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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 sprint planning meeting
- 3 Cultivate communities of practice
- 4 Coordinate work among teams



Proactively manage dependencies

A Use rolling lookahead planning



Sprint 4

Tasks	Est
Code the	8
Test the...	16
Integrate with the...	8
Code the ...	12
Design the	8

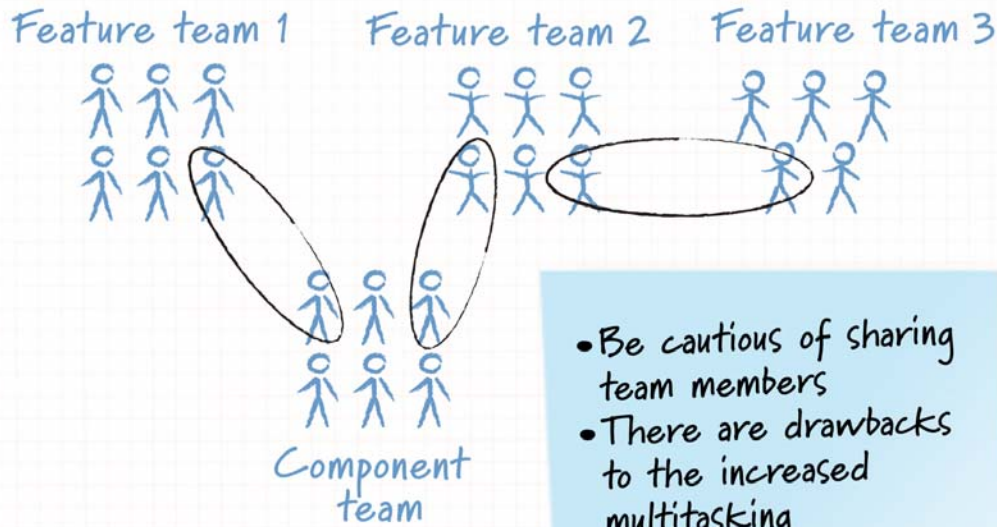
Sprint 5

Sprint 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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Use an integration team

- 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

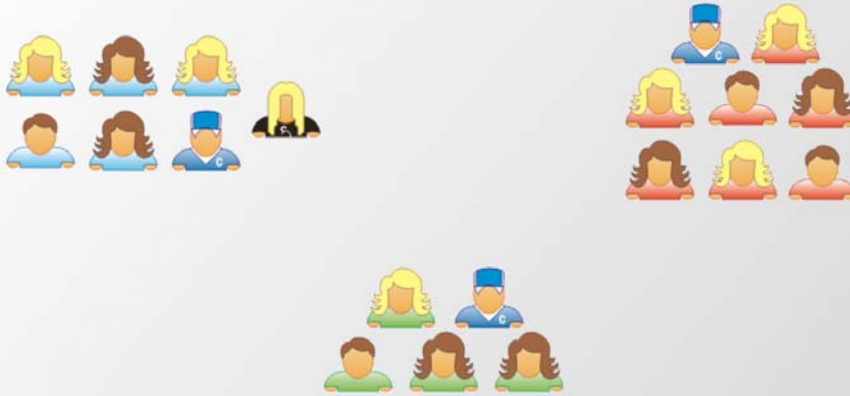


Scale up the sprint planning meeting

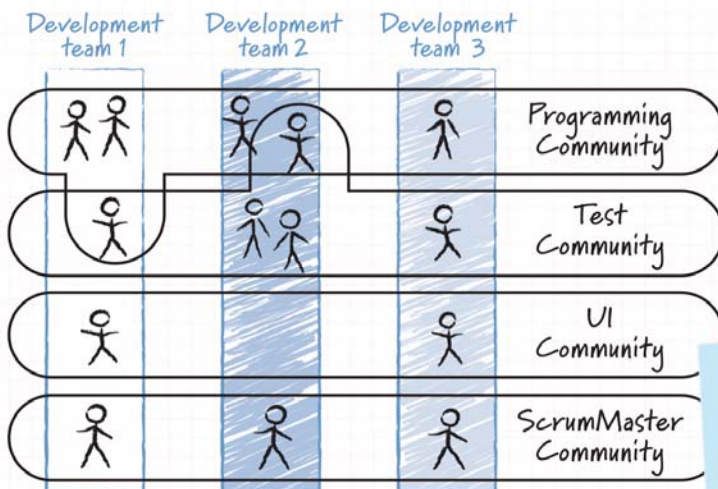
- Sprint planning meeting is the hardest to scale
 - Other meetings require less coordination
- Two general approaches
 1. Stagger by a day
 2. The big room



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.

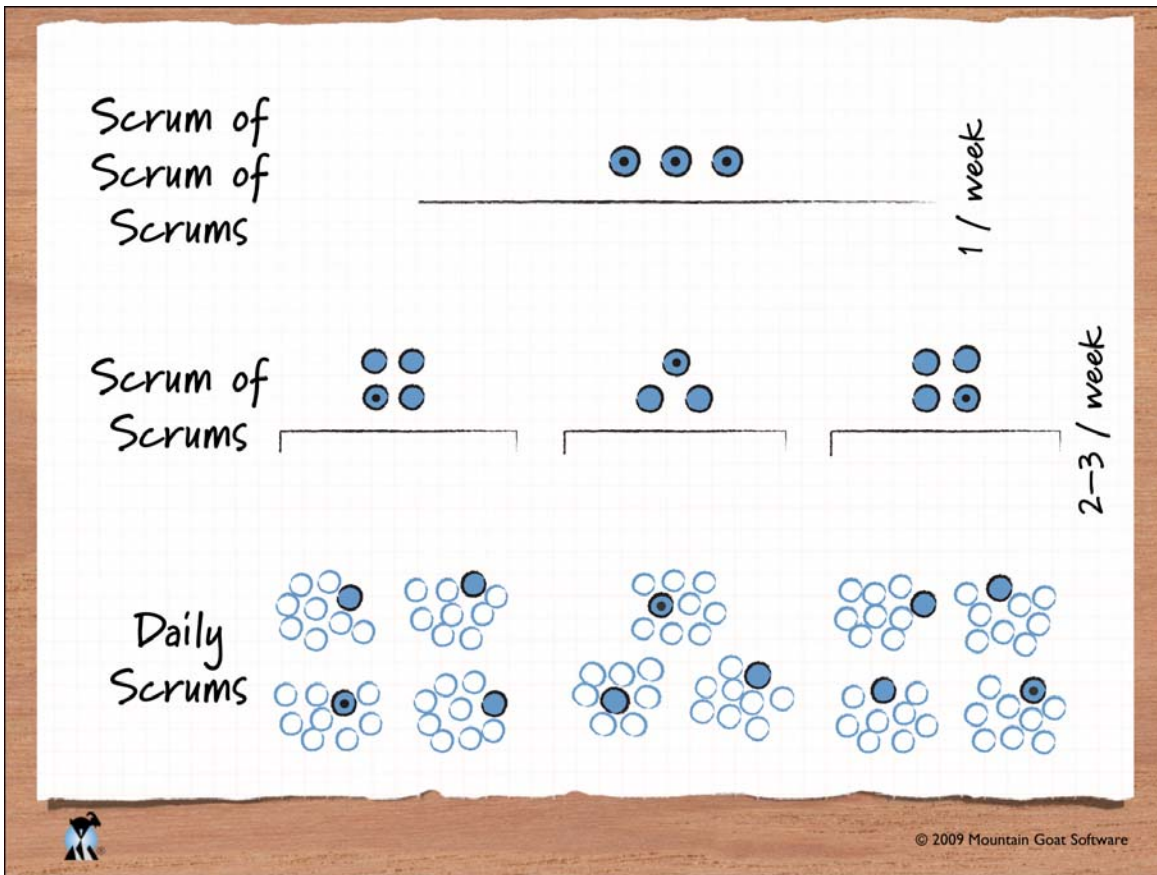
7 Create a rhythm for the community.



Coordinate Teams

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





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Agenda

Three questions

15 minutes

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?

Discussion

As needed

- Discuss an Issues Backlog maintained by the group.

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Distributed teams



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

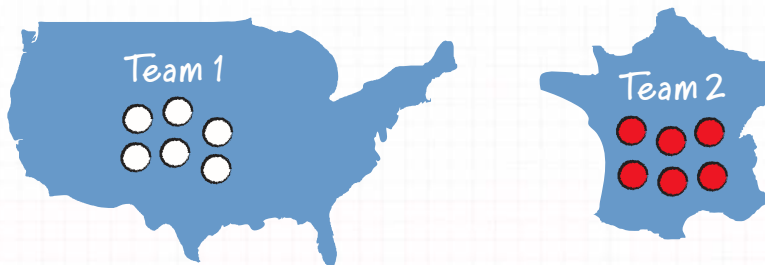


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Collaborating collocated teams

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



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Deliberately distributed teams

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



Distributed teams



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



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



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	36	95	
Sweden	31	71	5	29	33
United Kingdom	35	89	66	35	25
United States	40	91	62	46	29

PDI = Acceptance that power is unequally distributed
IND = Preference for functioning as individuals
ACH = Orientation toward achievement (earnings, visible signs of success, and possessions)
UAI = Tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity
LTO = Favoring of long-term considerations over immediate physical and financial benefits

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



More ways to create coherence

Acknowledge small cultural differences

2

- Holidays
- Working hours

Build trust by emphasizing early progress

3

- 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

Strengthen functional and team subcultures

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- Establish a shared vision
- Establish working agreements



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Distributed teams



- Decide how to distribute
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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 a sprint 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



Distributed teams



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



Change how you communicate

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



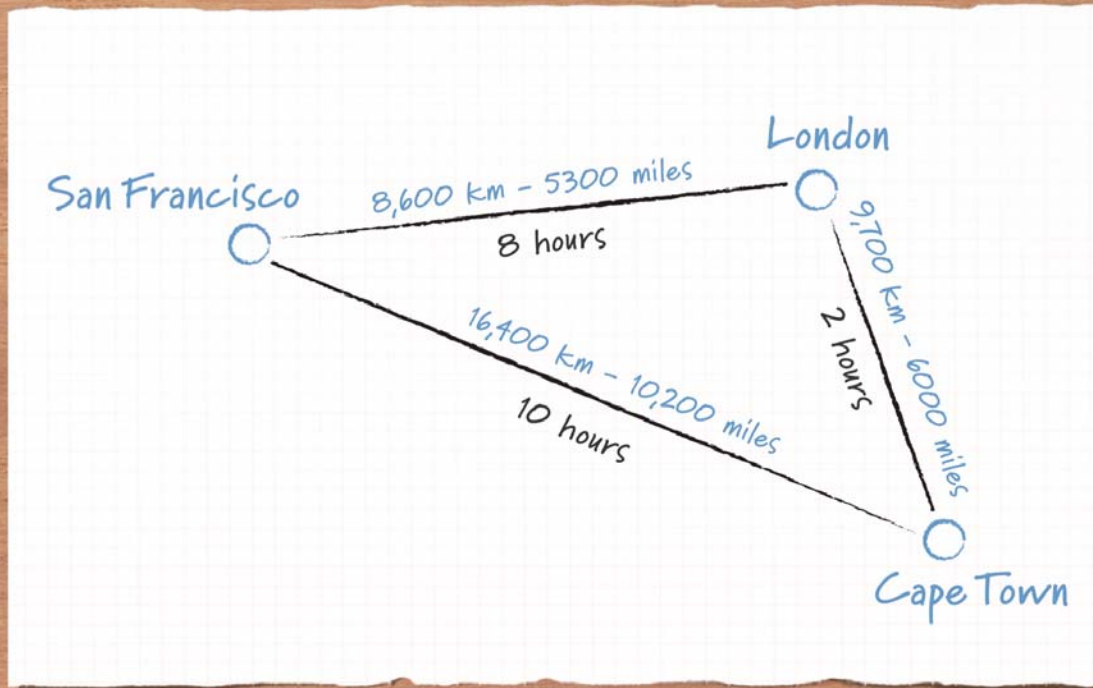
Distributed teams



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It's not the distance, it's the timezones

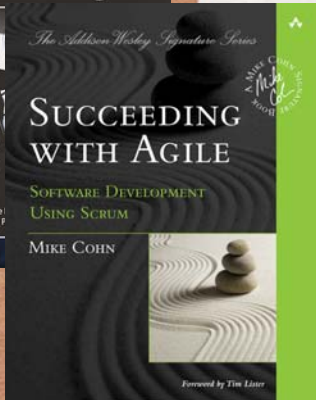
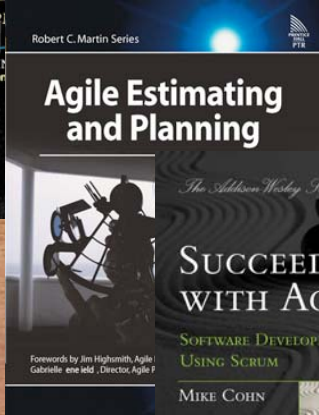


Useful advice for all meetings

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



Contact information



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