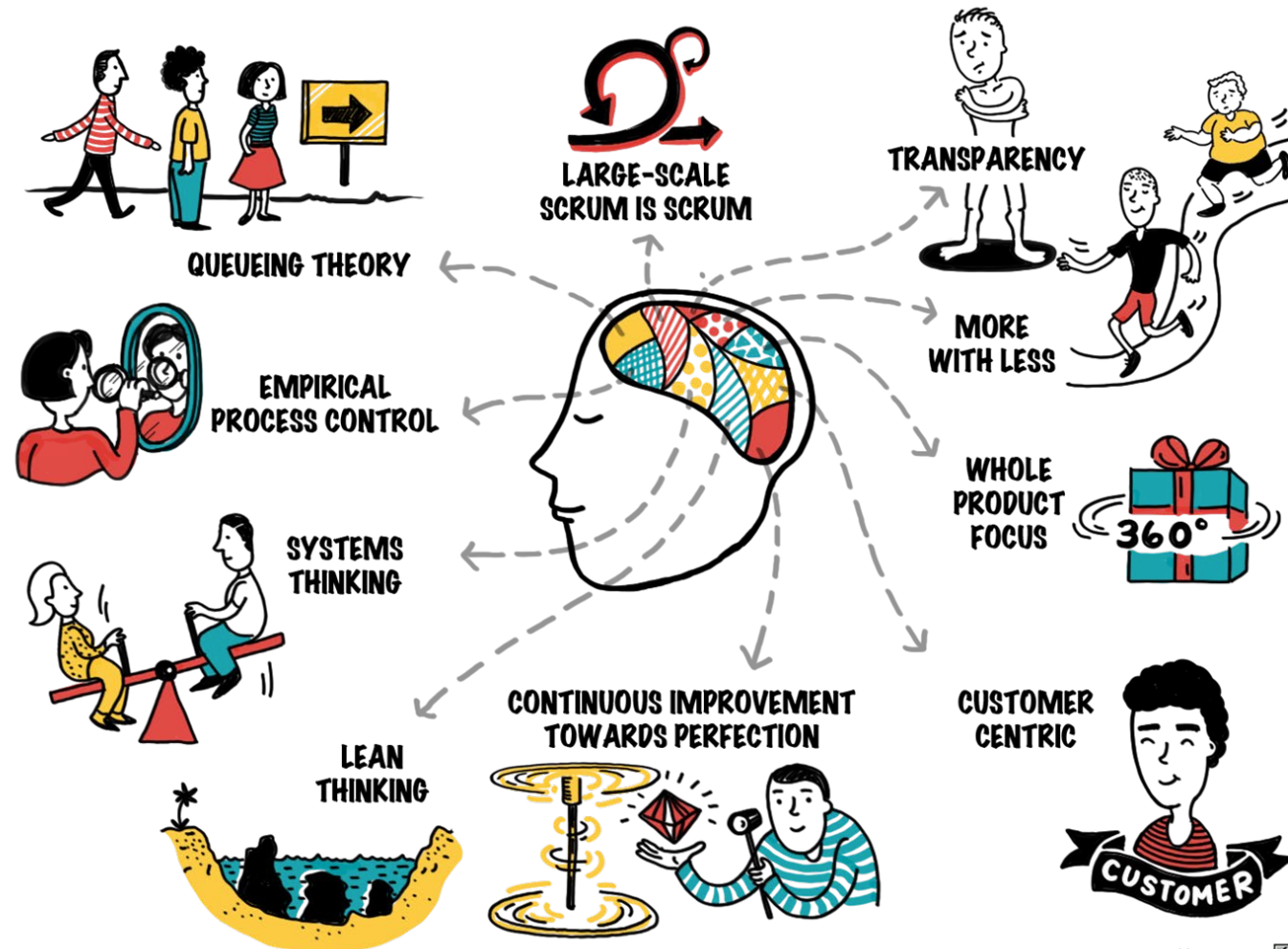
- **strategy and organizational structure**
- **processes**
- **people and rewards systems**



to better align with Agile values like transparency, adaptation, and iterative progress.

Culture follows Structure

LeSS principles



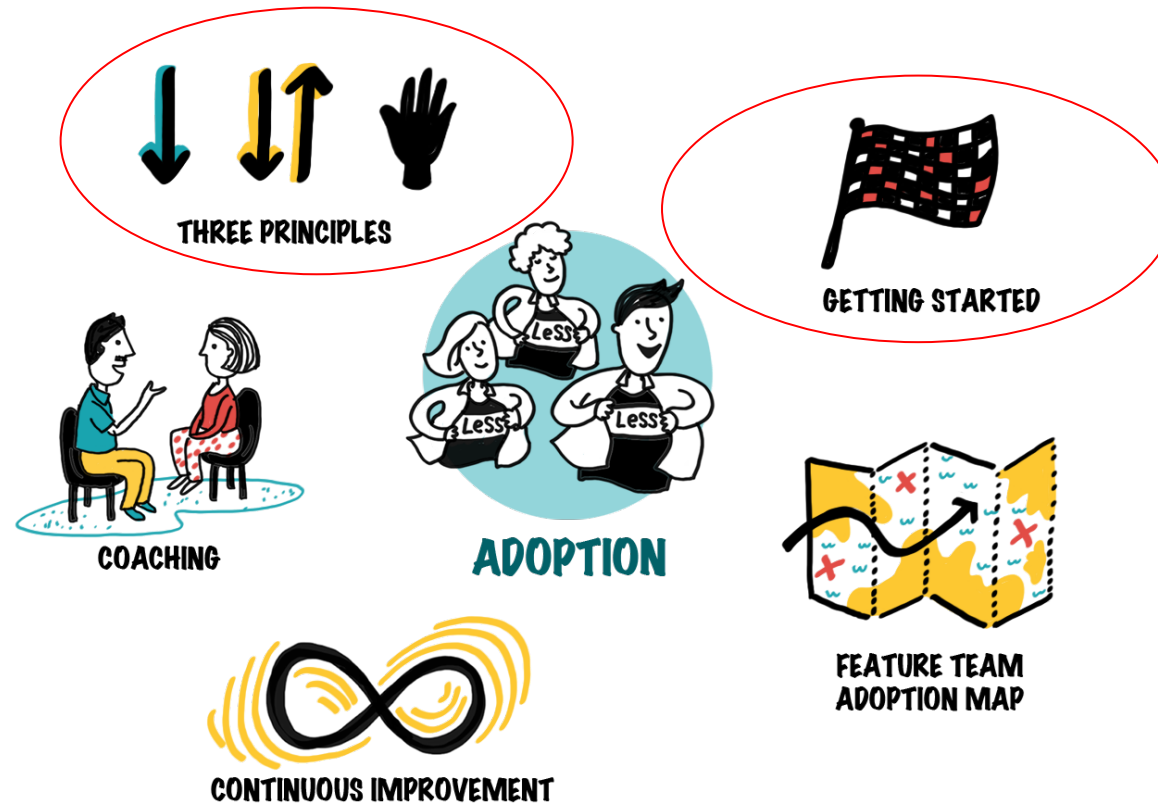


How to start

LeSS Guide: getting started



Adoption principles and guides

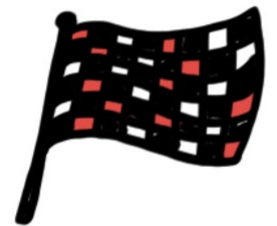


Getting Started



The three adoption principles include that it's best to start with one product adoption. How can you increase the likelihood of its success?

1. educate everyone
2. define 'product'
3. define 'done'
4. have appropriately-structured teams
5. only the Product Owner gives work to the teams
6. keep project managers away from the teams



GETTING STARTED

Sustainable Change

These **LeSS Adoption Principles** are crucial to an organizational change:

- deep and narrow over broad and shallow
- top-down and bottom-up
- use volunteering



THREE PRINCIPLES

Owning vs. Renting

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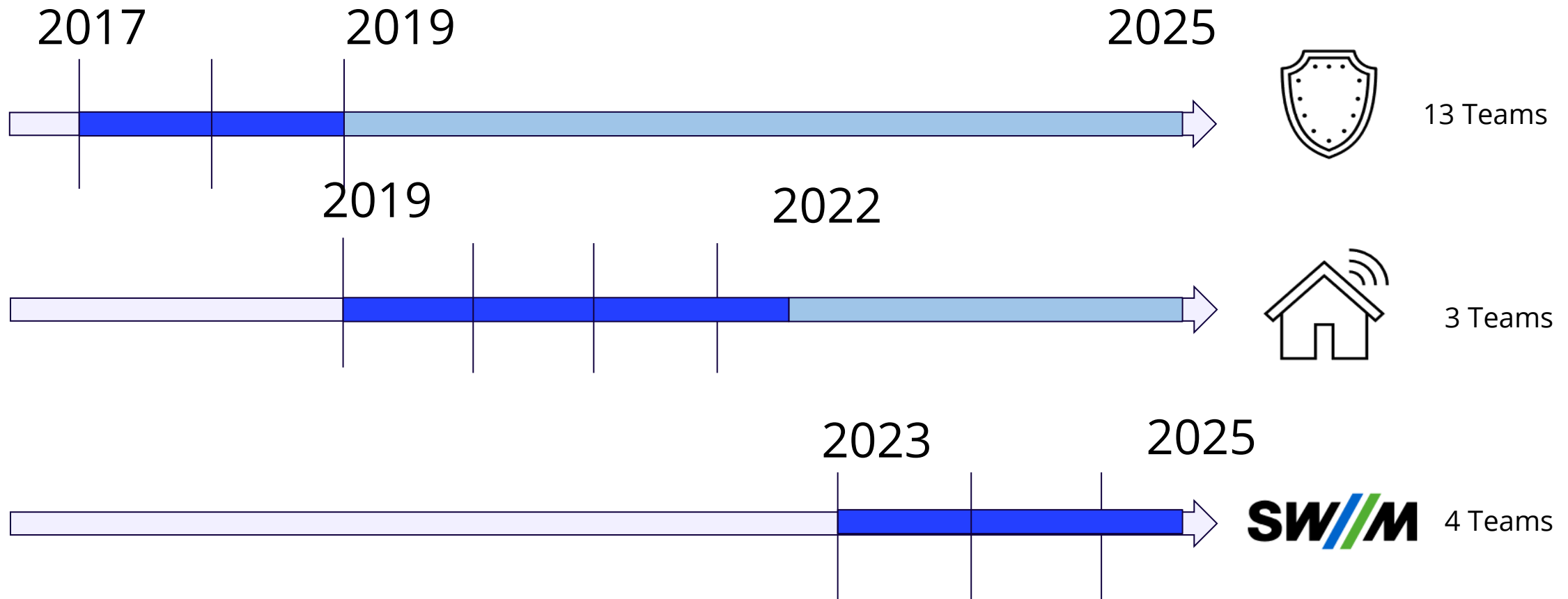
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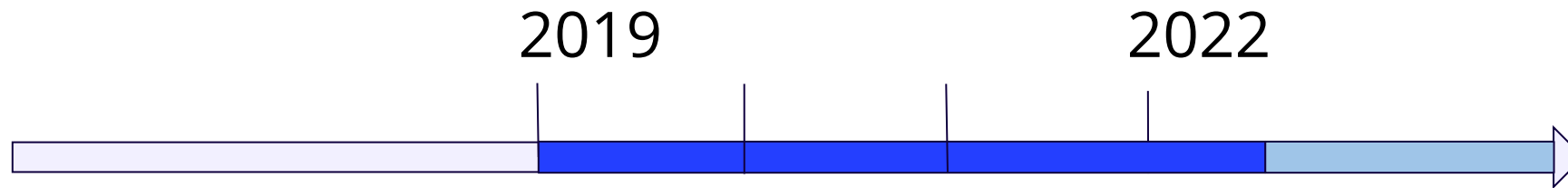
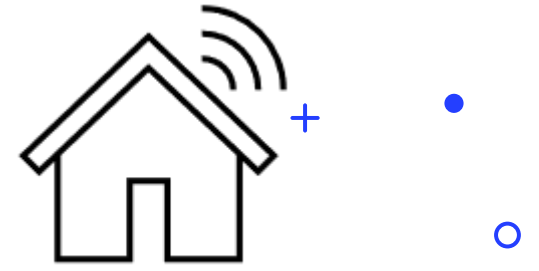
Insights

Sharing my experiences

My experiences in LeSS (Huge) Adoptions



Internet provider Bavaria*



THREE PRINCIPLES



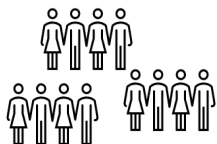
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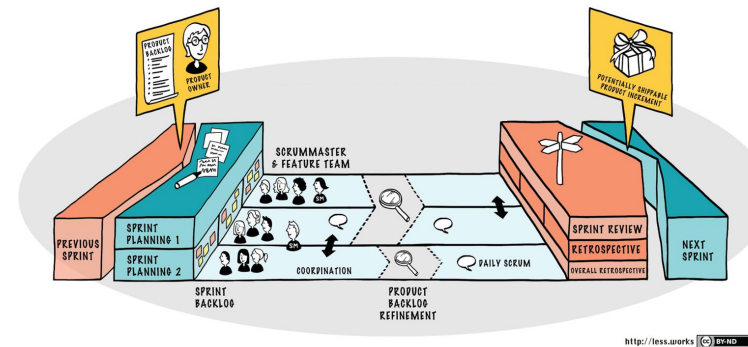
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Product: Service & Customer Portal (Webpage)



Scrum Master (SM)

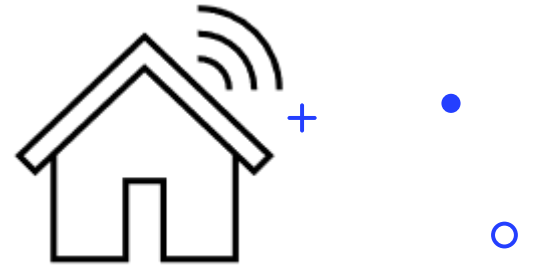
Agile Coach

Management Coach

Mentor SMs

*Case Study in review process of the LeSS Company

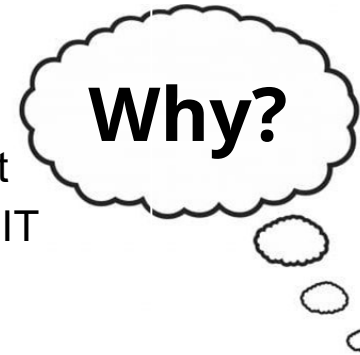
The Start of the Journey



It always starts with the Question:

Sense of urgency

- Multi-project landscape with concurrent priorities in teams
- Traditional resource planning, percentages of employee capacity per project
- Heavy loaded traditional processes (contract game) between Business and IT



Motivation/Optimization Goals:

- Reduce time-to-market for new features
- Need for increased flexibility and adaptability in a rapidly changing market.
- Increase team productivity through improved collaboration tools and practices.
- Improve customer satisfaction



The Journey



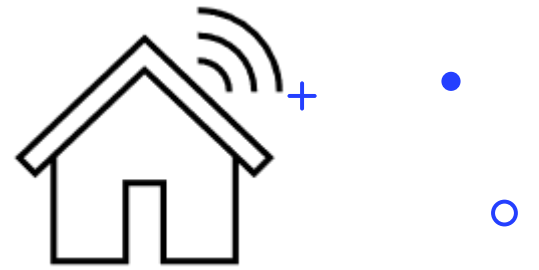
What we did or still do:

- **Management support**
Management by-in for LeSS Branded Scrum-Adoption in IT
- **Volunteering from bottom-up**
for LeSS branded scrum Team - fast growth of Team and Product
- **Product Structure**
4 Product Owners from Business Units, one Single Backlog
- **Scrum & LeSS Education**
Continuous trainings and knowledge sharing
- **Team formation during the pandemic**
The LeSS-branded feature teams (self-designing workshops, remotely)
- **Growth and Scaling**
Others department followed our approach
- **Team-Building**
Multi Skill learning inspiring growth, using Team Knowledge Model by Mark Bregenzer
- **Cross Team-collaboration**
Communities are established and working. UI/UX as Traveller in teams and in Multiteam-Events



Organizing Multi-Team Learning

Key achievements



- **IT Alignment with business objectives**
One IT backlog that is directly linked to the company's overall backlog
- **Improved collaboration**
between teams through regular multi-team meetings
- **Increased transparency**
with visibility for teams and the stakeholders
- **Faster time to market**
increase of about 20%; increase number of releases from 4 to 6.
- **Higher quality of deliverables**
through the shared code environment
- **Greater flexibility and responsiveness**
by prioritising the product backlog
- **Improved employee engagement**
volunteer employees and increased ownership in feature teams
- **Sustainable improvement culture**
repetitive inspection & adaptation sessions with business at all levels.



Public Utilities: SWM IT-DA



THREE PRINCIPLES



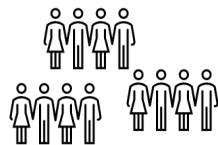
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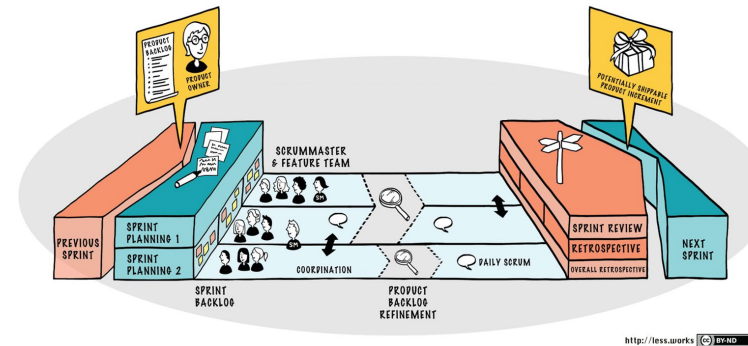
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Product: Reporting Analytics Platform



Agile Coach

Mentor

Trainer

The Start of the journey



it always starts with the Question:

Sense of urgency

- Increased flexibility and adaptability to pivot quickly in response to new business requests, aligned with business goals
- High collaboration effort due to the team growth
- Lack of transparency and visibility

Motivation/Optimization Goals:

- Increase transparency to get more control
- Desire to improve customer satisfaction and engagement
- Employee Retention and Attraction



The Journey (ongoing)



What we did or still do:

- **Management support**
fully support from management (division/department) to change the structure towards feature team driven product organization
- **LeSS Education**
Continuous trainings and knowledge sharing
- **One Product Backlog**
a single PO (Product Definition)
- **Team Responsibility E2E**
from analysis to delivery
- **Team Forming**
from component teams to the feature teams (internal open source)
- **Team Building**
e.g. Team-Knowledge Workshops, for Multi-Skill learning, individual and collective growth as a real team.
- **Team-Events**
Working in LeSS mode with 4 teams, Multi team events
- **Cross Team Collaboration**
Communities for cross team collaboration



Workshop to 100 days of LeSS (Overall-Retro)

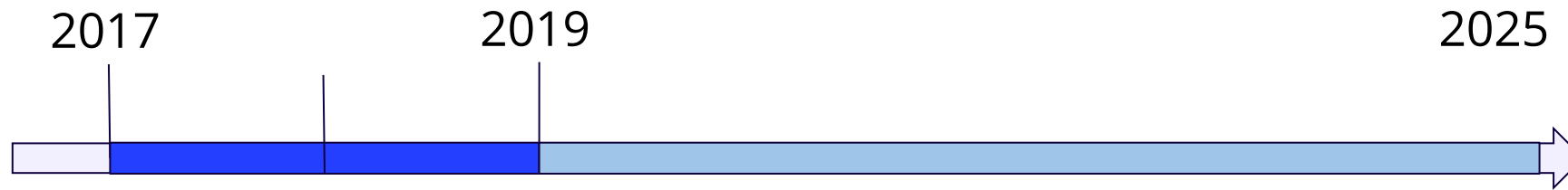
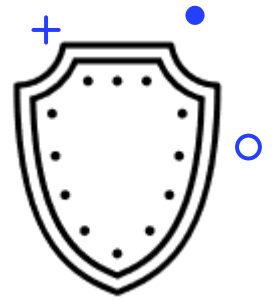
Key Achievements



- **Working on highest customer value**
Backlog prioritization based on business needs, not on resource utilization and close Customer and Stakeholder collaboration.
- **More efficient and effective team and cross team collaboration**
by Multi-Team-Events: e.g. Sprint Planning I, Overall-Retro, Review, Product-Backlog-Refinement (PBR)...
- **Faster Time-to-Market**
4 teams working in parallel on the end-to-end customer centric product backlog items (customer value), therefore - greater Flexibility and Responsiveness
- **Employee Satisfaction & Engagement**
by applied self-determination in self-organisatized feature teams
- **Sustainable positive Working Culture**
Open communication and transparency with more learning and sharing the new ideas, leadership support, Trainings and development



Big Insurance Company: Key facts



THREE PRINCIPLES



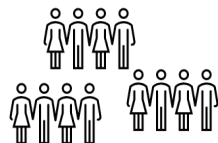
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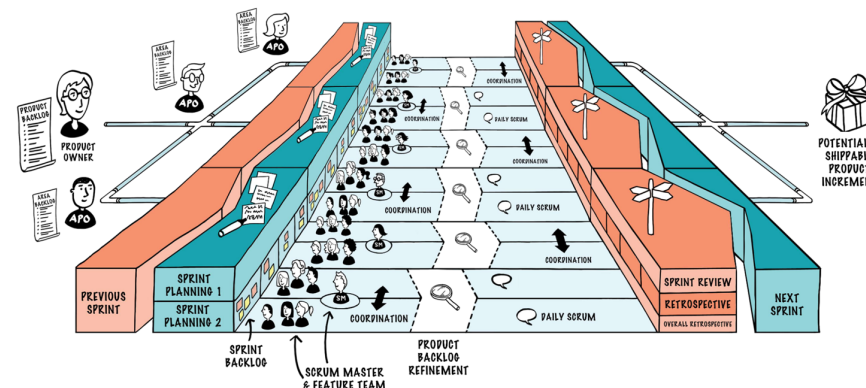
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Product: Car Insurance Application



<http://less.works> (CC) BY-ND

Scrum Master

Agile Coach

Management Coach

*Case Study "German Big Insurance"

The start of the journey

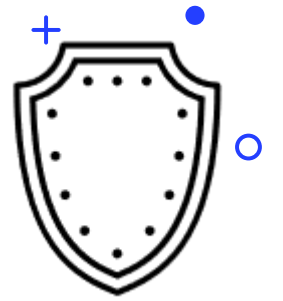
it always starts with the Question:

Sense of urgency

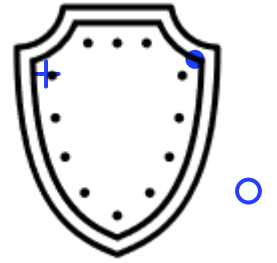
- Increasing costs
- Huge organizational overhead (coordination chaos)
- Complicated collaboration between the organisational entities

Motivation/Optimization Goals:

- Reduce time-to-market for new features
- Need for increased flexibility and adaptability in a rapidly changing market.
- Increase team productivity through improved collaboration tools and practices.
- Improve customer satisfaction



The Journey



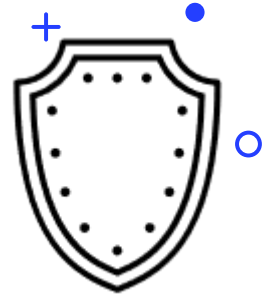
What we did or still do:

- **Management support**
top down and bottom-up from the beginning
- **LeSS Education**
Continuous trainings and knowledge sharing
- **One Product Backlog for all product areas**
with a single PO and APO (Area Product Owners)
- **Team Forming**
Transformation was done from component teams to the feature teams in a self organized team workshop.
- **Team Building**
e.g. Team-Knowledge Workshops, for Multi-Skill learning and individual and collective growth as a real team.
- **Team-Events**
Working in LeSS-Huge mode with 10 teams, Multi team events
- **Cross Team Collaboration**
Communities for cross team collaboration
- **Team Responsibility E2E**
from analysis to delivery



e.g. Multi-team Refinement

Key achievements



- **Working on highest customer value**
Backlog prioritization based on business needs, not on resource utilization
- **Efficient and effective team and cross team collaboration**
Multi-Team-Events:
 - e.g. Sprint Planning, Overall-Retro
 - Review
 - Product-Backlog-Refinement (PBR)...
- **Faster Time-to-Market**
10 teams working in parallel on the end-to-end customer centric product backlog items (customer value), therefore - greater Flexibility and Responsiveness
- **Close stakeholder collaboration**
joint refinements, reviews, and retrospectives



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General Challenges

and Problems in Agile Transformations

Overview of common challenges

- Resistance to change
- Overspecialization
- Legacy IT Landscape
- Lack of Automation
- Lack of System Thinking
- Suboptimal HR Policies
- AI Issues in Agile Transformations



Resistance to change



Every change brings uncertainty and this often generates fear, which can then lead to resistance on the part of those affected.

Overspecialization

Bottlenecks by limited single specialist capacities



Legacy IT Landscape



The complexity of the system
landscape: heterogeneous tech stack

Technical - Lack of Automation

Lack of automation, Test automation and fast feedback loops of the build-deployment system

Technical investments are often forgotten in Transformation Backlogs



Lack of Systems Thinking

Local optimization in the organization and at the individual level



Suboptimal HR Policies

HR policies

- fostering single specialists over multi-skilled people
- lack of non-disciplinary career path





AI Issues in Agile Transformations

Using AI for Change/Transformational Processes (non-technical)

- Additional financial efforts
- Up-to-date data and accuracy of data
- Missing skill for the right prompting
- How to filtering agile scaling knowhow for consistent approach (using all public knowhow with AI Systems?)

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Strategies

to overcome obstacles

Strategies to overcome obstacles

- Owning vs. Renting
- Education & Coaching
- Technical investments
- Get HR on Board
- Continuous Improvement
- Use Feature Team Adoption Map
- Use AI for Collaboration of People



Co-Developing Team & Individuals

- **by using Second LeSS adoption Principle** - Top down and bottom up!
- **by Product Definition** - start small and grow it over time (stay healthy, so not overwhelm people)
- **by Increase Cross-functionality of Teams and Team members** to overcome silo-thinking and bottlenecks

Owning vs. Renting



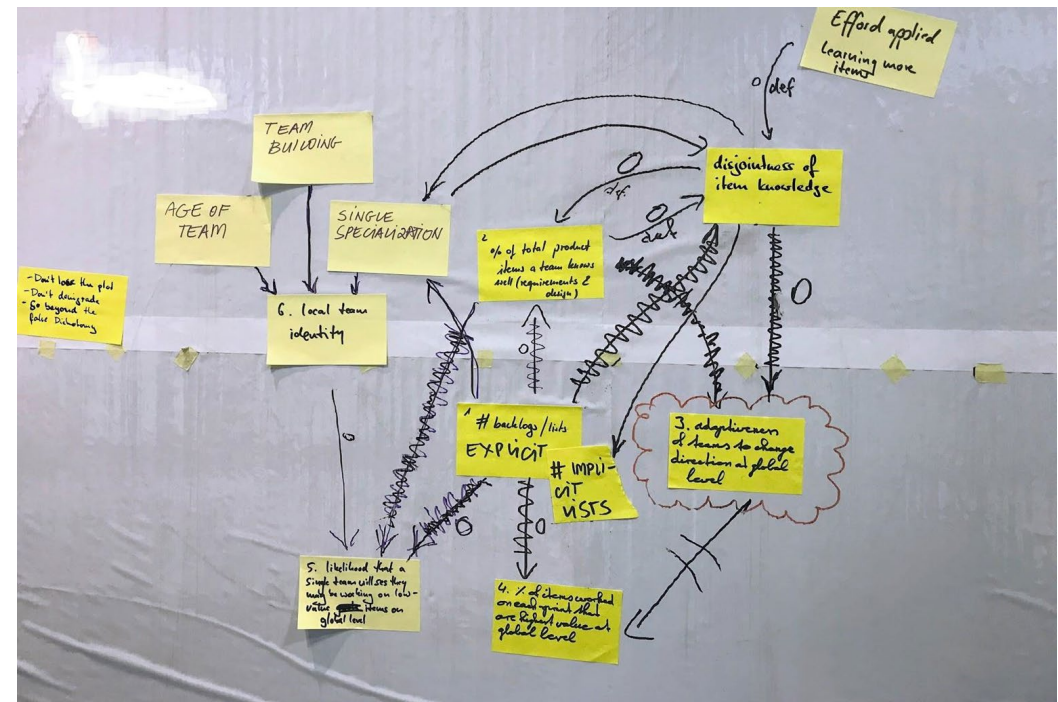
Without ownership, there is no continuous improvement.



Picture source: [Rent Vs. Own? – Sente Mortgage](#)

Education & Coaching

- **Educate** Management and employees in **Systems Thinking**.
- **Use Systems Modelling** to overcome local optimization
- Learning from experience



Coaching

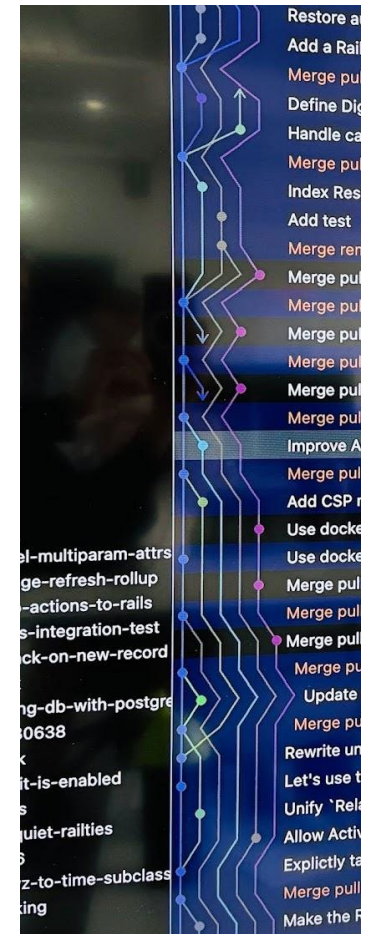
Coaching involves an **experienced coach** working closely with an organization to enhance product development by shortening feedback loops and emphasizing quality improvement.

This accelerates feedback cycles, boosting productivity and flexibility.



Your technical agility can and will limit your business agility.

- Invest into the build system for automated parallel builds and deployments (CI/CD)
- Invest into test automation for fast feedback loops



Get HR on board

Include HR in the transformation team to provide adequate career paths from the beginning, which encourages multi-skill-learning in parallel to pure professional career paths



Continuous Improvement

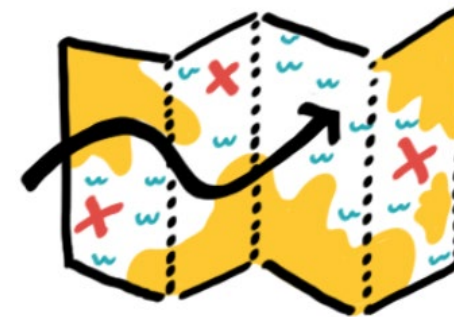
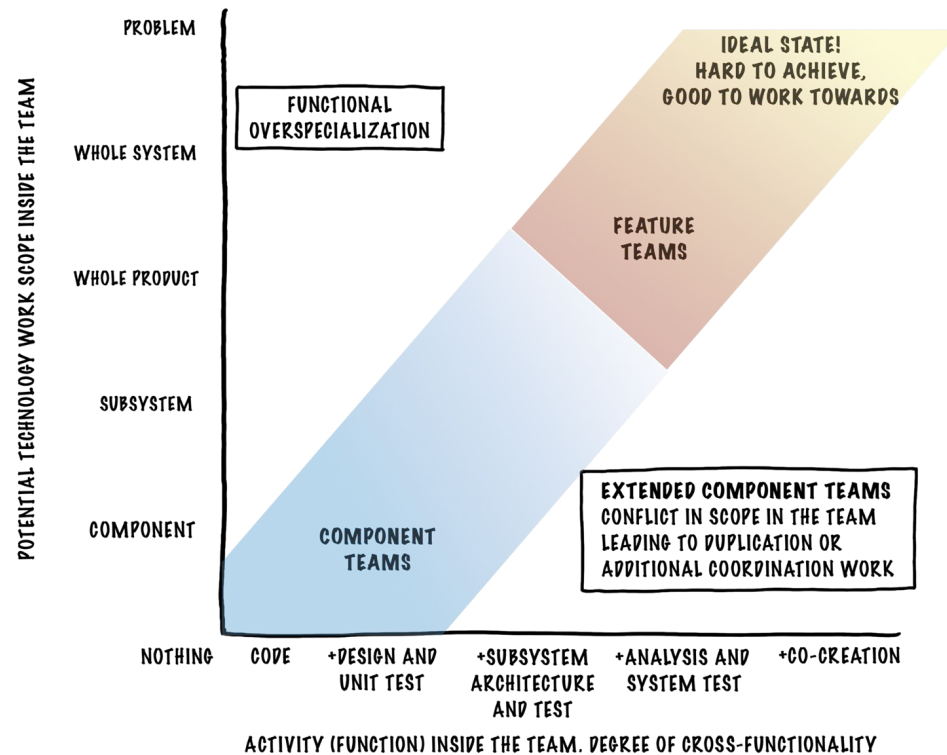


In LeSS, change never stops –
it's not a project, it's part of the culture.



Feature team adoption map

Feature Team Adoption Map is THE tool for management to initiate an organizational change



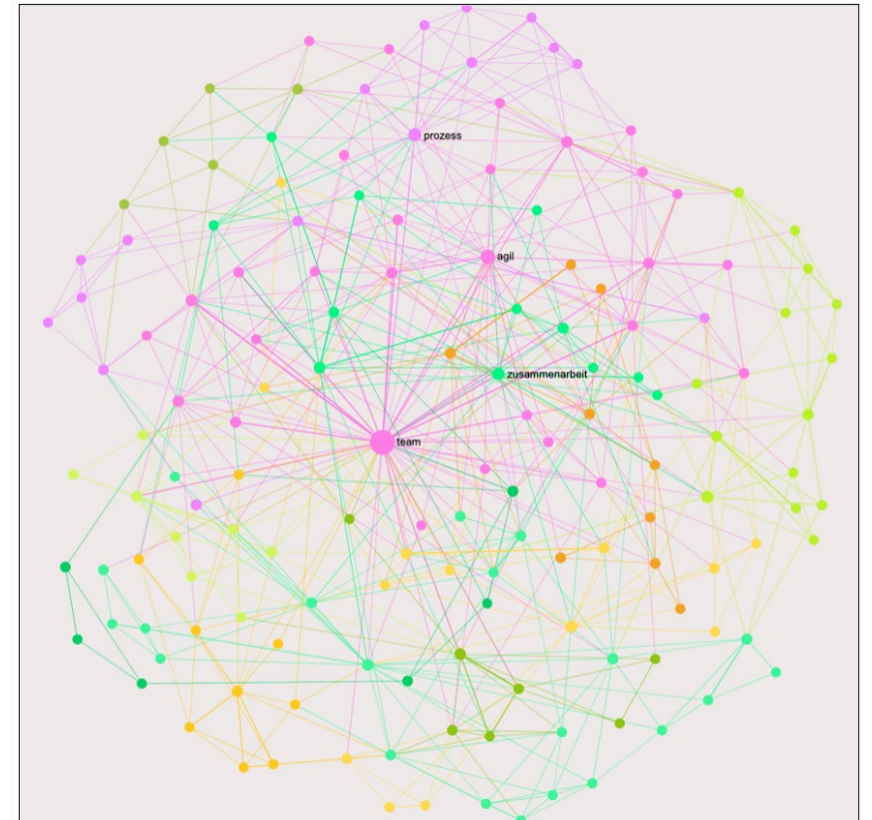
FEATURE TEAM ADOPTION MAP

Use AI for Collaboration of People



Accelerating Collaboration with shared and continuous AI usage:

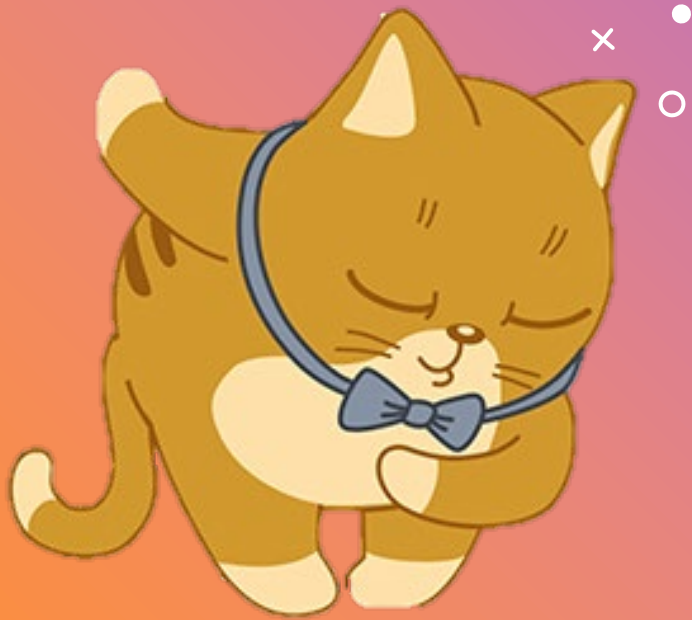
- Initial investments will pay off soon
- Instead of static surveys, use AI system for continuous interactive dialogue with managers and employees
- Educate people in prompting and use AI to improve prompts
- Setup own AI instances with “controlled” knowledge for coaching and daily work (change related work)



Text to Network visualization as support for finding the right question.
(InfraNodus tool: example from telco company)



Conclusion and Final Thoughts



Thank you!

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Q & A Session

