

BEYOND FAILING FAST

An Agile/Lean Toolkit for optimizing your
Way of Working (WoW)

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Project Management Institute

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The Plot

About me

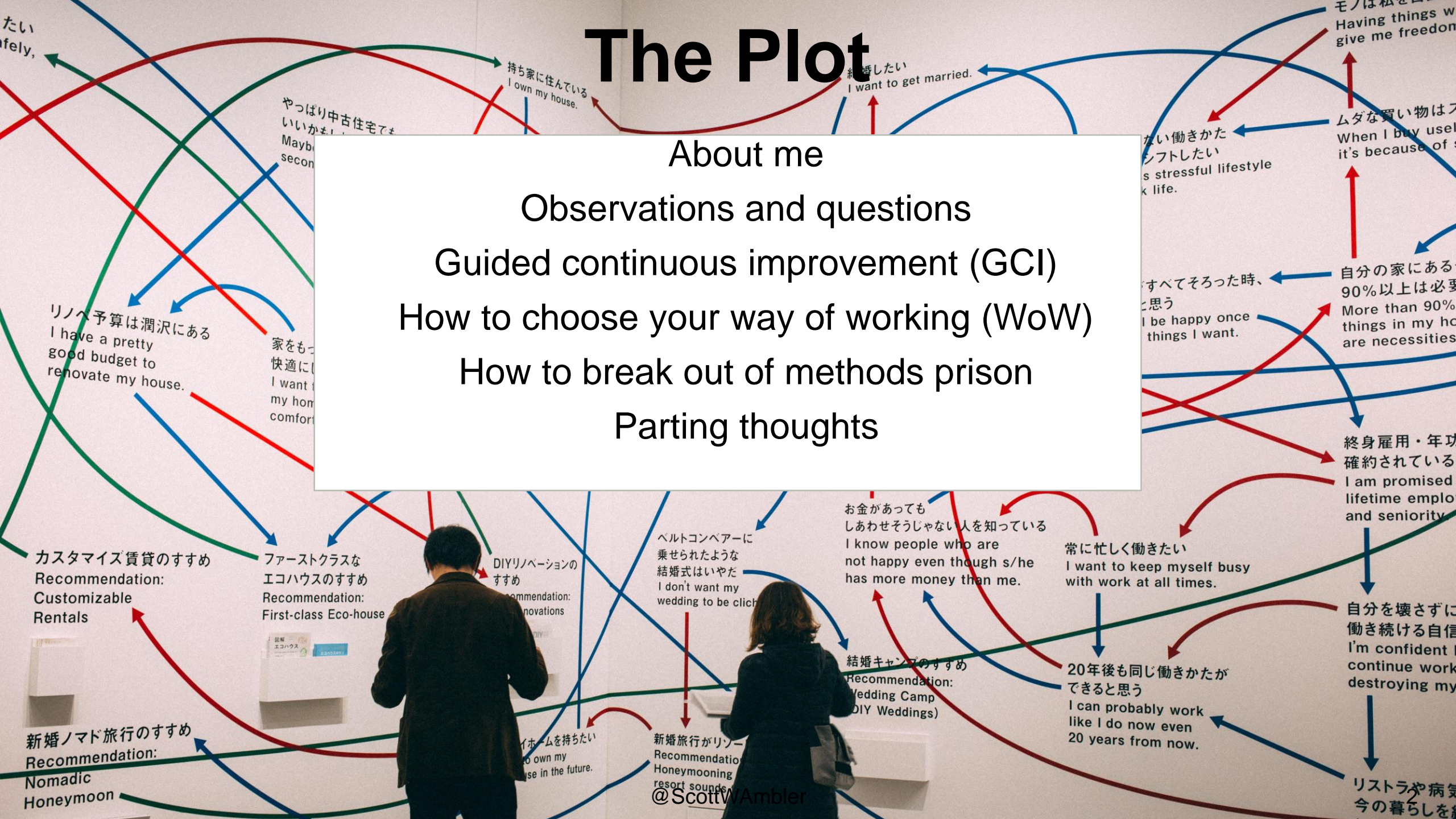
Observations and questions

Guided continuous improvement (GCI)

How to choose your way of working (WoW)

How to break out of methods prison

Parting thoughts



I survived Shabbat!

Luckily I Came Prepared



Scott Ambler

Father of Olivia and husband to Beverley

Vice President and Chief Scientist for Disciplined Agile at PMI

Thought leader behind Agile Modeling (AM) and Agile Data (AD)

Co-creator of the Disciplined Agile (DA) toolkit

Author of 20+ books

Advisory Board Member for SEMAT, ScaleFree Inc., and Architectural Thinking Framework



Some Observations



It is time to break
out of
“Methods Prison”
– Ivar Jacobson

The Essentials of Modern Software Engineering

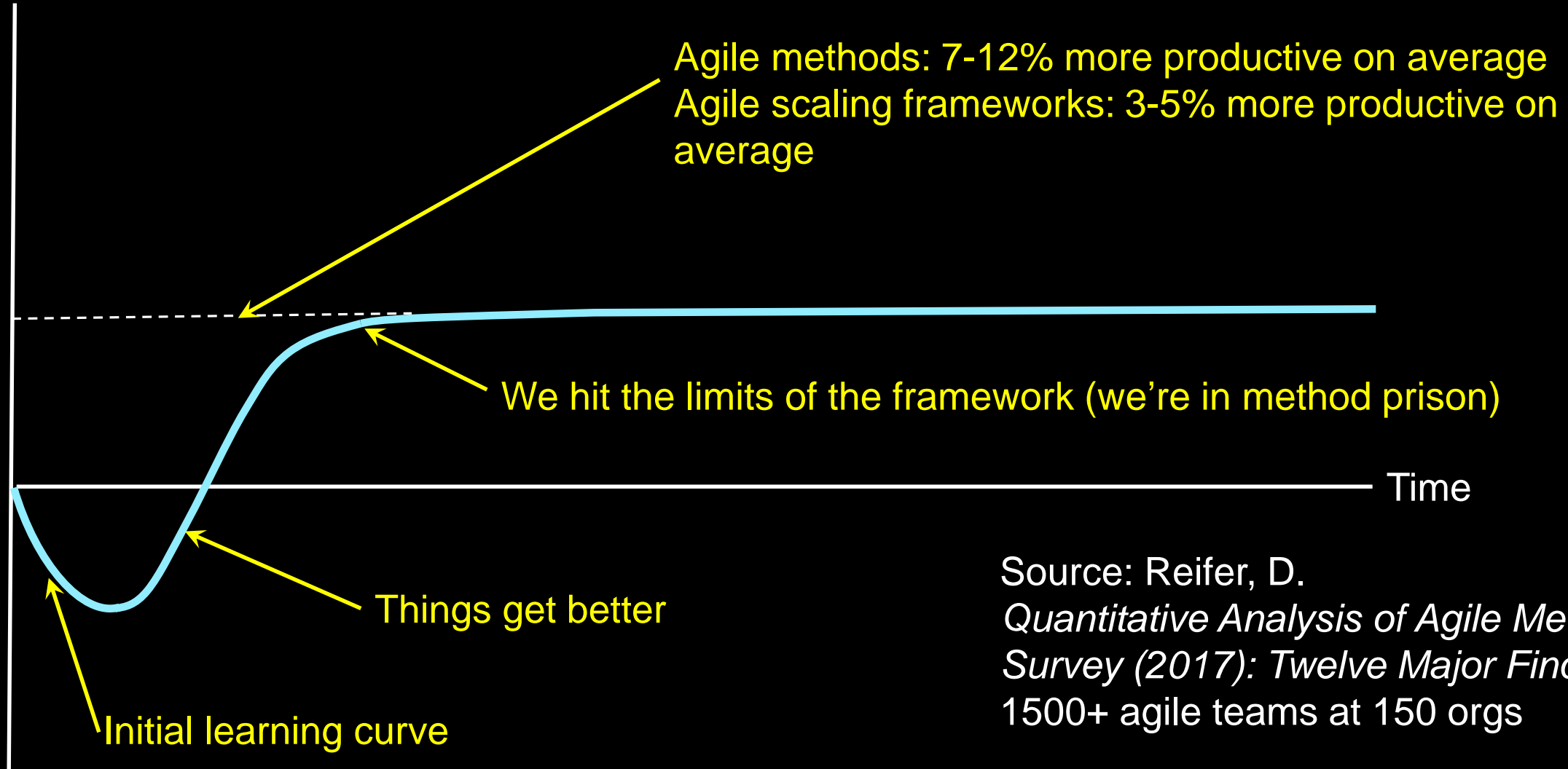
*Free the Practices
from the Method
Prisons!*

Ivar Jacobson
Harold “Bud” Lawson
Pan-Wei Ng
Paul E. McMahon
Michael Goedicke



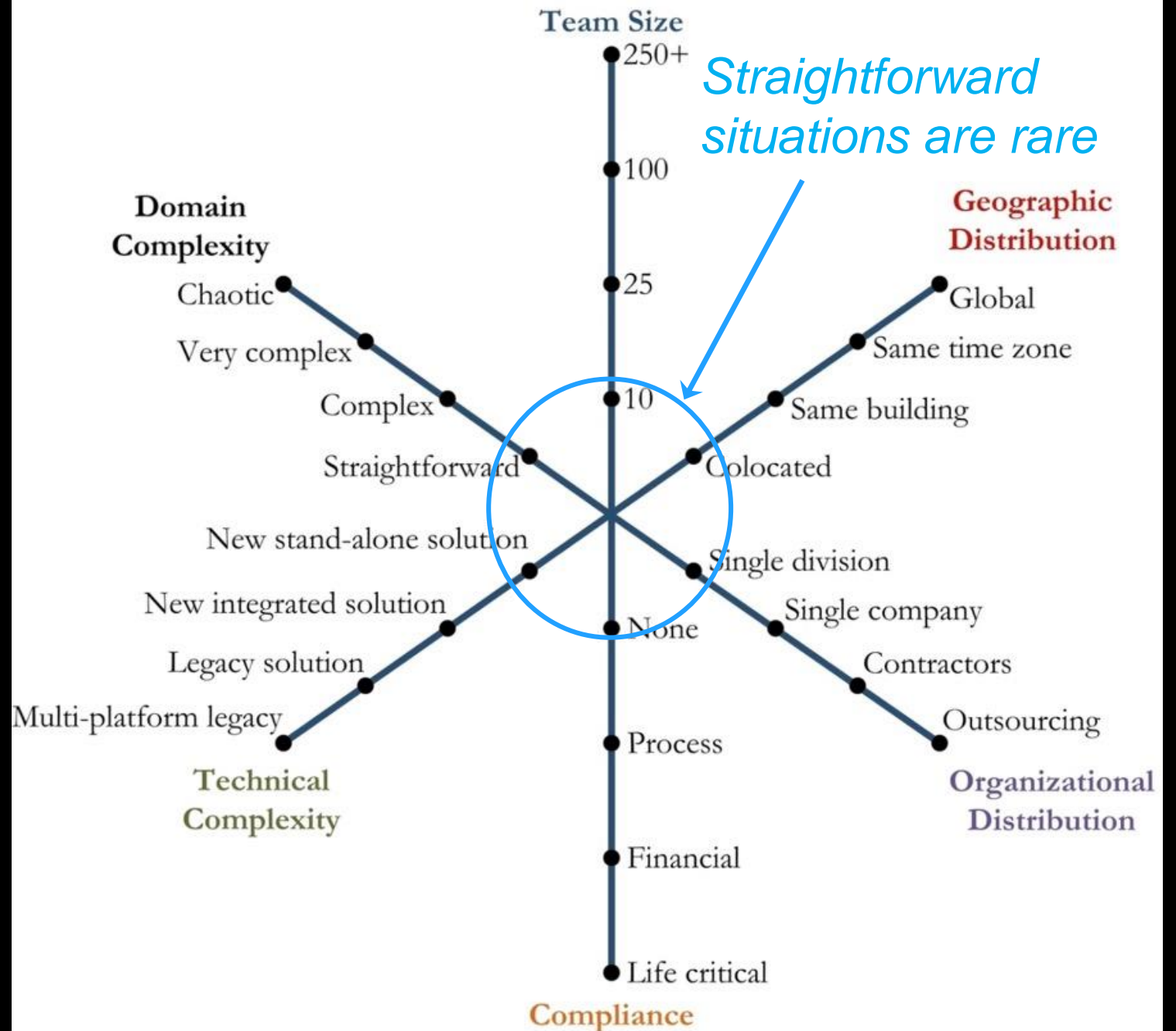
Adopting a Prescriptive Method/Framework Helps a Bit

Effectiveness



Source: Reifer, D.
Quantitative Analysis of Agile Methods Survey (2017): Twelve Major Findings
1500+ agile teams at 150 orgs

Context Counts



One process
does not fit all

mens+
womens

USA	EUROPE
Women	
5	35
5½	36
6	36½
6½	37
7	37½
7½	38½
8	39
8½	39½
9	40½
9½	41
10	41½
10½	42
11	43
11½	43½
12	44
13	45½
Men	
5	37
5½	37½
6	38
6½	38½
7	39½
7½	40
8	40½
8½	41½
9	42
9½	42½
10	43
10½	44
11	44½
11½	45
12	45½
12½	46½
13	47
13½	47½
14	48½
15	49½
16	51

size
conversion

Transformation is Really Hard

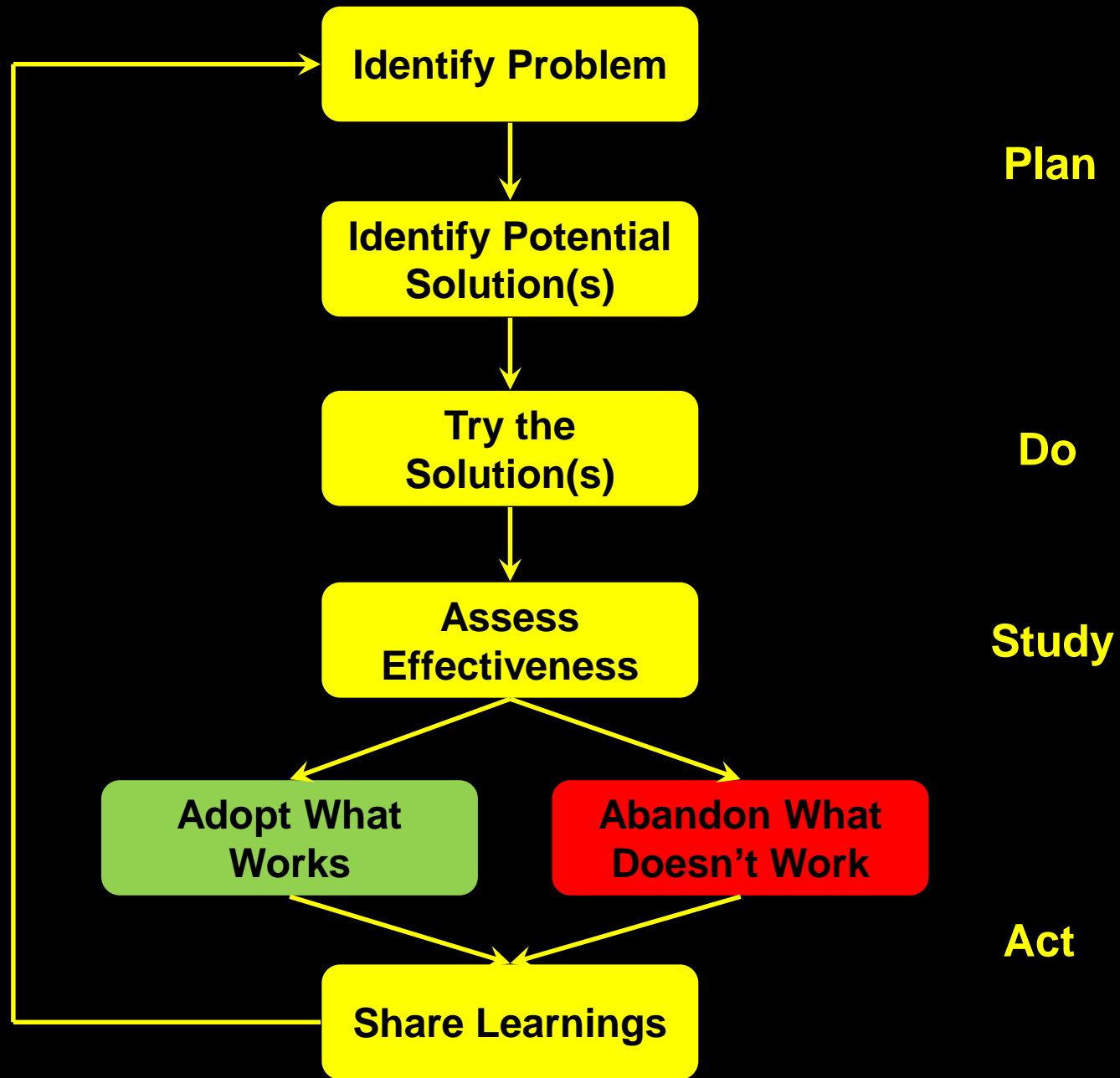
THINK
OUTSIDE
FRAMEWORK
THE BOX

@ScottWAmbler

How do apex-level competitors improve?



Kaizen Loops: Improve via Experiments



Continuous Improvement via Kaizen Loops

Effectiveness

Time



Failing slowly is
expensive



Failing fast is
inexpensive,
enables learning,
and reduces risk

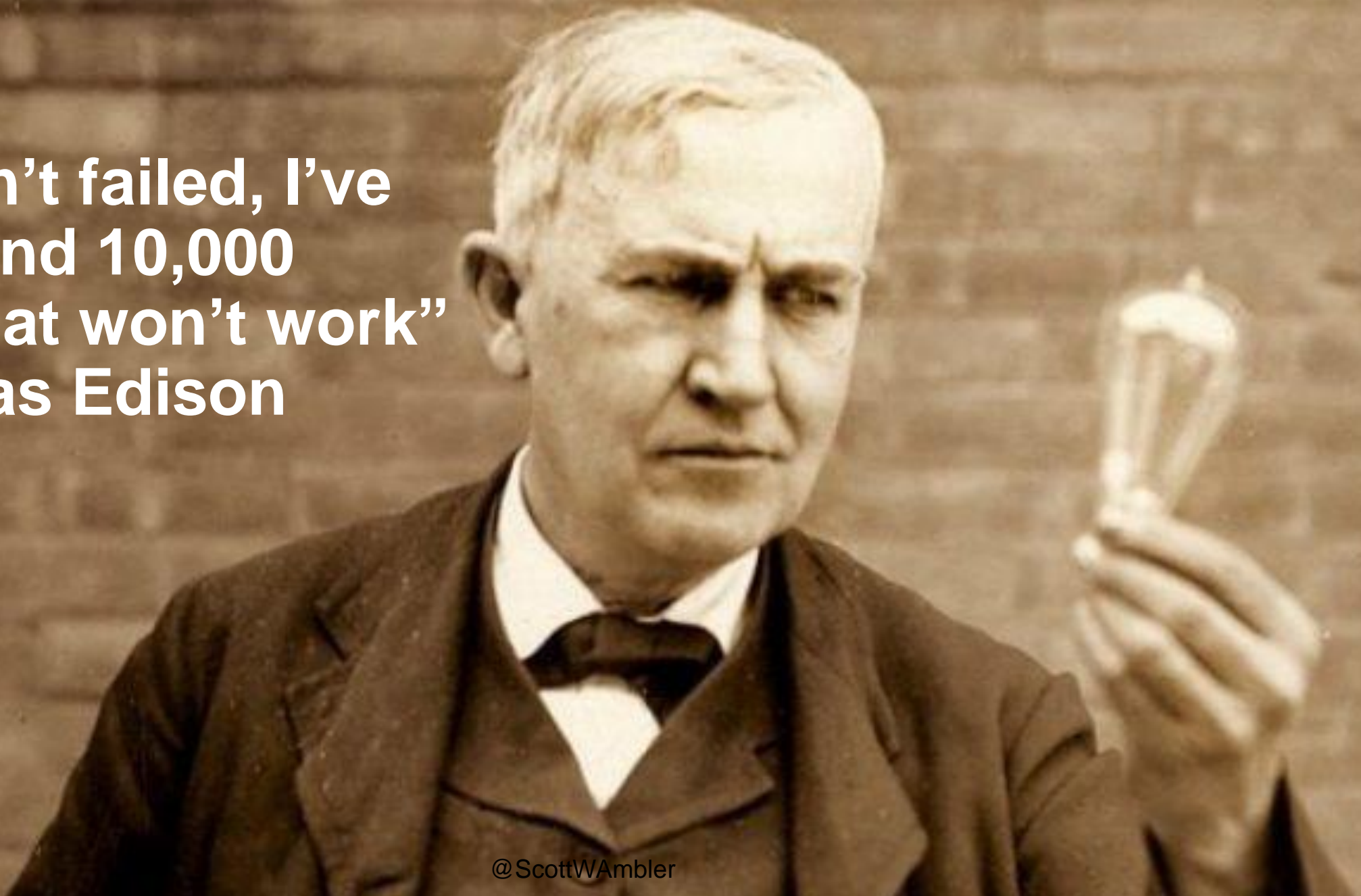


Can we do better?

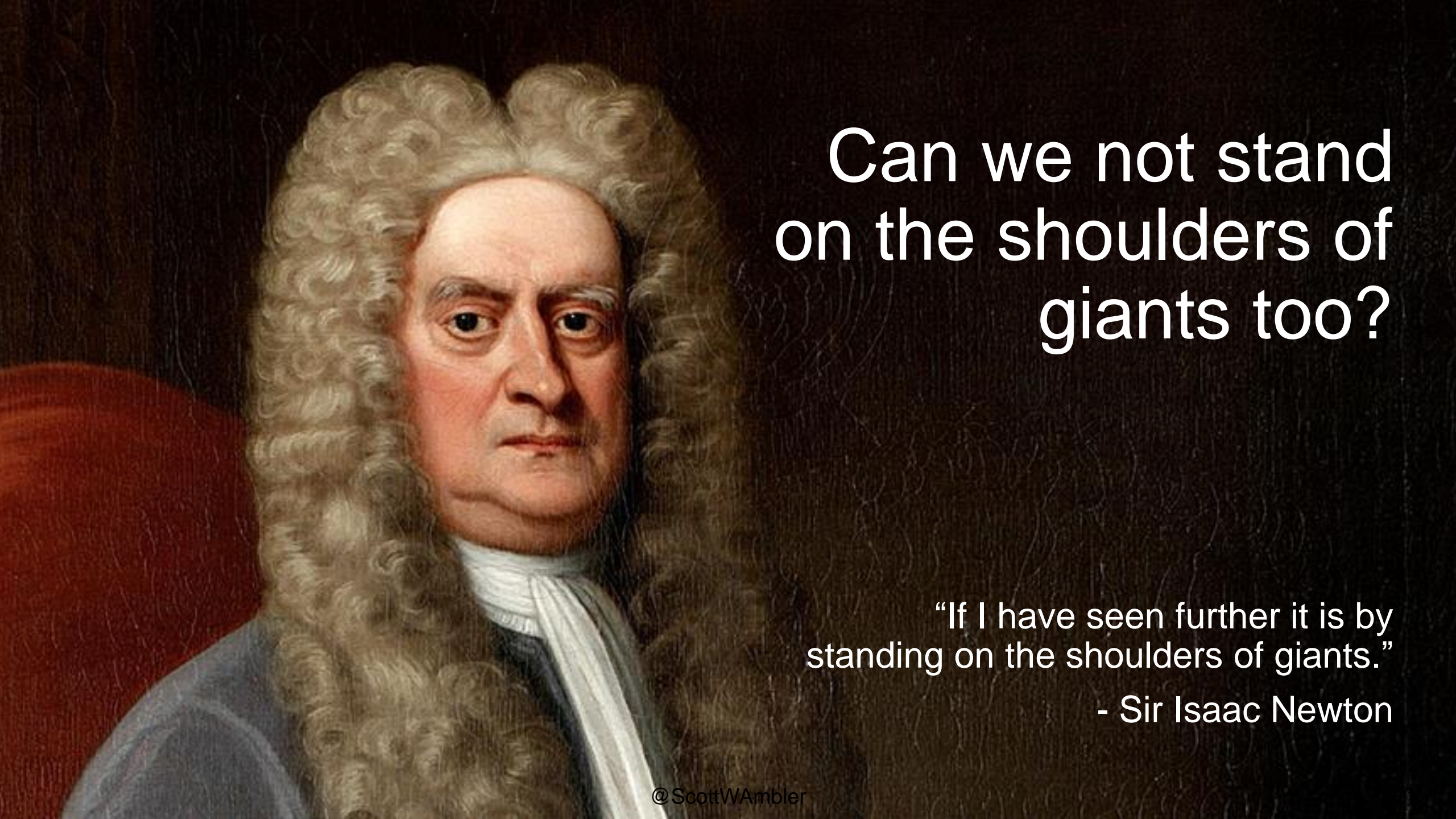
Actually, can we do a lot better?

Is “Let’s fail fast”
a great way for agile coaches
to avoid admitting
that they’re in over their heads?

**“I haven’t failed, I’ve
just found 10,000
ways that won’t work”
- Thomas Edison**



The “fail your way to success”
philosophy wears thin very quickly
amongst the people paying the bills.

A portrait of Sir Isaac Newton, showing him from the chest up. He has a long, curly white wig and is wearing a blue coat with a white cravat. He is looking slightly to the right of the viewer. The background is dark and textured.

Can we not stand
on the shoulders of
giants too?

“If I have seen further it is by
standing on the shoulders of giants.”

- Sir Isaac Newton

Although you are in a unique situation, you are dealing with problems that have been faced, and overcome, by thousands of teams before you



**Succeeding early is
better than failing fast**

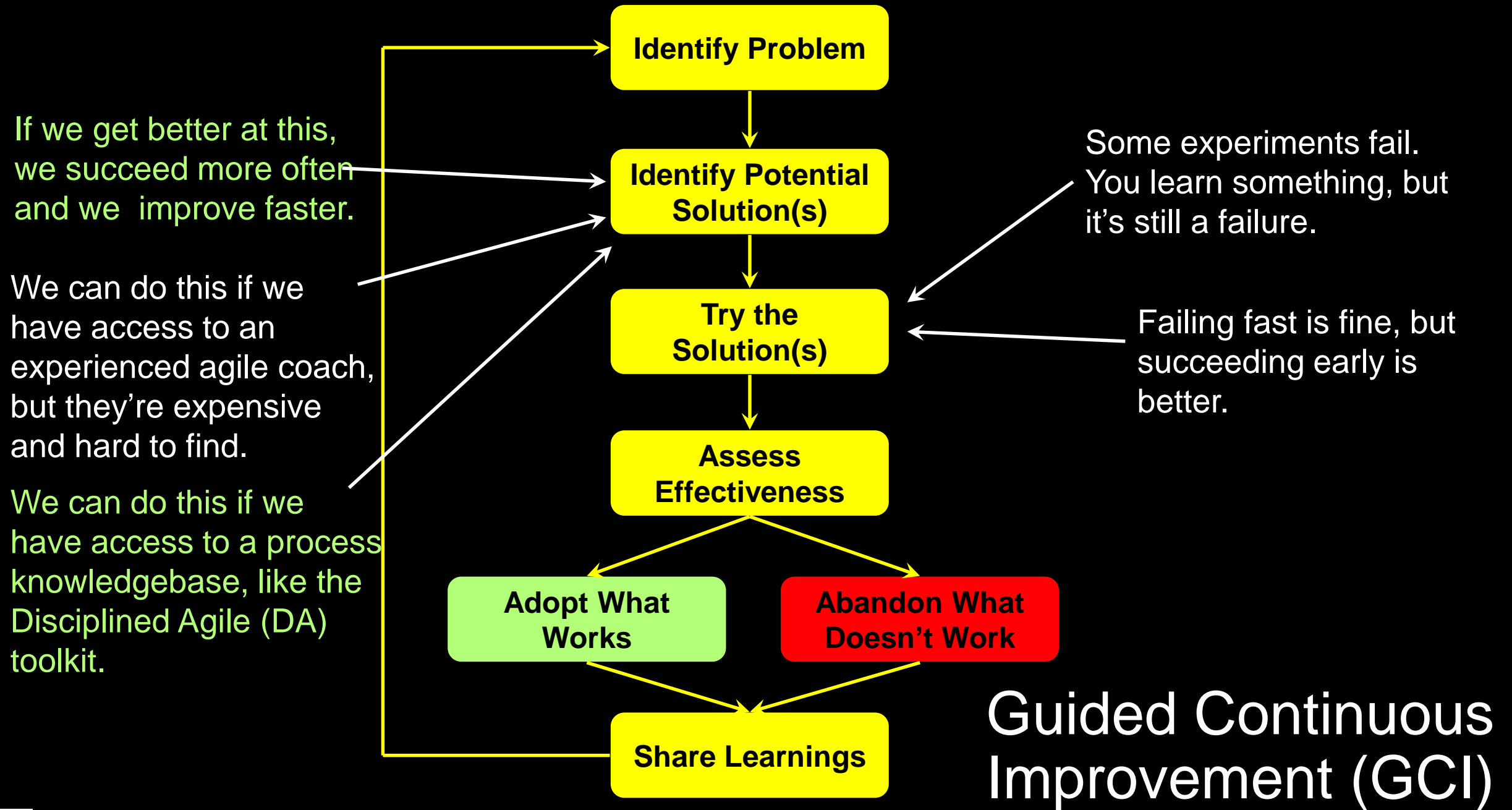
Guided Continuous Improvement (GCI)



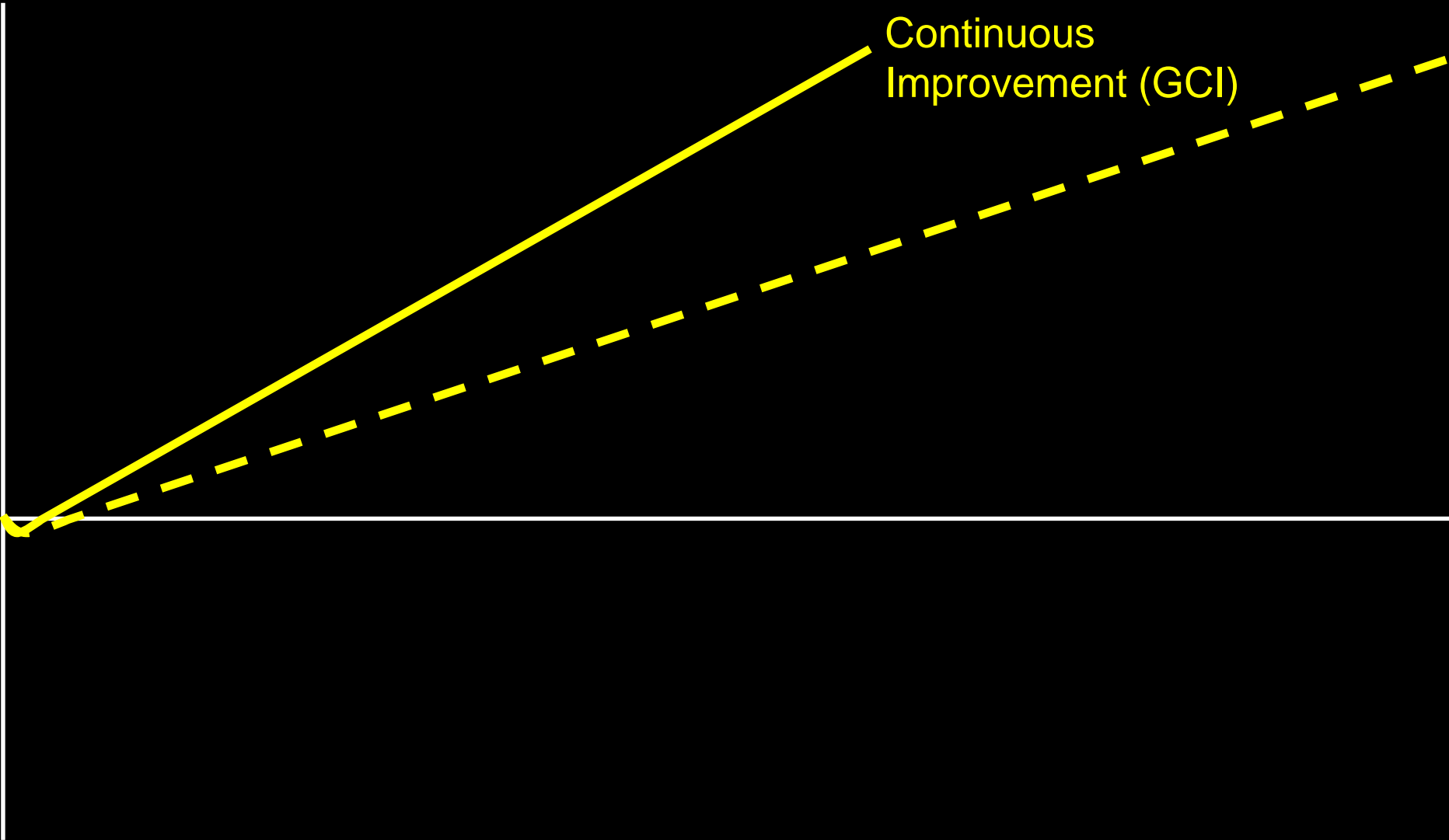
If we get better at this, we succeed more often and we improve faster.

We can do this if we have access to an experienced agile coach, but they're expensive and hard to find.

We can do this if we have access to a process knowledgebase, like the Disciplined Agile (DA) toolkit.



Effectiveness



Guided
Continuous
Improvement (GCI)

Continuous
Improvement

Time



Let's work through an example

When producing a solution for our stakeholders, how do we explore scope?

Explore Scope

What issues should we work through when exploring scope?

Explore Scope

How will people use our solution?

What information should we collect?

What business process do it support?

How will people interact with it?

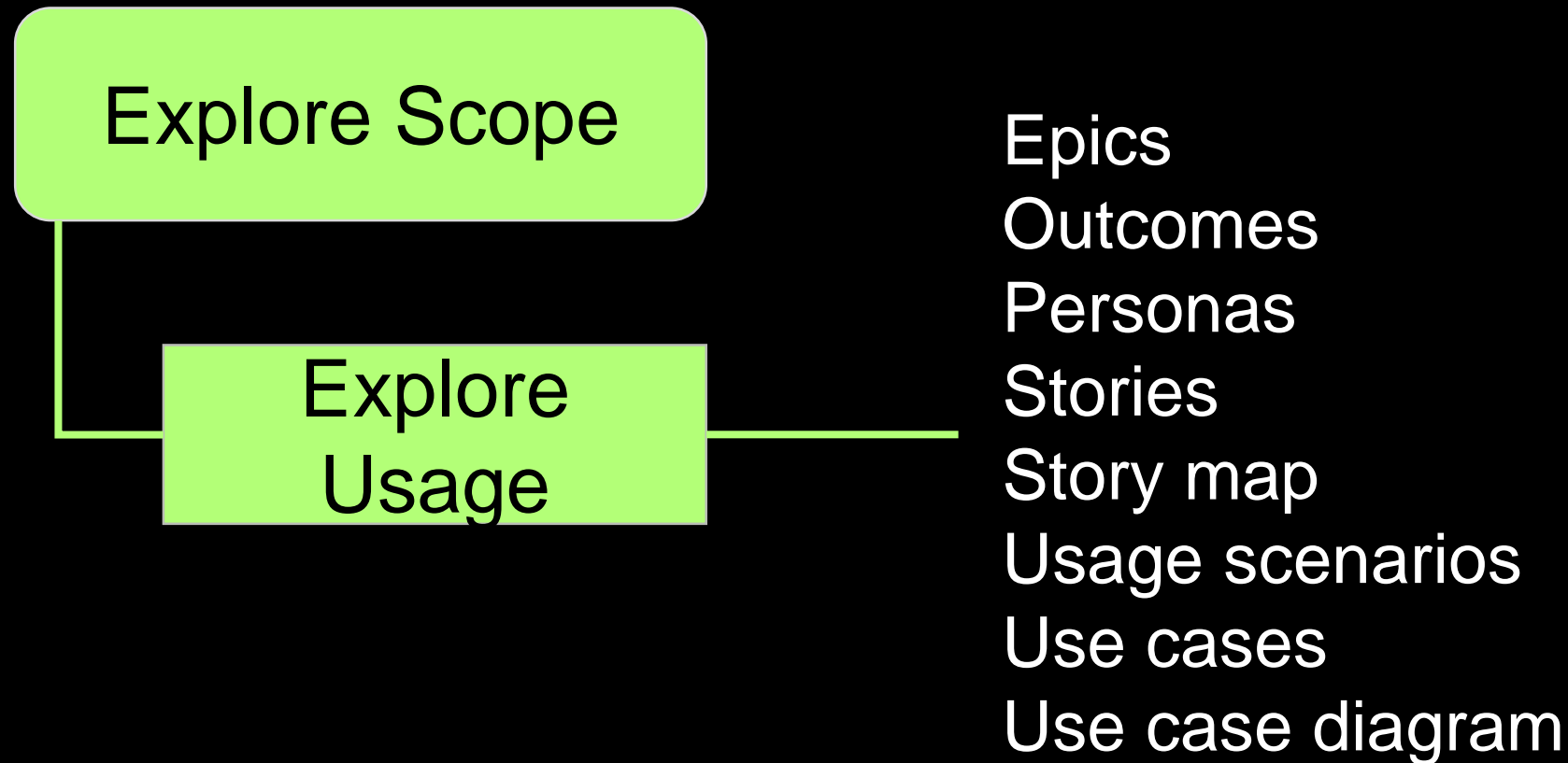
What quality aspects are important?

How will we work with stakeholders?

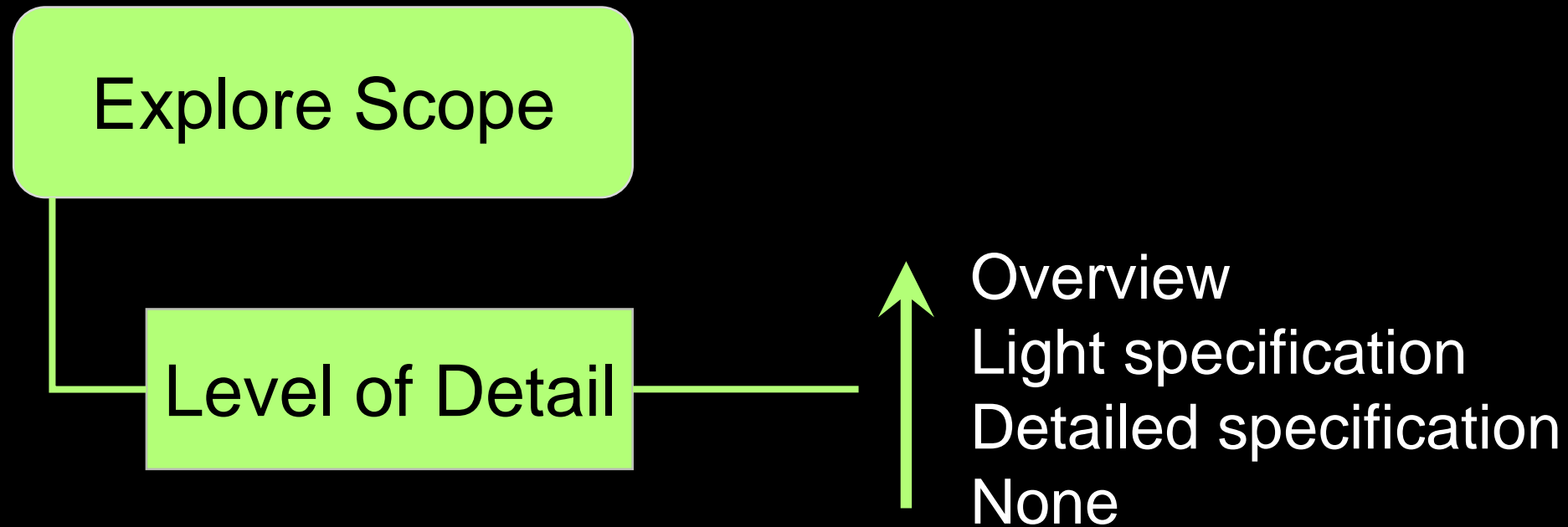
Do we need to document the requirements?

How will we embrace evolving requirements?

People need potential answers to the questions

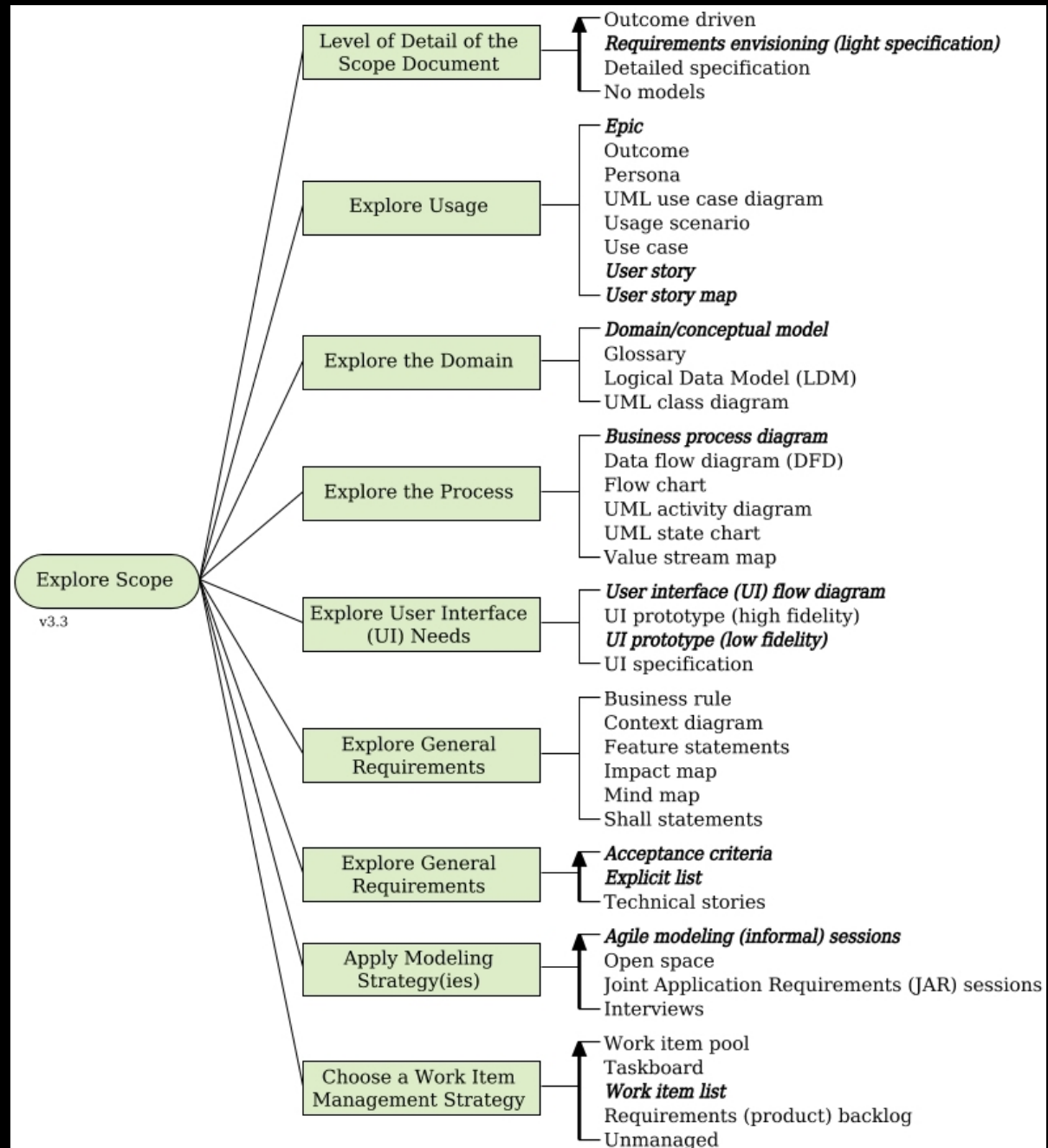


Sometimes we discover that some strategies are better than others



With a simple map, Disciplined Agile (DA) makes it easier to stand on the shoulders of giants

We call this a process-goal diagram





Choosing Your Own Way of Working (WoW)



Teams Own Their Process



- Tailoring sessions
 - Early in the lifecycle
- Retrospectives
 - Throughout the lifecycle
 - Identify a problem area
 - Look in the DA knowledgebase for suggestions
 - Choose a likely candidate to experiment with
- Experiment
 - Try out a practice/strategy in your environment
 - Measure the results
 - Aim is to determine whether the new strategy works well for you

Time to get real

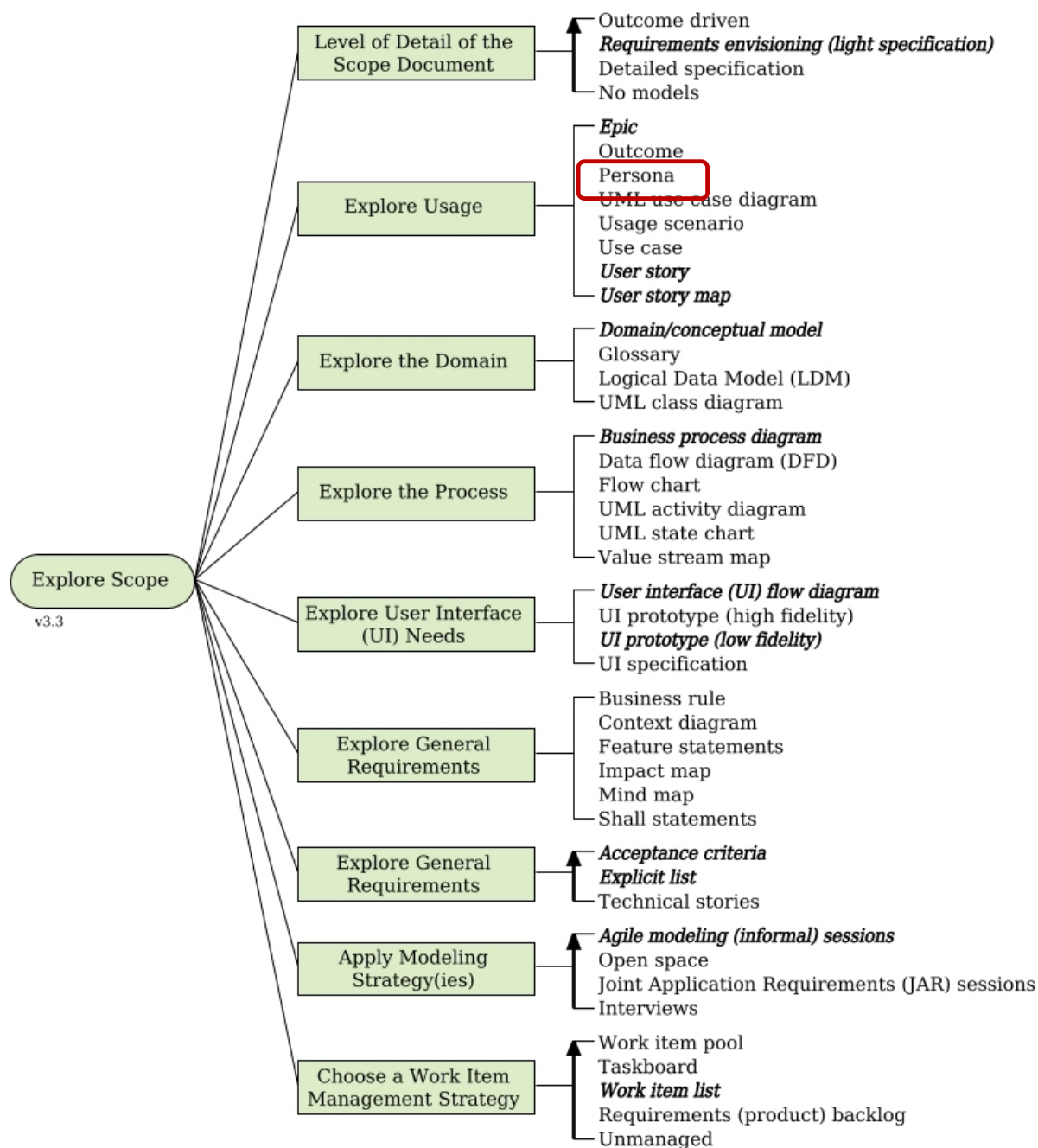
We've released new app into the marketplace but we haven't seen much adoption from millennials, an important part of our target customer base.

We reflect on the problem

Clearly we need to understand what millennials want

We don't have existing customers who are millennials, so our Product Owner has no one to work with

Our team has never run into this problem before, including our coach

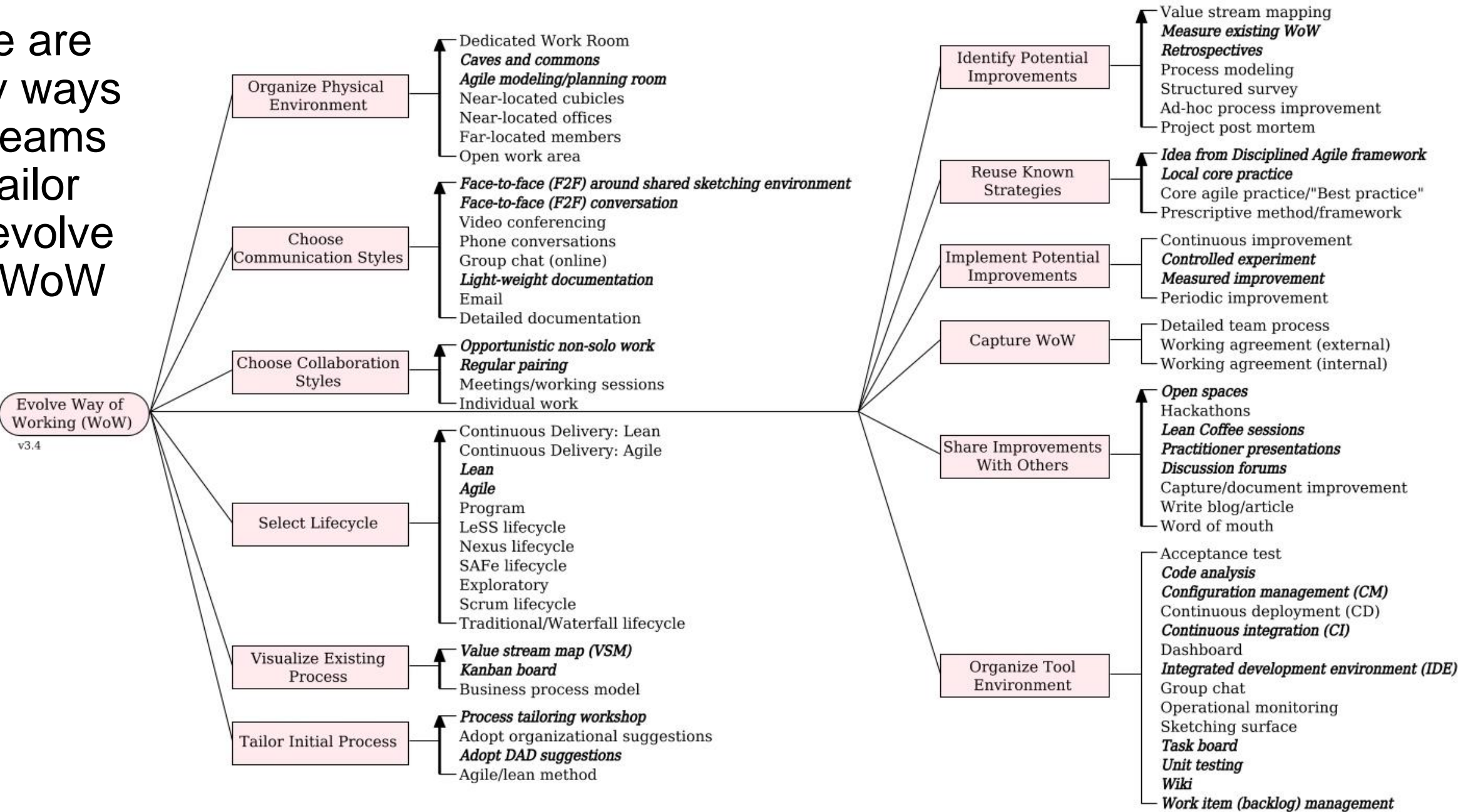


Explore Usage

There are many ways to explore how people will work with our solution. Although there is significant focus within the Agile community on user stories and epics, these aren't our only choices. Disciplined Agilists prefer to use the best technique for the situation they face, and as you can see in the table below there are several options available to us.

Options (Not Ordered)	Trade-Offs
Epic. Large stories that take a lot of effort, often multiple iterations, to complete. Epics are typically organized into a collection of smaller user stories [W]. Sometimes Epics are referred to as Features or User Activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for high-level program planning. Appropriate level of detail for low priority work since the details are likely not well understood yet and are likely to change anyway.
Outcome. An outcome describes a desired, measurable result that is pertinent to our stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes describe what stakeholders would like to achieve and why they would like to achieve that, but not how to do so. Provides teams flexibility in how to achieve the desired outcome. Useful to capture high-level stakeholder needs.
Persona. Detailed descriptions of fictional people who fill roles as stakeholders of the solution being developed [W].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used as a technique to build empathy for users as real people, and to understand the optimal user experiences for each. Useful when we don't have access to actual end users, or potential end users. Can be used as an excuse not to work with actual users.
Unified Modeling Language (UML) use case diagram. Diagrammatic notation for a textual use case [W, ObjectPrimer].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puts use cases, and potentially usage scenarios and epics if we're flexible, into context. Can promote requirements reuse via <<include>> and <<extend>> relationships. Can motivate unnecessary complexity via <<include>> and <<extend>> relationships.
Usage scenario. Describes the step-by-step interaction between a user/actor and the solution. Similar to acceptance criteria, although tends to cross the equivalent of several stories. Also known as a use-case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful to flush out all the different ways that a solution can be used, often putting granular requirements such as stories or features into context. Danger of becoming a set of detailed requirements. Scenarios are typically less structured than

There are many ways that teams can tailor and evolve their WoW



Breaking Out of Methods Prison



Start where you are

Do the best that you can in the situation that
you face

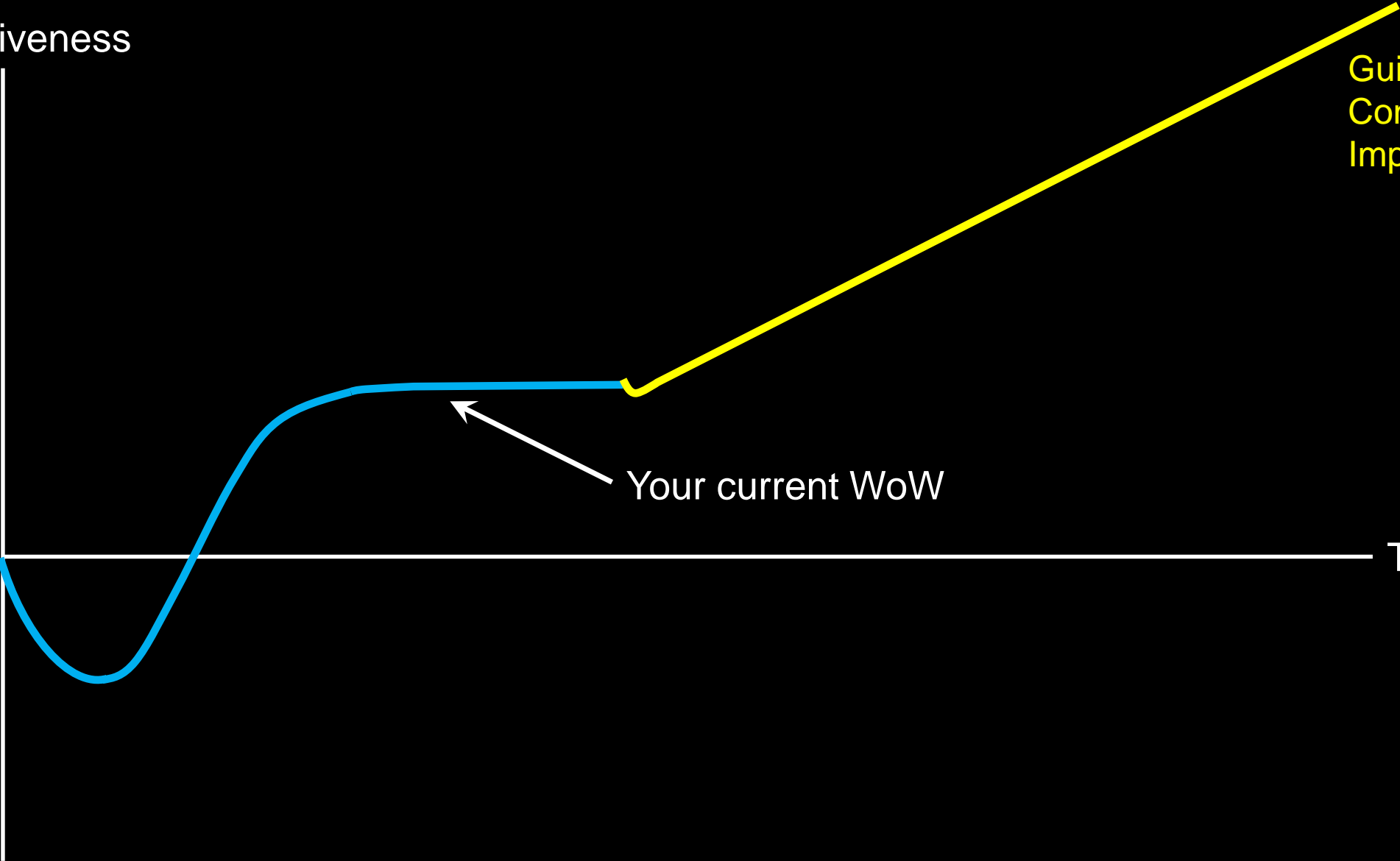
Always strive to get better

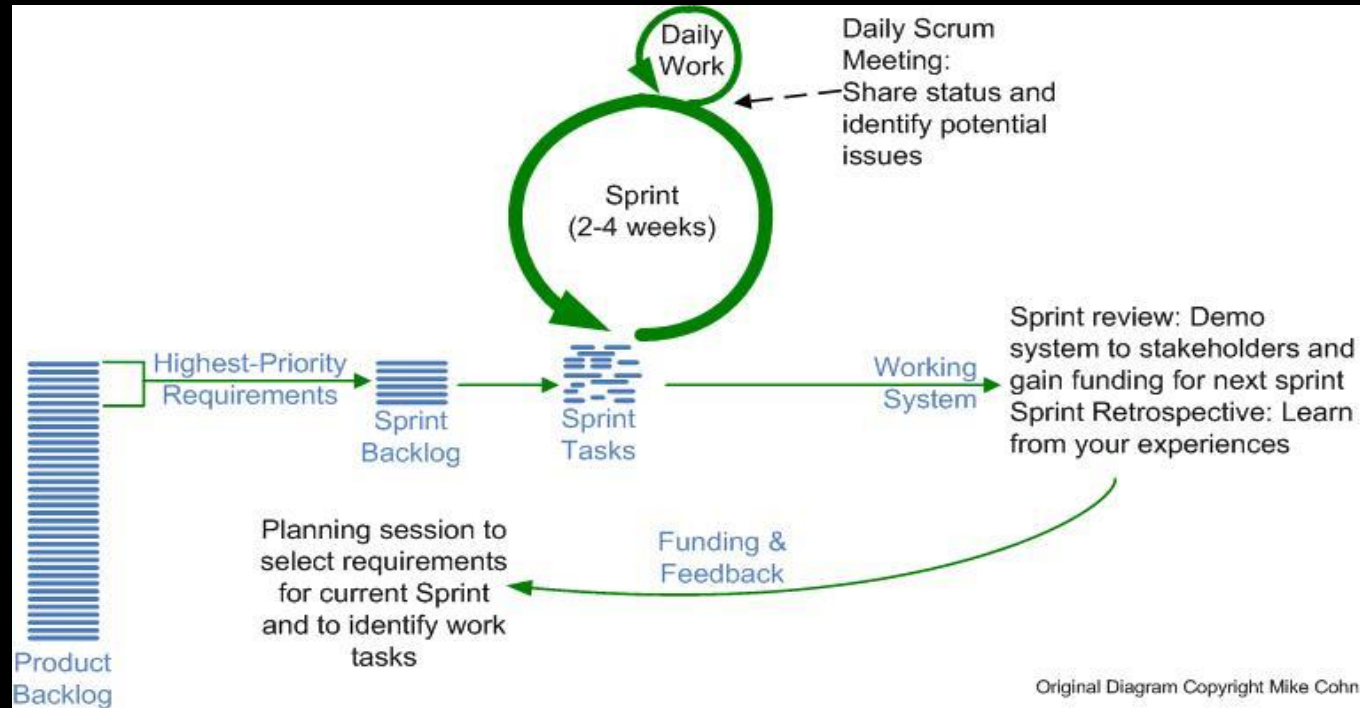
Effectiveness

Guided
Continuous
Improvement (GCI)

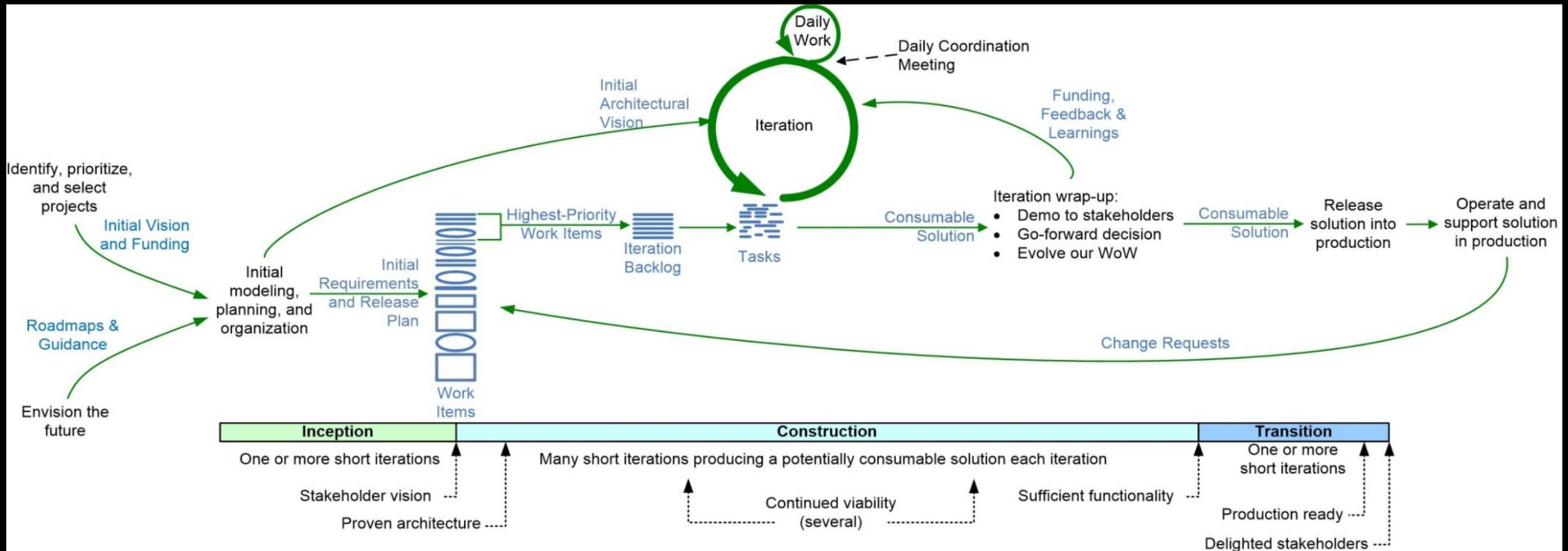
Your current WoW

Time





Look beyond simplistic answers...



... and embrace the complexity that you face





Agile



Continuous Delivery:
Agile



Exploratory



Program



Lean



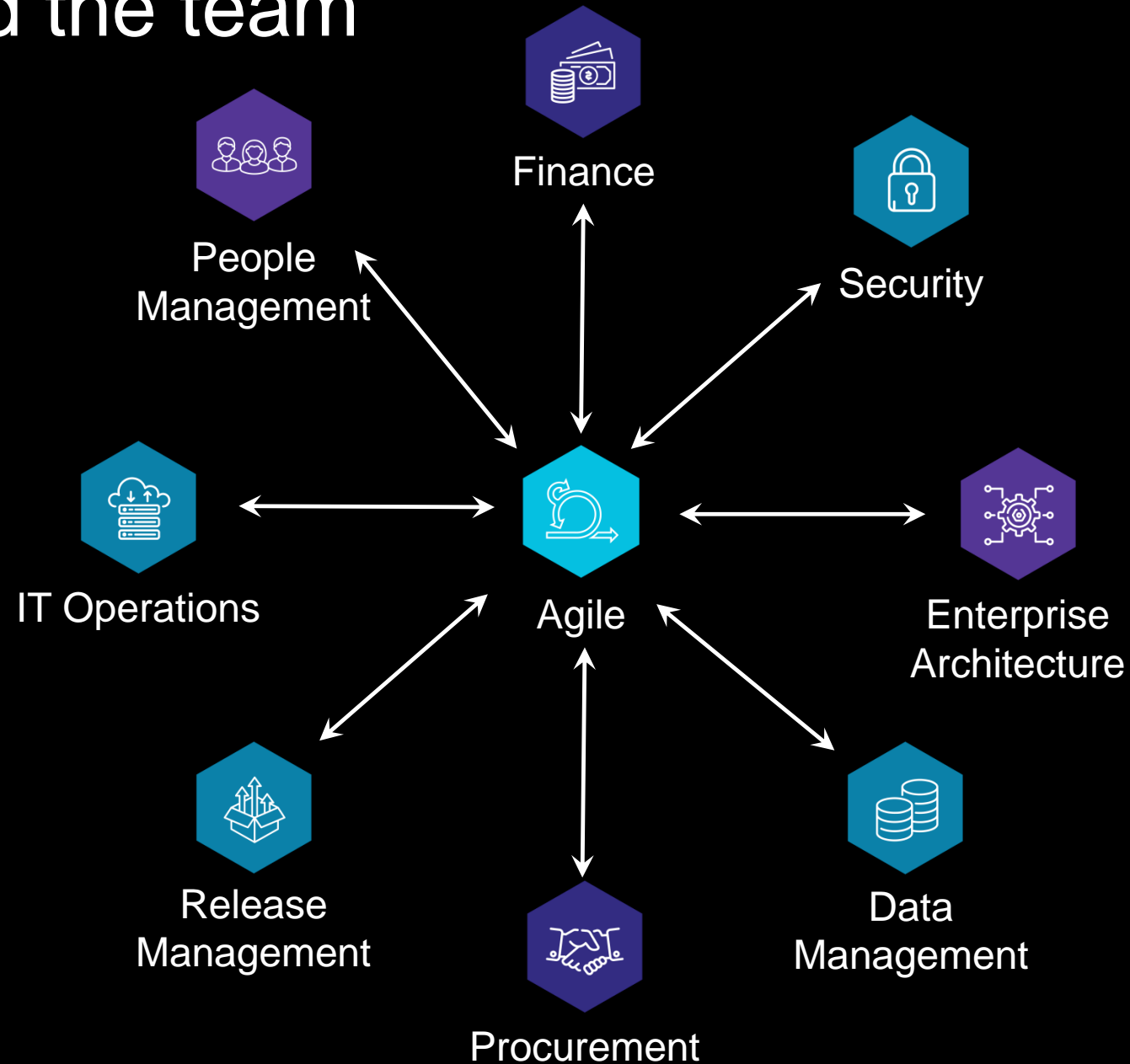
Continuous Delivery:
Lean



Serial

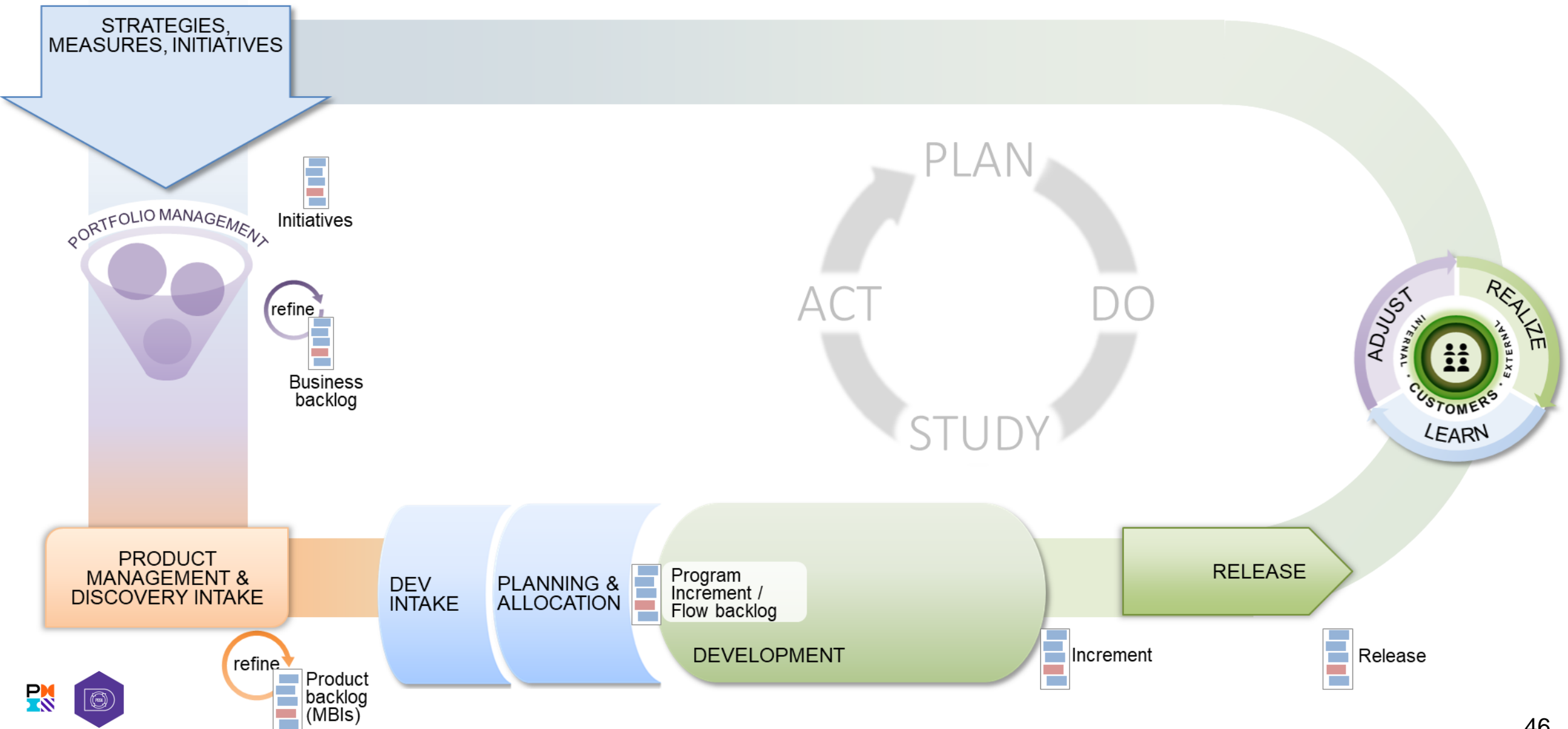
Allow teams to choose the most appropriate
lifecycle for their context

Look beyond the team





DA FLEX: The Flow of a Value Stream



We also need to look beyond value streams towards business agility

Disciplined Agile Enterprise



Enterprise
Architecture



Research &
Development



People
Management



IT
Governance



Asset
Management



Transformation



Finance



Sales



Procurement



Legal

Value Streams



Portfolio
Management



Strategy



Product
Management



Marketing



Governance



Business
Operations

Disciplined DevOps



Disciplined Agile
Delivery (DAD)



Security



Data
Management



Release
Management



Support



IT Operations

Foundation



Mindset



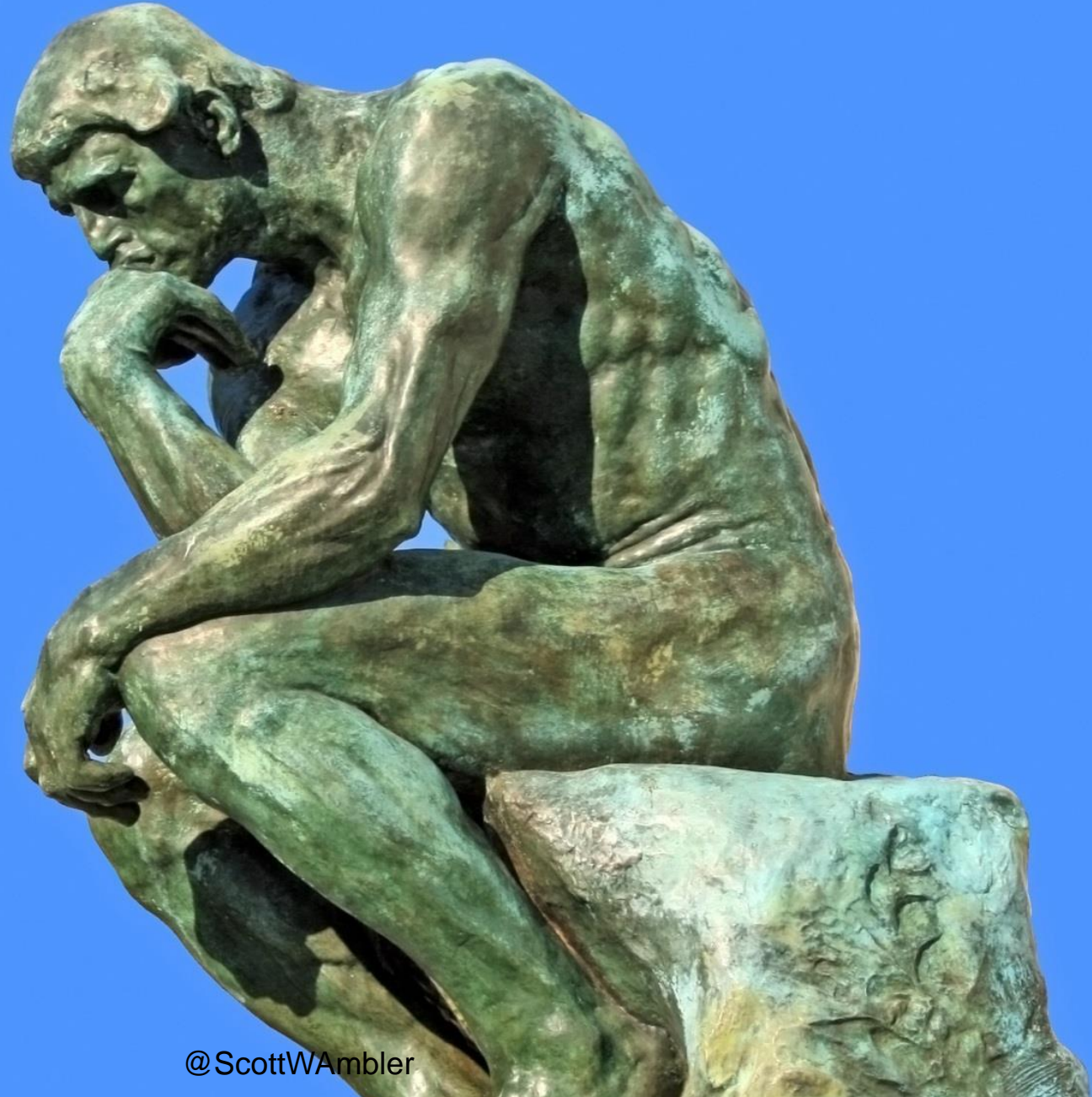
Agile



Lean



Parting Thoughts



Agile methods and frameworks
give you a fish and feed you for
a day.

The Disciplined Agile (DA)
toolkit teaches you how to fish
and thus feeds you for life.





You can choose to be an apex predator, or you can choose to be prey

Effectiveness

Disciplined Agile
Gets you out of Method Prison
with a bit of guidance



Guided
Continuous
Improvement (GCI)

Your current WoW

Time

Start where you are,
do the best that you can in the situation that you face,
and always strive to get better.

Thank you!
scott.ambler@pmi.org



About Project Management Institute (PMI)

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