

A Company's Transformation to Agile: 1-year Retrospective

Agile SoCal: The Southern California Agile User Group
October 15th, 2014

Ben Rodilitz, Dealer.Com

Agenda

- Who (a little about Dealer.com)
- Why (a little about the reasons for the transition)
- What and How (what was the plan and how was it implemented)
- How it is going (wins and challenges)
- Next Steps (what's waiting in the wings)
- Summary
- Q&A

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Who (a little about Dealer.com)

- Start (EarthCars.com – Burlington VT, 1998)
 - SmartSites
 - Web sites, analytics, inventory, CRM, SEO, Paid search
 - “Click to Curb”
- Culture
 - Employee-centric – Work/Life balance
 - Accessibility

“Guided by a belief in collaborative innovation, we’ve grown into a category leader while staying true to our relentlessly agile and adaptable roots. The result is an award-winning culture in which everyone is approachable, ideas are judged on their merits, and healthy, empowered people drive transformative technology and exceptional service.”
- Manhattan Beach
- Me
 - Full SDLC: MRD, PRD, FRD, Design, Dev, QA
 - Long-time Ganthhead (MS Project, EVM), PMP, CSM
 - Taught Problem Solving: What’s the problem we’re solving, stable substructures, constant feedback



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Why (a little about the reasons for the transition)

– In General

- “We never know less about a project than at the start”
- “We should be in the business of delivering features (value), not tasks”

– To Dealer.Com

- Agility
- Transparency
- Predictability

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What and How (what was the plan and how was it implemented)

- “All In”
 - Buy in from top management
 - Dedicated transition agent and time to learn
 - All of engineering put onto scrum teams
- Scrum implementation
 - Formal training – tailored to Dealer.Com
 - Multiple teams within each product area
 - Dedicated area w/”passive reflectors”
 - Key Roles: Product Owner, Scrum Master, Dev team (tech lead, QA, developers)
 - Key Processes: Grooming, Planning, Execution, Reviews, Retrospectives



2-Team, 2-Week Sprint Schedule

		Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday
Meetings		CRM ART Sprint Review		Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up	Stand Up
		Sprint Planning/Tech Planning					Backlog Grooming				Sprint Review
9:00 AM	9:15 AM			Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up	Lannister Stand Up
9:30 AM				Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up	Octan Stand Up
10:00 AM		Lannister Planning									
10:30 AM		Lannister Planning									
11:00 AM		Lannister Planning									
11:30 AM		CRM ART Review/Demo									
12:00 PM		CRM ART Review/Demo									
12:30 PM		CRM ART Review/Demo									
1:00 PM											
1:30 PM											Octan Review and Retro
2:00 PM		Lannister Tech Planning	Octan Planning				Octan Grooming				Octan Review and Retro
2:30 PM		Lannister Tech Planning	Octan Planning				Octan Grooming				Lannister Review and Retro
3:00 PM			Octan Planning				Lannister Grooming				Lannister Review and Retro
3:30 PM			Octan Planning				Lannister Grooming				
4:00 PM			Octan Tech Planning								
4:30 PM			Octan Tech Planning								
5:00 PM											

Sprint Planning (Day 0)

- Execution:
 - Hours Available
 - 9 days x 8 hours
 - Take off absences
 - Subtract work-related obligations (meetings, interviews, classes, releases, “pad” - mostly for tech leads or history of escalations)
 - Multiply by 0.75
 - Task first story from top of Backlog
 - Team breaks down story into tasks
 - Assigns hours to tasks
 - Totals this story’s expected hours and subtract from available
 - Task successive stories – one at a time - until available is “around zero”
 - Decide if the team wants to add or delete stories from plan
 - “Thumbs up, sideways, or down”; adjust until no “thumbs down”
- What’s Missing?
- Evolution:
 - Tracking “flavor” of hours expended: QA, Front-end vs. Back-end
 - Tasking Checklist: Dependencies, Support, Documentation, etc.

Stand Up (Days 2 through 8)

– Execution

- Standard content: accomplishments, plans, blockers
- Update hours remaining on tasks
- Tasking changes
- General team health and welfare

– Evolution

- Story-by-Story rather than round-robin
- Story updates from Product Owner
- Finish Dates
- Tech kick-off in place of 1st stand up

Backlog Grooming (Middle Wednesday)

– Execution

- New stories are described by product owner followed by story pointing
- Previously-pointed stories set for next sprint are reviewed for readiness and point-revision

– Evolution

- Improved definition of done and acceptance criteria
- “Could you task this story right now”

Sprint Review and Retrospective (Day 9)

– Execution

- Intra-team Review {Not all teams do this}
 - Internal review – team members and Product Owner
 - Final “done” determination by Product Owner
 - Assessment of work left
 - Release dates/plans finalized
- Retro: Wins and Opportunities

– Evolution

- Review
 - Plan for demo
- Retro
 - Pre-communicated items
 - Shared Doc with aggregation of open items for review
 - One to three opportunities become zero-point stories in next sprint and reviewed at each stand up

Company-wide Sprint Review (Day 10)

– Execution

- All teams present sprint status and demo
- Theater setting with C-level attendees

– Evolution (Still evolving)

- First revision: Separate time slots for each Agile Release Train (ART) team

– Now:

- “Science Fair” where teams are available during specific slots to allow walk-up demos. De-emphasize sprint status
- Struggling to integrate remote teams into Science Fair format.

What and How – Enterprise Scaling

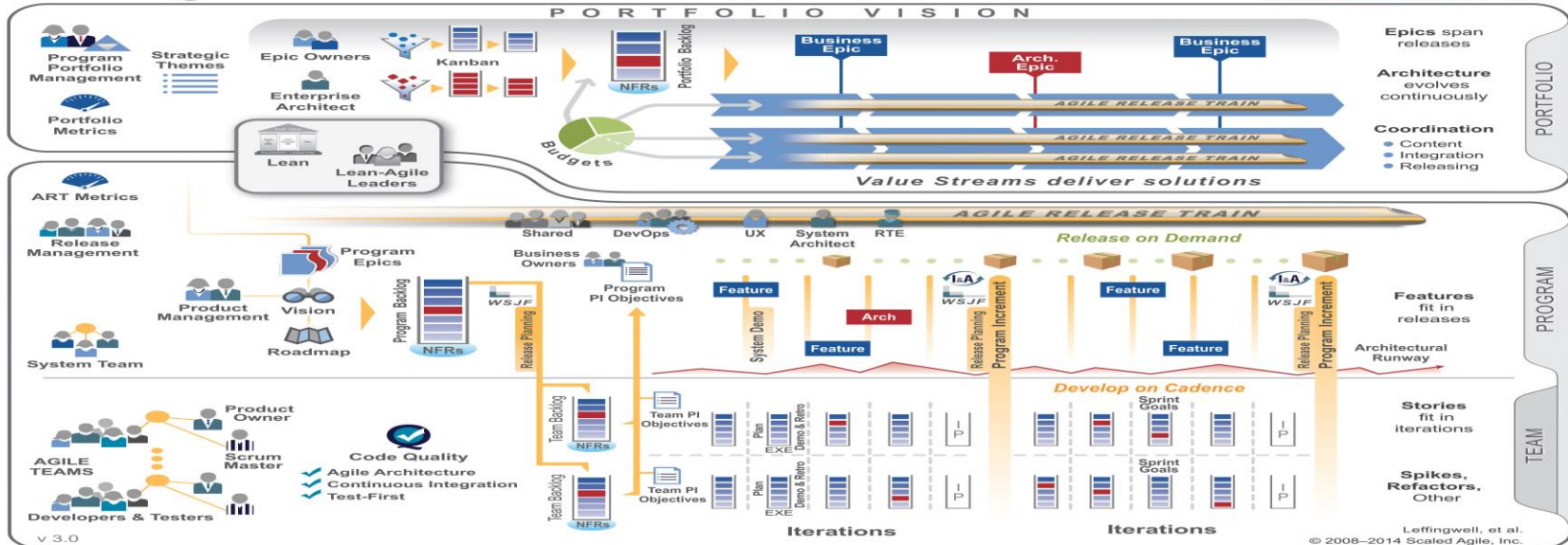
– Individual Scrum Teams



<http://scaledagileframework.com>

– Product and then Enterprise Levels

Scaled Agile Framework®



One Year Schedule of Sprints

	QTR	Sprint	Sprint Start	Sprint End			QTR	Sprint	Sprint Start	Sprint End		
1	1	1	1/15/2014	1/29/2014			13	3	1	7/2/2014	7/16/2014	
2	1	2	1/29/2014	2/12/2014			14	3	2	7/16/2014	7/30/2014	
3	1	3	2/12/2014	2/26/2014			15	3	3	7/30/2014	8/13/2014	
4	1	4	2/26/2014	3/12/2014			16	3	4	8/13/2014	8/27/2014	
5	1	5	3/12/2014	3/26/2014			17	3	5	8/27/2014	9/10/2014	
6	1	HIP	3/26/2014	4/9/2014			18	3	6	9/10/2014	9/24/2014	Extra summer vacation sprint
7	2	1	4/9/2014	4/23/2014			19	3	HIP	9/24/2014	10/8/2014	
8	2	2	4/23/2014	5/7/2014			20	4	1	10/8/2014	10/22/2014	
9	2	3	5/7/2014	5/21/2014			21	4	2	10/22/2014	11/5/2014	
10	2	4	5/21/2014	6/4/2014			22	4	3	11/5/2014	11/19/2014	
11	2	5	6/4/2014	6/18/2014			23	4	4	11/19/2014	12/3/2014	
12	2	HIP	6/18/2014	7/2/2014			24	4	5	12/3/2014	12/17/2014	
							25	4	6	12/17/2014	12/31/2014	Extra winter sprint
							26	4	HIP	12/31/2014	1/14/2015	
							1	1	1	1/14/2015	1/28/2015	NADA: Jan. 22-25-San Francisco.

HIP = **Hardening: Architecture – Infrastructure – Technical Debt**
Innovation: Hackathon
Planning: Quarterly Planning

Quarterly Planning

- During the prior quarter
 - Refinement of Corporate and Release Train (think “product line”) priorities
 - Release Train management creates list of epic/feature asks
 - Product Owner creates stories based on RT asks
- Week or two before quarterly planning
 - Initial, informal grooming of stories – Product Owner, Scrum Master, Tech Lead
- During early part of HIP Sprint
 - Formal grooming/pointing of new stories
- At end of HIP sprint: Formal planning sessions ...

Quarterly Planning Sessions

– Day 1

- Kick off:
 - Agile Transition Director
 - CEO: Themes of the quarter
- Overarching goals: Setting context
 - Non-product: Architecture, Infrastructure
 - Product Release Trains
- Scrum Teams create their 5- (or 6) -sprint plan
- Release Train management
 - assess difference between teams' plans and original asks
 - Create proposed release train plan

– Day 2

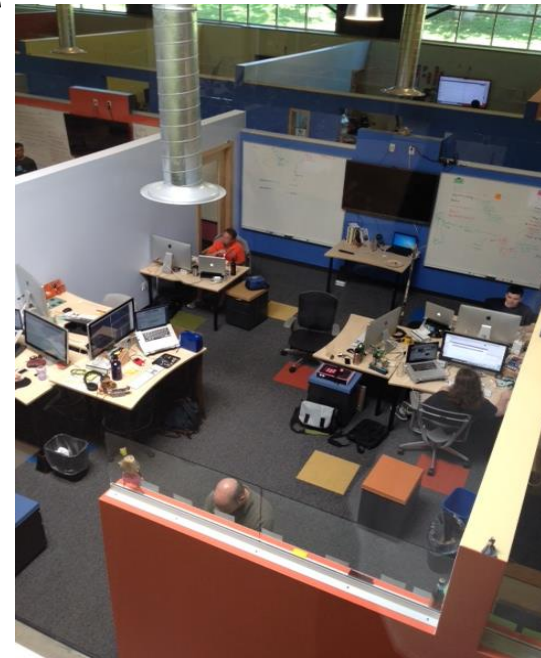
- Release trains report plan to upper management
- Plan rework requests communicated to affected teams
- Affected teams rework plan
- Release trains present final quarterly plan

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How it is going (Wins)

- Specific Pivots (these were all huge wins)
 - Handled new mid-quarter opportunities
 - Prioritized re-planning to adjust for over-capacity
 - Multi-team swarming due to accelerated deadline
- Adaptive / Continuous Improvement
 - Multi-level retros
 - Bi-weekly by team/quarterly for enterprise
 - Exec-level scrum team (Bored of Directors)
 - Communities of Practice
 - Training
 - Complete revamp of physical layout



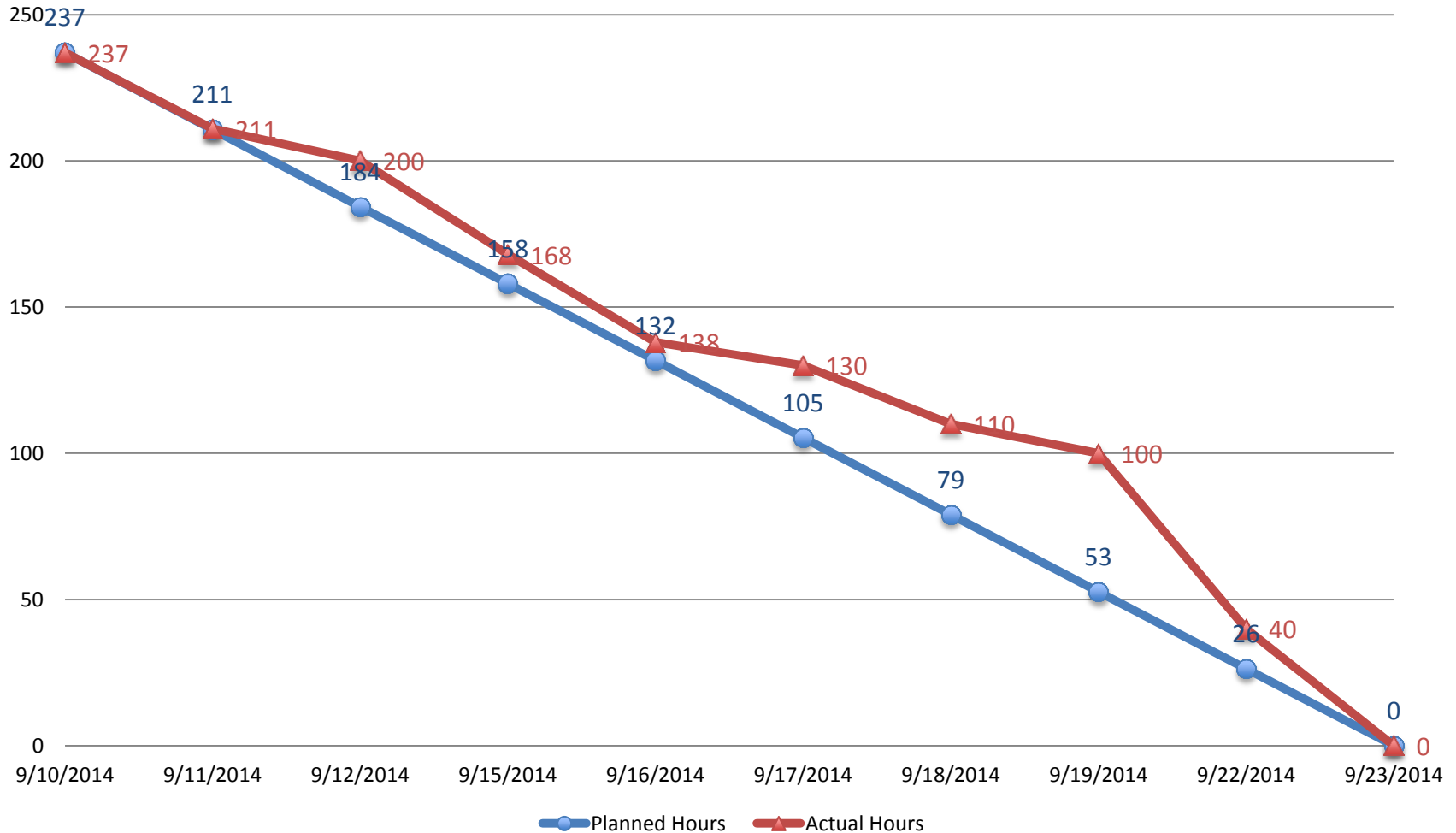
How it is going (Opportunities to Improve)

- Quarterly (& Portfolio) Planning
 - Timeliness
 - Inter-team coordination
 - Counter-Agile?
- Non-colocated teams and individuals
- Personnel
 - Generalist/specialist/mix on teams (QA, Design)
 - Local optimization ☹️
- Balance product dev with architecture/maintenance/escalations
- Metrics

Speaking of which...

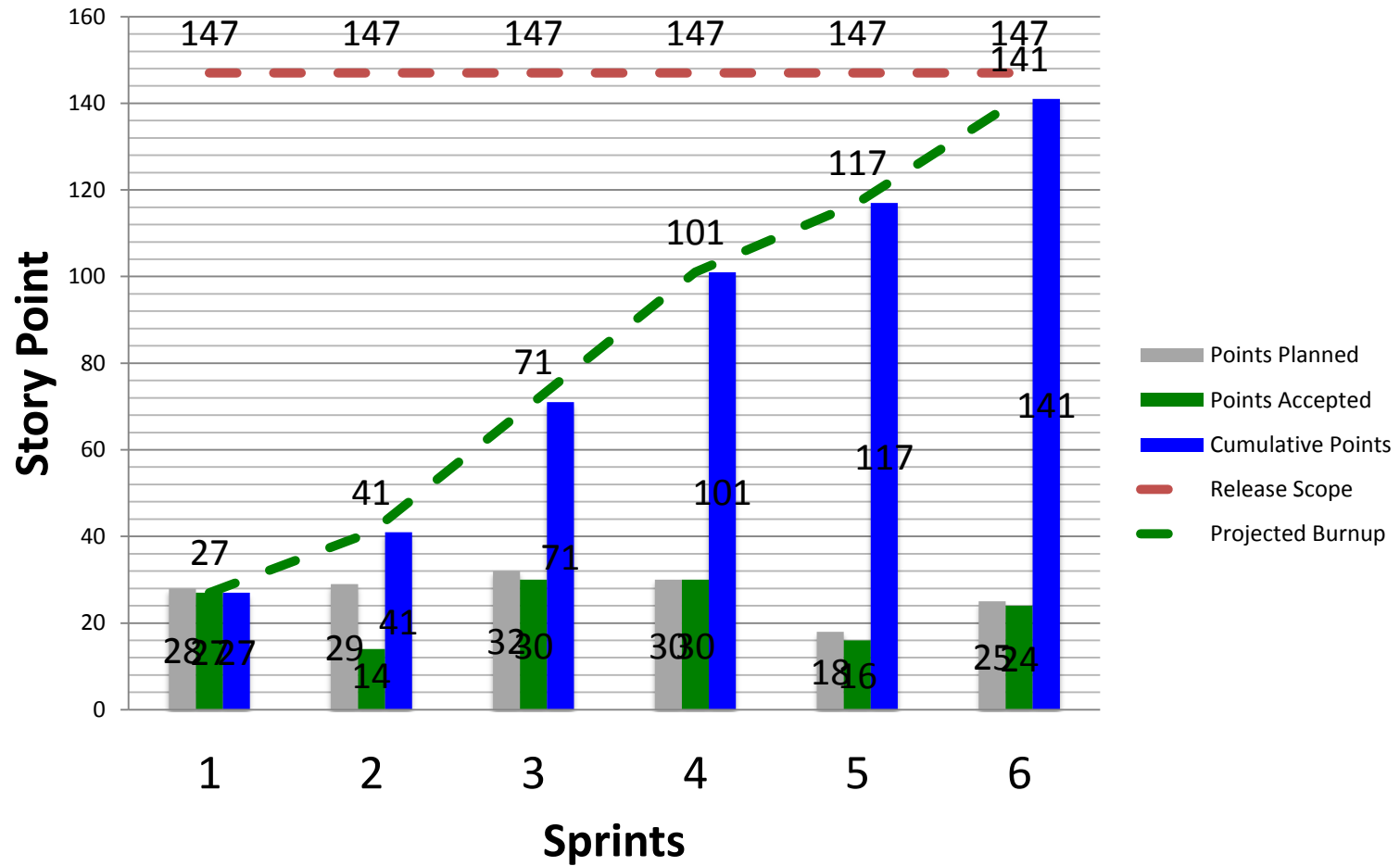
A Bit About Metrics-Burn Down

Run DMS: 2014Q3-6



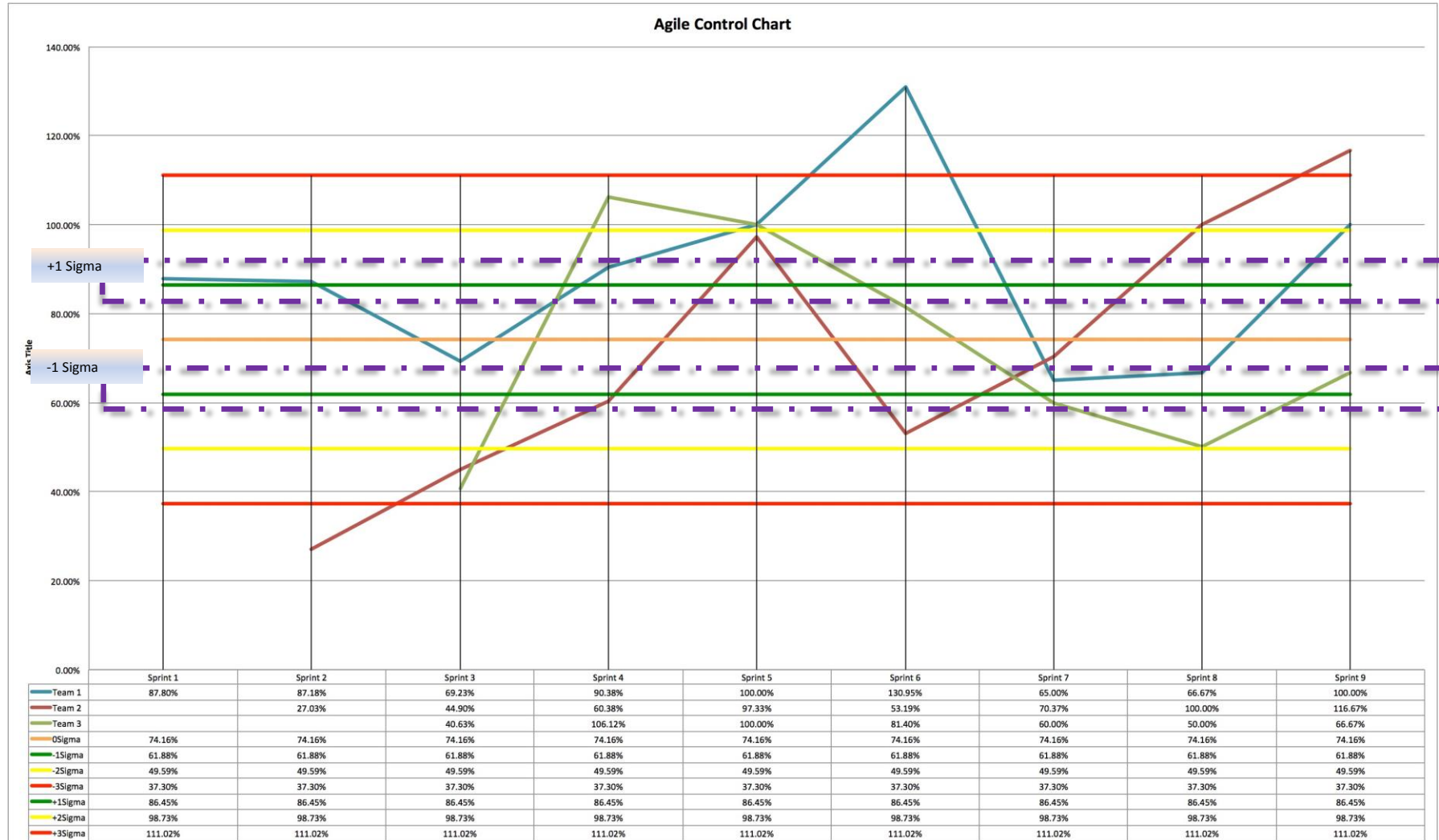
A Bit About Metrics – Burn Up

S.H.I.E.L.D.: 2014Q3 Release Burnup



A Bit About Metrics – “Say/Do”

Apologies in advance...



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Next Steps (what's waiting in the wings)

- Evolving/Improving Scrum – keep it fresh
- Bringing up new teams / changing existing ones
 - Oh yeah, about our acquisition...
- Evolving/Improving SAFe/2nd and 3rd tier planning
- Some transition to Kanban
- Lean UX

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Summary

From Dealer.Com's Vice President - Product Development & Technology:

– After 3 months (end of the year (2013) review):

“The most important accomplishment of 2013 has been our adoption of agile”

– After one year:

“It's been an exciting year since DDC began our transition to an Agile product development organization.

Engineering's "All In" approach has resulted in both dramatic changes and impressive results. The change required a redesign of our teams, our development

processes, and even our work space. **As a result, we're seeing increases in our productivity, predictability, product quality, and team morale**”

QUESTIONS?