

AGILE FLUENCY™ PROJECT

presents

How Limits Empower Your Agile



Presented by
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A group of nine people, four men and five women, are standing on a balcony. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The balcony has a glass railing. In the background, there is a large glass wall that reflects the sky and clouds. To the right, there is a multi-story building with many balconies and windows. The people are wearing various casual clothing, including shirts, blouses, and a dress. Some are wearing lanyards with badges. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

Overview

Teams & Limits

Investments & Tradeoffs

Questions?



How

Limits (boundaries, restrictions, constraints, tethers)

Empower (enable, permit, allow, authorize, make capable)

Your (personal, team, organizational, business)

Agile (quick, well-coordinated, easy, graceful, adaptable; *deriving from the Manifesto for Agile Software Development*)

“The enemy of art is the absence of limitations.”

Orson Welles (via Henry Jaglom)

“I don’t think you can escape from that...it’s a very good discipline to work with boundaries...”

Perry Westwood

“If you give somebody constraints, it’s easier to be creative.”

Dom Hofmann



The Agile Fluency Model

PRE-AGILE

SHIFT
Team Culture

FOCUSING

SHIFT
Team Skills

DELIVERING

SHIFT
Organizational
Structure

STRENGTHENING

SHIFT
Organizational
Culture

OPTIMIZING

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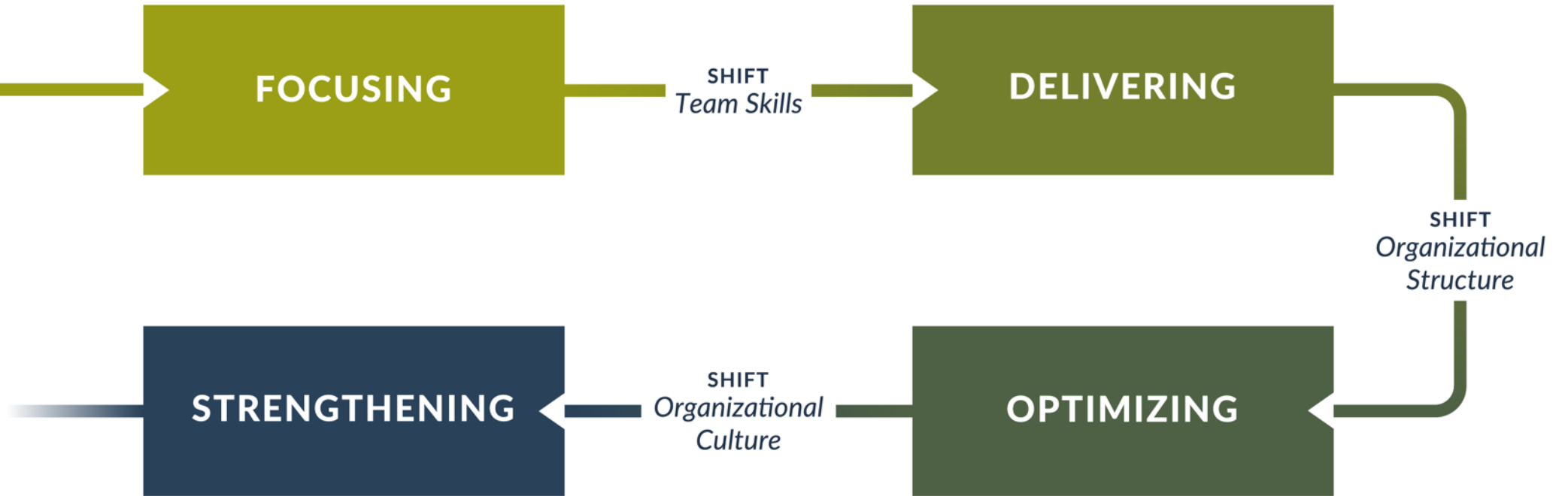




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Business Value of Focusing

- Reduce cost of delay
- Reduce waste due to building wrong things
- Spend less time on poor communication
- The team thinks and plans in terms of the benefits their sponsors, customers, and users will see from their software.

FOCUSING

▶ See progress from biz perspective
Redirect teams when needed
Work on most valuable thing

Investments

- Time to reach fluent proficiency, 2-6 months
- Remove impediments to teamwork
- Ensure 100% allocation to team
- Keep teams together
- Create shared workspaces
- Train managers to manage the system

HELPFUL LIMITS FOR FOCUSING TEAMS

- WIP Limits – No more than X items in process
- Working Agreements; e.g., “We work best together when we limit our thrashing to no longer than one pomodoro, then ask for help.”
- Limit on story size – all stories must be sized so that at least five can fit within a sprint
- Team member limit – one team at a time.
- Others?



Clarity about limits helps to avoid wishful thinking and to discern the tradeoffs needed to balance expectations and investments.

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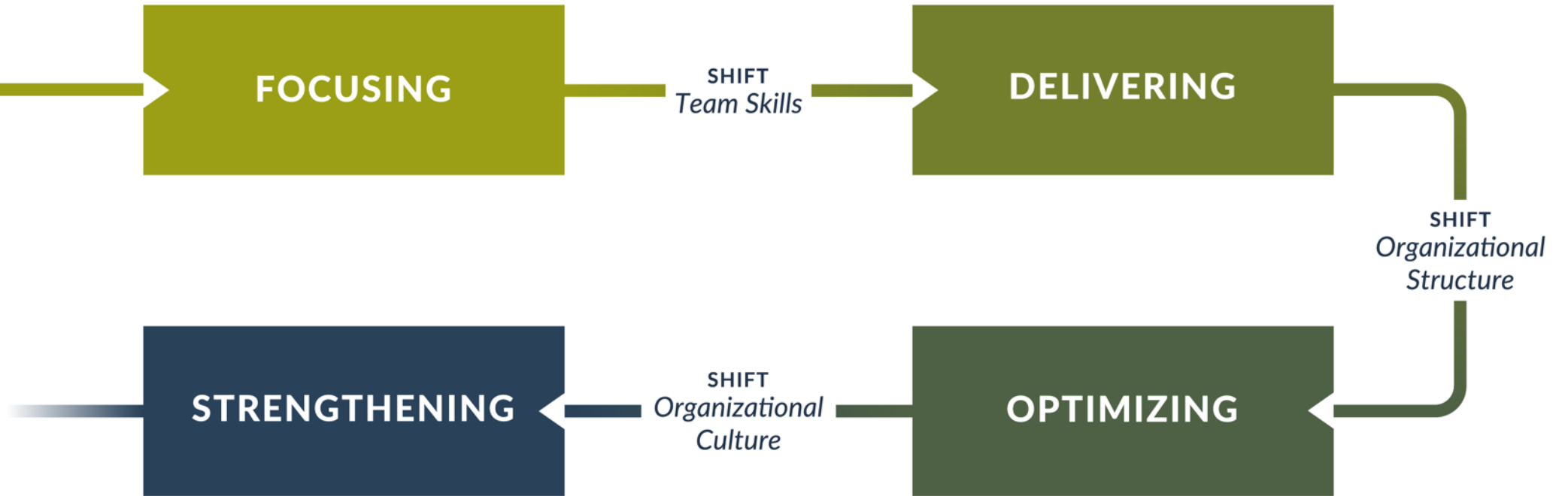
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Business Value of Delivering

- Reduce time spent in QA
- Reduce waste due to defects
- Reduce cost of deployment
- Increase morale and reduce churn
- The team can release their latest work, at minimal risk and cost, whenever the business desires.

DELIVERING

Release at will
Capture value frequently
Reveal obstructions early

Investments

- Time to reach fluency proficiency, + 3-24 months
- Provide & expect time for lowered productivity
- Create slack for refactoring
- Integrate technical disciplines into team
- Provide training in technical practices
- Hire skilled practitioner-coaches

HELPFUL LIMITS FOR DELIVERING TEAMS

- As a team “create the minimal set of [coding] standards you can live with.” James Shore, *The Art of Agile Development*.
- If two or more team members work remotely, all team members attend meetings virtually.
- No product backlog visible to the team holds more than a rolling quarter of projected work. More is waste.
- Others?

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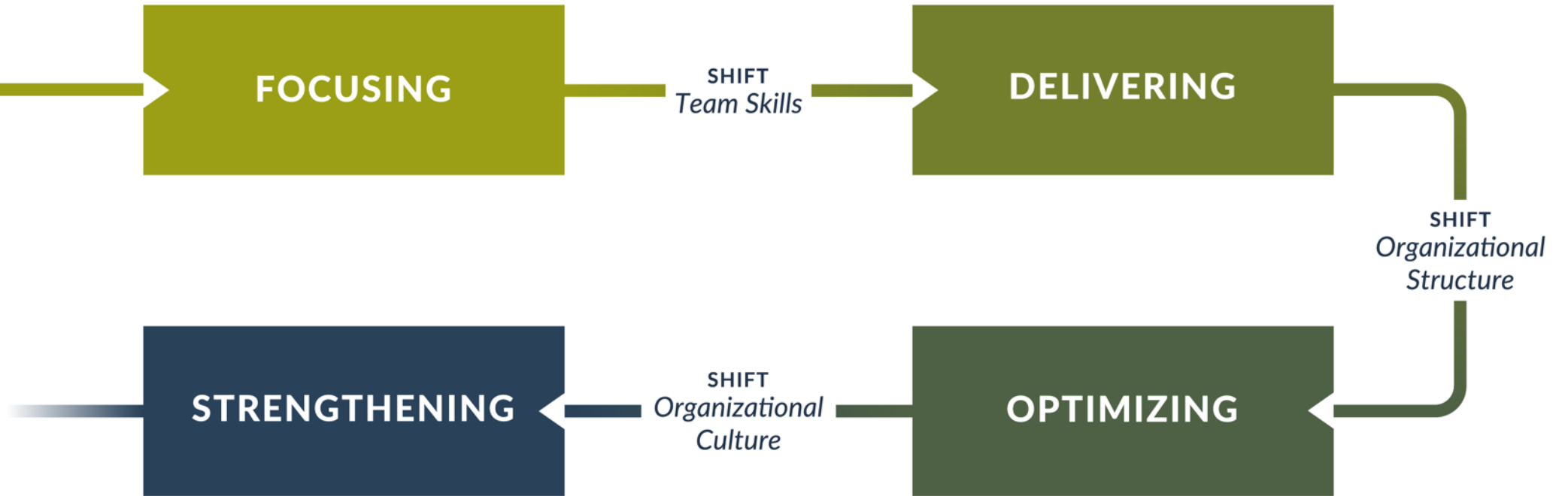
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Business Value of Optimizing

- Improve competitiveness
- Reduce communication delay
- Align better with market needs
- The team understands what their market wants, what your business needs, and how how to meet those needs.

OPTIMIZING

Excellent product decisions
Eliminate hand-offs and wait time
Innovation/disruption

Investments

- Time to reach fluent proficiency, + 1-5 years
- Disruptive—often need to build trust with Delivering fluency first
- Incorporate business experts full-time in team
- Dedicate teams to particular products or markets
- Give teams responsibility for budgets and plans
- Judge based on results, not adherence to plans

HELPFUL LIMITS FOR OPTIMIZING TEAMS

- The team works within a defined budget and manages its funding, and funding requests, appropriately.
- Team members may not have a single area of expertise. Every team member is included, or expected to obtain, multiple skills and knowledge sets useful to the team.
- Every team defines no less than three product/market metrics and refer to them on a regular cadence.
- Others?

Positive
Inclusive
Promotes Improvement

THE AGILE FLUENCY™ MODEL

CHART YOUR AGILE PATHWAY

Fluency: Routine, Skillful Ease
Comes From Investment In Learning

INVEST IN:
Productivity dip
DevOps, UX, etc. in team
Technical training & mentoring

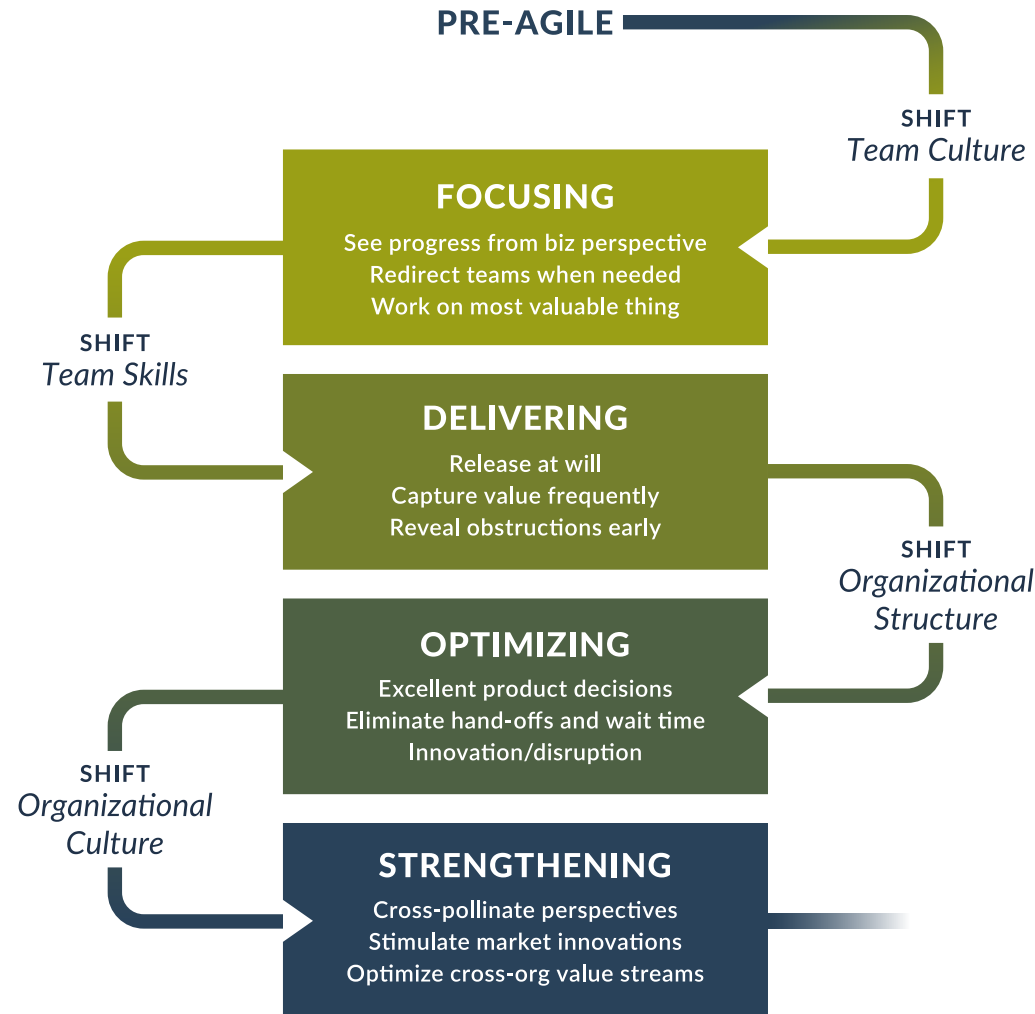
AGILE SUSTAINABILITY: +3-24 MO.

Extreme Programming
DevOps Movement

INVEST IN:
Inventing new practices
Cross-organization focus

AGILE'S FUTURE

Complexity Theory
Organization Design Theory
Alternative Governance Structures



INVEST IN:
Full-time team members
Team workspace
Business representation
Team coaching
Management training

AGILE FUNDAMENTALS: 2-6 MO.

Basic Scrum
Kanban

INVEST IN:
Market focus
Business expertise in team
Team business ownership
Management coaching

AGILE'S PROMISE: +1-5 YR.

Lean Startup
Lean Software Development
Design Thinking
Beyond Budgeting

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TYPICAL BUSINESS TRADEOFFS

- Giving up [THIS] for [THAT]
 - Comfort with habitual behavior for ..?
 - Reliable assumptions for ...?
 - X% of available funds for...?
 - Balancing factors, not attainable at the same time
- What are you willing to swap? What exchange makes sense to you? What makes a tradeoff worthwhile?

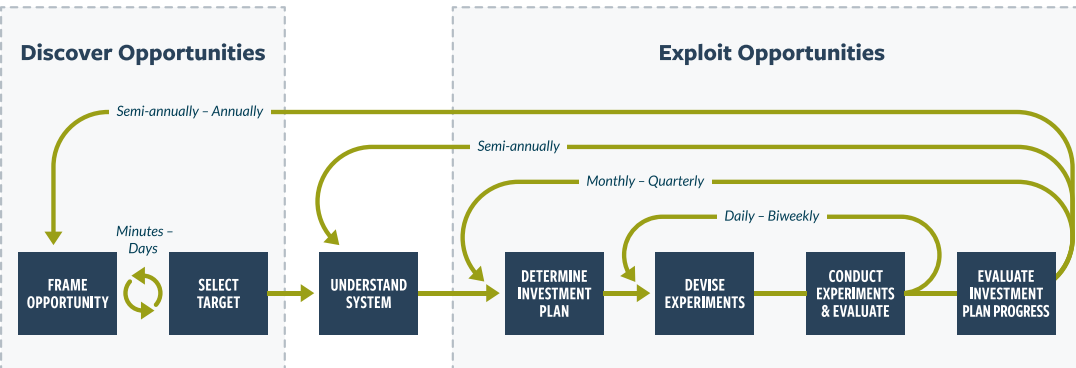
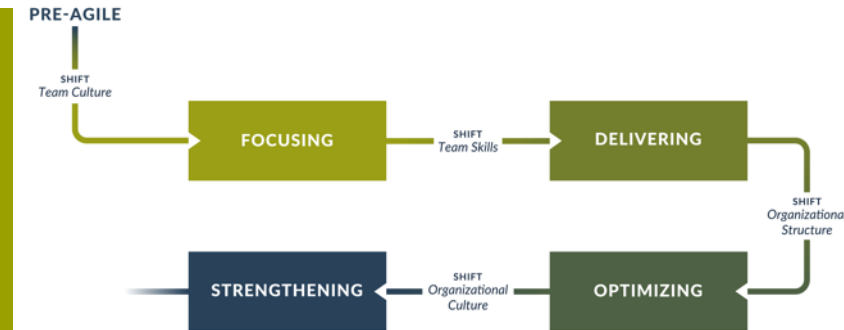
Resource: Barry Johnson. *Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*. 2014

CONSIDER TRADEOFFS NEEDED FOR...

- Your team
- Your leadership
- Your executives
- Your business
- The cost/benefit ratio you can sustain

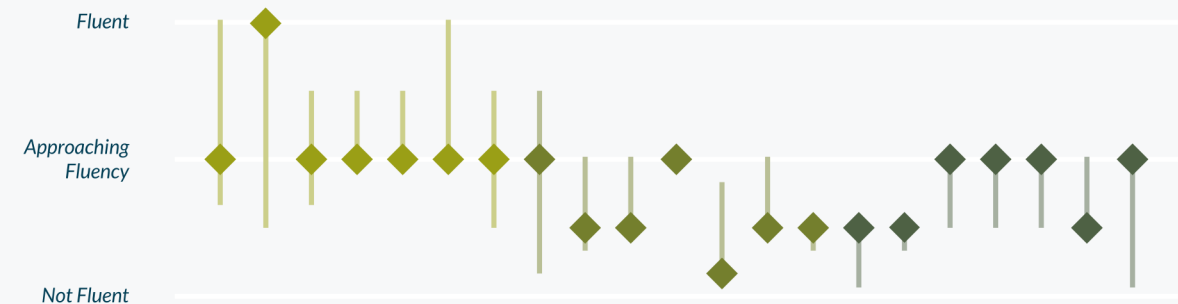
The Agile Fluency Suite

AGILE FLUENCY MODEL



AGILE FLUENCY IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

AGILE FLUENCY DIAGNOSTIC





THANK YOU!

More Questions? Contact us at agilefluency.org