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Mike Cohn: Agile Trainer and Coach

- Founding member and director of Agile Alliance and Scrum Alliance
- Founder of Mountain Goat Software
- Ran my first Scrum project back in 1995
- Typical programmer to manager etc. progression



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Scaling

- 1 Proactively manage dependencies
- 2 Scale the iteration planning meeting
- 3 Cultivate communities of practice
- 4 Coordinate work among teams



Proactively manage dependencies

A Use rolling lookahead planning

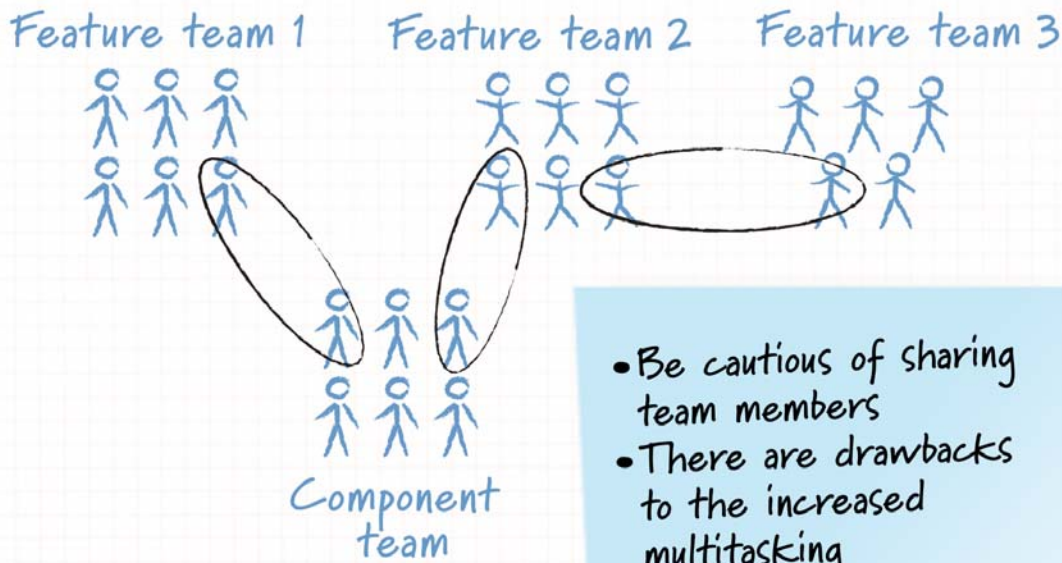


	Tasks	Est
Iteration 4	Code the	8
	Test the...	16
	Integrate with the...	8
	Code the ...	12
	Design the	8
Iteration 5		
Iteration 6		



B

Share team members



- Be cautious of sharing team members
- There are drawbacks to the increased multitasking

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Two types of interfaces to worry about

Unattended interfaces

At least one team is aware of the interface, but no one is doing anything about it

Unidentified interfaces

An interface that exists but that no one has discovered yet

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- Takes on the unattended interfaces
 - While on the look out for unidentified ones
- Can be a virtual team with part-time members
 - Common up to perhaps a dozen teams
- Larger projects will have a full-time team
 - Maybe more than one
- Not a dumping ground for poor performers



Scale up the iteration planning meeting

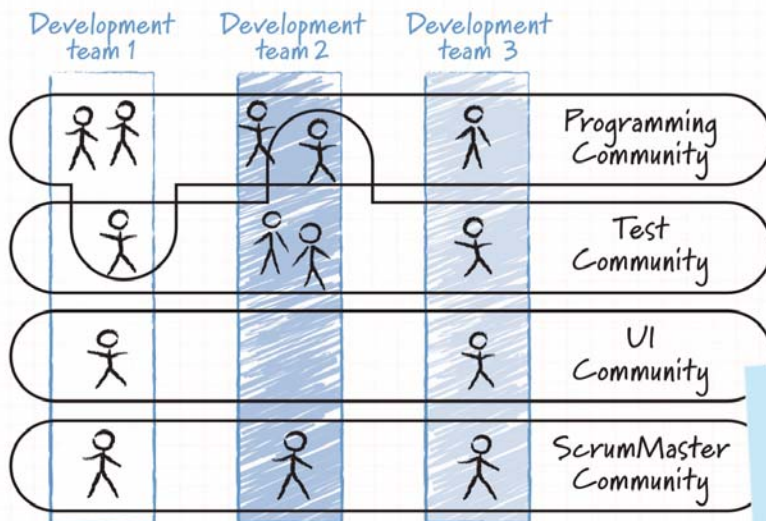
- Iteration planning meeting is the hardest to scale
 - Other meetings require less coordination
- Two general approaches
 1. Stagger by a day
 2. The big room



The Big Room



Communities of practice



A group of like-minded or like-skilled individuals



Characteristics of communities

- Self-organizing
- Organic
- Can span projects
- Not a full-time job
- There's often a "community coordinator"
 - Typically 5-20 hours/month



Five types of communities

Unrecognized

Invisible to the organization and possibly even to its members.

Bootlegged

Visible but only to a small, select group of insiders.

Legitimized

Officially sanctioned as a valuable entity.

Supported

Provided with resources (time, money, facilities, people).

Institutionalized

Given an official status and responsibilities in the organization.



Creating an environment for communities

1 Design for evolution.

2 Open a dialogue between inside and outside participants.

3 Invite different levels of participation.

4 Have both public and private events.

5 Focus on value.

6 Combine familiarity with excitement.

7 Create a rhythm for the community.



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Coordinate Teams

1. Use communities of practice
2. Hold scrum of scrums meetings



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Scrum of
Scrum of
Scrums



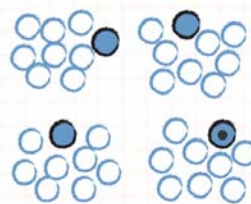
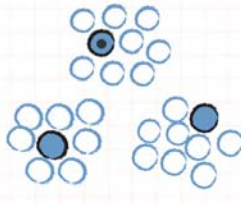
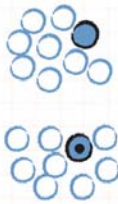
1 / week

Scrum of
Scrums



2-3 / week

Daily
Scrums



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?

- Does a scrum of scrums have a ScrumMaster?
- Who should attend the scrum of scrums?



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Agenda

15 minutes

Three questions

1. What has my team done since we last met that will affect other teams?
2. What will my team do before we meet again that will affect other teams?
3. What problems are my team having with which we could use help from other teams?

As needed

Discussion

- Discuss an Issues Backlog maintained by the group.



Distributed teams



- Decide how to distribute
- Create coherence
- Get together in person
- Change how you communicate
- How to handle meetings



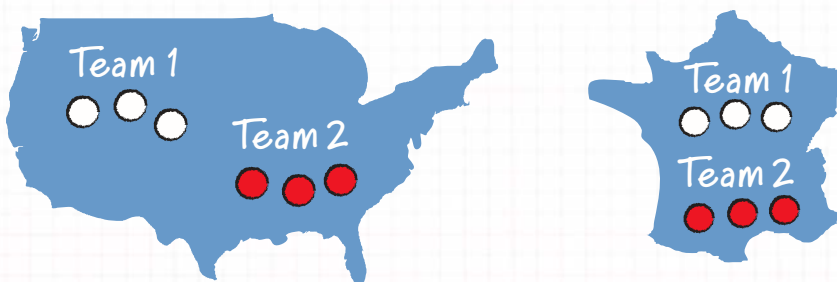
Collaborating collocated teams

- Each team has all needed skills
- Teams in different locations work independently but collaborate to coordinate their work



Deliberately distributed teams

- Each location has all needed skills
 - We could form collaborating collocated teams
 - But we choose not to
- Individuals in different cities work together as one team



?

There are advantages and disadvantages to both ways of distributing a team.

What type of problems would you anticipate with:

- Collaborating Collocated Teams?
- Deliberately Distributed Teams?



CCTs	DDTs	Situation
	✓	Developers work odd or long hours to accommodate meetings.
✓		Developers in different cities unknowingly disagree about what is being developed.
	✓	Developers must work remotely from their product owner and are forced to guess at the PO's wishes.
✓		An antagonistic, "us and them" relationship develops between individuals in different locations.
✓		Developers in one city do not know what developers in the other city are doing or why they are making the decisions they make.
✓		Developers in different cities make incompatible decisions.

?

Indicate whether the problems shown above are more likely to with Collaborating Collocated Teams (CCTs) or Deliberately Distributed Teams (DDTs).



Distributed teams



- Decide how to distribute
- Create coherence
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- How to handle meetings



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Creating coherence

- *Coherent* is from the Latin *cohaerent*
 - “sticking together”
 - We want a team that will stick together
- So we’ll
 - Acknowledge big cultural differences
 - Acknowledge small cultural differences
 - Strengthen functional and team subcultures
 - Build trust by emphasizing early progress



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I Acknowledge the big cultural differences

Geert Hofstede surveyed IBM employees in 50+ countries

Identified differences in five areas

Power Distance Index (PDI)

The extent to which less powerful members of a culture accept that power is unequally distributed.

Individualism (IND)

The extent to which individuals prefer to function as individuals rather than as part of group.



Achievement Orientation (ACH)

The extent to which the culture is oriented toward achievement, such as earnings, visible signs of success, and possessions.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

The extent to which the culture is tolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity.

Long-Term Orientation (LTO)

The extent to which the culture favors long-term considerations over immediate physical and financial benefits.



Country	PDI	IDV	ACH	UAI	LTO
China	80	20	66	30	118
India	77	48	56	40	61
Israel	13	54	47	81	
Norway	31	69	8	50	20
Russia	93	39	26	25	
Sweden	31	71			
United Kingdom	35	89			
United States	40	91			

What important cultural differences might exist between a team here and in my home in Denver?

PDI = Acceptance that power is unequally

IND = Preference for functioning as individ

ACH = Orientation toward achievement (earnings, possessions, etc.)

UAI = Tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity

LTO = Favoring of long-term considerations over immediate benefits



More ways to create coherence

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Acknowledge small cultural differences

- Holidays
- Working hours

3

Build trust by emphasizing early progress

- Early emphasis on relationship building encourages subgroups to form around surface-level attributes[†]
- Defer relationship building until team members have learned more significant things about each other

4

Strengthen functional and team subcultures

- Establish a shared vision
- Establish working agreements



Distributed teams



- Decide how to distribute
- Create coherence
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- How to handle meetings



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Getting together in person

- Seeding visits
 - Ideally, whole team meets in person at start
 - Stay together an iteration or more when possible
- Contact visits
 - Whole team, Quarterly, face-to-face
- Traveling Ambassadors
 - Individuals who travel more frequently among locations to ensure good working relationships



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Distributed teams



- Decide how to distribute
- Create coherence
- ~~Get together in person~~
- ~~Change how you communicate~~
- ~~How to handle meetings~~



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Change how you communicate

- Add back some documentation
 - Cannot rely as much on talking
- Add detail to the product backlog
- Encourage lateral communication



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Distributed teams



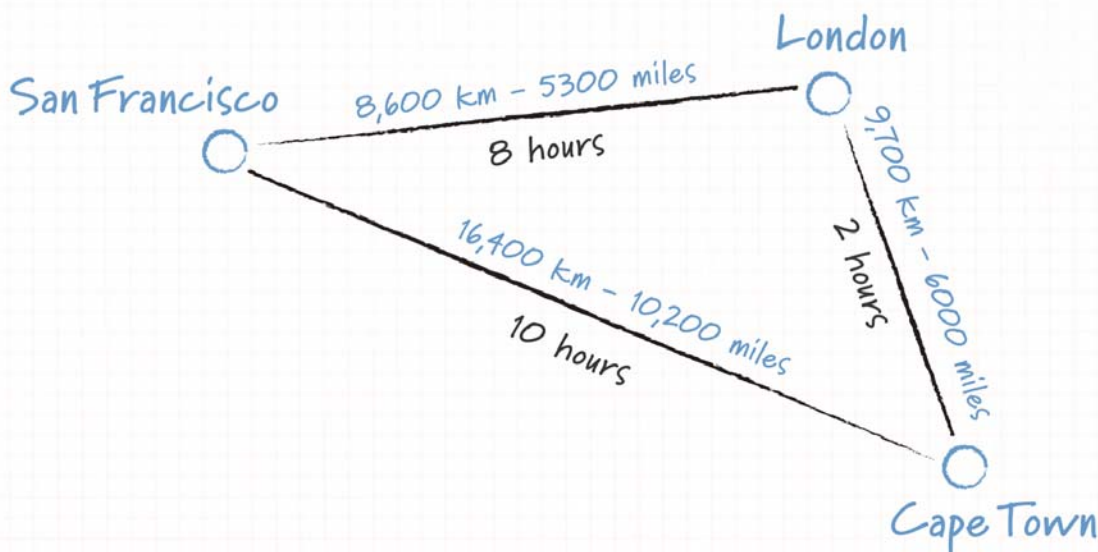
- Decide how to distribute
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It's not the distance, it's the timezones



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Useful advice for all meetings

- Include time for small talk
- Share the pain
- Make sure everyone knows who is talking



Iteration Planning—Approach #1 The Long Phone Call

- Everyone on the phone at once

Pros

- Can lead to good discussion if people remain engaged
- Planning is finished in a day
- Is consistent with approach used when collocated

Cons

- Participants often mentally disengage during a long call
- Requires significant overlap of workdays; not feasible if widely distributed
- May involve extending the work



Two Calls

- First call: understand what the product owner wants built
- Local subteams figure out what they can commit to
- Second call the next day: Subteams share commitments

Pros

- Can be a more efficient use of time
- Can be used whenever work hours can be made to overlap even a little

Cons

- Usefulness varies based on how widely distributed the team is
- Not all knowledge is shared with everyone, leading to misunderstandings
- Takes two days



Single Call

- Everyone on the phone at once

Pros

- Similar to what is done with colocated teams so there's nothing new to learn
- Discussions involve the whole team
- Everyone hears all issues, leading to greater commitment

Cons

- Can be extremely inconvenient for some
- Not sustainable if people are forced to work outside of normal work hours



Writing the meeting

- Everyone emails a written report or updates a wiki with status information
- Variation: A local group meets and others email updates

Pros

- Sustainable over the long term
- Helps overcome language problems

Cons

- No guarantee updates are read
- Issues are not discussed and may lay dormant
- Doesn't take advantage of daily interaction to improve relationships and knowledge sharing
- Reduced feeling of accountability to teammates



Regional Meetings

- Everyone emails a written report or updates a wiki with status information
- Variation: A local group meets and others email updates

Pros

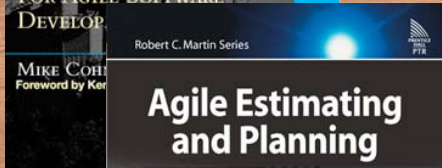
- Pain of off-hours calls is greatly reduced
- Allows local subteams to share information most relevant to them

Cons

- Information relayed from one meeting to another may be incorrect or incomplete
- Can lead to us/them feelings
- Not everyone is involved in all discussions
- Information may not be shared in timely manner



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