



Top 10 (+2) organizational impediments

Bas Vodde

Article



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.scrumalliance.org/articles/123>. The browser's address bar and navigation buttons are visible. The website header includes the Scrum Alliance logo with the tagline "transforming the world of work" and a search bar labeled "Search Scrum:". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Articles", "Resources", "Training & Certification", "News", "Events", and "Comm". A secondary navigation bar contains "Home > Articles >" and "by Craig Larman Bas Vodde | 02 Apr 2009".

The main content area features a grey header for the article titled "Top Ten Organizational Impediments", accompanied by two small profile pictures of the authors. Below the title, the article text begins with the following paragraph:

Tags: [adopting scrum](#) | [Scaling Scrum](#)

When we were writing the "Organization" chapter in *Scaling Lean & Agile Development: Thinking and Organizational Tools for Large-scale Scrum* we asked a group of agile development experts working in and with large companies about the most challenging impediments their organizations faced. We aggregated their responses into a list of what we call the top ten organizational impediments.

10. Failure to Remove Organizational Impediments

Jeff Sutherland, co-creator of Scrum, considers the failure to remove organizational impediments to be the main obstacle facing large organizations. Common reasons for not removing impediments are "That's the way we've always done business" and "We won't change because we invested so much in this."

To the right of the article text is a section titled "Related Articles" with three entries, each preceded by a document icon:

- [Glossary of Scrum Terms](#) by Victor Szalvay
- [Am I, or Am I Not, Using Scrum? That is the Question.](#) by Melanie G. Silver
- [Advice on Conducting the Scrum of Scrums Meeting](#) by Mike Cohn

Below the related articles is a link that says "More Related Articles..."

#10

Jeff Sutherland



patientkeeper®

#10

Failure to Remove Organizational Impediments



- Ineffective improvement focus.
- “That's the way we've always done business”
- “We won't change because we invested so much in this.”

Example



Ways out!

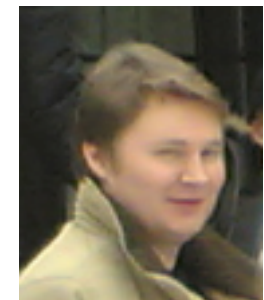
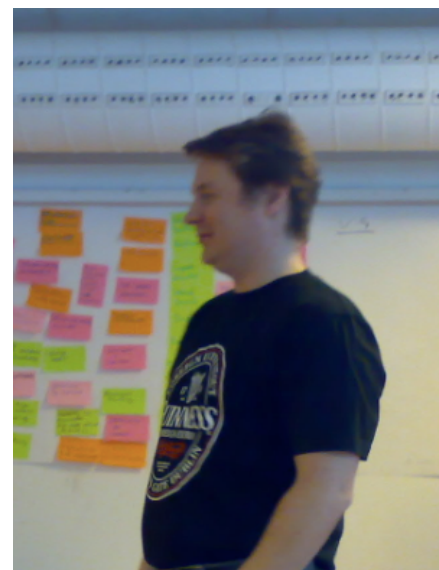
- Not let ScrumMasters only focus on their teams, but on changing the organization.
 - No rotating ScrumMaster
 - full-time ScrumMasters
- Train Management
- Change the **organization** or...
change the organization

#9

Peter Alvin & Petri Haapio



Nokia Siemens
Networks



#9

Misguided Cost Savings and Synergy Efforts



- Saving costs without measuring the overall impact

- Centralized processes
- Tool harmonization
- No new computers
- Saving on travel

Example



Ways out!

- Not give power to centralized groups
 - Not have “agile PMO”
 - Not make tool-decisions globally
 - Recommend, not force.
- Use Open Source models internally
- Not “roll-out” Agile with a centralized forced adoption program.

#8 Sami Lilja





#8

Lack of Training

- Training is considered secondary
- “We got this really urgent release”
- “All developers who went to university can code”
- “We shouldn’t train our people, they will leave”
- safe costs.

Example



Ways out!

- Establish Communities of Practice for sharing knowledge and learning
- Focus on facilitation and coaching
 - Training
 - Outside experts
 - Especially... TDD coaching for adopting technical practices.

#7

Larry Cai (蔡煜)





#7

Single-Function Groups

- Moving to cross-functional teams is too hard for some organizations
- “How do we do Scrum in the test team”
- “Architecture Scrum, Development Scrum, Test Scrum”

Example

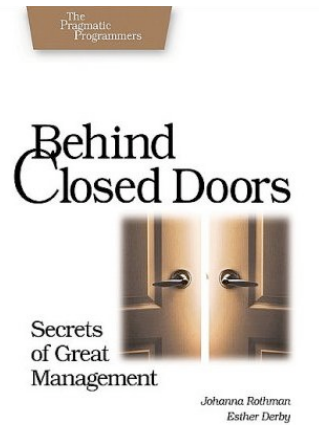


Ways out!

- Do not have functional units
 - Community or practice for sharing knowledge
- Have cross-functional teams

#6

Esther Derby





#6

Local vs Global Optimization

- Most organizations and departments optimize locally -> causing the overall system to go slower
- Short term targets
- “Our test department could test more efficiently if we do it later”

Example



Ways out!

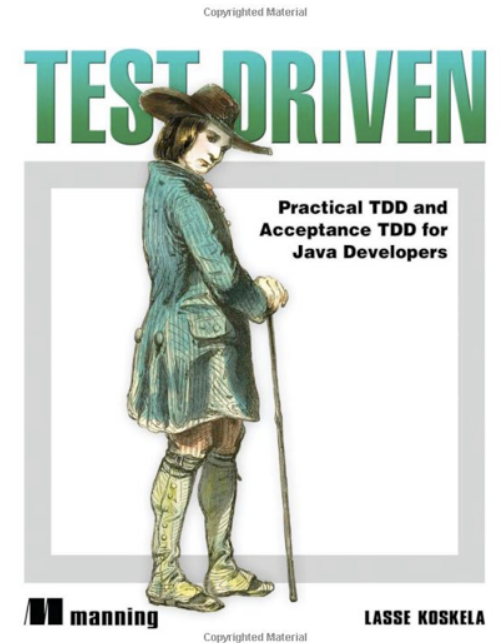
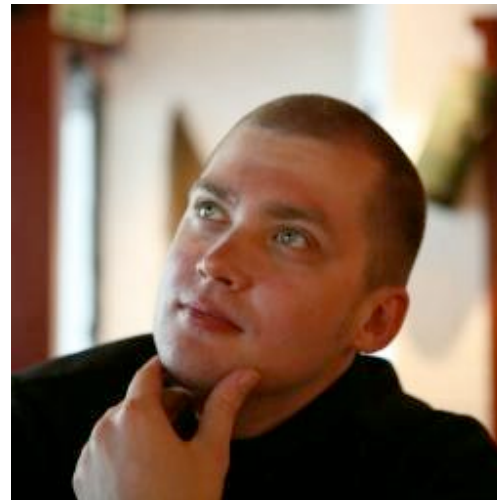
- Training and workshops in
 - Root cause analysis
 - Systems thinking
- Beyond Budgeting

#5

Mike Bria and Lasse Koskela



SIEMENS



#5

Assumption that Book Learning is Enough



- Though studying from books is an excellent way to learn, it is often not enough to get systematic improvement.
- “Yes, we do Scrum”
- “I write the test specification before the code”

Example



Ways out!

- Avoid... “not invented here”
 - Create a culture of looking outside
- Lots of coaching
- Outside training
 - Combined with internal knowledge sharing.

#4

Alan Atlas



amazon.com



#4

Individual Performance Evaluation and Reward



- Individual evaluation and reward destroys team-work and team accountability.
- “How do we reward individuals who perform better inside the team”

Example



Ways out!

- On Incentives
 - De-emphasize them
 - Not link them to productivity
 - Team incentives over individual ones
- Have targets without rewards
- Performance appraisals
 - Stop them
 - Team does own appraisals
 - Just fill in the forms...

#3

Lv Yi (吕毅)





#3

Unrealistic Promises

- Unrealistic promises and deadlines travel through organizations and cause developers to take shortcuts leading to legacy code.
- “Do it, it’s a customer promise”
- “Commitment”

Example

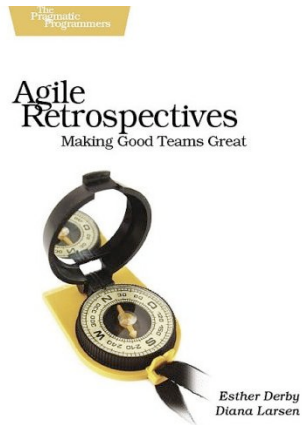


Ways out!

- Move Product Management closer to R&D
- Not allow promises to travel in the code
- Creating crap won't make you faster!
 - Make sure everyone understands this.
 - You need to go slower in order to go faster.

#2

Diana Larsen



#2

Assuming Agile Is All About Developers



- Agile development will have a huge impact in the whole organization, not only the development.
- Forcing Agile without thinking about the implications
- “We don’t need to change. Agile is for development”

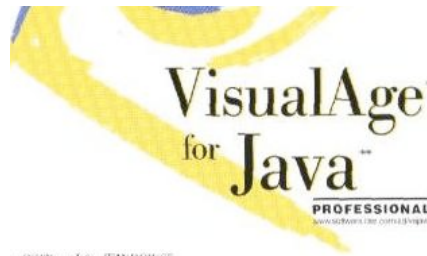
Example



Ways out!

- Flexible R&D -> Flexible Company
- Use Lean Thinking and Agile Company.
- Be careful with “functional career paths”
 - And other ways to cheat your employees
- Job Rotation!

#1 'big' Dave Thomas



Bedarra Research Labs



#1

Silver bullet thinking and superficial adoption

- Organizations adopt agile to solve all their problems, but then don't change a thing.
- “Do agile!”
- “Yes, we do Scrum, we have a daily Scrum twice a week”

Example

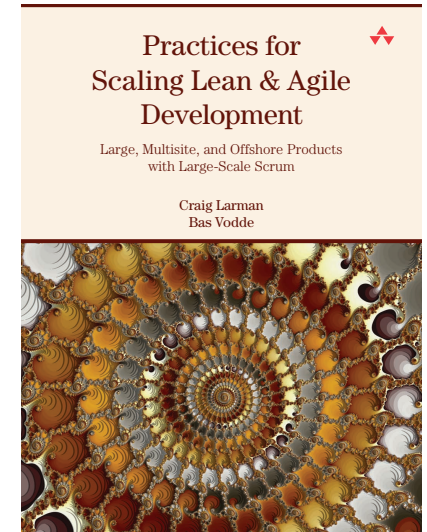
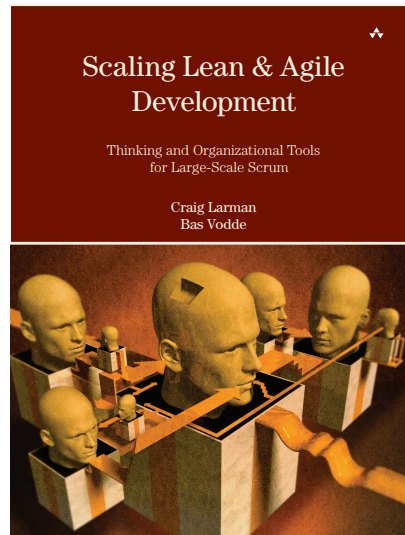


Ways out!

- Always talk about 10+ years
- Not have a change project ->
 - incorporate continuous improvement
- Do not “just rename”
- Don’t become a Cargo Cult.



#+1 Bas Vodde



#+1

gap between management and those doing the hands-on work



- Too often, management has no idea what is happening and people doing the work don't know what management tries to do.
- “What about lazy people”
- “We have to do this”
- “If we don't force developers, they will do nothing”

Example

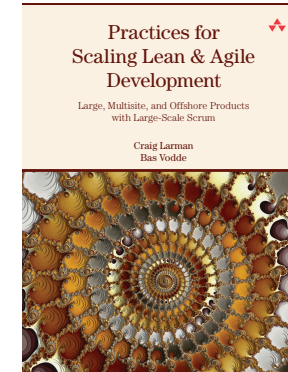
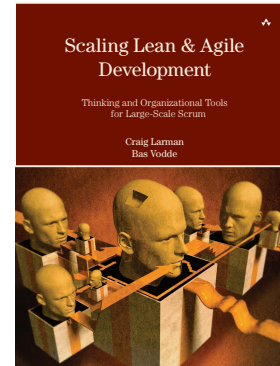
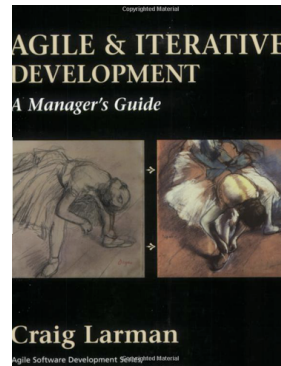
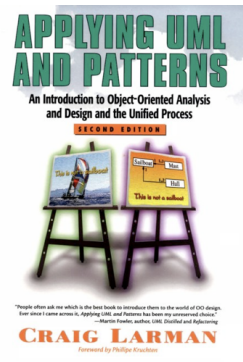
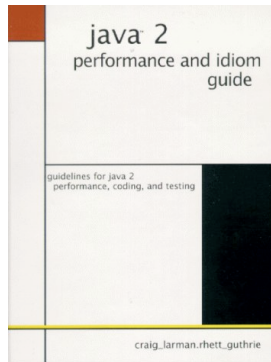


Ways out!

- Promote “Go See”
 - Not micro-management!
- Co-locate teams, managers.
- Avoid administrative managers
 - Automate or remove admin tasks
 - Managers-teachers
 - Coaching

#+2

Craig Larman



#+2



Culture of individual workers rather than teams and teamwork

- Taking a shared responsibility as a team is such a change from the individual driven practices in most companies
- “That is my task”
- “I’m a tester, I don’t do that”

Example



Ways out!

- Focus on team accountability in everything
 - Work assignment
 - Target setting
 - Rewarding/appraisals
- While product focus!