

October Meetup

How to use Agile methodologies to change organisational culture.



On Tuesday October 16th 2018, Ntegra ran their inaugural Meetup at their new offices in The Workshed, Swindon. Meetups are a programme of events open to everyone. Through keynotes, panel discussions and interactive sessions our Meet Ups explore a range of topics to promote thinking and conversation, ultimately creating better understanding for everyone. The subject for the first Meetup was Agile methodologies. The goal was to understand “How to implement agile methodologies in non-agile team cultures”, however in true agile fashion, after some initial panel discussion the goal was re-phrased to **“How to use Agile methodologies to change organisational culture.”**

To facilitate the meetup Ntegra chose to use components of their Design Sprint methodology. Ntegra use this methodology to enable organisations to have somewhere to start when answering hard questions and to then move rapidly through design and solution build. The Ntegra method is suitable for both technical and business problems. A typical Design Sprint lasts 3-5 days, although the meetup only lasted for two hours! Because of the shortened time the focus was on the initial phase of the Design Sprint. The format was modified to enable both panel discussions and wider audience participation whilst retaining the key principles of the Design Sprint.

The panel was made up of:

- Andy Jefferies, Chief Innovation Officer, Ntegra
- Sara Sharkey, Brigadier Head Application Services & DevOps, MoD ISS
- James Potten, Partner & MD, RED Academy Europe
- Diego Groiso, SAFe Release Train Engineer & Scale Agile Coach, Vodafone

The first exercise was a panel discussion where each panellist explained the context in which they had experienced challenges in using Agile within their wider organisations. Having set the scene, the main exercise of the evening was started, called “How Might We?”.

How Might We?

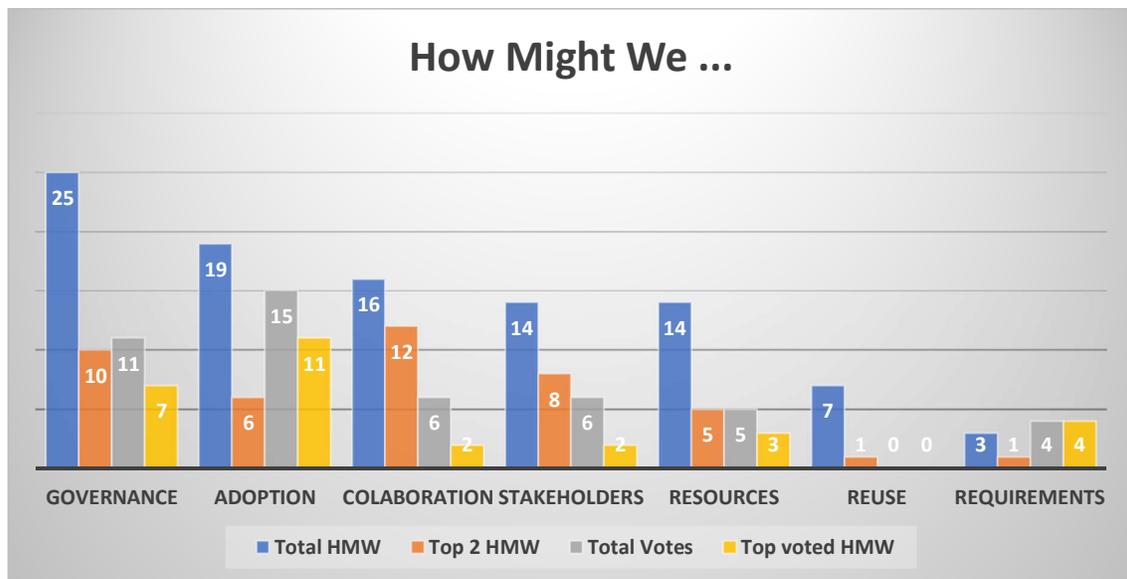
The How Might We (HMW) exercise was a deeper discussion of the initial points raised by the panellists. During this discussion we asked all audience members to take notes in the How Might We format. The HMW format encourages everyone to think about pain points as opportunities.





Following the HMW panel discussion each attendee was requested to hand in their HMW notes highlighting which were their top two. The top 2 HMWs from each attendee were then grouped into the following areas: Governance, Adoption, Collaboration, Stakeholders, Resources, Reuse, Requirements. Everyone was then asked to vote on the HMWs that they believed were the most important. To do this, everyone was given 2 dot stickers and told to vote by placing their stickers on the HMW or HMWs that they wanted to vote for. The panel would then be asked to comment on these top HMWs.

Analysis



The graph above shows the distribution of the HMWs that were received from all attendees. Key observations to note are:

1. Governance received the most overall number of HMWs (25 in total), however Collaboration was self-selected by the audience being most represented in their top two (12 in total).
2. Adoption had a relatively low self-selection by the audience (6 in total), however this was then the most voted for area.
3. The top two HMWs aligned to Governance and Adoption.

It should be noted that this Meetup focused on methods as opposed to technology and tools.

The top two most voted for HMWs were:



Findings

When discussing these top HMWs with the panel, the following were the key takeaways:

How might we get finance to enable agile?

- Use SAFe budgeting practices
- Ensure the correct culture is in place
- Know the next most valuable project to do with a fixed cost team
- Train financial staff to improve their understanding
- Fail Fast \equiv Fail Cheap

How might we ensure agile is adopted/accepted at all levels of the organisation?

- Train from the bottom to the top
- Identify “Ink Spots” where agile has worked
- Showcase results & benefits
- Take a punt
- Start with a small thing and show value
- Focus on Incremental delivery
- Agile \equiv Culture: select carefully
- Have a Kanban board for everything (and take a photo of it every day!)
- Get a coach (someone who has already done it)



Conclusion

The clear message in the room on the night was that governance/stakeholders and adoption were the top areas to focus on when challenged with getting agile adopted by the wider organisation. More specifically, working closely with finance to help them understand the benefits and facilitate appropriate budgeting is key. To enable this, being able to demonstrate success is essential. By choosing small yet impactful projects “Ink Spots” can be created that have two benefits; Firstly, they can be used as exemplars with finance and the wider organisation to promote the agile agenda and secondly, create enough “Ink Spots” and they spread and join up.