

Project Plans to Program Boards

My Transition from Project Manager to Release Train Engineer

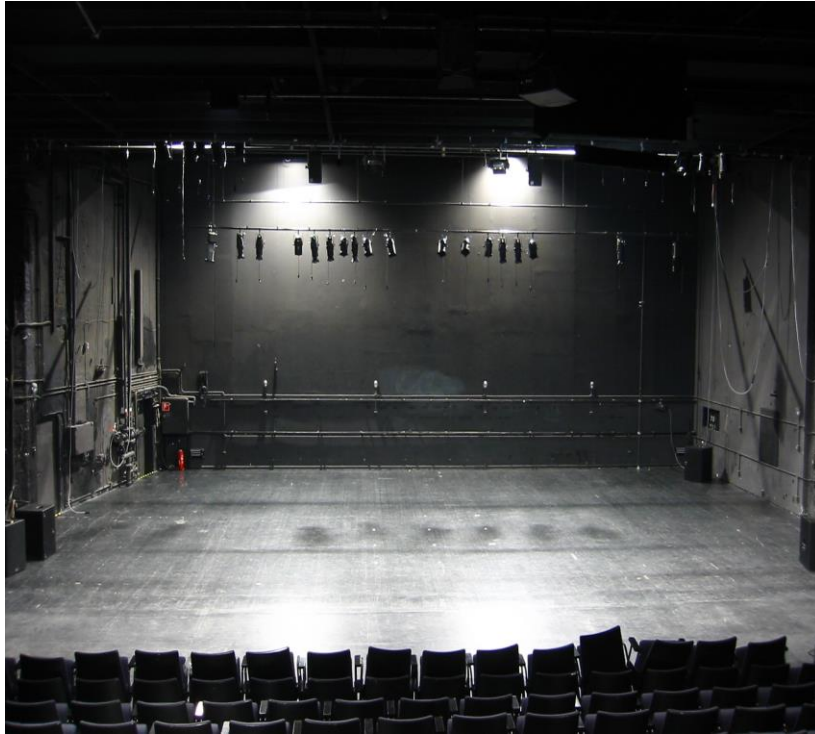
What We'll Cover

- The background
- Terminology and some visuals
- Making the shift as a group
- Making the shift as a PM
- What happened when we shredded the Project Plan (gasp!) and built a Program Board?



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Setting the Stage...

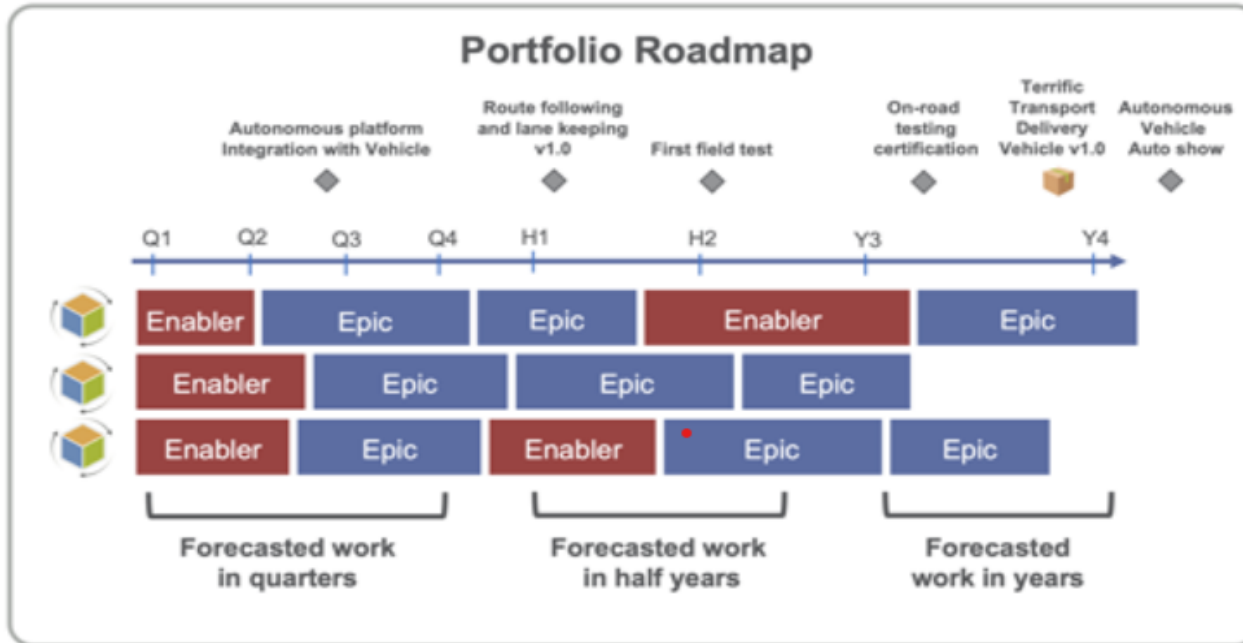


- Early 2017 – started a three-year project
 - Rewrite of a major application component
 - Project team size – approximately 15 developers, 15 testers, 3 analysts, 1 UX, 1 architect
 - Very quickly experienced ‘delays’ ...project goes ‘red’ on health indicators
- Late 2018 – we embark on a journey to adopt an Agile mindset.

Terminology and Visuals

- Agile mindset
- Sprint and PI
- Ceremonies and cadence
 - Stand ups (usually daily)
 - Scrum of scrums (weekly)
 - PI Planning (every 12 weeks)
 - Demos (every 2 weeks)
 - Sprint Planning (every 2 weeks)
 - Retrospectives (every 2 weeks)
 - Backlog refinement (every 2 weeks)

Terminology and Visuals: Roadmap



From scaledagileframework.com

Terminology and Visuals: Program Board

PI13 Program Board						
Start	8/26/2021	9/9/2021	9/23/2021	10/7/2021	10/21/2021	11/4/2021
End	9/8/2021	9/22/2021	10/6/2021	10/20/2021	11/3/2021	11/17/2021
Holidays	9/6/2021			10/11/2021		Veterans Day - 11/11/2021, PI Planning on 11/16 and 11/17
Sprint	PI 13.1	PI 13.2	PI 13.3	PI 13.4	PI 13.5	PI 13.6
Releases and Milestones						Infrastructure upgrade in production
	Infrastructure upgrade complete in dev	Create epic complete		Deploy release 2.3.4 to Production		
First Responders	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus
	Fiscal Year End Support	Fiscal Year End Support	Fiscal Year End Support	Fiscal Year End Support	Fiscal Year End Support	Fiscal Year End Support
	Browser research	Browser research	Browser research	Browser research		
Mechanics	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus
		Rolled Over - Testing				
	Infrastructure B upgrade	Infrastructure B upgrade - integration environment		Production issue support		
	Testing support	Feature C testing support		Weekly Deployment support		
Jaquars	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus
	Infrastructure C upgrade	Infrastructure D implementation	Production issue support			
			Weekly Deployment support			
		Feature D testing	Environment support			
Slingshot	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus	Sprint Focus
	Infrastructure K upgrade	Infrastructure K upgrade	Infrastructure K upgrade			Production issue support
	Infrastructure L upgrade	Infrastructure L upgrade	Infrastructure L upgrade	Infrastructure L upgrade		Weekly Deployment support
						Environment support
						Complete Cloud Training

Terminology and Visuals: Backlog

- Defect D
- Feature A
- Infrastructure C
- Feature B
- Enhancement E

From scaledagileframework.com

How Did We Start?

- Multiple teams, PI Planning
- Scrum Masters for the teams
- Explore the RTE role
- Leadership identified a rough idea of team make-up. We would hear some feedback from the teams about this later. 😊
- Picked a date for PI Planning (2 days in mid-November) and started web searches



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Our First PI Planning



- I literally lifted the PI Planning agenda from the scaledagileframework.com site.
- Snowmageddon!
- Our motto for that PI: Embrace the Fuzziness
- Solidified teams the first morning of that PI Planning
- Figuratively shredded the project plan
- Program Board: LOTS of dependencies
- Program Board: LOTS of risks
- Confidence vote was all over the place
- Food is very, very important



After PI Planning...Our Challenges

- Standups
- Team demos and sprint planning
- Teams took the 'self-defined teams' concept very literally
- Managers felt shut out
- Customer not of an Agile mindset, anxious

Meet Those Challenges with 4 Ts

Time

Talk

Trust

Transparency

From PM to RTE...What I Learned

- Lots of toes were damaged in this process
- Teams experienced empowerment/liberation
- Many skills are transferable

Keep Honing These PM Skills

- Organization and coordination
- Big picture mindset – roadmap, decisions that impact more than one team
- Prioritization - decisions that impact downstream PIs and product strategic plans
- Milestones – they don't go away
- Presentation and communication

Acquire These Skills

- Servant leadership
- Failure mindset
- Flexibility
- Diplomacy
- Terminology to add to toolkit
 - I don't know. What do you think?
 - Will you experiment with me on this?
 - Will you support this with me and we can reevaluate in a month?
- Assume positive intent

A Day in the Life of an RTE...



More strategic
 More listening
 More facilitating, less directing
 More liberating
 More process improvements/streamlining –
 making things easier for the teams
 Less reports
 More discussions and joint decisions
 No project plans - no baselines, no variance
 discussions, no red/yellow/green health
 indicators

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My Review: 5 of 5 Stars

- Excited and nervous
- Invaluable experience for my growth and my development
- No project schedules, project baselines, scope documents, etc.
- Discussions
- Empowered teams
- Managers/leadership focus
- Product Owner involvement



Questions? Feedback?

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