

Agile TODAY

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ENTERPRISE INNOVATOR

Volume #4 | JULY 2012



Exclusive: “Why
I get up in the
morning” –
Dr Fiona Wood

Top tips
for hiring
with Agility



State of
the (Agile)
Nation 2012

Agilists vs Architect – it’s (un)Civil war!

2012 Activate Retrospective



Win a
16 GB
Asus
Eeepad!

According to Standish, 68% of projects are unsuccessful...23% of software projects are “failures” and 49% are “challenged.”

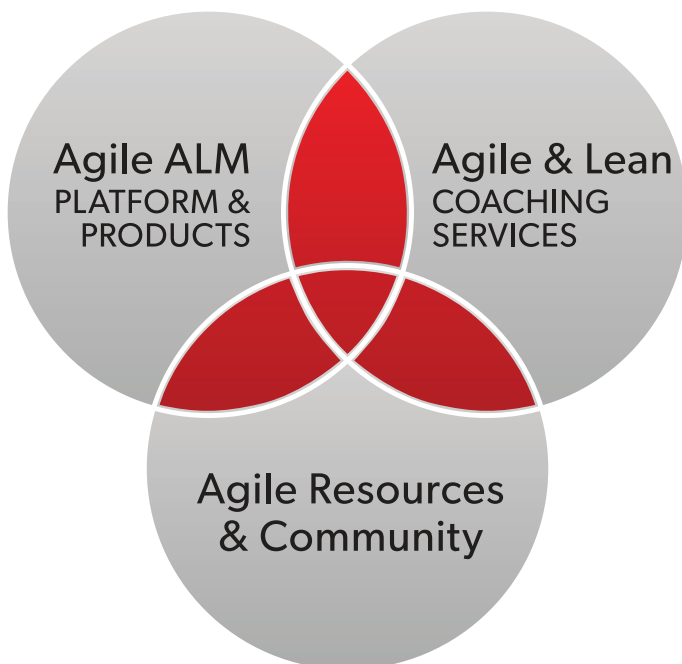


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Letter from the editor

I was so excited to be part of this year's Agile Australia conference! We were surprised beyond measure at the strong turnout in Melbourne this year. This was our first ever sold-out conference. It's such a testament to the continuing expansion and maturity of our Agile community. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported the event.

As the conference showed, Agile adoption is growing so rapidly! To help you find the right people for your team, check out the top tips for hiring on Page 2.

Many people mentioned the conference highlight was Dr Fiona Wood's inspirational message. Learn more about her tireless work for burns victims in our exclusive interview on Page 6.

We've also got a feature on how to turn failures to your advantage (Page 10) and case studies on practicing Agile when lives are on the line (page 16) and working with Agile teams in India and China (page 4).

Plus we've got a wrap up of the best bits of the Conference in a photo spread on Page 12, Activate Agile student forum retrospective on page 9, and a taste of the tweets from the floor on Page 16.

This edition's caption comp is a real doozy! To find out how you can win an Asus Eeepad, flip to Page 14.

Don't forget, we welcome your feedback and contributions to the AgileTODAY magazine. You can send us your comments and article ideas at agile@slatteryit.com.au.

Best wishes,

Zhien-U Bakarich



We are hiring: only the Agile need apply

The life blood of the telecommunications sector is innovation, yet adaptability to change has often been its *bete noir*. It is no surprise that with the game-changing shifts currently taking place in the industry, both the oldest and newest infrastructure carrier is on a very Agile path, writes **Natalie Apostolou**



Patrick Eltridge

“We have to do things differently. We need to be adaptive and ready to adapt to existing constraints and ready to seize emerging opportunities.”

Patrick Eltridge, CIO Telstra.

For Australia’s largest incumbent carrier, adaptability to market changes is now vital to its DNA and for Telstra’s CIO Patrick Eltridge the pressure to innovate has never been stronger.

The advent of the NBN, the shedding of its fixed copper network and the rapid shift in data traffic coming from mobile devices has put new demands on the old carrier.

“We have to do things differently. We need to be adaptive and ready to adapt to existing constraints and ready to seize emerging opportunities,” Eltridge says.

The CIO has boldly claimed that the carrier’s ongoing Agile IT transformation will soon be one of the most successful stories of enterprise Agile at scale in the world and that will be due more to its culture than its method.

“Industrial culture is not conducive to keep up with change required in organisations today. An Agile culture embodies what is required to keep up with that change,” he says.

For large organisations, that transformation is a long one, and 18 months into the journey this continues to be a challenge for the Agile change team, he concedes. The challenge lies in not only ensuring his team is thinking and working Agile but that the Agile message is being spread to other parts of the non-Agile organisation.

Meanwhile, for the new(ish) kids on the block at NBN Co, starting out Agile does not mean that it is bereft of its own challenges. NBN Co’s Michael Bromley who heads up Customer Experience, Portals and Online Services, Integration and B2B, knows that you cannot change your culture without changing your people.

“Hiring the right people first is critical to your success. Recruiting is costly, slow and painful. Don’t do it twice. Firing people is more costly, even slower and much more painful, don’t do it at all if you can avoid it,” he warns.

Bromley, who is also a former Telstra executive, relishes his role at NBN Co where he can install the Agile methodology into the heart of the culture and select new recruits with Agility principles.

He believes that hiring right from the outset will ensure that the culture remains strong. “Control is not nearly as valuable as context. What gives us the best chance for success is providing context as opposed to control, focussing on high performance, providing freedom and responsibility. If you hire that way you will have great people, and they will attract great people and you will continue to build a sustainable high performing team,” he says.

9 skills for hiring with Agility

NBN CO'S MICHAEL BROMLEY

- 1] **JUDGEMENT.** You make wise decisions despite ambiguity; identify root causes; think strategically; smartly separate what must be done well now
- 2] **COMMUNICATION.** You listen well; are concise and articulate; always treat people with respect; maintain calm poise in stressful situations
- 3] **IMPACT.** You accomplish lots of important work; demonstrate consistently strong performance; focus on great results rather than process; exhibit bias-to-action
- 4] **CURIOSITY.** You learn rapidly and eagerly ; seek to understand everything; broadly knowledgeable about more than IT; contribute effectively outside of your specialty
- 5] **INNOVATION.** You re-envision issues to solve hard problems; challenge assumptions and suggest solutions; create new ideas that prove useful; keep the organisation nimble by reducing complexity
- 6] **COURAGE.** You say what you think even when controversial; make tough decisions quickly; take smart risks; question actions inconsistent with the organisation's values
- 7] **PASSION.** You inspire others with your thirst for excellence; care intensely about the company's success; celebrate wins; are tenacious
- 8] **HONESTY.** You are known for candour and directness; non-political; only say things about fellow employees you will say to their face; quick to admit mistakes
- 9] **SELFLESSNESS.** You seek what is best for the company first; are ego-less; make time to help colleagues; share information openly and proactively

Michael Bromley



Head hunting for Agility

At the core of Bromley's HR approach is the belief that if he hires smart, empowered people, he can let them do their thing and get out of their way.

"We are innovators that like to keep things nimble, so we can reinvent and re-envision. Data requires context not complexity," he says.

The ability to make decisions quickly, to have the courage to take risk and knowing when to take those risks is also an essential ingredient.

"Not only does it take risks to make things better but also to say where you are doing it wrong," he says.

Bromley has a series of red and green flags that steer the interviewer into the right zone during the hiring process. Red flags include any hints of perfectionism, inflexibility, people who are defensive, afraid of change, complacency, fear of failure or overly judgemental of others who do fail.

"We want high achievers but not perfectionists. We want staff that talk about what they are going to do next and then improve that," he says.

Bromley advises, "when you find good people ... hire them fast and pay them well ... give them context then get out of

their way and let them do it well. High performance people have the ability to fail or change on their own. Do not micromanage it."

Cultural icebergs

Telstra took on the Agile methodology for its IT and software development as part of the consultation process over its \$11.9 billion transformation. Last year Eltridge went on an intense recruitment drive for Agile coaches as part of a large-scale change management program. As IT directly interfaces with every part of the organisation Eltridge took ownership of the task head on, "changing culture, just like an iceberg, is not easily perceptible."

In order to gain control over the change program process, Eltridge took the unusual step of personally writing a job ad for experienced Agile process coaches.

Skills sought included knowledge and exposure to the Agile and Waterfall methodology and a "demonstrated capability to deliver IT Infrastructure designs within a complex IT environment".

Working with the iteration manager, other duties include managing blockers, identifying common issues encountered by the project teams and help create a collaborative culture.

Eltridge confesses that while much of this innovative approach was new to the carrier, it was welcomed by staff. Eltridge said that Telstra went Agile out of competitive market necessity. He views Agile as not just a software developer methodology but a "way of working that drives a more productive and enjoyable experience."

While admitting that the change process has been long, he said that it is currently in acceleration mode. "The ox is slow but the earth is patient...changing culture is a gradual process and can seem glacial to those in it."

As part of the Agile deployment, Eltridge said that Telstra staff were continually being trained in Agile fundamentals and has implemented a feedback system that allows for accountability and transparency between the team and its leaders.

He says that as a result expectations of leaders have lifted, and warns that if your organisation tolerates a mediocre leader then you will never have an Agile environment.

"Achieving this sort of Agile culture must be a constant journey bringing people together collaboratively and visibly dismantle the outdated symbols of the industrial past," he states.

The misadventures of offshoring

By Natalie Apostolou

“We needed to go back to basics. Our goal was to build trust and collaboration.”

Megan Folsom, Technical Product Manager, Ebay

Offshoring can be an uneasy cultural fit to manage in any organisation, but in an Agile environment it can test the strength of any team or methodology. Two Agile trailblazers from eBay.com’s London office, technical product manager Megan Folsom, and product manager Robin Zaragoza set upon a year-long journey and defied all company conventions to ensure that Agile made an impact across teams, cultures and borders. This is how they did it:

Megan: What we did with our outsourced teams was a bit experimental and we were not sure that we would succeed. We tried to create a culture that we wanted to work in. We wanted to build an environment that we liked, but it was in a setting where we did not have much control over the team’s motivational incentives.

Robin: During this year long journey, we started in one place and definitely ended up at another. eBay has developers in San Jose and offices around the world. For shorter term projects it is easier to get outsourced teams on board and resource up or down accordingly. We used a team in India, which we shall call Acme Inc.

Megan: When joining eBay, I was very excited as I love the site, I use it all the time and it’s a great brand name. I had also reached a point in my career where I would not work in an organisation unless it was Agile or actively pursuing agility.

Robin: What did you expect to find?

Megan: Developers that work in collaboration, who delivered frequently, responded to change, motivated teams; a lot of passion, innovation, things that I had experienced in the past on Agile teams.

Robin: And were we Agile?

Megan: Not at all. I knew that we worked with outsourced teams, but I didn’t know

that we were 100% outsourced. That wasn’t a deal breaker; I had worked with outsourced teams before. But it didn’t feel right. We were using all the right tools but “nobody was home.”

Robin: Why didn’t it feel right?

Megan: The collaboration between the team and the business was not there. It was very siloed. The team was doing demos like clockwork every two weeks but the business was not turning up to them, they were just demo-ing to each other. It was a very command and control environment.

Robin: What was the effect of that environment?

Megan: There was enormous pressure put on developers to meet deadlines. An offshore vendor told me eBay had burnt through an entire [development] team. They all quit after the project.

Robin: As a product manager, I was feeling the same thing. We knew this could not continue. If it was a painful experience for me then it must be painful for our developers. I asked Megan what we could do about the situation.

Megan: We settled that we needed to go back to basics with our teams, and with Agile culture and values. Our goal was to build trust and collaboration.

Robin: We flew out to Chennai met with our teams for a full week of workshops, taking them outside their comfort zones through a series of exercises that we hoped would drive home the concepts of Agile in a comfortable and trusting environment.

After the exercises the level of engagement changed. Prior to these workshops my calls to developers were really painful. There was not a lot of collaboration and discussion. After this workshop the level of engagement went from zero to 100%.

Megan: Do you think culture impacts an organisations ability to be Agile?

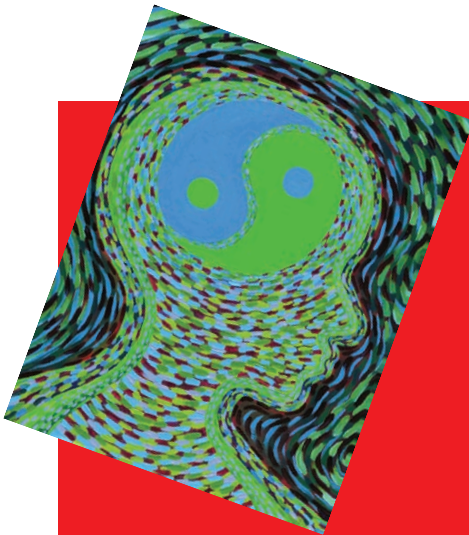
Robin: Definitely. Particularly when it is an Indian culture which is quite a hierarchical society and very class based. In an organisation where there are layers of management, senior management is almost like another class. When you have a class above you, there is a sense of deference.

The way Acme Inc incentivise developers is also not conducive to an Agile environment. We look at delivering product as something everyone is involved in, whereas Acme Inc basically measured it in the number of hours.

Megan: What advice would you give other companies on engaging their outsourced teams?

Robin: Don't underestimate face to face contact. The creativity of the exercises helped, but talking about what we do outside of office hours really helped the developers to connect with us and us with them.

Megan: We walked into a climate of fear and mistrust and we built bridges in choppy waters. But for us, this was not a training exercise but a relationship building exercise. We hope that the relationships we forged made a difference.



International Agilists reveal that the more diverse your offshore operation is from your local one then the more you need to invest in your culture. When AIA set up their China office CIO, Rick Wingfield and head of Application Development, Alex Stokes discovered that the putting Agility into practice helped assess and deal with cultural teething problems, speed up delivery on projects and put in place a methodology that embraced change. "Agile is about getting rid of those blockages as quickly as possible. Agile was the perfect fit," Wingfield said.

The art of Agile in China

YIN AND YANG – CHINESE AGILE TIPS

- **Distributed vs Co-located**
 - Scrum can work across countries! Hold stand up meetings using webcams.
- **Communication**
 - Experiment with modes of communication. Stokes found that Instant Messaging worked well across borders. You can see who is online and at their desk, response is immediate, work can be done more efficiently.
 - When holding a teleconference make sure everyone is remote. Do not allow group clusters to form. "It's a great leveller. No one has an advantage or can have a side conversation, you can ensure everyone is fully engaged," Stokes tips.
 - Use web cams or video conferencing – facial expression is a big trust builder.
- **Appreciating Culture**
 - Look at how Chinese culture impacts the organisation and integrate and adapt to suit. The Chinese like to integrate work with life. They will include you in their circle of trust and involve you in their life as a mark of respect and trust. If you are their boss, then you are "the boss of their life." Consider accordingly.
- **Individualism vs Collectivism**
 - Western culture is meritocracy based. Our Chinese colleagues are more interested in performing as a collective and community. Performance-based bonus structures may have to change to reflect the group dynamic over the individual.
- **Achievement vs Ascription**
 - In China, status tends to be accorded due to hierarchy rather than achievement. Age is also a status builder, the inference being the older you are, the wiser you are.

Innovation in action

DR FIONA WOOD is a woman of many passions. Unlike most, her passions are agile – they do not just dwell in the realm of ideas, but in action and transformation.

As the inventor of the revolutionary “spray-on skin” for burn victims, her contribution to the development of cellular research for burns and healing has been ground breaking.

But for Dr Wood, one invention is not enough. She has built a career which is not only innovative in itself, but is pushing the boundaries of innovation for those around her.

This coal miner’s daughter from Yorkshire is driven by putting innovation in practice, personally and collectively at the community and industry level, every day and in defiance of all obstacles.

“I have always been a ‘glass half full’ kind of gal,” she says.

And she need not look further than her immediate experiences for validation. “I live in an environment where I see people take on suffering each day. I see how lives can change in an instant. I also see the power of the human spirit and how extraordinarily positive it can be at times. I gain a lot of inspiration and motivation to keep going from the patients that I treat.”

Drawing from her own journey, Dr Wood has a strong message to impart on how critical agile thinking, innovation and collaborative practice can change not only lives but communities and industries.

“My philosophy is that you should learn something from every day in order to make sure tomorrow is better. We should get up in the morning to be the best we can be today. Why would you wake up in the morning to be average..you are wasting a whole truck of energy,” she says.

Time is one of Wood’s passions. Working in a field where life and death is measured in moments has made her obsessed with time. It was this obsession that led to the invention of spray-on skin, to reduce burn victims’ suffering and accelerate the healing process.

“Our time and resources are precious. Reinventing the wheel is a waste of time. You have got to know the landscape, you have got to know what is already out there. Harness that and build on it. Don’t launch behind the start line, start in front of it by learning everything you can,” she advises.

What consumes Wood daily is the pursuit of scarless healing. It is her magnificent obsession. It gets her out of bed each day and energised to galvanise individuals, businesses and governments to support her quest.

Dr Wood is currently in the midst of driving a fund raising campaign to raise \$10 million to create an international Centre for Excellence in Burns Research in Western Australia.

“It’s a competitive market place for the philanthropic dollar but we can support our endeavours by being collaborative rather than competitive,” Dr Wood says.

Her quest is part of a wider goal to create facilities and the support of community and government to retain the intellectual capacity we have in Australia. The intellectual brain drain is

being felt in all sectors as the US and Europe lure over our brightest minds, but Dr Wood says it is time to attract them back and reinvent the way we collaborate on a global level.

“With a population of 20 million we don’t have the capacity to develop the larger clinical trials that other markets like the US do and we don’t have the upscale of manufacturing. In order to develop scientific technology we have to collaborate in a smart fashion so we don’t lose that overseas. Upscale in manufacturing is so hard to do here, so we need to do it elsewhere but stay at the table, not abdicate control, and find new ways of working globally.”

Leading the innovators

As a leader of multi-disciplinary emergency teams in high stress environments, Dr Wood learnt about leadership the hard way. In her early days heading the WA Burns unit she was taken to task about not communicating to her team.

“I was team leader of a multi-disciplinary team by default. I had not communicated what I was doing,” she confessed. The incident changed her approach to leadership and made her realise that leadership needs to be very flexible.

Her teams then met every week and everyone was given a voice. She advises that there is no better way to handle a disaster than having a plan. Ensuring everyone is on board ahead of the game is the path to success.

“When in the operating theatre I realised that the decisions were not mine. I was just the voice delivering them. I was the conduit for the decisions that had been debated and criticised previously in our meetings,” she said.

She adds that having an open mind is key to good leadership, and valuing the contribution of all those around you.

“Nobody does anything in this life in isolation. We are all part of a whole. The leadership potential is within everyone, it is just a question of facilitating it,” she says.

Contributing to the wider community and sharing original thinking is also fundamental to Dr Wood’s world. In fostering innovation she advises that it will always take a tremendous amount of support to get that innovation implemented, which is why communication and collaboration is so vital to the process.

“Find someone that has another piece of the jigsaw. We don’t have to live in silos. When I am problem solving I don’t care where you come from. What matters is that you have a piece of my jigsaw,” she says.

In order to actualise innovation, Dr Wood asks all to shake the tree and work out how to go forward.

“We have to anchor our dreams in reality. Innovation gets me up in the morning. My whole obsession with scarless healing is not about getting to the top of the mountain and sticking the flag in, it’s the journey. It is delivering today that matters, to make sure tomorrow is an improvement.”

AgileAUSTRALIA '12

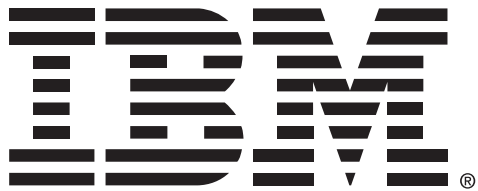
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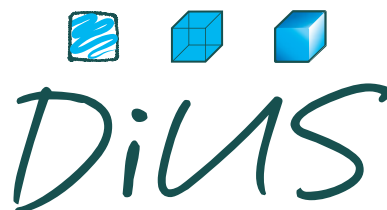
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activate **AGILE**'12 retrospective

Over 100 energetic secondary and tertiary students gathered for an introduction to Agile at the first ever Activate Agile event, sponsored by IBM and supported by the University of Technology, Sydney.

The evening built on the momentum of the Agile Australia conference in Melbourne, cashing in on having some of the Agile community's most famous names in the same room. Speakers Nigel Dalton, James Pierce, Martin Kearns, Fiona Siseman, Andy Sheats, and Simon Caddy were on hand to welcome the students, who arrived just as the first day of the Agile Australia conference came to a close.

Many 'Activators' took the opportunity to tour the conference floor, taking in the Live Retrospective Wall and Open Space areas and meeting some real live agilists.

The evening kicked off with a helicopter view of innovation over history, drawing a vivid kaleidoscope of examples from Henry Ford's cars to NASA's Apollo missions. "Apollo 11 landed on the moon, but have you ever wondered what happened to Apollos one to ten?" asked James Pierce, teasing out the Agile principles of solving the most pressing problem first and failing fast to gain learnings quickly.

Martin Kearns talked through the cultural world of Agile, impressing on the group how an Agile team values the contributions of every member. "We no longer live in a world where you have to refer to your boss by their surname. Everyone on the team is an equal," he said.

The forum also included some practical examples of day-to-day Agile from the perspectives of a project manager, designer, and a founder of a digital start-up in a series of lightning talks. Fiona Siseman, Project Manager at Lonely Planet, walked through a week in the life of an Agile team, from daily stand up meetings through to demos and retrospectives.

An evening roast concluded the forum. Students were invited to 'roast' the speakers by asking them curly questions. A much greater roasting was in store than the presenters anticipated, as the students stayed back for well over an hour after the event closed to continue gleaning insights.

The key takeaway from the question time was that Activators should invest just as much in their communication and people skills as their technical expertise.

Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology's Sydney's Faculty of Engineering, Andrew Johnston is thrilled by the forum's success. "It is so important for the next generation of developers, analysts, designers, and project managers to understand Agile. We are excited that the response from the students was so positive, and can't wait for a similar event to be held in Sydney."



Nigel Dalton



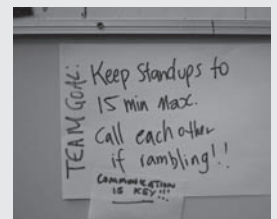
James Pierce



Fiona Siseman



Martin Kearns



Andy Sheats



Steve Caddy



Back from the brink

Why failure is an Agile ally

By Natalie Apostolou

Essendon Football Club coach James Hird is widely touted as one of the greatest footballers of recent times, but failure is never too far from his strategic view. Despite a stellar career as a competitive player in a combative sport, he has embraced failure and its lessons as a driving force for leadership as a coach and in business.

“Ultimately in football there is only one winner at the end of the year and 17 teams will fail. You don’t want to accept failure but you need to know that it is going to happen and that you can learn from it,” he explains.

When he took the reins to transform the Essendon Football Club 18 months ago, Hird had to accept not only the club’s shortcomings but his own and act accordingly. His proactive response was to hire the best people in the industry to contribute the knowledge and experience required to turn the team around. The key to the strategy was to create the most supportive and encouraging environment to empower the players to perform at their best- and to get everyone on board with that vision.

“We don’t talk about winning the premiership, we talk about creating the best, elite, training environment where we develop our players to the best of their ability. We sell the vision to our players and give them the best chance to be the best team that they can be. It is different from just wanting to win a premiership,” he says.

He adds that if the players don’t buy into the programme from the start, it is very hard to be successful.

Hird says that as coach his role is to empower the players with enough knowledge to make them successful which in turn allows them to formulate the plan of where the team wants to go, together.

“In the middle of the MCG when things go wrong in front of 90,000 people – and they do go wrong all the time – if you are not on board with the programme then you won’t be able to handle it when things fall over,” he warns.

If you don’t kick the ball you have no chance of winning

As digital marketing guru Seth Godin explains, “Failure is a project that doesn’t work, an initiative that teaches you something at the same time the outcome doesn’t move you directly closer to your goal.”

While a mistake is either “a failure repeated, doing something for the second time when you should have known better, or a misguided attempt (because of carelessness, selfishness or hubris) that hindsight reminds you is worth avoiding.”

“We don’t talk about winning the premiership, we talk about creating the best, elite, training environment ”

James Hird

Coach, Essendon Football Club



Tom Sulston



Michael Bromley

Godin believes that the world needs a lot more failures. “Failures that don’t kill us make us bolder, and teach us one more way that won’t work, while opening the door to things that might. Go ahead, fail. Try to avoid mistakes, though.”

His belief echoes the Agile approach to failure as a creative organisational force.

In sport, like in life, things go wrong and you need to have a very tight team that are motivated by the same common goal in order to get through the failures, Hird says.

“In corporate life we are very good technically at dealing with issues but if we have an emotional problem with a staff member or if we have an issue with the way we are being managed, it is not handled that well,” he observes.

After a year of mixed fortunes for Essendon, 11 and a half wins and an equal measure of losses, Hird says that the focus in pre-season has been on positive psychology and sharpening mental skills for failure and success.

“Psychologists are training our players in how to think properly and how to handle intense situations. The way we try to coach is not for us to be successful but to make them as good as they can be,” Hird says.

The icing on the fail cake

ThoughtWorks consultant Tom Sulston contends that failure is always an option, so “don’t waste your time trying to build failure proof systems.”

In the software industry where Agile germinated from, failure is a costly luxury, yet it happens so often and as many Agile experts will explain, should be viewed as integral to the path to success. Recent statistics have placed the global impact of IT failure as being US\$3 trillion annually.

The manner in which we identify failure and how deal with it however, is crucial to the success of an Agile organisation.

Sulston speaks of failure as not being in the release of a product and the world shrugs, but in not actually having the coping mechanisms when your product fails.

In order to embrace the learnings from failure he has coined the concept of the

‘fail cake’. “If you break something you have to bring cake to your desk... everyone comes to talk. No one can get angry when they have cake in their mouth.”

The concept is catching on with Telstra’s IT department, which is undergoing a massive Agile based transformation, boasting a “fail wall.”

At NBN Co, the ability to embrace failure is a key to getting hired. NBN Co’s Michael Bromley says that “failing passionately and doing so in order to succeed and then moving on, denotes the core of agility.”

Being afraid to fail raises the red flag against bringing a new recruit onto the team. In an interview process, look out for those who are afraid to fail or overly judgemental of others who do fail, he advises. “Failure should be celebrated and a culture that cultivates it will thrive,” he says.

Bromley urges managers to ask prospective employees the question, “what is your biggest and most spectacular failure” and what they learnt from it.

Bromley also uses failure as a barometer for a lack of organisational direction or a flaw in the process. “When one of your talented people does something dumb, don’t blame them. Instead, ask yourself what context you failed to set.”

“Failure should be celebrated and a culture that cultivates it will thrive”

Michael Bromley, NBN Co

For Bromley and an Agile culture, failure is entwined with risk taking. Those that excel in an Agile organisation are those that can innovate, challenge, reinvent, make decisions quickly and take risks.

“Courage is all about risks and doing that wisely, knowing when to take these risks.



James Hird

Not only does it take risks to make things better but also to say where you are doing it wrong,” he tipped.

Sulston suggests that the progressive Agile culture is one that creates an environment of psychological safety where learning from failure is rewarded and embraced.

The barrier to accepting failure in an organisation is that it is usually entwined in a blame game. For the employee admitting a mistake means admitting to guilt or a perceived level of incompetency, while for the manager allowing blameless failure may deter standards of high performance.

Agilists suggest that a culture that makes it safe to admit and report on failure can actually motivate higher standards of performance.

Sulston notes that not discussing a failure that came from pushing the boundaries or experimentation actually robs the organisation of valuable learning.

As coach Hird says, “You put yourself out there to be successful everyday but by pushing the boundaries you know that things are not always going to go right. But if you don’t try to push the boundaries you will never be as good as you can be and don’t worry about making mistakes. Move on and look to the future.”

Didn't make it to the Agile Australia 2012 conference?
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Competition closes **Friday 3rd August 2012.**



CONGRATULATIONS! Last edition's winner was Warren Head, Suncorp, who won a Samsung Galaxy Tablet with this caption: "When will people learn? If you don't use Agile your projects can seize up like my fingers!"



Agilist vs. (data) Architect:

A CIVIL (OR UNCIVIL?) WAR

By John Giles

We seem to have a war on our hands

So what if data architects and agilists don't get on? Why would we even expect them to agree? There is a perception that data types want projects to wait until their models are perfected, while the agilists argue they'll discover a better architecture over a few iterations than any head office person could ever construct in ivory-tower isolation. Am I exaggerating the tensions? A quick search on the Internet on the subject of "We don't want architects" should convince you there are certainly some tensions out there.

The high stakes of losing

From the perspective of some data architects, they've seen cases where systems are pumped out quickly, but end up as data silos, where the boss can't get a consolidated view of enterprise data. Agile isn't seen to deliver solutions faster; rather, it's seen as delivering problems faster.

Just as some see dangers with siloed delivery, there are plenty who have observed waterfall train wrecks. If it came down to a winner-takes-all competition and the old-fashioned architects were the victors, the agilists might as well pack their bags. Even if the agilists won, the data architects might have made valid points, and without them, a portfolio of systems developed with agility but is unable to integrate might bring disrepute

on the Agile way in the longer term. To have a one-side-wins-all outcome is a big risk to take. Do we go for a compromise?

A compromise may be worse

Perhaps we could hold back the Agile project while the data types throw together a good-enough start-up data architecture, then let the agilists loose? The agilist will refine the architecture and the end results should keep the integration people happy. That's the sunny-day scenario.

But what if the 'good-enough' architecture isn't good enough? The architects didn't have sufficient time and delivered a mess of half-baked ideas. Even then, delivery of this can of spaghetti took so long that the enterprise missed the window of opportunity for the business. That's not a win for either side.

A creative solution

Einstein said "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." The gridlock between traditional data architects and agilists can be broken. One way is through smart use of published patterns. We're not talking about the gang-of-four design patterns for programmers; we want to use data model (or class model) patterns that represent business objects (customers, products, contracts). Here are a few hints to get you started:

- Get hold of some reputable patterns books (maybe try Len Silverston or David Hay from the data community, Arlow & Neustadt, Martin Fowler, or Craig Larman from the OO community).
- Get the data types to work with the agilists during the first iteration, using these patterns to throw together a top-down framework of proven components that reflect the essence of your enterprise, or at least the bits you need. Some guidelines on pattern integration are available in my book *The Nimble Elephant*.
- Keep the data types engaged. During iterations and refinements, refer back to published variations on the base patterns. Where you can't find an extension pattern, use the best of Agile approaches to grow your own!

Because the patterns are, as Len Silverston would say, 'universal', there's a good chance it won't be as hard to achieve enterprise integration after the Agile project delivers.

*John Giles is an independent consultant with over 40 years of experience. He has recently published *The Nimble Elephant: Agile Delivery of Data Models Using a Pattern-based Approach* (foreword by Scott Ambler).*

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BY JOHN GILES

Foreword by Scott Ambler

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THE NIMBLE ELEPHANT

AGILE DELIVERY OF DATA MODELS
USING A PATTERN-BASED APPROACH

JOHN GILES
Foreword by Scott Ambler

(ISBN 9781935504252)

When Lives are on the Line, is Agile the Answer?

Craig Langenfeld, Principal Consultant, Rally

With companies like Cochlear and GE Healthcare practicing Agile and bringing innovations into the market quickly, it's no longer an option for healthcare companies to stay the course using the same processes and practices created over 30 years ago.

Agile is proven to be a better and more robust solution for the development of medical devices and other safety-critical products. At the recent 2012 Agile Australia Conference, I had the honor of presenting alongside Victor Rodrigues, Head of Audiology Software Development at Cochlear in Sydney. Cochlear's Agile implementation allows them to enhance their product development process while remaining compliant with their auditors, and above all, improve the safety and customer acceptance of their products. Using this five year success, we outlined a framework for applying Agile in regulated environments.

As we partner with more companies in high-assurance markets, I've seen aspects of delivery that were once considered purely aspirational become a reality. Agile processes make it possible for change to be successful within a Quality Management System, and to ensure outputs meet internal and external compliance requirements.

This topic continues to gain momentum across the global landscape as companies like Cochlear and GE Healthcare use Agile to speed modernization to market without sacrificing safety. It is no longer just a competitive edge, but has become the way we build software for medical devices and healthcare products. Doing this right can be the difference between life and death.

I co-authored *Agile Software Development with Verification and Validation in High Assurance* with Dean Leffingwell where we explored what Agile means in this environment. Also, stay tuned to the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation's website for a soon to be published Technical Information Report, titled *Guidance on the use of AGILE practices in the development of medical device software*, contributed to by Victor Rodrigues.



Craig Langenfeld

Agile tweets from the floor

If the #agileaus conference were held in the USA and had same per capita turnout, there would be 18,000 people here. Did I hear that right?

#agileaus Roy Singham when you think about a system with constraints you innovate differently

Michael Bromley@#agileaus: "One trick ponies tend to break the system."

#agileaus @tomsulston taking fear of failure to the point where you cannot decide what to do is really bad! We need to overcome this fear.

Bromley@#agileaus "We are innovators that like to keep things nimble, so we can reinvent and re-envision. Data requires context not complexity."

#agileaus James Hird dealing with ego...one way to deal with it – if you don't respect the team you don't get to play! Wow!

#agileaus Telstra If your organisations tolerates a mediocre leader than you will never have an agile environment.

#agileaus James Hird – people come to work to feel good about themselves. Leaders need to create the environment that fosters that

Paraphrasing Roy Singham – save the world by stopping SAP being installed #agileaus

#agileaus James Hird -leaders need to work with all their stakeholders – even the hard ones (eg Media). You have to work with them & deliver

NBN Co #agileaus Leave no stone unturned ... no idea should be ignored no matter the source

#agileaus @philabernathy trust is actually about expectation. Make them clear and they will be met

#agileaus flow ... If you cannot fly, run If you cannot run, walk If you cannot walk, crawl But, by all means keep moving. Martin Luther King

"they called them resources, I call them people" Hear! Hear! #agileaus

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A woman with glasses and a pearl necklace, wearing a black leather jacket over a black top, stands at a podium. She is gesturing with her right hand towards the audience. The background is a blurred stage setting with a large screen showing a person. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“When I am
problem
solving I don’t
care where
you come from.
What matters
is that you
have a piece of
my jigsaw.”

Dr Fiona Wood