



Øresund Developers Conference

## Why Agile Teams Fail

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**ThoughtWorks**

### Coding is a commodity...

- Is your job moving overseas?
- How do you distinguish yourself?
- There are only two differences:
  - Hourly rates
  - Location

*...Software Development is not.*



## The Bottom 10



### #10 Believing Myths (such as...)

- Agile is only good for small projects
- Pairing costs twice as much
- No documentation is required
- Agile is cowboy coding
- Agile projects have no need for Analysts/Testers
- "I'm doing Scrum, so I'm agile..."



## #9 Using Controversial Terminology

- You Say
  - Extreme
  - Agile
  - Pair
  - Standup
  - Refactor
  - Unit testing
- They Hear
  - Risky
  - Loose
  - Twice the cost
  - Not at a keyboard
  - Unnecessary change
  - Extra code

*If you don't say it...*



*...they won't hear it!*



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## #8 Missing key roles

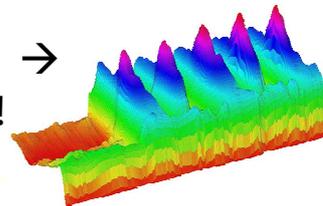
- Focus is on Developers, but...
  - You need an Iteration Manager
  - You need Analysts
  - You need Testers

	Iteration 6	Iteration 7	Iteration 8
Analysts	7	8	
Developers	7	7	
Testers		6	7



## #7 Overdoing it

- Make sure every document has an audience
- Make sure every practice solves a problem
- Drop anything without value (requires experience)
- Don't micromanage
- Don't draw a state diagram
- If your charts look like this... →  
...you might be overdoing it!



## #6 Cherry-picking practices

- Requires experience
- Decision is made by the most involved people
- Try methodologies once by the book
- Try every practice for at least 3 iterations
- Test every change for at least 3 iterations
- Don't be afraid to "undo" changes



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## #5 Lacking discipline or courage

- Don't be afraid to change or to respond to change
- Saying vs. Doing – are you really “Agile”?
- Experienced pairing is a key to discipline

*“If you had to walk around in your underwear all day,  
you'd probably go to the gym.”*

*~ Unknown*



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## #4 Failing to ask for help

- Have experienced leadership
- Hire an experienced team
- Have an experienced mentor for each role
- You'll need more than a “map”
- Get experienced people
  - And listen to them!



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### #3 Using iterations that are too long

- Iterations should be one week long
- Nothing to do with velocity, everything to do with direction
- The best developers require direction
- Faster teams need more tweaking
- No time to get sleepy
- More durable to change
- One hour IPM
- Tuesday → Tuesday



### #2 Failing to find a good sponsor

- Find a good customer
- Have a supportive sponsor
- Look for excitement around Agile
- Look for past failure

*Good trial lawyers  
don't take bad cases*



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## #1 Failing to rally the team

- Your team will make or break the project
- Good leadership is critical
- Environment is critical
- Support for the team is critical
- Team dynamics are critical



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