



## AGILE / DEVOPS

*At this 07.28.22 Roundtable 55, NOREX Select Members from Fortune / Forbes 1000 organizations discussed experiences with Agile; transitioning from Waterfall projects to Agile; framework to transition from Waterfall mentality to Agile mentality; promoting a cultural mindset change from Waterfall to Agile across the organization; best practices when working in a portfolio with a mix of Agile, hybrid, and Waterfall projects; rolling out a DevOps initiative; and the necessary amount of standardization across all development teams vs giving them the autonomy to operate and use what works best.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[An IT Manager just starting his organization's Agile journey](#) questioned what others had learned when transitioning from Waterfall projects to Agile. A Software Development Supervisor shared that they have been using Agile across all of their app development teams. Their test automation engineers use the Agile approach across everything they do. His biggest lesson learned was to be diligent with your retrospectives. The most valuable sessions happen when your team is honest, upfront, and courageous enough to talk about issues that really need to be addressed. This promotes improvement every day and removes the fear to try something new and different. He understands the challenges going from what you would typically use in an infrastructure space to an Agile environment. However, with a Cloud architecture infrastructure there is more flexibility to be able to try different things. One organization shared that they claim to be Agile but have found they were just using points and sprints with no one doing anything with consistency. A year ago, they started down the path of SAFe and are just now adopting standard sprint practices. They have found that achieving a cohesive understanding of how to build Agile projects, how to communicate, and how to get the systems to work together is the biggest hurdle for their teams.

[Regarding standardization across all development teams](#) for tooling, sprint intervals, roll-up reporting, etc., a Member asked if others require a significant amount of standardization vs giving teams autonomy to operate with what works best for them and their particular business partner in the Agile DevOps environment. His organization wants to be Agile and have a high-level desire to standardize across the board and minimize cost to get everyone on the same tool and to minimize onboarding time. An organization that has everyone in the Cloud and thus functionally required to use the tools in the same way, have the same workflow, and same card types have found individuals do not organize their work, package their releases, or name their releases in a standard manner. To achieve standardization, they educate their teams on how to better compose their features or epics to stories. They have pockets of brilliance where they see an end-to-end project plan with great connectivity with all relevant information. They have come to realize that you need practice standards to have successful utilization of the tools to produce the information you need. An Enterprise Architect stated that his organization does dojos. A specialized group of people who have a unique skill go from development line to development line and teach new skills. They also use a product called CardBoard which is a software for requirements gathering. It helps to build out A3s and the value stream map.

#### **Additional headline topics:**

- [Framework / development plan](#) to help advance the transition from a Waterfall to Agile mentality.
- [SAFe approach](#) for scaling Agile.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Agile experiences.....	3
Poll: How much of your development is done via Agile? .....	3
Transitioning from Waterfall .....	5
Cultural considerations .....	6
Project timelines/interdependencies .....	9
SAFe usage .....	10
DevOps .....	11
Poll: What is your DevOps maturity level? .....	12
Development Team Autonomy.....	14
Products/Vendors/Technologies shared in this WebForum .....	16
Appendix: All Poll Results .....	17

**This transcript is from a videoconference. It may contain misspellings and grammatical errors. To preserve privacy, names have been abbreviated and organization names have been deleted. NOREX retains the unedited version in order to facilitate future networking. For networking assistance, please contact your NOREX Member Success Manager.**

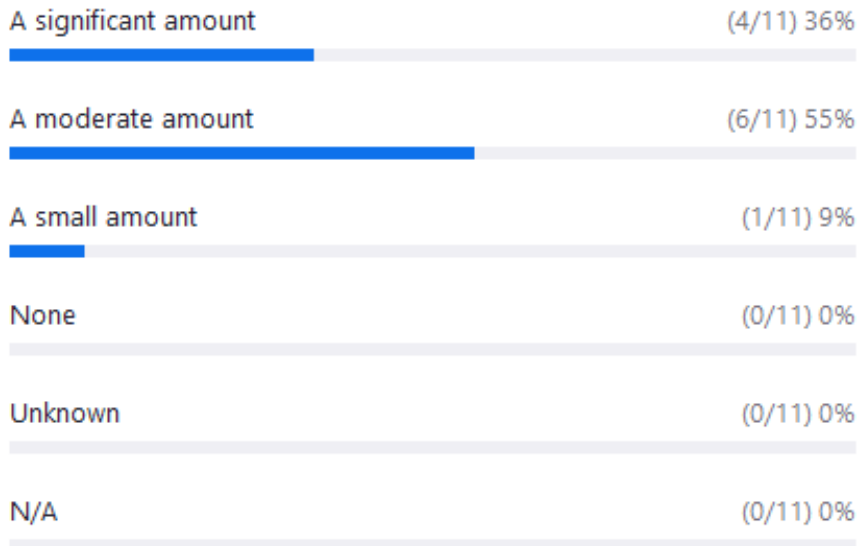
*© Copyright by NOREX, Inc., 5505 Cottonwood Lane, Prior Lake, MN 55372. The opinions expressed in this document / recording are those of NOREX Members, not necessarily those of NOREX, Inc. This document / recording is for NOREX promotional purposes and for use by NOREX Members only. Unauthorized use or distribution to non-NOREX Members is strictly prohibited.*

**NOREX *Select* Roundtable 55 Transcript**  
**Agile / DevOps**  
**July 28, 2022**

**Topic: Agile experiences**

**Moderator:** We'll start by focusing on Agile usage and then transitioning into DevOps. Please respond to the poll asking about usage.

**Poll: How much of your development is done via Agile?**



**Moderator:** Who is using Agile? What do you use it for? And then what do you *not* use Agile for? I think we've heard in the past that it might not be the right choice for some types of applications. Anybody want to start and just give us some general experiences with Agile? What kind of development is Agile really best for?

**Brett S.:** I'll jump in. We are actually using Agile to manage our central data management platform project, but as a company as a whole we have really just started transitioning to the SAFe Agile mentality probably nine to ten months ago from the Waterfall process. We're using it more of a project management aspect and deliverables and timetables.

**Moderator:** Okay thanks for getting us started. We do Agile events fairly often. It does seem to be growing. Would you say that it's still kind of a hybrid approach though between Agile and Waterfall?

**Brett S.:** Yes. And that's one of the difficulties we're having and that's why I was excited to be at this Roundtable, we're having trouble with some teams transitioning the mental capability from Waterfall to Agile.

**Moderator:** Let's go to our first submitted topic from Tim who's asking for advice when transitioning from Waterfall projects to Agile, what were the biggest lessons learned? Those of you who have a significant amount - there's four of you according to the poll - maybe some of you could chime in and talk about what you've learned. (no response) You've learned not to talk about it apparently?

**Tim S.:** The first rule of Agile is not to talk about Agile. (laughter)

**Noel S.:** I'll chime in a bit. We've been using Agile, and I've been here for nine years, and they'd already had an Agile practice adopted by the time I came in. Real quick, we just use Agile really across all of our app development teams. The team I have is a team of SREs and test automation engineers use Agile approach across the board in everything that we do. But as far as lessons learned, the thing is you've always got to take a risk.

The biggest take I have, is to be diligent with your retrospectives. Those are the moment when someone most valuable sessions that you have where your team has to be truly honest and upfront and courageous enough to talk about issues that they really need to address to continue to get better. It really has to do with how you can continue to improve day in and day out. Don't be afraid to try something new and different.

**Moderator:** Are you 100% Agile?

**Noel S.:** Yes.

**Tim S.:** Thanks Noel. That's what I was kind of looking for. We're just starting out on Agile in IT, so we're just kind of trying to build a base for it. I'm in the infrastructure operations area, so it doesn't really lend itself well to Agile and the way we have it set up today. We're looking at making those changes by that like we have a lot of manual building of processes. We don't have a lot of Cloud-based stuff yet.

**Noel S.:** The team that we have here Tim, just you said your infrastructure team, the team I have we predominantly just manage the Cloud infrastructure manager space for the website. I get the challenges as far as going from what you typically use in an infrastructure space to an Agile environment it's a big challenge.

But with Cloud architecture infrastructure space you do have a little bit more flexibility to be able to try different things. You're not setting up the bare metal like you are in a traditional infrastructure environment. Like I said we do it 100% it does lend itself to it.

**Melanie W.:** Hi. I'm sort of in a similar position I think as Brett. We claim to be Agile. I say claim because we had everyone saying they're Agile but they were just using points and sprints, but no one was doing anything consistently. About a year ago we started down the path of SAFe - I wouldn't say we're 100% there.

We are just now I think getting adoption standard sprint practices, so it takes a while to get where you feel you've got a cohesiveness of teams understanding. If you're using something like Jira, how to build your Agile projects, how to communicate, how to get the systems to work together. Sometimes that's the bigger struggle for these teams.

**Moderator:** Agile has been around a while. As younger people come into the field, are they coming in ready for Agile as opposed to maybe 10-15 years ago?

**Collin Z.:** Hi. I can answer that question. I graduated college like a year ago. Agile is a huge focus. We still covered all the other methodologies briefly at least, but Agile is what we used if we had like a capstone project or anything like that, that was the primary method.

**Moderator:** I'm going to show you my ignorance here. Obviously familiar with Waterfall and Agile. You called them methodologies. How many are there?

**Collin Z.:** And that's a good question.

**Moderator:** What are the ones that are taught still?

**Collin Z.:** Agile and Waterfall were the main two. I know that there were others, but we like hardly glanced at them. I don't remember what they were called.

**Moderator:** I think you're right. These are the primary ones, thanks Collin. Tim, go ahead if you want to follow up.

**Tim S.:** No I'm good.

### **Topic: Transitioning from Waterfall**

**Moderator:** All right. I think the next few questions are the continuation of what you're asking here. Let's go to them. Brett is with us. Is there a framework or development plan to help advance to transition from a Waterfall mentality to Agile mentality? Where are you in the Agile journey?

**Brett S.:** We are nine months implementing. We had a major step back. We tried to run before we could crawl. What we've learned in our process is a 10 to 15% increase in change or requirements with our engineers. We got significant pushback trying to get individuals to utilize the board, break down the user stories and refinements, create the tasks, and then using original estimates of story points.

We've regressed to a much more favorable Waterfall mentality in our project so we're looking for advice in how to increase the lean towards Agile. We have several individuals who've been with the company and the Waterfall mentality for years and they're resistant to change, so the transition has been difficult.

**Moderator:** Any advice for Brett? I think our next two or three topics are talking about changing the culture and growing the maturity level of Agile.

**Noel S.:** I'll just weigh in real quick on some of the lessons learned especially for those folks that are hardcore Waterfall mentality. Maybe don't use Agile terms and talking with them because they have a tendency to really be adverse to Agile in and of itself and are really a Waterfall mentality. Trying to use language that speaks to Agile practices and Agile norms but maybe not in Agile terms and maybe it's more so in terms of something they can understand.

It's not necessarily forcing them to completely change their way of thinking. It's a hard one. It has to be cultural, it's something has to be supported. Top down as the best way to get to get buy-in to help really drive that and proof of concepts with it. Take small items and work those through the Agile process and show how those work and just continue to use that as those ones as your baseline.

**Moderator:** I would assume that the Project Management Institute has licenses, frameworks, whatever guides to help people get started. Does anybody know about that, the PMI and what kind of resources they can provide? Typically, we've had Members in the past that have leveraged them. As I mentioned a lot of these topics are very similar.

**Tim S.:** One thing I noticed when going with the Agile is especially if you're very used to the Waterfall, to me Waterfall because of the structure and the way it goes through, and it's been developed for so long, people are used to a cadence that is maybe not as fast as what Agile tends to be. I think if there's a big tendency to chew off more than you can actually do in your sprints etc.

So what happens is you're going to get a lot of angst and anxiety on people who are associated with it. It kind of pushes back on being able to really embrace it and make it part of the way they work. I would say you have to kind of start balancing, making sure you don't over allocate. Make sure that you start with small things so that they can get used to the process before starting really pushing harder and getting more about throughput in the process.

**Moderator:** Is the fail fast attitude important to promote Agile? I think that old saying is if you're going to fail, fail fast. Is that part of it Tim?

**Tim S.:** I think Noel hit it on the head at the start with the retrospective. It does that is part of it but as long as your team - you go through that whole process of once you get to that performing stage with Agile and those people are open and honest about that retrospective, I think that'll help you get past that, that you won't fail as much.

Failing fast is great because it doesn't cost a lot of money, but nobody really likes to be associated with failing projects. The more they learn from it and do that again and again and again, I think it really builds that mentality to help us move forward.

### **Topic: Cultural considerations**

**Moderator:** Right, thanks for that. Let me advance through the next two topics. I think we're covering this. How do you promote cultural mindset change from Waterfall to Agile across your organization rather than forcefully mandate it? And then, what strategies do teams use to grow Agile maturity within the company? Is there resistance to change and pushback? It sounds like we're hearing that there has been. Levi, go ahead and tell us more.

**Levi B.:** I think a lot of people have alluded to the same kind of issue. There seems to be a high level commitment to Agile but a low level commitment to actually do it. They do just enough to have it to at least nominally claim that they are doing it as opposed to Waterfall. We're trying to take a "win hearts and minds" approach to implementing Agile but are meeting a lot of resistance and we're just kind of trying to avoid that forceful mandate of some of these processes. Just wondering if anybody has any tips there and I've heard of a few already.

**Buzz W.:** Good morning, everybody. We've been doing Agile, DevSecOps probably for six or seven years now. Quite mature in our journey down the Agile development process, to the point where the last two years we've actually migrated over into the infrastructure side of the house instead of just software development and the normal traditional places.

A couple of things that we did up front that really made a difference, Agile and Lean go kind of hand-in-hand. And the challenges when you talk about Lean, people start thinking about value stream mapping and oh, we're doing this because we want to create efficiencies, reduce headcount, do that type of stuff. I wish I could tell you that's not a true statement, but normally when that starts off that's exactly what McKinsey or somebody will come in and say well, we can do this. And I know it's going to cost you \$17 but we can save you \$47 because we'll show you how much better you can run. But as hard as that is, you've got to kind of start introducing that mentality.

Like someone said, don't talk about Lean, talk about Agile practices. Because Lean practices tend to make you shudder, because they think you're all about just looking at how you can get rid of people. And that's not it. You're really trying to find how you can effectively provide more time for people to do things that are really important. Once you get that done and you've got that in place, you really need to get the top-down leadership engaged in this and engaged all the way down to they should be doing Gemba Walk.

So if you don't have your Agile board set up and you're not meeting at least three times a week or every day to where you say okay let's do this Gemba Walk. Where are you at on this? What's your blockers? People always want to build these huge maps out on their boards about well this is this reason, this is why. No it's like what do you have in backlog? What's on deck? What's going to be the next thing you tackle on this? What's in progress? What are we going to get done this week? What's a blocker and then when is it done? And you build this on a two week sprint.

Everybody seeks one week sprints, five week sprints, what's comfortable. But two seems to be the general norm that people recommend. The other big step that's hard is called accountability. But as you said you're going to get this done this Friday, how come it's Thursday and you're telling me you got all these blockers and just ran into this problem?

There may be some reasons for that that are legitimate. There may be some reasons that aren't. It's up to the scrum master to make sure who's driving that board every day to say where are you at? Because we're taking this huge project. We're breaking it down into little manageable chunks that we can pivot.

Someone talked about failing fast. Absolutely, that's the whole purpose. Hey, I got into this, we thought it was going to work this way, completely wrong. We have to regroup and figure out another path. I think the other piece that's really hard, and most of these you hear me talking about our culture is releasing control. Senior leadership, middle management leadership wants to have their hands on it. What do you mean you made a decision to do this? Where was I in the loop? Well, you weren't. Because you empowered that team to say this is where we're going to go. This is the initiative; this is what success criteria looks like at the end. And that hasn't changed.

We're going down this path to do it and you've got to empower the people at the level that are making the decisions to make the decisions to move forward. If you have an Agile work stream and they have to stop every time and raise their hand and ask somebody for permission to do something because it's different, you're never going to succeed.

I like to describe it as a roundabout. Locally we've got roundabouts coming up all over the place. I don't know whether you do or not. The purpose of a roundabout, believe it or not there's more accidents at a roundabout than there are when you just have normal traditional stoplights and everything else. But the good news is less people die. Very rarely does somebody die in a roundabout accident. Little fender bender. You've got the guard rails that you put in place; you can't go left. You can never go left. You have to yield.

But it's those types of guardrails that you get put up with the Agile line so that everybody knows the area that they can operate in and when they have to go outside and ask for help or permission. That's really going to be a big challenge too, because you'll hear from senior leadership what do you mean we just did this? Where was I in that? You weren't - that's the beauty of it. You weren't. You also now have time to focus on the things you should be really focusing on instead of trying to get down into the minutia of the day-to-day operations of a development practice.

The last piece of it too kind of ties it together. It's about trust. I've got to trust that you have the skill set that you need to be able to execute this plan the way we've decided so that we reach the success criteria at the end. And that's a big deal.

A lot of people say that they have that kind of trust, and I always look at senior executives and say so what's your budget? Well, I have a \$5 million budget. What's your spending authority? I can spend up to \$500,000. Can you go do that without asking somebody up above you if you can do it? Well no. Why? You have a \$5 million budget you've spent \$500,000. Why do you have to check?

That's within your guardrail. And so breaking down those types of barriers are the same type of deal. One last thing that we did is The Ohio State University has an excellent program at the Fisher College of Business all about Lean and all about Agile practices and I was very fortunate to have gone through it. There's many of us that were selected to do that and to drive this. It kind of builds in that whole idea set about why it's important to where to look for the principles.

Sorry, a little long on my explanation there, but these are some things that we lived through the dream. Just like oh we're going to do everything all at once. We didn't actually pick up Jira until about two years ago and tried to do it other ways. Now we use Jira which is great because you can do it virtually. But get those Gemba Walks, get those stand-ups going, start holding people accountable and say what are you going to get done this week on this project?

**Moderator:** So Buzz, once your leadership is kind of all rowing in the same direction on this then you mandate it?

**Buzz W.:** Yes. It pretty much came down from this is where we're going. Our entire software development environment now is all Agile development. It works great because we're offshore / onshore. It actually facilitates better development, better resource utilization. Like I said, about two years ago we really embraced the idea of going to product managers and product owners (difference there). Once we got that in place it was easy to start taking the Agile practices and move them into our infrastructure. Well, not more into our infrastructure environment.

Our infrastructure environment has a Jira board walk through everything, what do we have, how do we prioritize? Your prioritization means you have backlog grooming there's a whole structure that goes on behind. Making sure you got the right people there to make the right decisions based on the criteria that's been set. It is in itself a methodology, right? But you got to start - you gotta crawl, walk, run. And then you say this is the way we do it. When you come in like when we hire people, this is what we do.

**Moderator:** Okay great. Follow-up for Buzz or anyone?

**Noel S.:** Just a quick follow-up. What we learned along the way is that it is important to have folks in there as you're making that transition. Having some scrum masters that are doing a dual role. When we first started, we had people that were business analysts that were kind of doing a scrum master role.

It wasn't until maybe four or five years ago where we started having actual dedicated scrum masters with the team. It was a one-to-one ratio, one scrum master per team. I know some places do it's maybe one scrum master per couple teams. It comes down to whatever works best for the organization, but that did help a lot with the teams becoming much stronger in the Agile practices.



I haven't met a person that is really focused on strictly those Agile practices and helping the team be better at practicing Agile. It helps tremendously and making sure that whoever those scrum masters report to make sure that those leaders are truly supporting them and backing them up with what it is that they're trying to do with their teams.

And another thing too that the scrum master door is creating just a center of practice within the organization where they get together on a regular basis just to discuss with each other how are things going within their teams, what struggles are they facing, and trying to build upon that community practice and learn things from each other and share things and just help the organization to better having dedicated roles. People are extremely passionate about that it's extremely helpful.

**Buzz W.:** Great point! Scrum Masters must have this as their only job.

### **Topic: Project timelines/interdependencies**

**Moderator:** Okay good. A couple of more specific ones here from Brenna. When working in a portfolio with a mix of Agile hybrid and Waterfall, what are the best practices or tools for providing leadership with a roll-up view of project timelines and interdependencies? Is Brenda on? She's not on. Anybody have anything we can pass on to her about this?

**Melanie W.:** Jira can support it if you can configure your Jira appropriately.

**Buzz W.:** Okay.

**Melanie W.:** Then you have Advanced Roadmaps, functionally from a tools perspective.

**Buzz W.:** Yeah, that's what I was going to add Melanie. Once you get to full functionality and know what you're actually standing up initiatives. And then there are the initiatives are epics and stories and tasks you can...

**Melanie W.:** It can have a Waterfall you can have a full hierarchy. You can see a Gantt chart in Jira just same with Advanced Roadmaps. I have found that has been actually a game changer for a lot of our product teams and BAs alone just to understand. I think sometimes Jira for teams, the struggle is not having that visibility.

Let's say like classic PMP or project managers had with Microsoft Project to be able to kind of build a Gantt chart and say look here's my timeline. This will allow you in Jira to do that. I will say we've struggled with the Atlassian consultants that have a lot of extreme knowledge, meaning how do you integrate an Enterprise Jira Cloud infrastructure with - we're looking to go with Jira Align to integrate that as well for our portfolio. So that's scaling even more.

We've gotten there but I'm just calling that out is when you're looking at the TAMs that may come with Confluence or Atlassian you're going to want to really look for someone who knows how to integrate all those tools collectively because they tend to have very siloed focus either one in Jira, one in Confluence, one in Align. But Advanced Roadmaps is a definite add on to an enterprise or portfolio that would help you enable those views.

**Moderator:** Is there one tool that does all that as opposed to having to have so many?

**Melanie W.:** I have yet to hear of one is that ideal in the space I've been doing this 25 years. Everybody's got a mix. Somebody uses Microsoft Project, some people use Jira, they use NetSuite they use a multitude of things.

**Buzz W.:** I think they break it out that way for purpose is that all enterprises or not all businesses need all that functionality. But the base functionality like Jira provides, especially the reports and dashboards that you can build in Jira are just crazy. And enter once and populate many with Jira is another. It's just amazing all that you can do.

But depending on the size of your company you may not need all of those other pieces, so from a Jira point of view I'd rather get some of your money than oh I'm not going to spend all of this because I don't need a lot of things that come with it.

### **Topic: SAFe usage**

**Melanie W.:** Yeah, I think to those who might be going the safe route, if you're scaling then yes, Advanced Roadmaps is probably a worthwhile add-on for you to get that organization, because it enables probably your product owners who have a less likely relationship with Jira depending on your organization and how they're set up.

But it helps give those more business-centric views to have that development information, not having you do something in PowerPoint separately out of your Jira information, which I'm sure a lot of you've done.

**Moderator:** Melanie, remind me what the SAFe approach is.

**Melanie W.:** Scaling Agile.

**Moderator:** Yes okay.

**Melanie W.:** Yes, scaled Agile. The value stream you mentioned, it was like if you're doing your Agile release train. I'm the RTE for our organization. We are not fully adopted to SAFe. We have about a third that is practicing SAFe in total and others are what I would say are in the crawling stage of merging them into the planning practices of that quarterly cadence planning our features / epics. Every team has their own Jira project. It's very prescribed, so it's company-managed Jira projects vs team-managed Jira project was a little different.

**Moderator:** Does that sort of indicate a high level of maturity?

**Melanie W.:** I wish.

**Moderator:** Not necessarily?

**Melanie W.:** Not necessarily. I think when the decision was made, they were considered an Agile shop, but again it was team-managed Agile. There was not an enterprise formal adoption of the sprint cadence, story point estimates, even the way work was broken down. When SAFe came along, we did SAFe training and then we migrated to Jira Cloud.

In that migration to Jira Cloud, we forced the teams into the right Jira structure which was like pulling teeth. Because like you said, it's forcing sometimes – oh, this is the way we've always done it. Well now you're going to have to change and get consistent workflows, consistent statuses. These are

very fundamental one-on-one things, but if you are transitioning and trying to mature you kind of have to go to basics.

**Buzz W.:** One thing that I thought of too is it to be successful you need to have consistency. One of the things that we erred with at the beginning was so here's this product. Here's how we're going to do it. Everybody go off and do something. And so, I estimate story points this way, you do it that way. You want to get that foundation and then lock Jira down.

You should have a group that manages your Jira from the highest level and then doesn't allow certain things to change. The other piece too as you move through this is we now quarterly have what we call Big Room Planning Meetings. They started off being two days and we were barely getting through them two years ago. Now we probably get through the entire thing in about half a day.

Big Room Planning is all the other Jira boards that may have conflicts with you, because I do my Jira board but how do you know that I don't have any resources? Or how do you know that my priorities are different? It's time to get everybody together across all these development lines and all these different practices you're doing and saying what's the number one thing across all of these that has to get done?

**Melanie W.:** Are you doing SAFe Buzz?

**Buzz W.:** Well not really. We're *kind of* doing it ok. Everybody has to have their little tweak. But yeah, we call it Big Room Planning Meetings and that's the next level. Once you get to there and you're starting to look across the enterprise that you're making sure everybody's focused on the right thing at the right time, it gets better. It doesn't eliminate - remember none of this is going to eliminate angst. It may increase some of it for a period of time but yeah, we're kind of safe. Melanie, great question, but we haven't really officially call today yeah, we call it Big Room Planning.

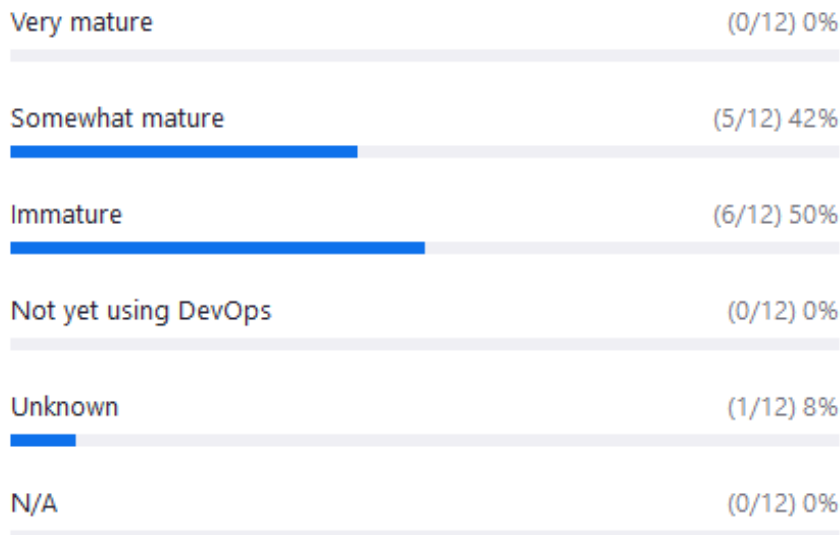
**Melanie W.:** In practice, this is like you're doing exactly what SAFe prescribes right? It's incremental quarterly planning. You have your key goals and priorities that are universally aligned. You all put everything on the table, align your priorities, dependencies, risks, everything and you all shake hands and walk away with that's our commitment for the quarter.

**Buzz W.:** For the quarter, and then we use OKRs quite a bit too. And so, by doing objectives and key results because that's the other linchpin that helps how do I know when this is done? What are you doing and what's the key results that's going to tell me I'm finished with this.

### **Topic: DevOps**

**Moderator:** Great discussion. We better move on and dive into DevOps or we'll run out of time. I have a poll up asking about your maturity level with DevOps. Perhaps we could have called this DevSecOps, that's probably becoming more appropriate these days.

## Poll: What is your DevOps maturity level?



**Moderator:** The specific question is have others rolled out a DevOps initiative, and if so, what's the focus on culture? Collaboration, tools, or something else? Maybe it was security. And did you use a specific reference framework, book, or consultant to guide you? So far nobody is very mature. We've got a few somewhats, a lot of immatures. Buzz, can you start? You referred to it as DevSecOps – can you really do DevOps without the Sec involved?

**Buzz W.:** Personal opinion, no. Not in today's world. Yeah, you *can*, but is it the best decision for you to be doing? Probably not. We're looking at tools like Contrast. We use Contrast to go back and look at our development code and to make sure it's being done securely. And how do we get everything aligned to the full direction. And some developer didn't go off and pull something in that they read about over the weekend.

So not having all that integrated in is challenging to say the least. It's risky at the most, because the bad people are out there. If you're going to develop you've got to make sure development is secure, it's operational, and it's doing all the things that you need it to do at the right time.

**Moderator:** What drove the move to DevSecOps at your organization?

**Buzz W.:** The world. When you think about the environment in the world that we live in today, I tell people at my organization we were very, very fortunate. Back in 2011 we had a breach, and it was so tiny and so small, and nothing was ever found anywhere on the web. But we knew we had a breach. It was before Target, which actually kicked the world off as far as this whole concern. But even though it was so tiny it took five or six years to get resolved.

When I say we're fortunate, it opened everybody's eyes up, because everybody thinks they're secure or they don't need to worry. So, we started looking around and said we probably need to do some different things. We have invested a lot into making sure our environments are as secure as possible. I think really when you start looking at your maturity level, it's like okay first you got to get this working. It's that crawl / walk / run. You can't throw everything into it. Okay now when's the right time?

We know this is there. When's the right time to really start pushing hard to do this? I'd say we started doing that probably about two years ago to where we started really saying we've got to figure out

ways to stop this stuff before it happens. How did this get in place? We know this is out there, well because all the reasons we all face.

We've done some significant things; we've run a lot of scenarios. We have a really effective Cybersecurity Operations Center. A lot of good stuff that we do here but it's because we started. A lot of companies unfortunately today are just not starting this journey. Well, we started our first probably 10 years ago.

**Moderator:** Did you use consultants or any kind of resource to get going?

**Buzz W.:** We did at the beginning. We still have people come in and do double-checks on us. We did like everybody else, when you start thinking about what's it about. You do your tack and pen tests, then you have the red teams, and you go through all of this type of stuff.

And then as you do that you mature your internal capabilities, and you keep maturing those to where you just do things differently. I will tell you that the cultural mindset here has shifted tremendously over the past five or six years from a security-type focus.

There was a call I was in yesterday where I said seven years ago the board of directors, we would get maybe an hour a year to talk about what was going on with cybersecurity. The board meets six times a year and they have I think half a day at every meeting to go through. The board is very engaged, understands the importance.

It is one of our key risks when you think about your technology risk committees etc., it made it all the way because that's kind of where it starts. If it falls apart there, where do you start fixing that with the new stuff you're building now? I hope that's where you are asking the questions, I'm going the right way.

**Moderator:** That's fine. I'm just trying to get some discussion going on getting started basically. Anybody else want to jump in?

**Noel S.:** It was a bit different for us. We had a strong architect in the organization that really was the same as is the direction we have to go from monolithic code releases to more of these incremental DevOps types of places. This is not DevSecOps, were just OPs here purely. It was just really having the person that really had that vision. We did have a team that went up.

We partnered with Microsoft for a week of pretty intense meetings and discussions to get things going and that's where they kind of birthed the CI/CD pipelines for us. It was really having that vision within the organization to drive that and having a team there that was going to jump on board and try a lot of different things.

Lesson learned though is making sure that you continue to keep the Dev teams are going to be impacted by this change in the loop along the way. That was the biggest shortcoming we had. We didn't do a great job of communicating and sharing that information across the board. It would have really helped with the adoption process.

**Moderator:** How do the operations teams typically feel about this change? Is it the idea that they're more involved now than done before?

**Noel S.:** Well the way we've had here was more or less - again I'm speaking more from AppDev and with the website, so when they had a code release everything was packaged up and then it was a matter of copying those changes out to however many servers we had. And unfortunately, one of the individuals that was on the team to help with that conversion of the DevOps part that was the one that was copying it to those servers.

Operationally I think they were on board with it and understanding that this is a better way to go with having those smaller incremental releases that are going out on a regular basis. It wasn't too difficult to get that mindset and get to get them on board with it. From our perspective, yes. It's certainly going to vary by organization.

### **Topic: Development Team Autonomy**

**Moderator:** Let's go to Levi's topic. How much standardization across all development teams, for example tooling, sprint intervals, roll-up reporting, etc. do you require versus giving teams autonomy to operate and use what works best for them and their particular business partner in your Agile DevOps environment?

**Levi B.:** I guess we kind of have a competing goal. Enterprise-wide is we want to be Agile which basically, doesn't really prescribe tooling per se. It advocates people over processes and this sort of thing, but we also have this desire from a high level to standardize across the board and minimize cost so everybody gets on the same tool, minimize time to onboard, that sort of thing.

And roll up relevant an enterprise level where everybody is with the projects and this sort of thing. Where do you fall in that spectrum, I guess of giving teams autonomy to do what they need to do? Satisfy their particular business partner and still have that that high level vision of what's going on.

**Melanie W.:** I'm working through that now.

**Levi B.:** Fair enough.

**Melanie W.:** Even though we got everybody in the Cloud and infrastructure and so they are functionally required to use the tools the same, they all have the same workflow, same card types. Fundamentally that's the same. But what we have found they don't know organize their work quite the same way, nor do they package their releases or name their releases the same.

It's those types of practices where we're looking to say how can one educate these teams how to better compose their features or epics to stories? Kind of that maturity level. Then there's the standards, like you need these elements are pieces of information that helped us get those larger roll-up visualizations. And we're definitely crawling.

We have pockets of brilliance where I see an end-to-end project plan with great connectivity with all relevant info, and then other times we're struggling to find what are you what are you working on? We have empty cards with commits against them and things like that. You definitely do need some level of practice standards to have successful utilization of some of the tools for sure to what level information you need.

**Levi B.:** Organizationally, who typically sets that? I guess it's your organization anyway. I'm from enterprise architecture which obviously has a lot of different functions. We've sort of been tasked with this specifically which is very in the weeds development-wise. Is that typical, or who typically leads this console initiatives for you?

**Melanie W.:** Architecture has a big part in ours, because they obviously own our architecture, and a lot of our work is organized around that architecture. But we have obviously our business partners or domains that we kind of align to. So we have dual need.

The teams have need for things that they own, maintain, and live and breathe. We also have to report out to our business, but then our release management teams and infrastructure teams need information out of that as well. It's collective to be honest. Different teams make different decisions on information in the system, that's part of your governance that you would likely have around your tools or your practice and standards.

I think somebody mentioned a community of practice or a CoE type of thing. We do that with like our business analysts, our architects, or who we consider our scrum masters. But then obviously we take from the executive leadership needs as well. All have input into a lot of our standards in our tooling and things like that.

**Moderator:** Would you say that at the strategic level there needs to be standardization? But then at the tactical level people have autonomy?

**Melanie W.:** Ooh, that's the reverse maybe. Strategically you can have a different approach, but I think when you're getting tactical, when you need the information to link up in the system that's got to be a lot more consistent and with rigor. Because you can trust that.

I think especially the larger organization if you have resources, where in a larger IT group you have a lot of development. They want to move from team to team, learn new skills, and if the teams are not doing things the same that's a hindrance sometimes to moving teams or sharing resources.

**Buzz W.:** We do dojos also, which is Target was really big on dojos when they brought them out. It's a specialized group of people who have a unique skill. That multiple development lion's mane need and they can go from development line to development line and help teach them these new skills. That's a help to keep that knowledge that with Melanie was talking about, we're getting stuck and we don't want transfer these resources, that kind of helps.

I completely agree with the standardization at the lower levels. That might be a really great a A3 to start off with. If you were to do an A3 about what your problem statement was we have no standards in order to effectively manage to an Agile line and you went through all the pieces and parts of it. That could probably get you started on how effective Agile can be. If you utilize Lean principles and they get that little team and then you give them another one to do and another and kind of ease it in. We use a product called CardBoard too.

I don't know if you've heard of it, but it's kind of good when it comes to requirements gathering. It has a good interface as far as moving from - they're not integrated, they're not same company. It's pretty robust and easy to use requirements gathering type of software. Which when you're building out A3s and stuff like what's your value stream map look like, it can help you with that.

**Moderator:** Thanks Buzz. Levi, hopefully you're getting some good tips.

**Levi B.:** Definitely. I think I got them all.

**Moderator:** We're coming up on an hour. Anything additional we can cover before adjourning? Okay, thanks everybody for your participation.

**Tim S.:** Thank you.

**End of discussion**

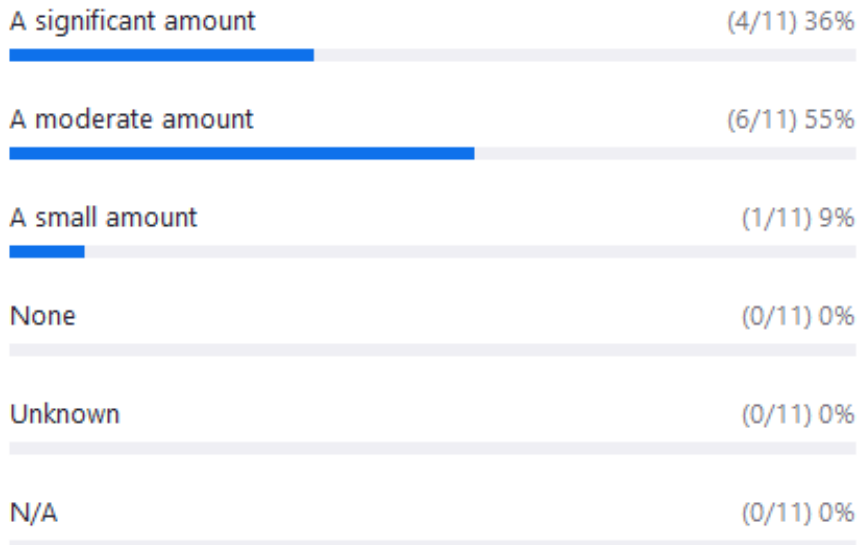
**Products/Vendors/Technologies shared in this WebForum**

Atlassian  
Cloud  
Cybersecurity  
DevSecOps  
Gantt Chart  
Gemba Walk  
Jira  
Lean  
PMP  
Project  
SAFe  
Scrum  
Waterfall



## Appendix: All Poll Results

### How much of your development is done via Agile?



### What is your DevOps maturity level?

