

10 years.  
10 companies.  
10 common patterns.  
Trace amounts of agility.



@poddrzewem



@iterategame



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All disfunctional organizations are disfunctional  
in similar ways; every highly successful company is  
successful in its own unique way.

-Will Evans [@semanticwill]

**pattern** /'pat(ə)n/ noun

a regular and intelligible form or sequence  
discernible in the way in which something happens  
or is done.

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# Bureaucratic Breakdown

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[\*] you have this strange feeling at the end of a busy day that nothing was really achieved.

[\*] you have this feeling too freaking often.

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# Bureaucratic Breakdown

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Regional and local branches are usually doing better than the center. Same pattern observed for detached projects, internal tooling, etc.

Less exposure to politics. Less over- and micro-managing. Less over-controlling. It matters.

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# Decoy Flares

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[\*] you have recently changed or considered to change your approach to agility especially towards a trademarked or branded [„proven”] methodologies.

[\*] you have created some phony, impactless roles and staffed them with clueless people, to feel better.

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# Decoy Flares

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Implicit faith in methodologies, processes, practices and tools, certification and consulting. This is avoidance of accountability at a cosmic scale. No one will make you agile.

I'm not sure how exactly a “squad” is supposed to be better than a Scrum team, or why “devops” is better than a “cross-functional”. Especially if a “squad” is exactly what the team was before and “devops” is a role on a team.

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# The Big Non-Change

[\*] employees are not sure who's the driving force behind the change and what their motives are.

[\*] no regular and frequent access to this person.

[\*] no evidence or anecdotal evidence is used to assert the change ["it feels better now"]

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# The Big Non-Change

Change has no face. Change has no legs. Change has no heartbeat and no vital signs. If there is no reason to change, why bother?

There must be a vital driving force to the change. There must be a set of metrics to monitor its conditions.



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# They Ain't No Münchhausens

[\*] there is no transparent process of removing impediments signaled by the teams or the existing process is irrelevant [also see [Decoy Flares](#) and [Bureaucratic Breakdown](#)].

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# They Ain't No Münchhausens

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No one removes impediments signaled by the teams or there is no transparency to this process. “Bottom-up intelligence” stays at the bottom and breeds frustration [also see [Running On Fumes](#)].

Top-down mandated agility? I don't think so.

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# Running On Fumes

[\*] you have 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of change catalysts, yet still the same problems.

[\*] you have recently lost at least one of the change catalysts due to “nothing ever changes here” or “I did everything I could”.

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# Running On Fumes

Change is fuel hungry. People most keen on change burn first. In about 2 to 3 years into the transformation most of them goes, leaving the ground to less convinced, less experienced, less gifted, and generally less engaged employees [also see [They Ain't No Münchhausens](#)].

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# Responsibility Trap

[\*] managers are more engaged in managing the work than they are in creating environment that support the teams in getting the work done.

[\*] managers are forever busy managing never-ending streams of work; virtually no time left in their calendars to be for their employees.

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# Responsibility Trap

We made managers responsible for the results, we shouldn't be surprised they actually do "the managing" thing.

The illusion of command and control and micro-management are real. No time is left for building organizational culture.

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# More Is Less

- [\*] the whole is the only way to deliver value.
- [\*] new initiatives start on top of the running ones, all equally important.
- [\*] teams have to asks for permission to do their job right [refactoring, automation, testing].

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# More Is Less

Unfinished businesses, feature-rich, over-cooked, over-invested products, multiple concurrent projects, negative deadlines, committees and coordination paralysis, over-managed pseudo-problems. There are 3 main reasons to why Scrum isn't working at your company: lack of focus, lack of transparency and lack of commitment. Coincidentally this is precisely why you don't excel as a company. Start with focus.



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# Shattered Value Streams

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[×] products are more aligned with system architecture and technology components than they are with value streams; teams structure follows.

[×] no freaking chance to confirm value delivered at the end of the Sprints.

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# Shattered Value Streams

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The waterfall is living right here, in your org structure.

Think of departments, teams structure and skillset,  
architecture components, geographical dispersion, etc.

Partial accountability breeds partial commitment.

Cross-functional isn't about process functions only. Devops  
is good for start. Business and IT are the ultimate silos.

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# Iterative-Non-Incremental

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[×] no increments deployed or ready for deployment, not even at the end of the Sprints.

[×] waterfall within the Sprints and/or some stages of the development cycle omitted or left “for later” [UATs, bug fixing, documentation, etc.]

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# Iterative-Non-Incremental

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No releasable increments. Plenty of reasons to keep it that way ["not enough time" is the absolute number 1]. No inspection, no feedback, no adaptation. Keep insisting on done increments and you shall see the true colors of your organization. Very little beside that really matters.

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# Same Old, Same Old

[\*] no one has been fired due to their misalignment with change in the last, say, 3 months.

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# Same Old, Same Old

No one loses their jobs. No one leaves [beside change catalysts - see [Running On Fumes](#) pattern]. No change in organizational structure. No change in positions.

Agility is different. Not everyone fits. Chew on that. Don't mistake empathy and understanding for gullibility.

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# Don't Ever Stop

[\*] you didn't uncheck any of these checkboxes in the last, say, 3 months

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# Don't Ever Stop

There is no end to agile transformation.  
Complacency is the enemy of change.



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