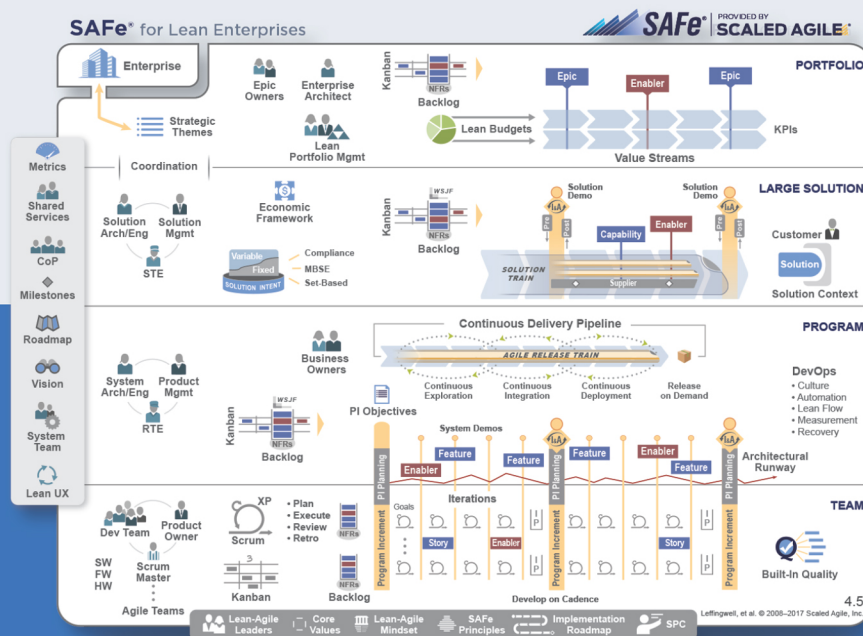


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SCALED AGILE FRAMEWORK® FOR LEAN ENTERPRISES



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with Richard Knaster, Inbar Oren,
and Drew Jemilo

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- [1] Leffingwell, Dean. *Agile Software Requirements: Lean Requirements Practices for Teams, Programs, and the Enterprise*. Addison-Wesley, 2011.
- [2] Leffingwell, Dean. *Scaling Software Agility: Best Practices for Large Enterprises*. Addison-Wesley, 2007.
- [3] Cohn, Mike. *Agile Estimating and Planning*. Robert C. Martin Series. Prentice Hall, 2005.

Iteration Goals

Clarity adorns profound thoughts.

—Luc de Clapiers



Iteration Goals are a high-level summary of the business and technical goals that the Agile Team agrees to accomplish in an Iteration. They are vital to coordinating an Agile Release Train (ART) as a self-organizing, self-managing team of teams.

Iteration goals provide the following benefits:

- They align the team members and the Product Owner to the mission.
- They align the people to the Program Increment (PI) Objectives.
- They provide context for understanding and addressing cross-team dependencies.

Whether the teams apply Scrum or Kanban, iteration goals give program stakeholders, management, and Agile teams a shared language for maintaining alignment, managing dependencies, and making necessary adjustments during the execution of the program increment.

Details

As described in the Iteration Planning chapter, the planning process produces three outputs:

- The Iteration backlog, consisting of the Stories committed to the iteration
- A statement of iteration goals, as shown in Figure 1
- A commitment to the work needed to achieve the team's goals

Iteration goals often reflect the following factors:

- Features, feature slices, or feature aspects, such as research and necessary infrastructure
- Business or technical Milestones
- Architectural, infrastructure, exploration, and compliance activities
- Routine jobs and other things, such as maintenance and documentation

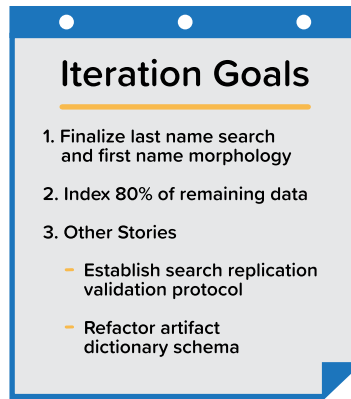


Figure 1. One team's iteration goals

Iteration goals are achieved by completing backlog items, even though it may not be necessary to finish every story to meet the goals. In other words, the goals for the iteration override the concerns related to any particular story. On occasion, it may even be necessary to add new user stories to achieve the iteration's goals.

Why Iteration Goals?

In the Agile Release Train (ART) context, iteration goals help in understanding and maintaining a larger view of what the team intends to accomplish in each iteration, and what to present in the upcoming System Demo.

Iteration goals support three of the four SAE Core Values—namely, transparency, alignment, and program execution. Simply committing to complete a set of stories in an iteration is insufficient. Instead, the team must continually review the business value of each iteration, and then be able to communicate it in business terms to the Business Owners, management, and other stakeholders.

Although Kanban teams don't typically use iterations in the same way that ScrumXP teams do, iteration goals still provide transparency and alignment when they are part of an ART.

Align Team Members to a Common Purpose

The execution of an iteration goes by very quickly. It's a fast and furious process. Iteration goals help the team and Product Owner reach agreement on the initial business value they intend to deliver, align the team and program PI objectives, and ground everyone in the shared purpose, as summarized in Figure 2.

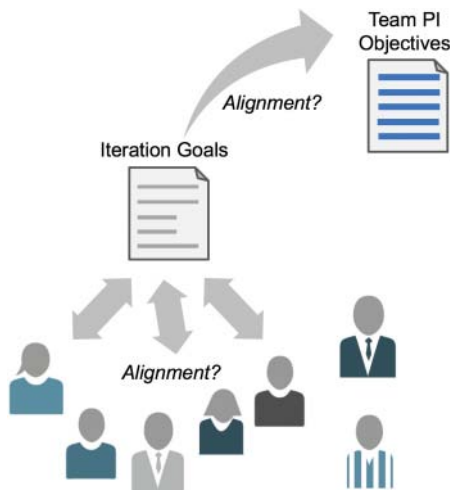


Figure 2. Iteration goals help align the team to the program PI objectives

Align Teams to Common PI Objectives and Manage Dependencies

Agile teams are not islands of agility, but rather integral parts of the broader Program Level context and purpose. As a result, the intent of upcoming iterations requires communication with other teams and the Release Train Engineer (RTE). Iteration goals facilitate alignment with the program PI objectives. In addition, they provide the necessary context for discovering dependencies and developing a resolution, as shown in Figure 3.

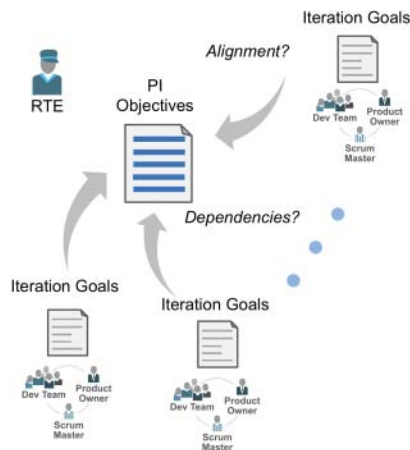


Figure 3. Iteration goals align teams and help identify dependencies

Provide Continuous Management Information

Scaling to the program level requires the creation of a leaner, more empowered organization in which management can handle more responsibility, using organization skills to eliminate impediments and drive

improvements. However, management cannot and should not relinquish its responsibility to understand what the teams are doing and why they are doing it. Managers are still accountable for the effectiveness of the development organization and the value delivery outcomes. Moreover, aggregating iteration goals for a train provides a simple two-week summary of what's happening, as depicted in Figure 4.

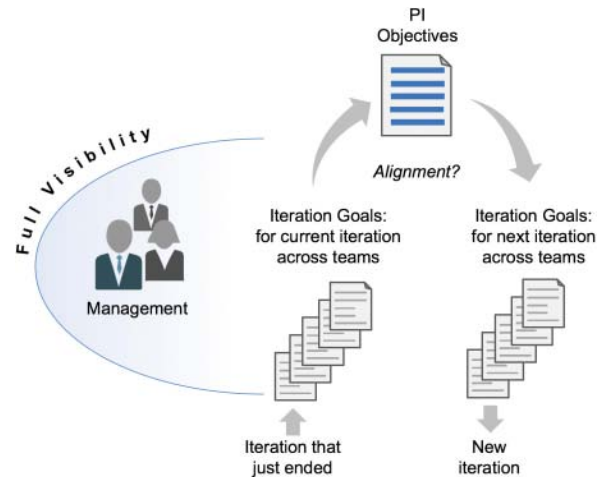


Figure 4. Iteration goals provide visibility and communication with management

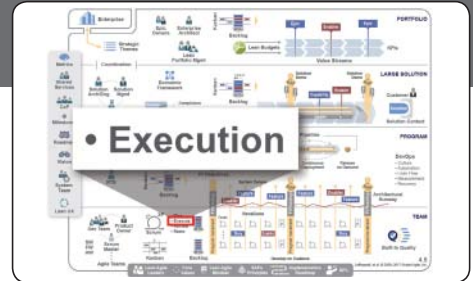
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[1] Leffingwell, Dean. *Agile Software Requirements: Lean Requirements Practices for Teams, Programs, and the Enterprise*. Addison-Wesley, 2011.

Iteration Execution

Vision without execution is hallucination.

—Thomas Edison



Iteration Execution is how Agile Teams manage their work throughout the Iteration timebox, resulting in a high-quality, working, tested system increment.

Developing high-quality systems is a challenge for every Agile team, Agile Release Train (ART), and Solution Train. No matter the preparation and no matter the planning, without effective iteration execution, scaling is nearly impossible and solution quality is compromised.

During the iteration, each team collaborates to define, build, and test the Stories developed in the course of Iteration Planning. The team members track the iteration's progress and improve the flow of value by using story and Kanban boards and Daily Stand-up (DSU) meetings. They deliver stories throughout the iteration and avoid 'waterfalling' the timebox. They apply Built-In Quality practices to build the system right.

These completed stories are demoed throughout the iteration and at the Iteration Review. During the Iteration Retrospective, the Agile Team reflects on its practices and challenges and makes small improvements at every increment. The team also works effectively with other teams on the train and participates in the System Demo.

Details

Empowering Agile Teams to focus on rapid value delivery fuels them with energy, motivation, and purpose. It instills a better sense of mission than traditional management and development models. The centerpiece of this approach is the development of high-quality system increments during the iteration. Teams employ a variety of practices to achieve that result, but the focus is always the same: to deliver the stories they committed to during iteration planning to meet the Iteration Goals.