The Agile Café

Leveraging the World Café for Large Scale Change

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every time you make a powerpoint

edward tufte kills a kitten
Sorry Kitty

My very quick presentation
Obligatory Agenda Slide

- First a video
- Presentation ~ 25 min
  - Why you really came to this?
  - Why listen to this guy?
  - What is the agile café?
  - What was the theory behind this?
  - Does it work?
  - Take Aways and Resources
- Practice! ~ 20 min
- Q&A ~10 min
From Keynote! Conversation is two minds with working on one thought….literally!

Tap the positive emotion – expand your context and perspective.
Why you came to this session....

- **Guesses –**
  - You wanted coffee and saw the word *café* and figured they had mochas here
  - You saw the word *Boeing* and like airplanes

Or

- You’re a change agent
- You’re a coach
- You’re a scrum master

**Take Away #1:**
We’re all change agents when we’re trying to improve things.
Why Listen to Me?

BSCE Washington State ‘96

Software industry in all capacities, including frustrated internal Agile coach

Masters Degree in Organizational Development, ’10

Participated and/or design over 10 cafes

Was the innovator behind the Agile Café @ Boeing…and it helped!
My dilemma … and yours?

- My dilemma – if it's hard to change just one group, or group of groups, how can I change an entire, giant organization?

  .... maybe I should just do an MBA

- Result - put my shields out up and reached out. See my Agile 2008 paper for that story

Takeaway #2 – Be intentional about being a change agent. Understand the time horizon may be long, and reach out to get help.
Change Agent Burden – What do you connect with?

Some of these were issues I faced...what do you see here that you wrestle with in your orgs?

From outside the team – We’ll never be fully agile, etc.

From within the teams - What we’re doing works, why change?

Funding & Budget – don’t have the funds for new tools or training

Teams too big
Teams too small

Cultural mismatch with agile

____________________  ____________________
Dealing with those challenges

Typical efforts

- Training – Developed and Organized an Agile Training Camp
- Coaching – One-on-One coaching with teams
- Tools – VersionOne chosen as standard tool

This is fine, but…

- It is hard to scale coaching
- Training felt like sending people ill-equipped. “Good luck with that!”
- Tools are very specific to the project teams

Takeaway #3 – You need the social network if you are going to change your culture.
Seeking wisdom I attend
Organizational & System Renewal
@ Seattle U.

Topics:
- System Thinking
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Social technology
- Complexity Theory
- Servant Leadership
- Wisdom of Crowds
- Large Scale Change
The World Café is a social technology based on the principle that conversations matter.

World Café’s cover the gamut:
- Leadership
- How to improve Kaiser Permanente
- How to make Grad school better
- How to make Public Schools better
- How to make The Hanford cleanup be less contentious
Ah Ha!

If a café can address Nuclear waste cleanup and bring together contentious parties into new understandings, a café is more than sufficient to raise the awareness and understanding of Agile!
Fortunately I had management support, which was open to trying a new model for meetings.

Had previous success with “Action-item free” meetings.

Sponsored three café’s across the country, two of which I facilitated directly, and one in the works.
Where does the Café fit?

Take Away #4 - Joe’s Change Agent Pyramid

Agile Training Camp
Agile Workshops
Tools & Vendor Training

Internal Coaching
External Coaching
Embedded Coaching

Training & Tools
Peer-to-peer collaboration
Coaching
Experience

Communities of Practice
Agile Support Group
Agile Cafés
Future Searches

The Best Teacher!
The Agile Café Details

...is a heavily modified version of the World Café
....is different every time to meet a need.

Agile Café Goals

- Peer To Peer Learning
- Increase visibility and energy around Agile
- Spin up “site focals” to build communities
- Somewhere between a meeting and an open space.
The Agile Café Design Process

1. **Establish Sponsorship**
   - Find one or two
   - See if he/she has time
   - See if he/she has budget to buy coffee and snacks
   - What is their interest and stake?
   - What's their calendar like?

2. **Form Design Team**
   - Design team answers the question – who should be invited, what topics are to be discussed, what's our goal, etc.
   - Café Facilitator – the main facilitator should be someone who’s done a café before
   - Table Hosts - coaches, scrum masters, with interest in topics related to Agile (Different than pure facilitation)
   - Find a site focal – the one to continue the conversation
   - What website or tech can we use to keep it going?

3. **Planning**
   - Follow the World Café Checklist, chimes, paper, etc.
   - Logistics - Find a room, get coffee, music, toys, etc.
   - Get that unifying question and table topics – design team for this.
   - Should you add training to the afternoon?

4. **Execute the Café**

5. **Gather Results and Executive Report Out**
   - Survey right away < 5 questions
   - Internal Press, pictures, photos, tag clouds from the table paper
The Unifying Question

What have been the successes and the challenges up until today on your Agile projects in Boeing? Considering those successes and challenges, what would you indicate as best practices when leveraging Agile?

Metrics
Sandy

Business and Collaboration
Mary Kay

Technical Practices
Joe

Org Processes
Jon

Table Topics

General Topics
Lisa
**Agile Café Flow**

**Introduction (30 min)**

1. The Café Facilitator (thanks everyone who has come to the event)
2. Sponsor opens
3. The unifying question is shown.
4. The table helpers (TH) introduce their tables
5. A chime is rung and the conversation begins.
Round 2 & 3

1. At the end of round 1, everyone is instructed to move to a new table with different people around a topic that interests them.

2. The table helpers stay at their table and welcome the new group, introducing them to what had emerged in the last round and the conversation beings at the ring of the chime.

3. Repeat for Round 3
The Agile Cafés inside of Boeing

- **Puget Sound** – first ever – very strong positive feedback

- **Huntington Beach** – larger design team, very strong positive feedback

- **St. Louis** – even larger design team, added a ½ day of training. Added vendors for training and demos

- **Puget Sound BDS** did their own…heard it was great.

- **Café #2 in Puget Sound (In Work)**

But did it work?
The Survey Says....

Q1 - I found value in the Agile Cafe

96% rated this as a valuable event across sites
I would be interested in more lean-agile collaboration events like the Cafe...

Quarterly wins….but it's hard to do!

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Frequency?

More than once a month: 1
Monthly: 18
Quarterly: 35
Annually: 14
Don’t want to do it again: 0

n=68
97% rated this as a good community event builder…but is it true?
Results

- Great survey responses
- Lots of internal press
- Met a lot of great agile change agents on my design teams.
- Most importantly - I was focused on issues that my clients cared about
- Take away #4 – This whole thing may be about how you can be a better change agent…and that would be okay!
What remains to be seen….

- Despite the high marks on community building, and the specific role of “Site Focal” I have not seen those communities form as strongly as I would like.
  - Reason? Probably lack of a dedicated agile coaching in those regions

- Management and Executive Buy in
  - Definitely happening, but fragmented

- Can we do this Virtually
  - First experience not so hot, will try it again

- Increased Agile adoption and Agile understanding
  - Definitely making noise, but tough to measure these things
Skeptics

Still, how do you know its working?

- Count number of seats of VersionOne?
- Count number of projects using agile?
- Survey responses
- Actionable ideas generated

Ideas?

Ultimately any intangible work will be hard to quantify. I choose to trust the surveys and the quality of the interactions I receive as a Enterprise Agile coach.
Café’s leverage Agile Principles

- As agilists, the effectiveness of Café’s shouldn’t surprise us...
  - Café’s are face-to-face conversation (principle #6)
  - Peer-to-Peer – non-hierarchical
  - Self Organization - No assigned tasks, choose the topics you’re interested in…self organization (principle #11)
Café’s leverage human principles

- As humans, this is as old as…well…humans

  - Conversation is how work gets done
  - Conversation is how people bond
  - Conversation is the way we open our minds to new understanding
  - Conversation is entertainment – song, television, movies
  - Conversation is core to learning and teaching is core to human nature
“The World Café is emerging as a dynamic way of connecting people and enabling them to share ideas and seek deeper meaning. The World Café creates an hospitable environment by bringing people together in a more intimate space in order to encourage real dialogue then moving the participants amongst the groups to share ideas and concepts. This methodology is being used around the world to help create a greater sense of shared community.” - Ann McCloskey, Senior Vice President Strategic Development for Wells Fargo Foothill

“This is the most actionable data we have ever had to work with.” - Doug Eastman, Executive Director of Technology Adoption and Organization Capability, Kaiser Permanente on a recent café of over 100 participants on the subject of designing a companywide people strategy
Let's Practice!

Two, five minute rounds, ten minute report out.

The unifying question –

What are the best ways you’ve seen to raise visibility and peer-to-peer interactions for Agile in your company?

Ready…set…go!
Reference Sheet

• OSR Seattle University - Probably wouldn’t have happened without these folks
• Go to my website at visuallabs.com for current templates and resources on Agile and Innovation

Referenced Works:
Takeaways – Review and Close

Take Away #1 - We’re all change agents when we’re trying to improve things.

Takeaway #2 – Be intentional about being a change agent. Understand the time horizon may be long, and reach out to get help.

Takeaway #3 – You need the social network if you are going to change your culture.

Take Away #4 - Leverage Joe’s Change Agent Pyramid for culture change

Take Away #5 - A well designed and facilitated Agile Cafe will make people ask for more Agile, raising its awareness far beyond your capability to do it alone. If may change your company, it will certainly change you.
The Agile Café Toolkit

If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to ask me at joefec@gmail.com or joseph.l.fecarotta@boeing.com.
The World Café Model
(explanation slide for selling the idea)

- Intentionally harnessing the power of conversation for business and social value.
- Provides useful guidance for anyone seeking creative ways to foster authentic dialogue in which the goal is thinking together and creating actionable knowledge.
- The metaphor of the "World as Café" helps highlight and strengthen invisible webs of dialogue and personal relationships that enable us to learn and find a shared purpose.
- World Café is based on a set of principles and processes to evoke collective intelligence and link it to effective action in pursuit of common aims.
Agile Café Roles

- **Café Facilitator** – the person who knows a lot about World cafes, has done a few, and is typically the agile change agent pushing it.
- **Table hosts** – the folks who stay put at the table and should be interested in the topic they’re representing
- **Site Focal** – For large enterprises, the person the facilitator is putting up as the local go-to-person after the facilitator leaves
- **Café Host** – a manager or executive that gives the 5 minute introduction and usually one of the people that receive the report out
The Unifying Question

What have been the successes and the challenges up until today on your Agile projects in <your org>?

Considering those successes and challenges, what would you indicate as effective practices when leveraging Agile?

Notes:

• Develop these questions with the café sponsor and design team
• Keep it simple, but open ended
• Might want to pass out sheets of Action Planning on them
• Might want them to bring artifacts of their work that they’re particularly proud of, or embarrassed by.

Reference: The Power of Questions
**Logistics**

**Duration:** <2-3 hours, could combine with training>

**Who:** Agile supporters with some Agile experience

**When:** <better to be in the morning>

**Where:** <choose a nice room with natural light if possible>

**Sponsor:** <the higher, the better>

**Host:** <the higher the better too. Might be same as host.>

**RSVP by <date> via email <youremail>**

Coffee and Lunch provided by ....

**Notes:**

- Always provide Coffee! Lunch is optional, but snacks respect the human in us and are just plan fun.

- If its hard to get people to events like this, add a ½ day of training or something else to increase the value of co-location

**Reference:** “Do food” from Fearless Change, Rising & Manns, 2005
Cafes are like planning a wedding and a bar mitzvah together – a lot of work

- You need some time, at least a month, to plan it
- Trained Café Facilitator (email joefec@gmail.com if you need help!)
- Best if you have a design team – it’s harder alone
- Best if you have a sponsor
- A nice room - table cloths, coffee, maybe snacks.
- Stay true to World Café Principles. Read the Café to Go Guide
- Don’t do it during lunch unless you buy it
- Make sure you have a report out
- Create some sort of follow up (DL, wiki)
- Passionate table hosts who can facilitate discussions
- Somewhat experienced Agile practitioners.
- Give Agile back to the community and the site focal
Typical Post Event Action

- The paper on the tables will be collected, grouped and analyzed by Café Helpers and Facilitator.

- While it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the Café, whatever is discovered will be presented to Leadership

- Leadership Team will be informed of the Agile Café output and analysis

- Survey should be sent by the Café Facilitator immediately after the café.

- The change agent should note his or her own action plan.
If you want this to become this you have to create a social movement and the Agile Café is a good tool to do that.
Table papers from the session.

Thank you for coming!
- Lunch & Learns
- Internal Agile Conference
- Post shippable milestones
- Use social networking tools (ie: Yammer)
- Online Groups (ie: Campfire)
- Communities of Practice
- Centers of Excellence
Stories are now
- Short crisp
- Lessons
- Urban legends
- Sticks w/ people
- Team

accelerating by copying

Implement successfully

Give them a tool to help them get together to talk their problems through.

Learning Time Schedule 1-2/sprint
11:50/2 - 4 pm
Ways to peer agile learning

- Local community
- Meetups
- Lunch & learns
- Agile talks
- Evangelist kits
- Materials
- Smaller PO support
- Daily standups
- Cross-potential
- Team Townhalls
- Virtual eight knocks
- Bring consultants
- Special facilitated session
- Build on successes
- Scrum
- Post interviews
- Book club
- Discussions
- Final reports
Work In Public (kitchen)
Lunch & Learn

- Artifacts
- Posters, Pictures, etc.
- Internal websites
- Company Newspaper

"We are Listening"
Agile Special Interest Group (A-SIG)

- Pitch it in Demo/People meeting
- Ask for interest in office

Features:
- webinars
- speakers
- exco sponsors

Train coaches to the agile office

T.O.
- PR - success stories
- One good project
- Internal social network
  - Internal community site
  - Blog, etc.
  - One stop shop
- Find & groom "darers" across the organization.
- Presentations to other communities
Science Fair

We’re Listening Sessions

MONTHLY REPORTS

ISSUES

FORMAL TRAINING
(TEAMS & MGT)

LUNCH & LEARN SESSIONS

Communities of Practice
Routine Agile training

1. Raise Awareness of key concepts

Agile counsel

1. Allow people to bring questions / concerns up through managers
2. Counsel delivers feedback / support
   (i.e. nail down pain points)
Communities of Practice.
Management support
Dedicated Teams
Agile collaboration outside your Company
Local & Global Retrospectives
CSPRINTs
Team newsletter, sharing success
RAISE VIS.

1. Sharepoint site + AskforHelp@co.com
2. Get in the IT newsletter
3. Exec Briefings/Agile Overviews (project)
4. Record/share lots of data (training)
5. Share success stories
6. Reading group/Book Club
7. Comm of Interest

P2P INTERACTIONS

1. Open Space (½ day, at least 1 x/year)
2. "Beer" + food = social + biz works
3. Find opps for people to work together - example: "down tools week"
4. Present/share results between tms
5. Present case studies to share techniques