

LeSS Adoption Principles and Approach



@ Enterprise Agile San Francisco Bay Area

<https://www.meetup.com/SF-Enterprise-Agile/events/270030970/>

Upcoming LeSS Training

➤ **4/29-5/01 Certified LeSS Basics**

➤ **5/06-08 Certified LeSS Basics**

Note: This is not an introductory course. Good Scrum knowledge is required. More about the course - [here](#).



About Me

- **Certified Agile Coach (CAC)**
 - **Certified Enterprise Coach (CEC)**
 - **Certified Team Coach (CTC)**
- **Certified LeSS Trainer (CLT)**
- **20+ years in the industry**
- **~15 years of knowing how to spell 'Agile' 😊**



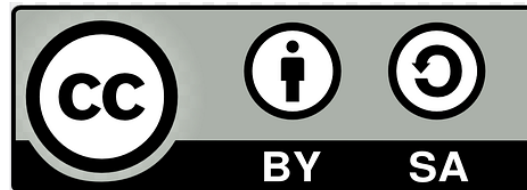
Please, Take Anything You Like

Agile Anti-Patterns with Irony and Satire

and/or

Run This “Method” Through Organizational “Compiler”

All images are:



Feel free to use them all with a small attribution 😊

This May Not Be Obvious to Everyone

Organizational STRUCTURE –

is the 1st Order Factor (Variable) that has impact on everything else inside ECOSYSTEM.

Everything else just follows behaviors, norms, values, principles, policies

This is what many unexperienced Agile Coaches fail to teach to Organizational Leaders

Large Scale Scrum View On Agility

It is vital to appreciate that organizational agility cannot be achieved by a development team in isolation -- it is a system challenge for organizational redesign. Especially when you are interested in LeSS within an R&D department of thousands, where each product group may have 200 or 700 people distributed in two or five sites around the world. If an engineering team has the technical capacity to adapt or change quickly, but requirements management, legal practices, product management, HR policies, site strategies, and deployment processes all emphasize rigidity, conformance to original plans, conformance to the status quo, and slow practices, then how can there be real agility?

Source: <https://www.scrumalliance.org/community/spotlight/craig-larman/june-2015/less-agile-or-less-agile>

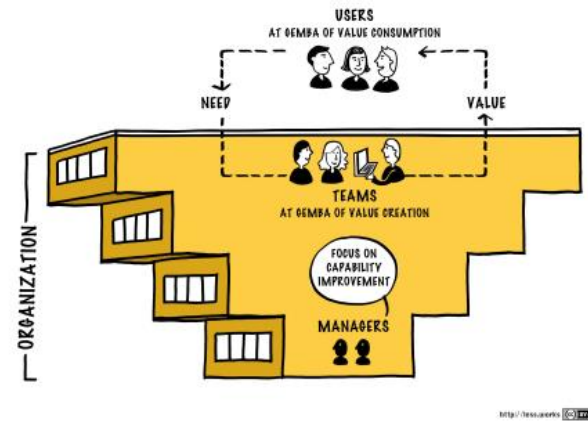


Three (3) Adoption Principles of LeSS

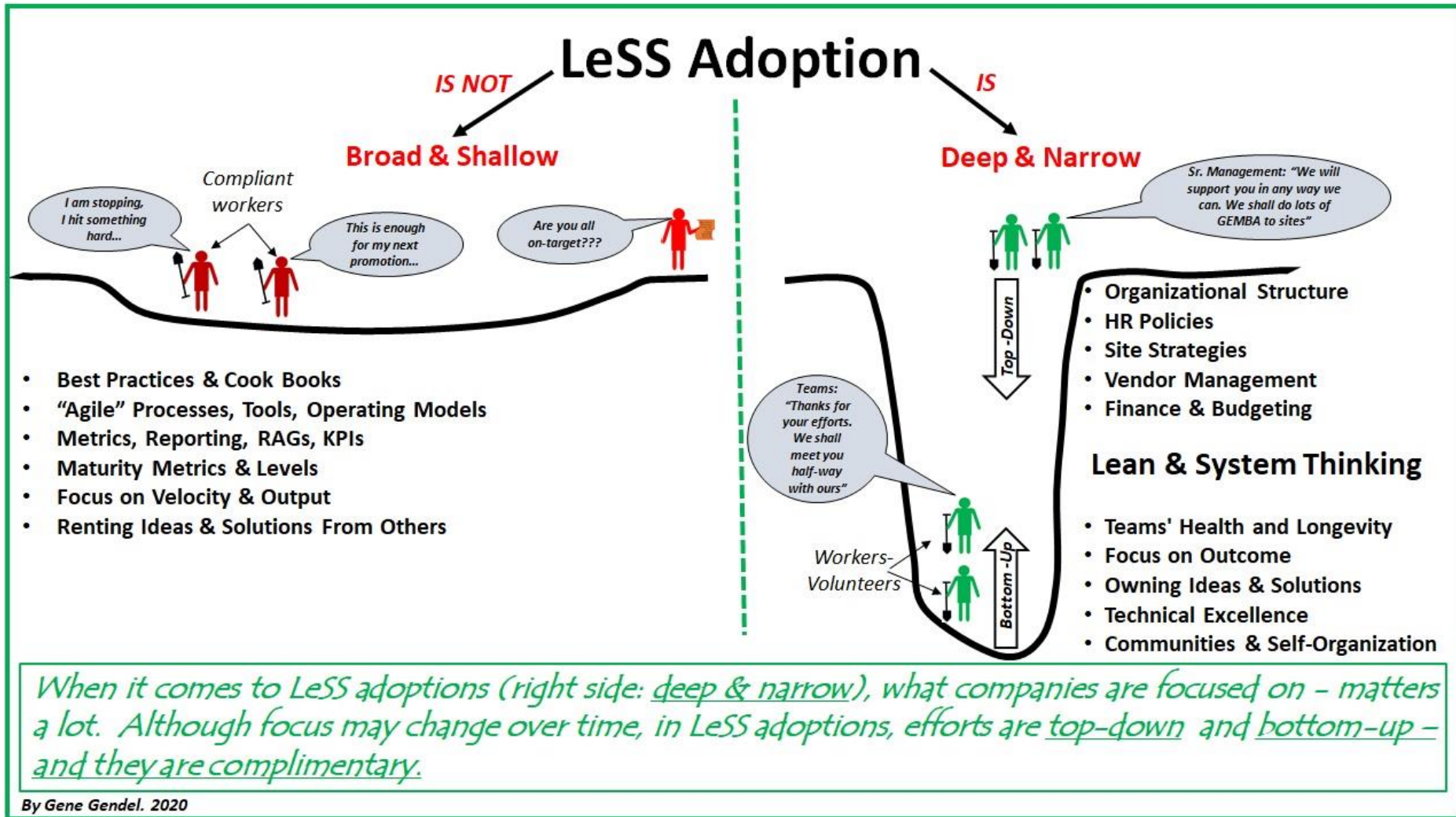
➤ Deep and narrow over broad and shallow

➤ Top-down and bottom-up

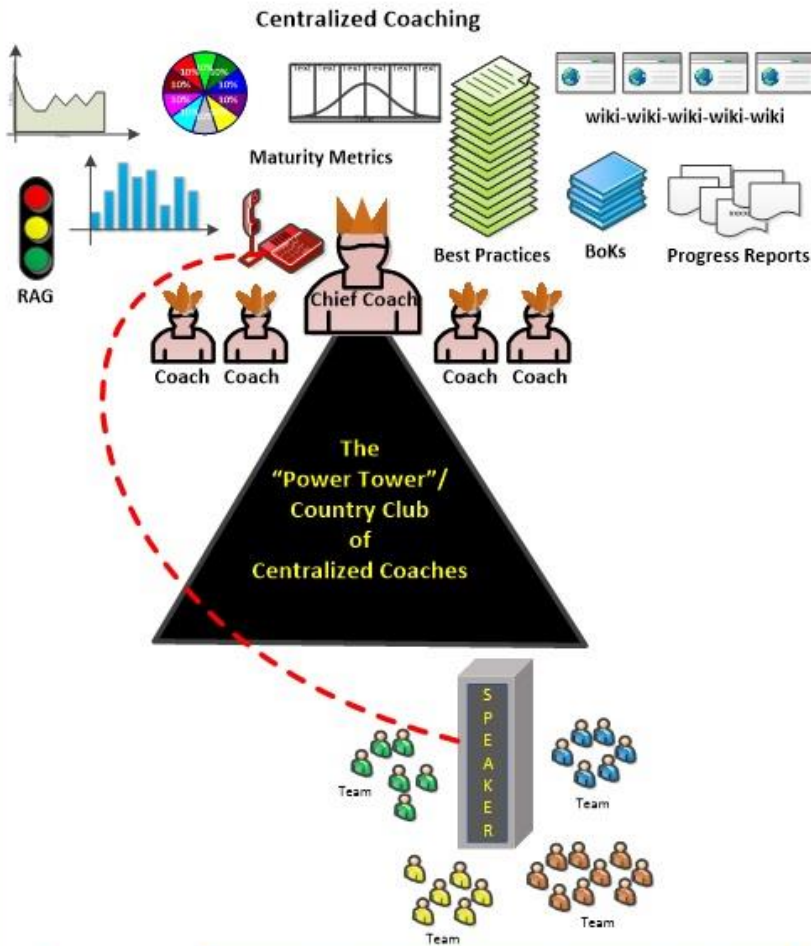
➤ Use volunteering



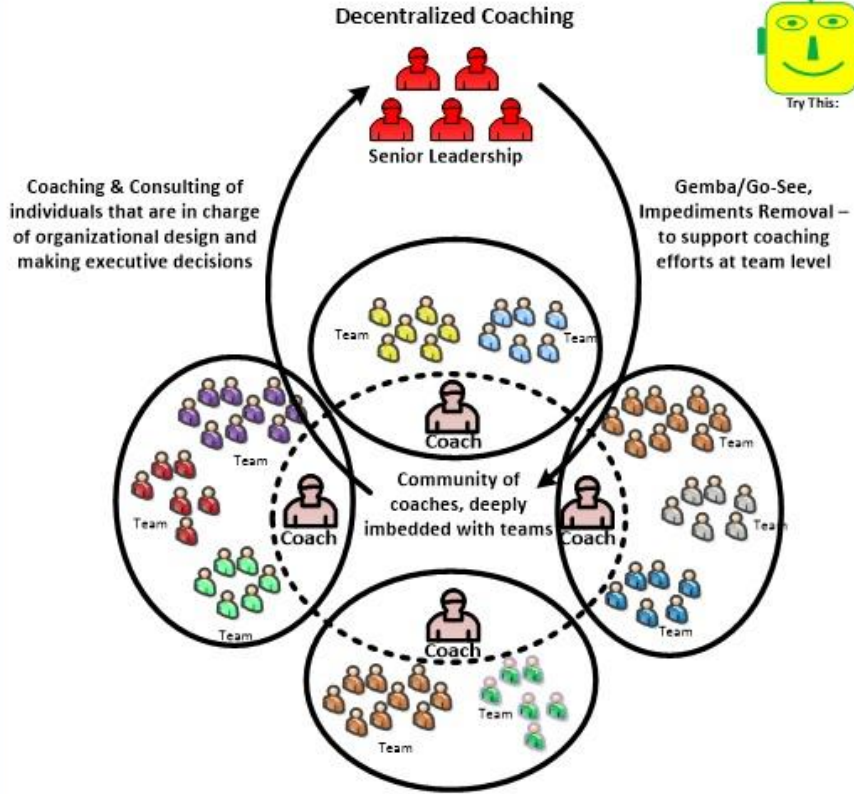
Deep & Narrow VS. Broad & Shallow



The Ivory Power-Tower of Cheerleaders



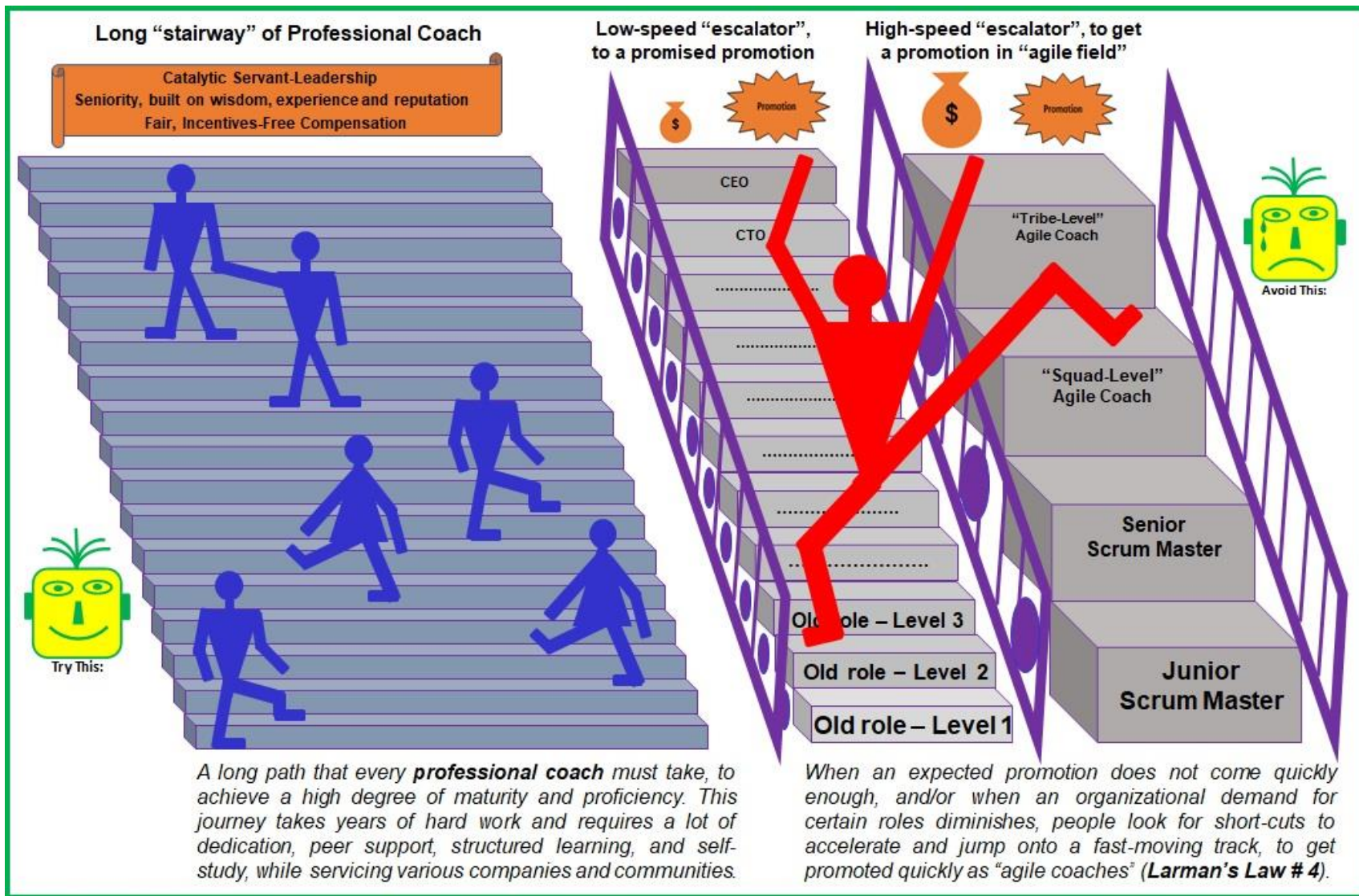
Attention: This graphic is a cartoon and its purpose is to expose a dysfunction through irony. This is **NOT** an invitation to experiment the presented case 😊.



...But you can try this.... 😊

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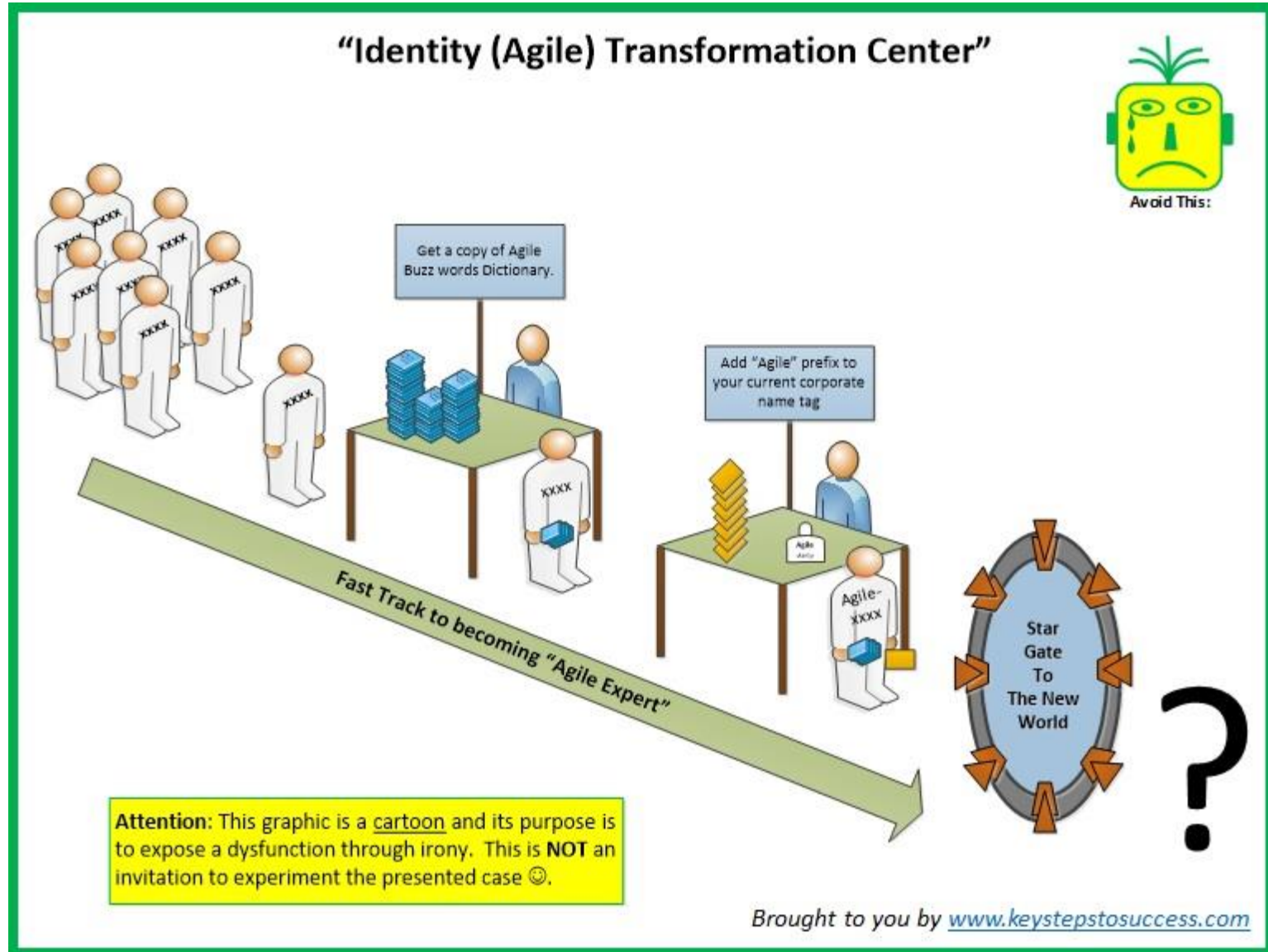
Career “Fast – Trackers”



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http://www.keystepstosuccess.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/agile_coach_fast_track-1.jpg

Old Title + Agile = “Agile New Title”



Industry-Wide Problem



CERTIFICATE OF AWARD



This is to certify that

Johnny A. Walker



- Has successfully completed a deeply discounted 60 – minute on-line course, followed by 20 impossible-to-fail, multiple choice examining questions and, therefore, has gained full proficiency in using overloaded agile jargon, necessary to seamlessly fit and efficiently navigate complex organizational terrain
- Has gained deep knowledge of all agile methodologies and the most popular agile framework (version: 495.33-ABF-309)
- Is able to spearhead multiple agile projects, programs, portfolios, while using various agile processes and electronic tools
- Is capable of guiding teams and senior leadership on how to 'do agile' in a very safe and non-disruptive way

Certificate ID: 123423-9343-94235324-2-45437

Certificate granted by: Experienced Instructor who completed the above training program just one week before this certificate was issued

Certificate backed by: Recently Formed, Unknown Company with aggressive marketing strategy and questionable industry reputation



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http://www.keystepstosuccess.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/fast_track_agile_expert.jpg

Larman's Law # 4

Larman's Laws of Organizational Behavior

([Spanish translation](#))([Russian translation](#)) ([Japanese translation](#))([Persian/Farsi translation](#))([Polish translation](#))([Portuguese translation](#))

After decades of observation and organizational consulting, here are *Larman's Laws of Organizational Behavior*. These are observations rather than laws to follow ;)

1. Organizations are implicitly optimized to avoid changing the status quo middle- and first-level manager and “specialist” positions & power structures.
2. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be reduced to redefining or overloading the new terminology to mean basically the same as status quo.
3. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be derided as “purist”, “theoretical”, “revolutionary”, “religion”, and “needing pragmatic customization for local concerns” — which deflects from addressing weaknesses and manager/specialist status quo.
4. As a corollary to (1), if after *changing the change* some managers and single-specialists are still displaced, they become “coaches/trainers” for the change, frequently reinforcing (2) and (3).
5. Culture follows structure.

Agile “Masquerade” In A Nutshell



Bad SQL (in HR Database)

It is amazing if your company, creates the following important titles (marked in red) in its HR database, to support agile roles and careers. However, it is a sign of a deep systemic dysfunction and ‘agile masquerade’, if the following SQL queries are ran, as a batch job, overnight... ☹.

```
UPDATE table_employee  
    SET table_employee.title = 'Senior Agile Coach'  
WHERE table_employee.title = 'Senior Project Manager'
```

```
UPDATE table_employee  
    SET table_employee.title = 'Scrum Master'  
WHERE table_employee.title = 'Junior Project Manager'
```

```
UPDATE table_employee  
    SET table_employee.title = 'Product Owner'  
WHERE table_employee.title = 'Business Analyst'
```

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Agile “Masquerade” In A Nutshell

Terminology Clean-Up Recommendation

Since “*agile business*” (not to be confused with *business agility*) has become so popular in the last few years, some *agile terminology* got out of hands. Some of it is being inaccurately used. Let’s try to clarify what is important:

- There are no ‘Agile Scrum Masters’ and ‘Agile Product Owners’. But there are: Scrum Masters and Product Owners – these are the roles of Scrum (and Large Scale Scrum). There is no need to add the word ‘agile’ to these two Scrum roles, just to emphasize that they are not waterfall roles. Why? Because Scrum is agile framework, and each of its roles, by definition, is assumed to be agile.
- There are no ‘Agile Project Managers’ and ‘Agile Business Analysts’. At least, not in Scrum (or Large Scale Scrum). NB: this is not to be confused with a team’s ability to manage themselves and their work, or analyze a product (not project) needs. But there are Project Managers and Business Analysts in waterfall and other sequential phase-based SDLC approaches, used by companies with traditional organizational design (interestingly, we never used the word ‘waterfall’ to describe them historically).

...last but not least...

If the word ‘Enterprise’ is used in conjunction with the role of ‘Agile Coach’, please make sure that its meaning is understood (there are well defined industry standards, e.g. by Scrum Alliance, to describe the role of an enterprise coach). This is what ‘enterprise’ should not mean:

- Pay grid *conversion factor*, for a person to ‘convert’ (overnight) from his/her senior ex-role to a coach (Larman’s Law # 4)
- Implication that a coach, single-handed, ‘converts to agile’ a huge organization (NB: some enterprises could be very small)
- Assumption that a coach belongs to an internally centralized *ivory-power-tower* coaching structure that sets golden standards, best practices and mandatory ‘operational models’ for the rest of an organization

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Triple Taxation

**Large Consultancies (+
Staffing Firms – Hustlers)**

**Tooling
Companies**

**Large,
Commercially
Successful “Agile”
Frameworks**

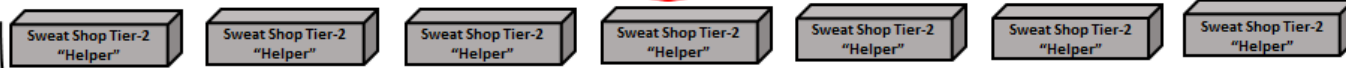


Industry-Wide Problem

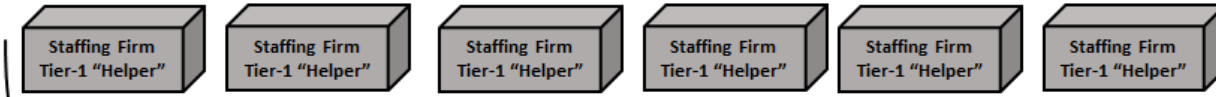
“Resource-Processing Food Chain”



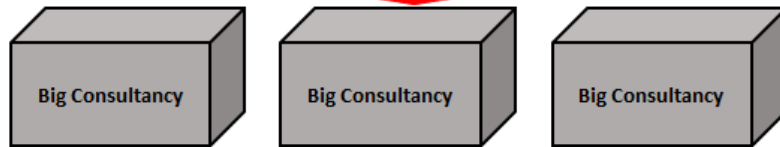
A huge pool of people, with the word “agile”, added to their public profile. Majority of them, displaced from their traditional roles, now becoming agile coaches (Larman’s Law #4). Amongst them, there is a tiny fraction of **really experienced coaches** that are very hard to find in a mix.



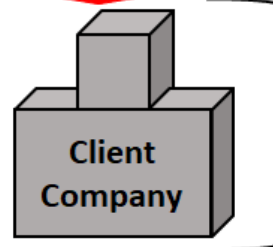
Typically, off-shore based, “boiler room” style, Sweat Shops, full of cold-callers that are VOIP calling, texting, emailing everyone, whose public profile contains the word “agile”. **Working for extremely low pay.**



Low-quality Staffing Firms, aggressively trying to hunt for resources, while using primitive (border-line unethical) screening techniques, to furnish a heavy volume of resumes to Big Consultancies. **Working for a very small mark-up fee.**



Big Consultancies, desperately fighting for an opportunity to become an “exclusive service provider” to Client. Not having their own internal expertise (usually, their consultants are not coaches), to meet Client’s needs, they now have to hunt for “coaches” in the market. **Charging Client an enormous amount of money.**



Client Companies, lacking enough internal expertise to provide to themselves with quality guidance, training, coaching and organizational design advisory. They naively rely on “best practices” and thick presentation decks of large consultancies – long time preferred vendors that are great at traditional staffing, now eager to bring in their “coaches”.

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Avoid This:

Big Consultancy Approach

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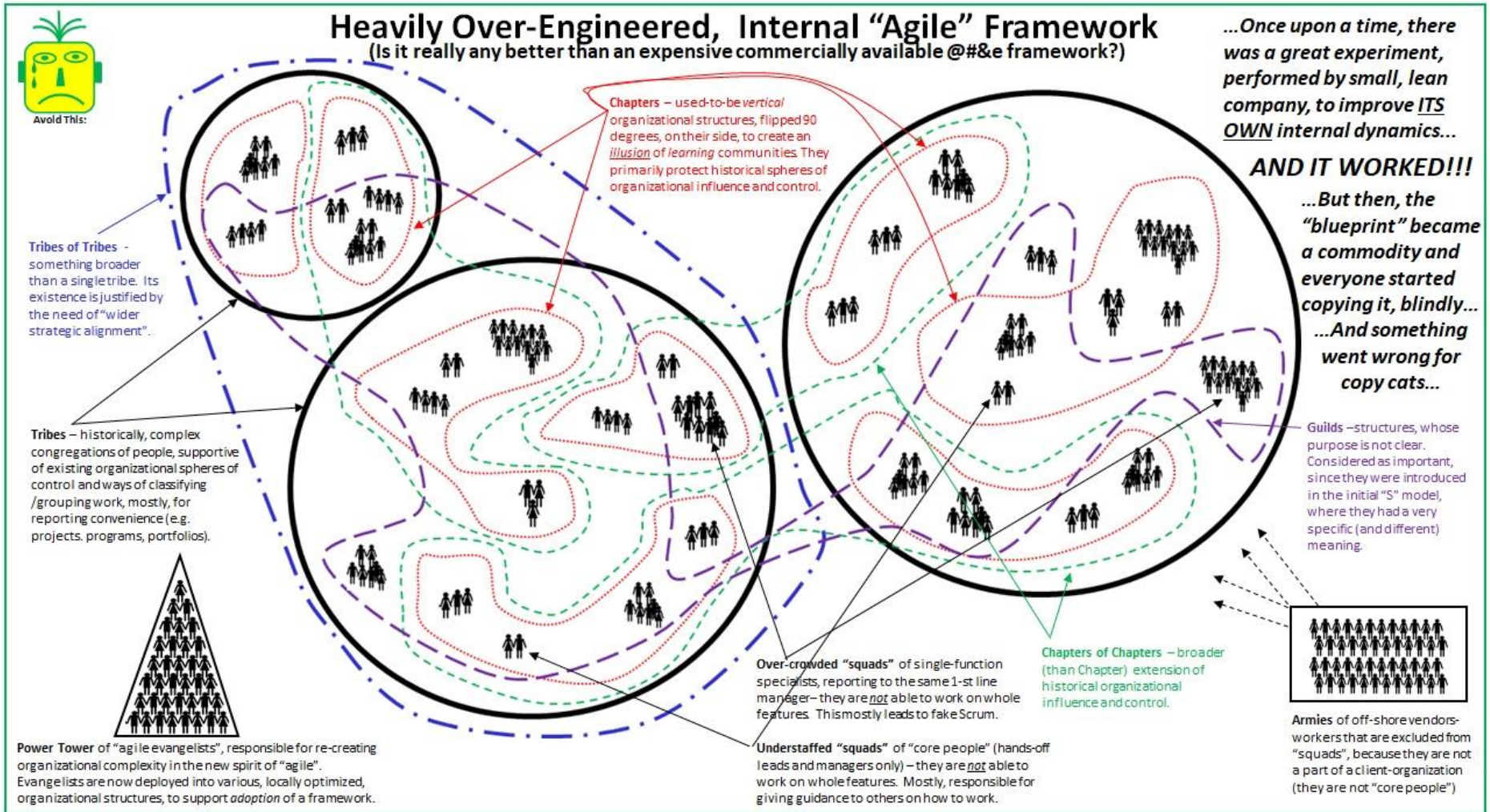


**Avoid
(Deck – Driven Transformations)**

DDT

Knowledge retention and quality of learning are inversely proportional to thickness of a power point 'agile transformation' deck and directly proportional to font size used in a deck ;)

Big Consultancy Solution

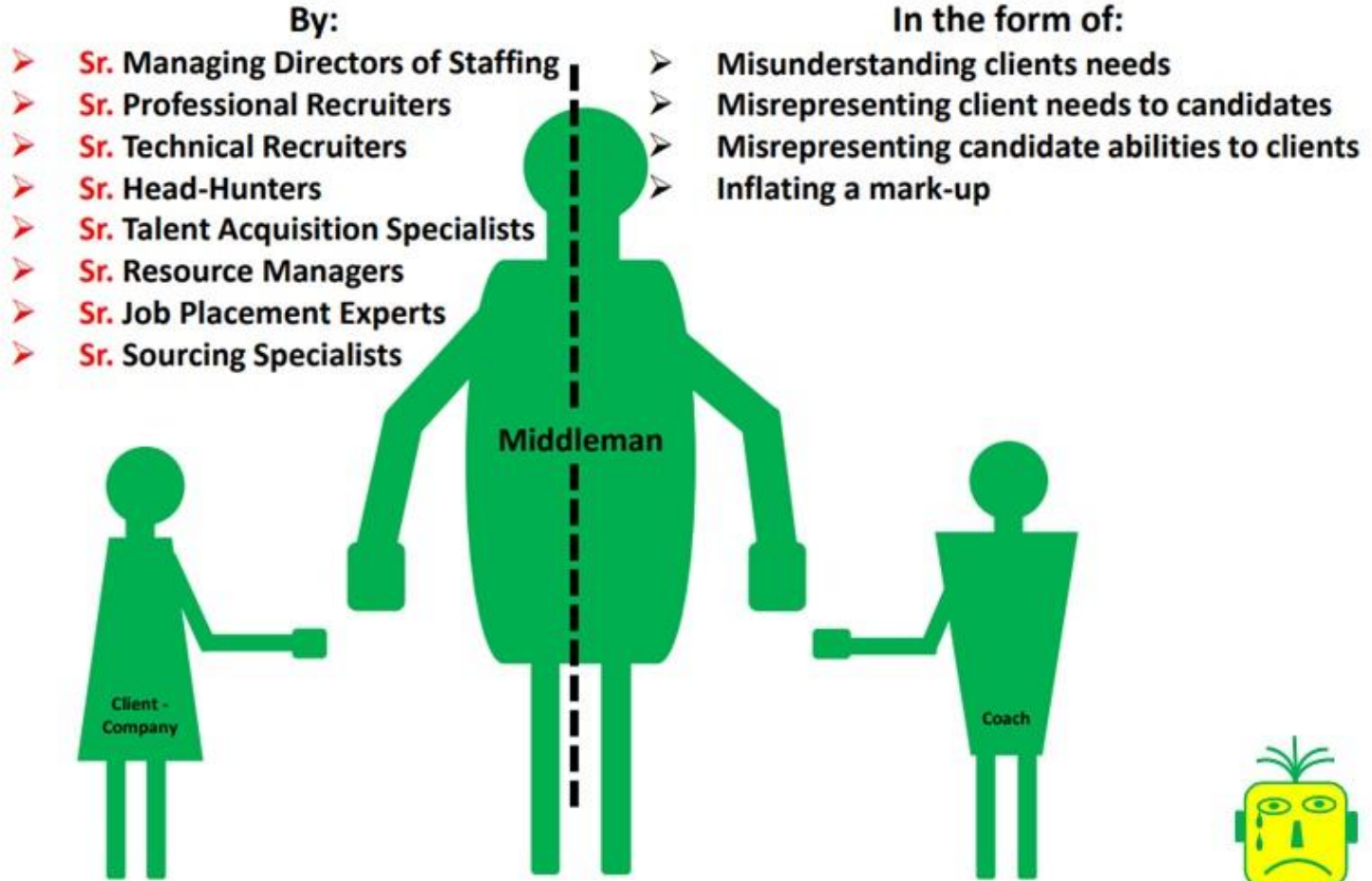


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<http://www.keystepstosuccess.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/donotcopy-s-model.jpg>

Industry-Wide Problem

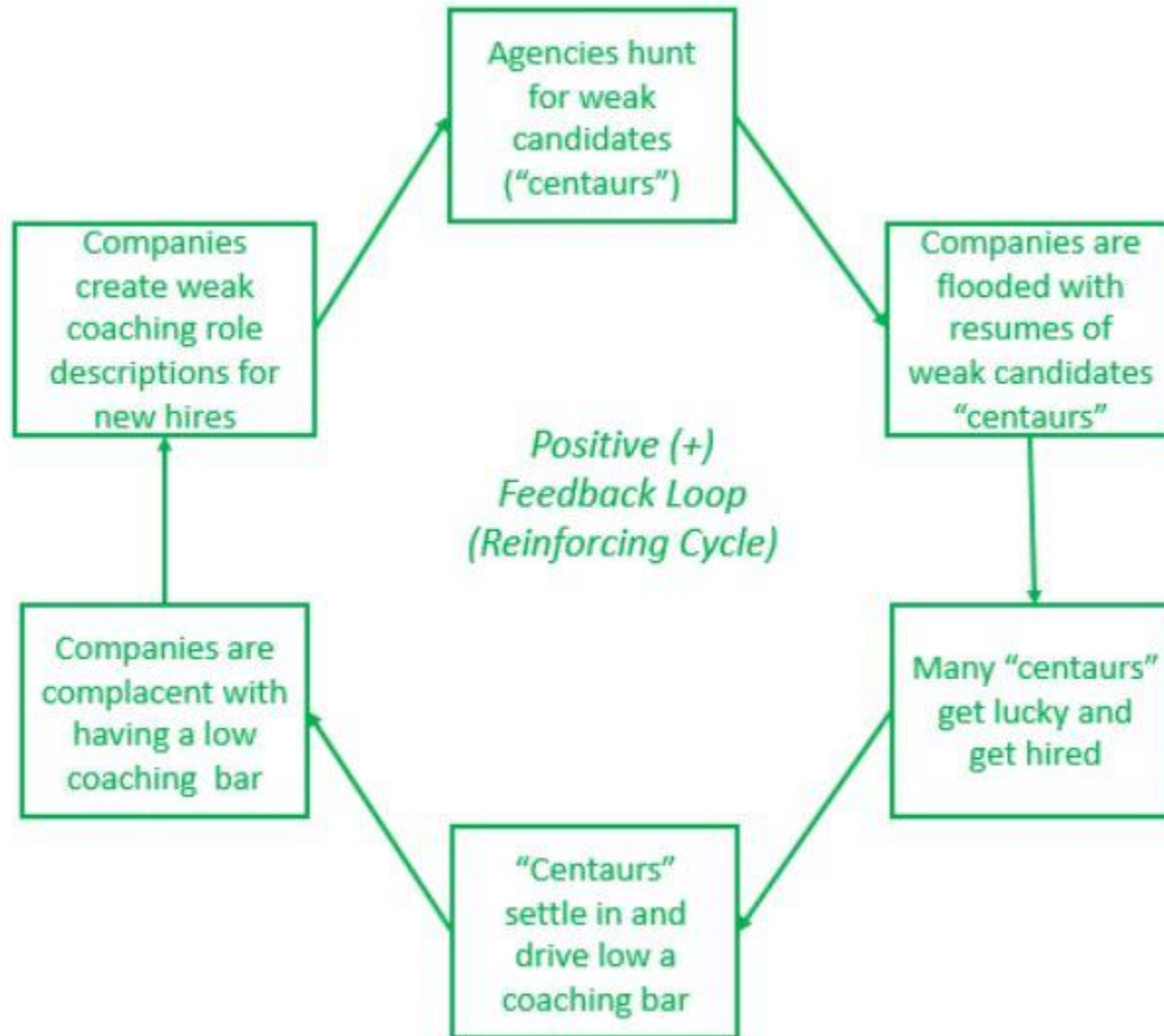
Middleman Problem: Low (very) Value Proposition



Avoid This:

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Industry-Wide Problem



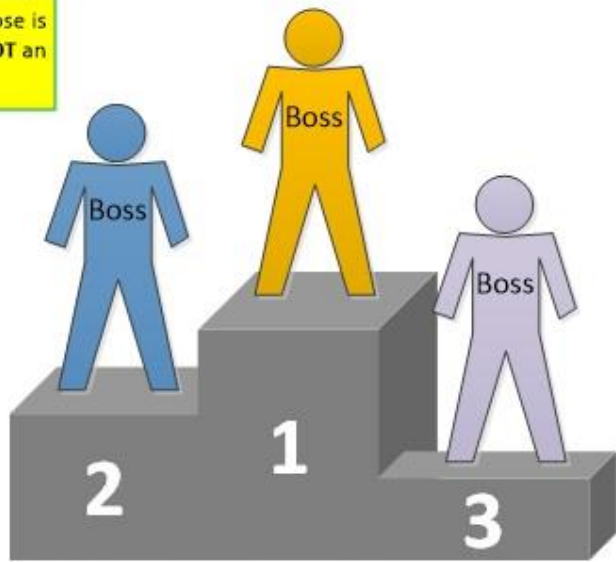
Avoid This:

Gaming The System

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Agile “Semi-Finals” Race



EoY Agility:	45.373%	67.924%	37.184%
Agile Maturity Level:	12.3455	16.9729	7.1223



Organizational Agility Meter: **4 5 . 3 7 3 9 9 4 %**

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How Is Going To Survive?

Organizational Fitness (to Survive)

Organizational Design is of the FIRST ORDER factor that defines Organizational Adaptive-ness (a.k.a. Agility).

Flattened reporting structures, streamlined communication, simplicity of processes and frameworks, fewer roles, with more responsibilities per role... All of this may sound like a broken record, re-played way too often by *“not pragmatic enough agile purists”*.

HOWEVER... when it comes to extraordinary times (e.g. financial uncertainties, hardship, economic turmoil, pandemic)...

A company that is lean and fit is also more resilient. A company that did not accumulate a heavy “baggage”, does not have to trim as much of its “organizational weight”, in order to stay afloat and survive. It also means that a company does not have to put at risk job security of its own people (downsizing), its own ability to run vital business operations and keep clients happy...remain relevant and competitive.

A lean company is more adaptive, and therefore – more fit. It will survive.



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Q & A

About Gene

Gene Gendel is an organizational design specialist, agile/lean coach and trainer, consultant and adviser to senior leadership. Almost 15 of 20+ years of his professional experience – Gene dedicated to working with companies of various sizes and lines of business, trying to help them improve internal dynamics, organizational structure and and becoming a better place to work. Gene engages at all organizational levels: senior- and mid-level management, teams and individuals. In his work, Gene uses various methods, tools and techniques to amplify learning by others and to ensure that people gain autonomy after Gene “coaches himself out of the job”.

Gene is Certified Agile Coach (CAC), by Scrum Alliance – small elite community of [Scrum Alliance Certified Enterprise Coaches \(CEC\)](#). Today, he is the only CEC who resides in NY State. Gene is also one of the co-creators of [Team Level Coaching Certifications \(CTC\)](#) program for Scrum Alliance.

Gene is also one of very few [Certified LeSS Trainers \(CLT\)](#) that are based in the United States.

He is also well-recognized blogger and publisher. He is the author of [Adaptive Ecosystems: Collection of Independent Essays About Agility](#) and co-author of:

- [Agile Coaching: Wisdom from Practitioners](#) (free pdf).
- Best Agile Articles of [2017](#) and [2018](#)



Gene significantly contributes to global and local agile communities, where he influences people by running workshops, webinars, seminars, panel discussions, lunch & learn, coaching retreats, professional gatherings and other events. While teaching and coaching Large Scale Scrum (LeSS) to organizations, Gene has built the biggest in world (today) [LeSS meetup community](#) that is used as a free educational hub about LeSS available to many people.

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