

10 years.

10 companies.

10 common patterns.

Trace amounts of agility.



@poddzewem



@iterategame



@productifyit

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

*-Will Evans [@semanticwill]*

*Shaping the Future: Product Strategy in the Age of Uncertainty [<https://vimeo.com/758060257>]*

**pattern /'pat(ə)n/ noun**

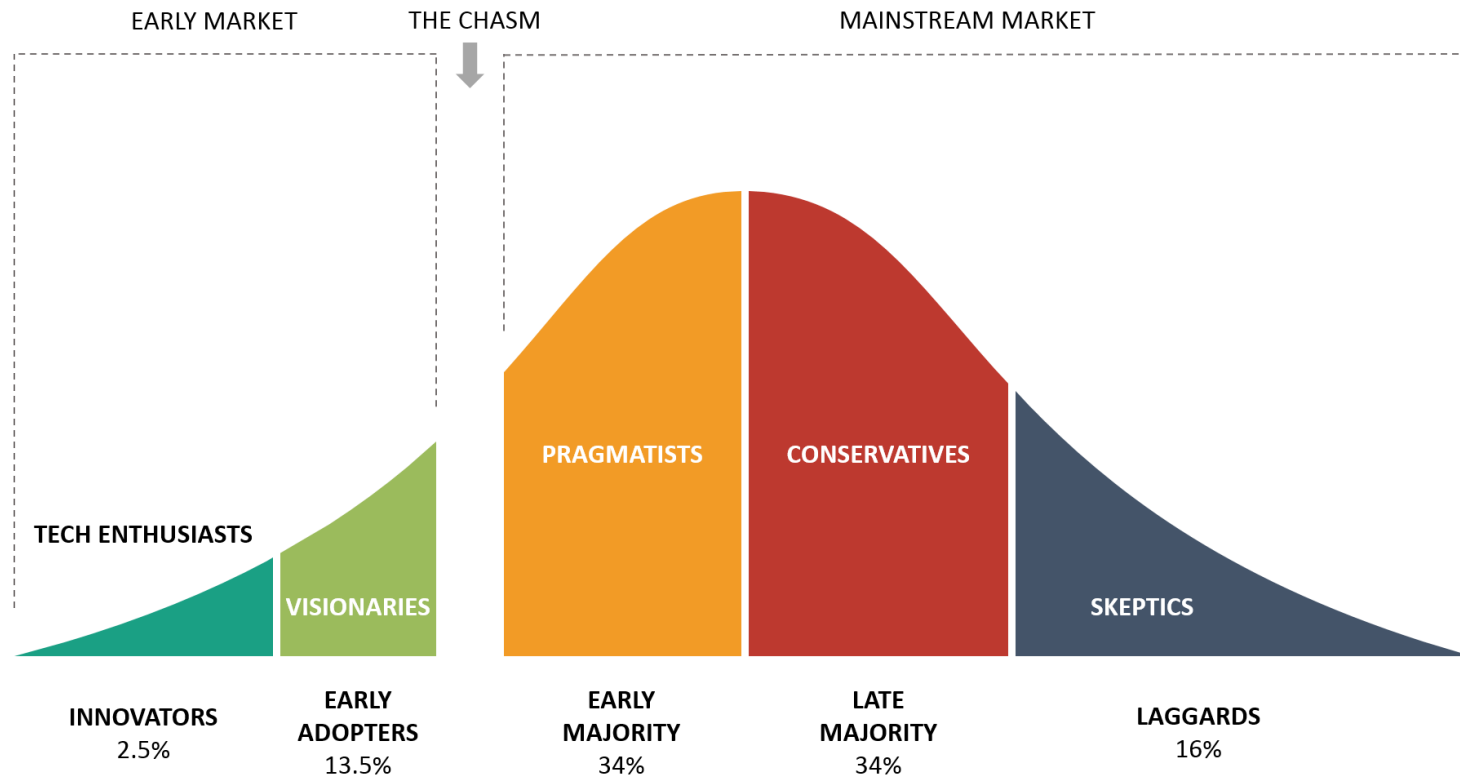
*a regular and intelligible form or sequence discernible in the way in which something happens or is done.*

**Agility** is the organizational state of constant flux, evolution, innovation, improvement, and re-invention.

**Agility** reflects an enterprise's capability to respond to challenges, explore and change direction, take advantage of opportunities, to be quick and nimble. It's a competitive advantage.

**Agility** isn't a binary state. It's a continuum.

Find out more: Manifesto for Agile Software Development  
<https://agilemanifesto.org/>, <https://agilemanifesto.org/principles.html>



Source: <https://www.business-to-you.com/crossing-the-chasm-technology-adoption-life-cycle/>

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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 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. Less exposure to politics. Less over- and micro-managing. Less over-controlling [also see [Iterative-Non-Incremental](#)]. The same pattern was observed for non-essential, detached projects, internal tooling, etc. Transparency trumps politics. Make them space. Fail fast, learn fast.*

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# Smoke and Mirrors

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

*[ ] you have created some phony, impactless roles*

*[ ] you staffed them with clueless people*

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# Smoke and Mirrors

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*Implicit faith in methodologies, processes, practices, tools, certification, and consulting. This is avoidance of accountability at a cosmic scale. No one will make you agile. Chew on that. Select a method and stick to it. See beyond its rules. Understand agility values and principles and live them. Scrum is hard, Kanban is even harder. “Scrumbanish devops” is for wimps.*



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# The Big Non-Change

[ ] employees are not sure who the driving force behind the change is 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

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*Change has no face. Change has no legs. Change has no heartbeat and no vital signs. If there is no reason to change and no one to remind us about it, 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

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*[ ] there is no transparent process of removing impediments signaled by the teams or the existing process is irrelevant [also see [Smoke and Mirrors](#) 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

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*[ ] you have 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> [4<sup>th</sup>?] generation of change catalysts [read: SMs, ACs, and alike], yet still the same problems*

*[ ] you have recently lost at least one of them due to “nothing ever changes here” or “I did everything I could, so long suckers!”*

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# Running On Fumes

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*Change is fuel hungry. People most keen on change burn first. In about 2 to 3 years into the troubling transformation most of them go, 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

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*[ ] managers are more engaged in managing the work than they are in creating an environment and culture which support the teams in getting the work done*

*[ ] managers are forever busy managing a never-ending stream of work [budgeting, statuses, steering committees, crisis management]; virtually no time left in their calendars to be for the people*

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# Responsibility Trap

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*We made managers responsible for the results, we shouldn't be surprised they actually do "the managing" thing. The delusion of command and control and micro-management is real. Virtually no time is left for deliberately crafting organizational culture.*



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# More Is Less

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- [ ] the big, complex “whole” is the only way to deliver value*
- [ ] new initiatives start on top of the running ones, all equally important*
- [ ] teams must ask for permission to do their job right [quality, refactoring, automation, testing]*

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# More Is Less

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*Unfinished businesses, feature-rich, over-cooked, over-invested products, multiple concurrent projects, negative deadlines, committees and coordination paralysis, over-managed pseudo-problems. There are three main reasons 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. Cancel some projects and kill some products. You will feel better right away.*

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# Shattered Value Streams

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*[ ] products are more aligned with system architecture and technology components than end product value; teams structure follows [reversed Conway's law]*

*[ ] no freaking chance to confirm value delivered at the end of the iterations*

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# Shattered Value Streams

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*The waterfall is living right here, in your org structure. Think of departments, temporary project teams, specialized skillset groups, system or architecture components, geographical dispersion, etc. Fractured accountability breeds partial commitment. Cross-functional isn't about process functions only. DevOps culture is good for the start. Business and IT are the ultimate silos. Think long-term.*

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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 iterations

[ ] waterfall within the iterations [*waterations*]  
and/or stages of the development cycle omitted or left  
“for later” eg. integration or performance testing,  
UATs, documentation, etc. [*water-scrum-fall*]

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# Iterative-Non-Incremental

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*No releasable increments and plenty of reasons to keep it that way [“not enough time” is the absolute number one]. No inspection, no feedback, no adaptation. Keep insisting on done increments at least once in an iteration and you shall see the true colors [see [They Ain't No Münchhausens](#)].*

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# Same Old, Same Old

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*[ ] no one has been fired due to their misalignment with the change objective and/or the new way of working in the last, say, three months*

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# Same Old, Same Old

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*No one loses their job. No one leaves [besides change catalysts - see the [Running On Fumes](#) pattern]. No change in organizational structure. No change in positions or team assignments.*

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



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# Don't Ever Stop

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

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# Don't Ever Stop

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

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