The Agile Office

Experience Report from Cisco's Unified Communications Business Unit

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Abstract— **Similar to the way a Project Management Office (PMO) defines standards for project management within the organization, an Agile Office governs the organization's ongoing agile adoption and continuous improvement through agile practices and is responsible for the successful ongoing adoption of agile practices throughout the organization. Agile transition takes time; it is not a discrete event. When transitioning to agility it is important to put in place structures that will ensure that agile survives long after the initial transition period. This paper describes the experiences of Cisco's Unified Communications Business Unit in establishing an Agile Office. It describes the history behind establishing the Agile Office, the governance model, where it fits in the organization structure, engagement model, primary activities, challenges faced, and the stakeholders with whom it operates.**

Keywords-agile office, scale, transition, agile, organization, change management, stakeholder

I. INTRODUCTION

Mike Cohn gave a keynote at the Agile 2010 conference in which he mentioned the concept of an "Agile Office". I was inspired. At the time we were two and a half years into using agile practices in our business unit, and about 9 months into a formal organization-wide agile transition that had top-down support from senior executives. We had a dedicated Agile Transition Team tasked with transitioning the organization. Although the transition was progressing, we knew we needed to create the support structures necessary to make sure that agile survived after the transition. We knew that people and organizations have a natural tendency to fall back into old habits once the initial transition period is over. We wanted to ensure that the investment we were making as an organization would result in the higher levels of motivation, productivity, efficiency, quality and culture we were striving for. We wanted to make sure that this lasted long-term, and would not simply be forgotten about as just another fad. However, we weren't yet sure what form this would take. I brought the idea of the Agile Office back to work after the conference and we discussed how it might work for us. We already had some of the pieces

in place. In September 2010 we formally launched Cisco's first Agile Office in UCBU. In his book 'Succeeding with Agile', Cohn expands on what he discussed at the Agile 2011 keynote, and talks about potentially rebranding the PMO as the Scrum Office [1]. We decided to not do this for several reasons. Not all of our product areas had transitioned to Agile, so there were still several product teams using Waterfall. Our Program Managers had varying experience managing agile: from zero to some. We decided to use the Agile Office to help continue the transition of the PMO towards being a more agile PMO, including explicit coaching for program managers. We also did not want to call it a "Scrum Office" because our agile adoption is much broader and deeper than Scrum. We created the Agile Office as a distinct entity, rather than try to rebrand or repurpose the PMO.

II. STORIES – A TALE OF TWO TEAMS

A. Team A

Team A tried Scrum for the first release of a new product. Team A had 14 people, not including managers. There were seven developers, four testers, a user experience designer, a documentation writer, and the Product Owner. All team members, except for one tester, were in a single location on the US West Coast. Some of the team had worked with Scrum on previous projects, but as a whole the team was new to agile. We met with the Scrum Master, Product Owner, Program Manager, and some of the managers a number of times at the beginning of the project, and at various points throughout the project. Several things stood out at the beginning as potential problems. Their Scrum Master was an engineering manager. The product the team was working on was a significantly complex, multi-platform communications application. This team had a number of core dependencies on third party libraries and on other teams. We advised the team that they were launching into full-scale development too early, and without the necessary preparation. Some had become convinced that 'doing agile' meant jumping right in and writing code. Several people had heard about the notion of a 'Sprint Zero'

through Scrum training and through personal research. On the face of it Sprint Zero seems like a good idea; an entire first Sprint to get aligned seems reasonable. However, one problem with this is, for the type of products we develop, two weeks is not going to be enough. The second problem is teams just were not sure what to do with this time, and what the outcome should be. As a result, there was no coherent plan for what the team as a whole needed to achieve from Sprint Zero.

The team was sizing user stories in points, using a scale of 1,2,3,4,5. There were wide discrepancies between some user stories that had the same point value. They discovered that work was larger than they originally estimated, but would not change the size of the user stories. The whole team was not involved in creating the plans and estimates.

On top of this we were fighting misconceptions, some of which conflicted with each other. Agile teams don't need to plan ahead. The architecture will just emerge. The user experience will just evolve. The entire user experience needs to be worked out before development starts. We don't need to do design. The team was finding defects during each Sprint. However, instead of fixing them during the current Sprint, they focused on adding features. They did not size or prioritize the defects.

We checked in with them at various milestones along the way. The team had lost their ability to understand the true status of their project and to know how much work remained. We tried to convince them to revisit their plan, adjust their estimates, plan their actual capacity, and consider some specific agile technical practices. They were not convinced any of this was necessary, and disregarded our advice. Our attempts to get them to plan ahead and consider longer-term architecture issues were questioned as 'non-agile'. Unfortunately, all of these turned out to be real issues that caused the team trouble along the way, eventually forcing them to extend their planned ship date.

B. Team B

Team B was developing a new communication engine that would become a core component in many of the company's products. Team B had 18 people, including 13 developers, 4 testers, and a Product Manager. There were also three engineering managers and two architects. One of the architects was based in Europe. Six of the developers were located on the US East Coast. The rest of the team was based on the US West Coast. Some of the team members were new to agile. Several team members had taken the Certified Scrum Master or Product Owner class, but they

recognized that they needed help. Many had worked on projects that claimed to be agile, but were really just incremental waterfall deliveries with fixed content and dates. The team wanted to really embrace agile and use it to be successful with their product deliveries.

We spent two weeks working with the team with the initial goal of helping them to prepare for their upcoming project commitment. We started with a retrospective. This gave us an opportunity to uncover their concerns and obstacles, as well as build on their strengths and positive experiences. We worked with them on requirements, sizing, release planning, and sprint planning. We helped refine their Daily Stand-ups. We facilitated as they learned to be self-organizing and formed two Scrum teams. We worked with the team, their management, product owners, and Scrum Masters, instilling agile values and principles. Five months on, the team is confident, happy and performing effectively. They are in control of their work. They are successfully meeting their Definition of Done and delivering high-quality software in each Sprint. The team, Product Owners, and management all credit agile with their high degree of success.

C. Summary of What the Agile Office does

The two cases above illustrate some of the many activities of the Agile Office. As our overall Agile transition has progressed, and the Agile Office has gained more standing in the organization, we engage up front with teams before they start work on a new product or release. We also engage at periods throughout a product's delivery cycle, as coaches. We leverage that experience, and the experience of other people, in coaching our teams, management and organization. Working closely with the PMO gives us both a broad perspective on what's happening in the organization and an entry point into teams and projects.

Working with the PMO, we guide teams through the organization's commit process. There are different dimensions to this, including compliance with overall organization requirements, and compliance with regulatory requirements such as ISO. We help Product Owners to build and structure the business case for a new product or release. We work with them to define and refine Product Requirements, structure their Backlogs and establish effective Backlog Grooming practices. We work with teams on planning, architecture, project execution, team formation, team structures, roles and responsibilities, and agile technical practices. We advise teams in establishing effective communication and coordination structures, and we provide ongoing consulting and coaching, e.g., directly

facilitating Sprint planning, reviews, retrospectives or coaching others to do so.

III. CASE STUDY

A. Organization Context

The business unit used in this Case Study is the Unified Communications Business Unit (UCBU). Tom Lambert is the manager of UCBU's PMO. Todd Weber is a senior manager with the Business Operations team. Together with senior managers and directors, we are part of the Agile Transition Team leadership in the business unit. Tom, Todd and I had been working closely on our agile transition strategy and execution for the previous year. We had a lot of discussion on where the Agile Office, and the focal point for agile transformation in general, should belong in the organization. We realized that as an entity, it needed to be independent from the influence of any one functional area such as engineering or product management.

UCBU has a PMO that was already well established. The PMO sits in the Business Operations group, and so is already an objective party in the organization. We decided to align the Agile Office closely with the PMO in the Business Operations group. However, it is important to emphasize, the Agile Office is not the PMO; they are separate and distinct entities. Having the Agile Office closely aligned with the PMO works well. The PMO has access to the broad organization and has responsibility for the operating procedures for projects and programs. One aspect of this is ensuring the organization remains compliant with ISO and other regulatory requirements. By working together, the PMO and Agile Office can ensure that the organization progresses on its agile journey, allowing for experimentation along the way, and still remain compliant with mandatory regulatory and compliance obligations.

B. From Agile Transition to Agile Office

UCBU was an early pioneer of agile methods in Cisco, piloting some of its first agile projects in early 2008. These projects became testing grounds for understanding the limits of how far agile could be pushed before encountering limitations in the organization. By late 2009 agile had spread to other business units and it was time to launch a formal organization-wide agile transition program across the Technology Group. Each business unit established an Agile Transition Team. Our organization-wide agile adoption took off throughout 2010. We worked with external trainers and coaches to roll out a training program across the organization, and had hundreds of people go through the basic Scrum Master and Product Owner classes, as well as some other introductory agile training sessions. Although useful, this training left us with many gaps when it came to successfully adopting agile processes in large products and programs. We recognized that we needed to provide support for teams and product areas that were adopting agile, as well as make sure that the agile mindset took hold across the organization. It was important to make sure that mindset took root, and that we provided the necessary structures to make sure it thrived after the initial transition period. From early on in the transition period we knew we needed to establish structures that would ensure that the agility and leanness that was created would survive after the initial transition period.

C. Agile Office Primary Stakeholders

Time and focus are our biggest assets. Deciding where and how to spend our time and focus has been one of the bigger challenges we faced. We identified seven primary stakeholder groups including Executive Management, Managers in the business unit, Agile Teams, Product Owners, Program Managers, Scrum Masters/Coaches, and the Customer Engagement Teams.

Program Managers have access to the wider organization surrounding our products and programs, and own the program management processes, including all the necessary compliance guidelines and procedures. We work with Program Managers from a program's inception, through the business approval process and the formation of teams, and on through the development and release of the product.

Scrum Masters own the process at a team level. We could not possibly scale our agile adoption across the organization without engaging with Scrum Masters. We facilitate Scrum Master gatherings and Scrum Master retrospectives to help people reflect, share experiences and overcome common obstacles.

TABLE I.   LOCATION OF TEAMS AND PROJECTS

Location	Teams	People
San Jose	5	38
Seattle	11	67
Richardson	-	5
Boulder	-	1
New Jersey	-	1
RTP	1	6
Galway	14	89
Belgrade	-	8
Shanghai	2	23

Agile Teams are responsible for the delivery of our products. Most of the work we do is focused on making sure these teams have the coaching, support and organization structures they need to succeed. For example, we engage with teams on a regular basis as

they prepare for a new release of a product, or to facilitate a retrospective. We also have regular forums that bring together people from across the organization to share experiences.

We support Product Owners by helping with backlog management, execution of product strategy, and advising on portfolio management strategies. We run workshops with Product Owners to help them write better user stories. We run games such as Product Poster, Speedboat [2] or Elevator Pitch [3] to help them articulate and communicate product visions.

We organize a regular forum for Managers. Earlier in our transition it was about understanding the role of managers in agile. This was one of the shortfalls of the initial training received by managers. Scrum, on the surface, was perceived to have an almost anti-management bias. The Scrum training talked about three roles, and none of them was 'manager'. Part of the role of Scrum Master was described as protecting the team, including protection from the unwanted interferences of managers. Part of our goal has been to engage with managers as primary stakeholders, to understand their goals for their organizations, to help them understand agile processes, and to advise them on modeling agile behaviors.

The business unit's executives and some senior managers comprise the Agile Office Steering Team. These people are responsible for the operation of the business unit. They own multiple product portfolios, and are responsible for the strategy and direction of dozens of products. The other primary stakeholders described in this section are part of the reporting organization of one or more of our executives. This group has a direct interest in the success of our agile transition, and the success of our agile teams, because that success directly impacts their teams, products, and revenue streams.

D. Summary of Agile Teams and Locations

This section gives an idea of the scope of the population served by the Agile Office, as of February 2011. The numbers are for agile team members only, including roles such as Scrum Master and Product Owner, but not including managers and other staff. Many of the teams have members that work from other locations. There are five main R&D centers that are home to agile teams. These are San Jose, Seattle, RTP, Galway, and Shanghai.

We try to have co-located teams where possible but there are exceptions. We have agile teams that, e.g., are based in Galway but have a team member in San Jose, New Jersey or Belgrade. We have some people who work from home offices or from offices that are not

one of our primary R&D centers. One of our goals is to unify all of these people, regardless of location, in a common sense of purpose and direction. People need to feel that, while they might be part of a single Scrum team, they are also part of a much bigger agile transition effort and are connected to each other through that. They are primary stakeholders in our agile transition, and in the organization.

IV. OPERATING THE AGILE OFFICE

A. Kotter's Change Model

Agile transition is a large-scale change effort that can be hugely disruptive. Establishing an Agile Office is a change effort that impacts an organization's structure – at the least it is a new entity that must find a place in an established organization. Too many change efforts fail as a result of not taking a long-term perspective, and through not employing a holistic approach to the change effort. John Kotter created a model for change based on decades of researching organizations that underwent successful change efforts, and those that failed [4]. The result is an 8-step model (see Table II) for guiding organization change.

Step 1. The sense of urgency was already there, helped in part by our formal agile transition. We tapped into that and built on it. The organization was going agile. Product teams needed to adjust accordingly. Another type of urgency developed once we started our formal agile transition. We had teams who were going through Scrum training but who still needed active coaching, mentoring and support from people who are experienced with agile and who know the organization, its people and products.

Step 2. The guiding team existed from our Agile Transition. We expanded and repurposed the team. The Agile Office core team consists of three people; Tom Lambert, Todd Weber and me. The Steering Team consists of ten VPs, Directors and Senior Managers.

TABLE II.   KOTTER'S CHANGE MODEL

Focus	Step
Set the stage	1. Create a sense of urgency
	2. Pull together a guiding team
Decide what to do	3. Develop the change vision and strategy
Make it happen	4. Communicate for buy-in and understanding
	5. Empower others to act
	6. Product short-term wins
	7. Don't let up
Make it stick	8. Create a new culture

Step 3. We developed a Vision, Strategy and Execution (VSE) statement. This is a simple one-page document that relates the

vision of the Agile Office to our overall Agile Transition effort, the vision of the business unit, and the wider organization. The Strategy outlines how we realize the vision, while the Execution describes how we execute on the strategy. We intentionally evolve this to keep pace with the overall business unit and organization strategy and priorities.

Step 4. We have regular forums for communication for buy-in and understanding. We have a roadmap that expands on our VSE to articulate our communication strategy. There are a number of elements to this including regular forums with each of our primary stakeholder groups, establishing communities of practice, internal email forums. We spend time embedded with teams from different parts of our portfolio. We have regular touch base meetings with teams to address specific issues.

Step 5. 'Empowering others to act' means a couple of things to us. First, it means removing obstacles to our teams and organization can be agile. Second, it means engaging people so they start to support and build on the work of the Agile Office, and undertake initiatives themselves.

Step 6. Producing short-term wins is critical. We are on a multi-year journey to transition the organization, and a never-ending journey of continuous improvement. Short-term wins are essential for motivation and success. Some examples of short-term wins include ready access to coaching where needed, earlier customer engagement on projects, a series of successful agile projects that delivered in shortened time windows (down from 12-18 months to 3-6 months), a streamlined Business Commit process, establish and roll out of Product Owner Teams across the portfolio, engagement with HR on roles and responsibilities for agile teams, introduce new practices for release planning, introduce new practices for estimation, improved focus on retrospectives, etc.

Step 7. Complacency and apathy are two of our biggest enemies. We have resisted declaring success too early, and have worked to instill the mindset that this is a long journey that we're on.

Step 8. Agile is a means to not only ship great products, but to create great teams and organizations. We have a way to go yet, but there are already clear signs that our agile transformation is helping to transform the culture of the organization.

B. Ongoing Activities

Some examples of the activities of the Agile Office, outside of direct engagement with teams, are described in Table III.

TABLE III.　　Agile Office Activities

Activities
Process Design. The Agile Office helps teams to adopt agile practices and to design processes to meet their purpose.
Organization Design. We realized quickly that introducing agile to a large organization and making sure that the transition is successful and the changes stick requires some changes in organization. Every engagement with new teams includes a discussion and decision on team organization and communication structures.
Engagement with multiple stakeholder groups.
Scaling agile adoption across the organization.
Developing the agility of the organization.
Research. We stay current with the latest thinking in the agile and lean communities. We engage in research work with universities in areas relevant to agile organizations.
Spread Awareness through the organization. Generally, the Agile Office is the focal point for introducing new practices or processes, and bringing together practitioners from across the organization to share experiences
Be an **evangelist**. Part of the role of the Agile Office is to act as evangelists for agile practices.
Nurture **Communities** within the Organization. We have a regular set of community events that bring people together from across the organization.
Coaching teams, individuals and organizations.
Engage with the **broader agile community**. We learn a lot from attending conferences, coach camps, gatherings, and other community events as well as from online forums, books and journals.

C. Governance Model

We manage the Agile Office as an agile team. The Agile Office has a Steering Team that is comprised of the business unit's VPs, Senior Directors and Senior Managers. This group operates as a Product Owner Team. We maintain a backlog of work items, and work through these on a monthly cycle. The 'Product' in this case is our organization, and the work items are activities that we undertake. We keep the backlog small at any point in time. If it were too large there is a danger we will end up spending too much time managing it, and not enough time actually working through the items. Some of the items that have been on our backlog include 'Portfolio Management Strategy', 'Training and Coaching with team A', 'Architecture Strategy for Product Line Z', 'Training and Coaching with team B', 'Surveys of Agile Teams', 'Metrics Dashboard for Executives', 'Training and Coaching with team C', 'Communities and Forums', 'Release Planning with team D', 'Communication and Coordination Structures for team E', and 'Retrospective for Team X'. Our iterations are a calendar month. We don't try to prioritize too hard past the top three to five items. It is unlikely we will get to more than three items in a single iteration. A large part of our time is self-directed and spent with teams as needed. Priorities are generally derived from our portfolio priorities. We also consider the urgency of the needs of the particular team and

the consequences of not giving them what they need immediately. Portfolio priorities change in line with business strategy, and the Agile Office priorities often change in response to this. This can mean that some teams that we originally had planned to spend time with get de-prioritized in favor of more urgent needs. We try to use every team engagement as an opportunity to build up the skills and experience of Scrum Masters, Program Managers and others on the team so they can become more self-sufficient, helping not just their own teams but other teams too.

V. ENGAGEMENT WITH TEAMS

Every team releases product versions under a formal program. We have developed a model of engagement with teams that allows us to give different levels of attention to different teams at different times. This is based largely on two factors: (1) how advanced they are in their practices and capability as an agile team, and (2) where they are in their lifecycle.
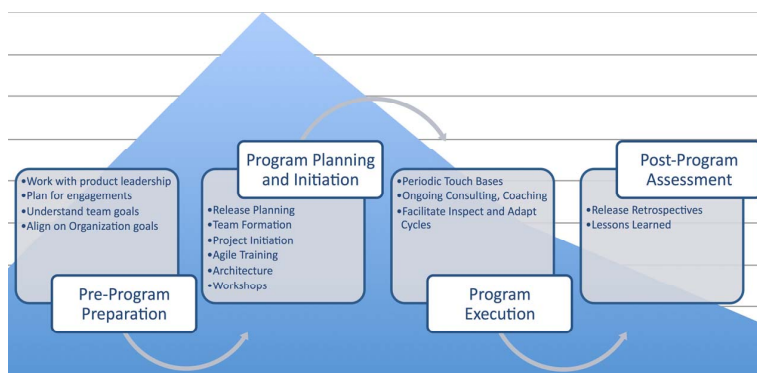

Figure 1.   Engagement Model

The diagram in Figure 1 shows our typical engagement model. We spend some time with the product leadership ahead of the main engagement. We need their ongoing and active support for the engagement to be successful. We also need to understand their goals for the product, for their teams, and for their organization. The heaviest period of engagement is that time around program planning and initiation. That's when the business has committed to, or is preparing to commit to, a new product or release. Product and portfolio owners are elaborating on product and release visions. Teams are being formed. Our experience has shown that this is the critical time for us to engage heavily with teams. The intensity of our engagement declines as teams start to execute on their release goals. We stay involved, but to a lesser extent, primarily through the PMO. The degree to which we can stay involved varies, depending on the needs of the team and the activity of other teams. Managing time is a constant balancing act. We get involved after a

product release to facilitate release retrospectives and work with teams to quantify lessons learned so we can bring that to the wider organization. We have teams at different stages in their product development cycle at any point in time.

A.   Planning and Commit Preparation

The business unit and the broader organization require teams provide a release roadmap for their products. We have worked to bring the release period down from 12-18 months to, in some cases, 3 months. Most projects now work on multiple incremental releases rather than long single delivery cycles. Teams make a commitment to deliver certain functionality at the start of each release. The Agile Office helps teams to prepare for these 'agile' commit cycles, and we coach teams through all of the activities required for release planning in large enterprise organizations. One of our primary goals when we engage with a new team is to coach them in doing these activities themselves, and help them towards being more agile and more self-sufficient. It covers many activities including planning, backlog management, architecture, user experience, dependency management, workflow analysis and stakeholder management. We help teams understand how their functional role fits in with a cross-functional Scrum team. We help them to understand how to create an effective customer engagement strategy. This is a critical period in a Scrum team's formation, where they learn and apply agile skills.

B.   Targeted Training

We use third-party vendors for general training such as Scrum Master or Product Owner training. We often run training sessions ourselves to compliment this. Topics range from training on agile practices, to specific training on topics such as tool training with our chose agile project lifecycle management tool. Other topics might include estimation techniques, planning, agile architecture practices, or Test Driven Development. We will generally tie this training in with pre-program preparation or project initiation.

C.   Regular Touch-Bases

After a program is underway we establish regular touch-bases with teams. This is particularly important after we have spent some time onsite with a team. Sometimes we have a

backlog of items that we work through with teams on a longer-term basis. Sometimes there is no fixed agenda and we work through questions and issues are most current and relevant for the teams.

D. An Example of Team Engagement

We track each of the engagements with teams and other groups. Every month is different, but to get an idea of how our time is spent let's look at an example from February 2011. Figure 2 shows the level of engagement
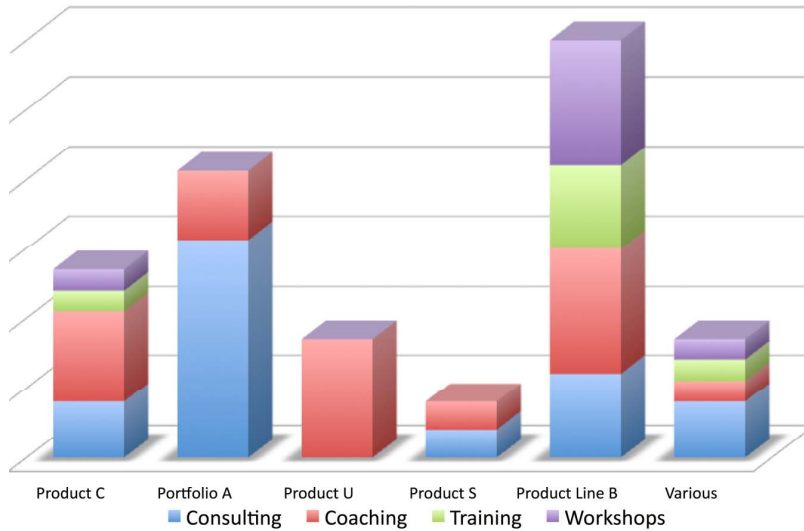
Figure 2. Sample Engagements

with each product area, and with other groups. We also allocate some time towards strategy and organization. One of our business unit groups ('Product Line B') was preparing for an important development period, so we engaged with them to help with release planning, team organization, the commit process, backlog management, retrospectives, and other activities.

There are different types of engagements. For simplicity here we categorize them as training, coaching, consulting, and workshops. One thing this diagram does not show is that during this time there were teams and product areas that we did not get to spend time with. We had to refuse or postpone requests for engagements with teams in our own business unit and other business units simply due to a lack of availability. Having a prioritized portfolio with a prioritized stakeholder engagement plan helps us to make decisions.

VI. CHALLENGES

A. Large Population, Growing Fast

It is a challenge for us to keep pace with the rapidly expanding agile adoption across the organization. The figures quoted earlier were current as of February 2011. We are adding new agile teams all the time. This forces trade-offs.

B. Selling the Need for an Agile Office

There will be people who question the need for an Agile Office, or even the need for a full-time agile coach. We faced these discussions as we set about forming our Agile Office. Use the data that is available to you. Gather data on all your teams and products, and show the extent of the agile adoption within the organization. Get feedback from teams that you engage with, and use that feedback to highlight the benefits of the Agile Office. An Agile Office is also a good strategy to support an organization's self-sustainability, reducing dependence on 3rd-party trainers, coaches and consultants. This can be sold in real terms of cost, but also in terms of developing the capability of the people. Unless a core group of the organization's senior leadership see the need for, and actively support it, the Agile Office will not get established.

C. Pragmatic use of Metrics

We look at metrics from two perspectives. First there are the metrics that help teams understand and communicate their product and project status. Things like Release Burn-up charts, Release Cumulative Flow diagrams, and Iteration Burn-Down charts are new to many teams that encounter agile for the first time. We spend some time teaching people how to apply these charts, how to interpret them, and how to use them to communicate outwards to other stakeholders. We are also interested in metrics that help us to understand how teams are progressing on their agile journey [1, 5]. We are still evolving our use of these and experimenting with different approaches.

D. Avoiding a One-Size-Fits-All Approach

We actively resist defining a 'standard' agile process that is overly prescriptive, not least because we fear it would stifle innovation, learning and continuous improvement. So far, we have gone with the approach of defining a minimal layer of commonality for our agile teams, and treating everything else as belonging to our toolbox. Teams must adhere

to a common set of processes for things like the commit process and compliance. They need to articulate a vision for each release. They must have a customer engagement strategy. If they are using Scrum then they need to identify a Scrum Master and a Product Owner. For most other things, we try to arrive slowly at common practices, and then only after something has been proven to work with at least a couple of teams. The freedom and knowledge to choose the right set of practices is essential for a team's empowerment, autonomy and growth.

E. Engagement and Disengagement

Despite our best efforts to identify and engage with stakeholders, we still encounter people who resist or outright disengage, not just from the Agile Office activities, but also from the broader agile transition itself. That has become less of an issue over time as our agile transition has gained momentum and support across the organization. Having unwavering support from our senior management has played a crucial role. Being able to demonstrate successful product delivery in short time frames has also helped. Even with that we still encounter skeptics; the occasional voice that claims agile does not scale, that sticky notes and white boards are not proper tools, or that teams spend "too much" time planning. We generally try to dig deeper with these people to uncover what their real concerns are.

F. Develop Internal Coaching Capability

We realized early that our teams need ongoing coaching to help them grow and evolve their agile practices. We also needed to develop our internal coaching and mentoring capability. For example, in our story of Team B earlier, seven months after our first engagement with them, Scrum Masters, Product Owners and Managers from Team B are now helping to coach another agile team. Team B has come a long way in a short time. They have successfully delivered two increments of their product with high quality, and are actively growing their team numbers. They continue to evolve their practices, and stand as a great model of agile development done right in the organization. And they are not alone. It is a pleasure to see more and more people spring up across the organization that are willing and able to coach and mentor others.

G. Sharing Experiences

The forums described earlier provide one way for teams to share experiences. A picture is worth a thousand words, and a video worth even more. I have photographs and videos of all of our teams engaged in all sorts of agile activities. I share these with our teams on a regular basis. They are especially useful for engagements with new agile teams. These informal case studies of our teams in action help people understand what other teams do.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Establishing an Agile Office is an effective way of creating a focal point within the organization for the changes brought by an agile transition. Consider the following recommendations if you are thinking about establishing your own Agile Office.

- Know when the time is right. Establishing an Agile Office requires a serious commitment and investment from the organization. It's probably not something to do at the start of an agile transition. First, understand how to help your organization become agile. Seed some pilot projects to understand how your organization will manage them and flush out the aspects of your organization that need to change to support your agile teams.

- Understand who your stakeholders are, and engage continuously.

- The organization's senior leadership needs to be actively engaged, not just passive supporters.

- Operate the Agile Office in an agile way.

- Define a roadmap for agile adoption, and be prepared to keep updating it.

- Give the Agile Office autonomy.

At this time, the Agile Office continues to receive broad organizational support. It is a significant investment for the organization to make, but the return is perceived as high. Our agile transition efforts continue, and with it the Agile Office guides the transition and caters to a growing population of successful agile teams. As more of our teams continue to move beyond the basics and become truly high-performing agile teams, the role of the Agile Office is evolving with them to chart the course for the next steps on our agile journey.

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