



Sprinting In Place

Why Your Agile Team Isn't Agile - And What *You* Can Do About It

Nonfiction Book Proposal

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Overview

Executives are frustrated and bewildered by “agile” software development teams that blow deadlines, build the wrong features, and disappoint internal and external customers. In a recent survey

[\[https://chrismurman.com/2017/05/12/executives-dont-think-we-are-doing-agile-right/ \]](https://chrismurman.com/2017/05/12/executives-dont-think-we-are-doing-agile-right/)

hundreds of IT executives said that agile techniques were discredited and a fad - yet they are still launching projects using agile methodologies, as there appears to be no better alternative.

There are plenty of books offering advice on how to choose an agile method, what people you need to build an agile team, and how to scale your agile projects. And there are even more on the general topic of managing teams and building a successful company culture.

Yet in our consulting and speaking, both of us continuously see founders and sponsors who are sure something is wrong in their software development, but whose efforts to fix whatever it is have failed completely.

Sprinting in Place offers these executives tough but practical advice on what they can do to address *failing* agile teams. It's also useful down the org chart, for managers and developers within failing agile teams who want to fix what's broken.

In chapters based on the values of the Agile Manifesto, we give specific, step-by-step advice on changing behaviour and culture to make agile projects successful. These detailed techniques, based on a proven management technique called Action Science, help teams improve relationships, collaboration, and communication. We draw on a combined 30 years' experience of software project management to explain how to get valid information from the

development team and its customers, jointly design solutions to productivity problems, and obtain internal commitment leading to vastly improved results.

In the rest of this proposal, you'll find market analysis, author biographies, chapter summaries, and sample content, including a full chapter. All this material is also available at <http://sprintinginplace.com> , which we intend to make the home page for additional material and audience-building once the book is published.

We'd love to know what you think of our proposal! Thanks for reading.

Jeffrey and Squirrel

Market

Audience

Our primary audience is C-level executives, startup founders, and senior managers who are bewildered and frustrated by their “agile” development teams - teams that promise agile “best practises” but fail to deliver what the business needs to succeed.

Our secondary audience is the direct managers or leaders of such teams (tech leads or product managers, for example), and our tertiary audience is individual members of such teams.

All three groups can get benefit from the techniques we describe for improving communication and relationships in agile teams. Managers and executives get more leverage as they apply the methods more broadly.

Comparable Titles

Sprinting in Place is both a management and an agile practises book, so has similarities to a variety of titles in both categories:

Management:

- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (by Patrick Lencioni, published by Jossey-Bass)
- *The Manager's Path* (Fournier, O'Reilly)
- *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, Random House)
- *Fierce Conversations* (Scott, Piatkus/Little, Brown)
- *The Coaching Habit* (Michael, Box of Crayons)
- *The Phoenix Project* (Kim, IT Revolution)

Agile Practises:

- *XP Explained* (by Beck, published by Addison-Wesley)
- *The Art of Agile Development* (Shore, O'Reilly)
- *Agile Software Development: Principles, Patterns, and Practises* (Martin, Pearson)
- *Agile Software Development: The Co-operative Game* (Cockburn, Addison-Wesley)
- *Coaching Agile Teams* (Cohn, Addison-Wesley)

Promotion

Sprinting in Place lends itself to several helpful marketing techniques:

- The methods described are suitable for step-by-step guides, which can be presented in a couple of helpful ways:
 - As attractive visuals. These can go on the endpapers, illustration pages, or be presented separately as part of promotional material.
 - As worksheets or workbooks - for example “a one-week schedule for improving your communications”. Again, these can be included in the book or separately.
- We have purchased <http://sprintinginplace.com> and plan to update this site with useful extensions, new content, and advice for at least a year after publication. We have a web designer lined up to help us with this (see <http://douglassquirrel.com> for an example of her work).

In addition, we have a number of options for our personal promotion of the book:

- Jeffrey co-organises and Squirrel regularly attends a worldwide series of conferences called CITCON with hundreds of attendees each year. We have been presenting related material at these conferences for several years with very positive responses. We plan to promote the book at at least three CITCON conferences in the year of its release.
- The two of us make a series of podcast videos on related topics, available at <http://actionscienceconversations.com> . We plan to rebrand these as Sprinting In Place podcasts and to actively grow the channel in the next few months.
- Both authors regularly speak on related material at conferences and meetups and plan to promote the book as part of their conference appearances. See for example:
 - <https://blog.jeffreyfredrick.com/2015/07/18/video-frustrated-it-is-probably-your-fault/>
 - <http://douglassquirrel.s3.amazonaws.com/Squirrel-AgilePortugal2016.mp4>

Authors

Jeffrey is internationally recognised for his expertise in software development and has 25 years' experience across the software development lifecycle. An early adopter and advocate of agile techniques, he has been a regular speaker and coach in agile development and an independent software consultant on topics including corporate strategy, product management and interaction design.

His roles have included VP of Product at software-testing startup Agitar, founder at SaaS startup OpenAvenue, and CTO and Head of Product at recently-acquired fintech startup TIM Group. He co-organises the CITCON international series of software conferences with hundreds of attendees on five continents.

Squirrel has been coding for 40 years and has led software teams for 15 of them. He is an executive coach and consulting CTO in London, making use of his extensive experience growing agile teams and advising startup founders and senior managers.

His previous roles included founding CTO at TIM Group and VP Engineering at e-commerce startup Secretsales. He has consulted with a wide variety of London startups including Geckoboard, Lostmy.name, DueDil, Kano, and MarketInvoice.

Sample Material

The authors have included with this proposal:

- Chapter summaries for the entire book;
- A draft introduction; and
- A sample chapter.

This material is also available at <http://sprintinginplace.com>.