Storytelling to Generate Scenarios for Epics, Features, and Stories

IIBA Philadelphia Chapter
BA Showcase 2016

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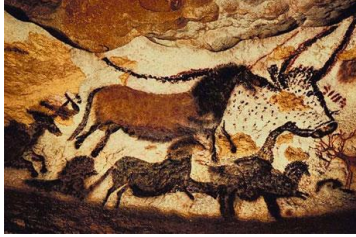
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Storytelling had been used throughout the ages

Earliest: Lascaux Caves in the Pyrenees Mountains in southern France dating back to ~15,000 B.C.

First Printed: The epic of Gilgamesh was created and began to spread from Mesopotamia to other parts of Europe and Asia in ~700 B.C.

Oral Storytelling: Aesop's fables were written down ~200 B.C., even though Aesop lived in the 500s B.C
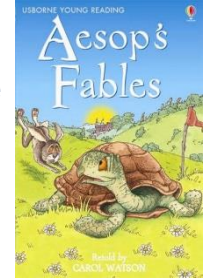
Troubadours
Medieval Europe

Griots
Western Africa

Biwa Hoshi
19th Century
Japan

Native Americans

Early American

Modern Media

Pictures from Google Images, https://**images.google**.com/

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Scrum Starts With A Backlog

Daily Standup

24 Hours

Burn-up Chart Example

Continuous Reporting

1-2 Weeks

Product Backlog

Iteration Backlog

Iteration Planning

Demo

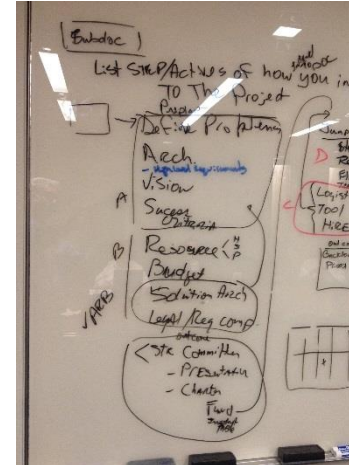Potentially Shippable

Done

Retrospective
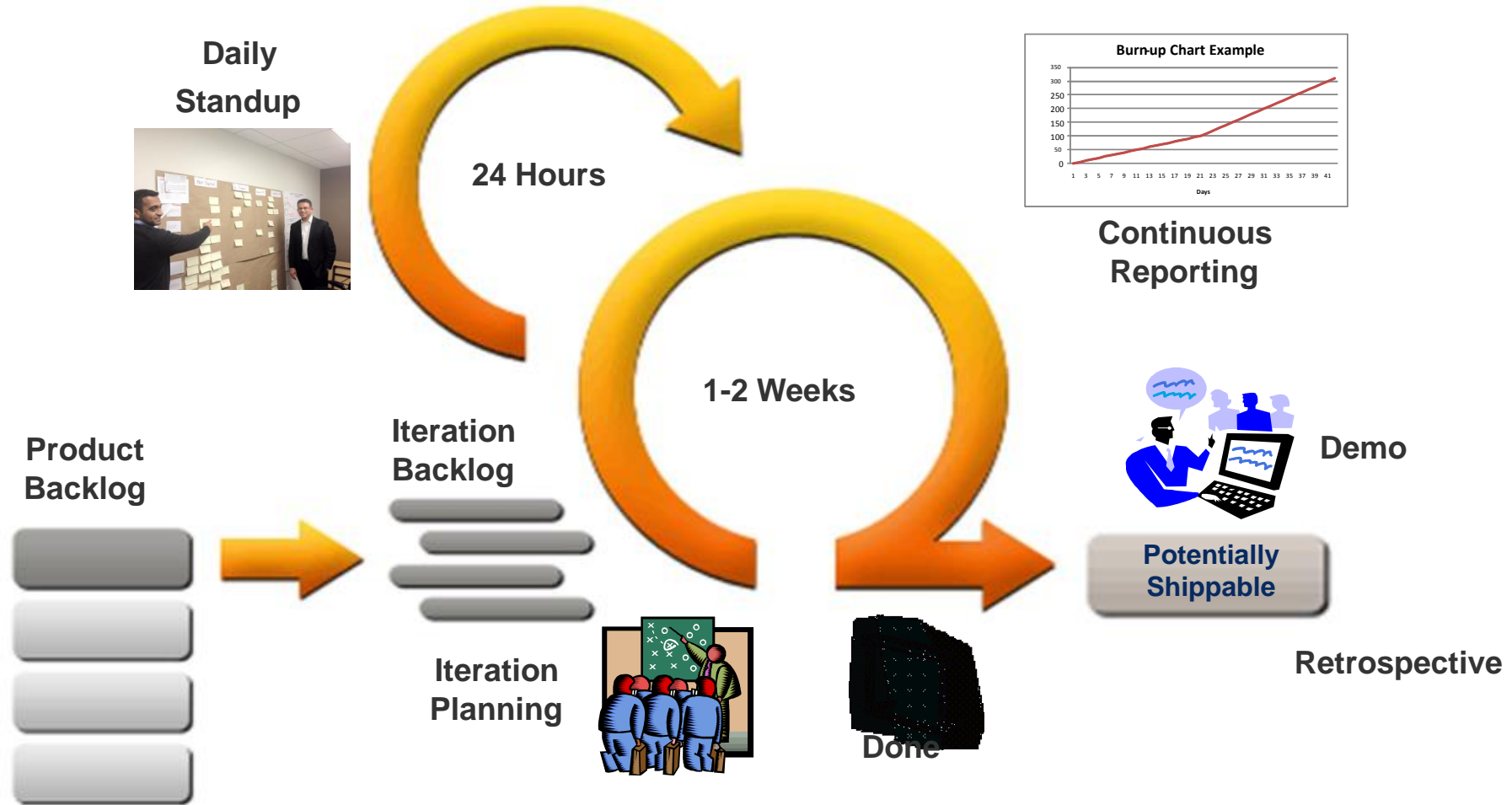
So Where Do Backlogs Come From

Backlog

Product Backlog

- Features

- Bugs

- Technical Work

- Knowledge Acquisition

- Minimum Viable Product

Team Backlog

- The backlog includes all potential work items of the team.

- Backlog items represent possibilities.

- Backlog items should be estimated.

- The product owner owns the backlog.

- The backlog is groomed.

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Storytelling As A Tool

- Sprint Zero:

  - Identify a cross functional team of SMEs, product owners, product managers and the development team personnel (or at least a subset of the developers), and a facilitator.

  - Assign each person in the team pre-work (typically to set context or gather information).

  - Assemble the team

    1. Have each person review their pre-work (use a time box to make sure people are concise)

    2. Brief the team on story format.

    3. Break into sub-teams 2 -3 people with different roles and use storytelling to generate a set of scenarios.

    4. Have each team brief the whole group using their story. The listeners should use a Lean Change Canvas or a storyboard to take notes.

    5. After each team has briefed the group, discussed and generate a consensus on a common narrative thread. (Note: We generally break the team into groups of 4 – 6 and have one group begin on the beginning, another on the middle and a third on the end. 10 minute time boxes with debriefs provide a tool to ensure everyone stays on course.)

  - Scenarios are then taken into a standard grooming process

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Stories Using Journey Patterns

- **The Monomyth or The Hero's Journey** is one of the most common story structures. The monomyth is cyclical story structure in which a hero team embarks on a journey and then returns when successful. It describes where the journey started, the trials along the way, the goal that was attained and the steps to move forward after the goal has been met.

- **Freytag's Pyramid** is a structure that follows a similar pattern of rising action climax, falling action followed by final release. The protagonist doesn't need to return to complete the cycle, but the problem does need to be solved.

- **The Mountain** begins by describing a current state, showing how challenges are overcome as the story moves away from the current state towards a conclusion/climax, followed by falling action. The most significant difference between the Hero's Journey and the Mountain is that in the Mountain the conclusion does not have to be positive.
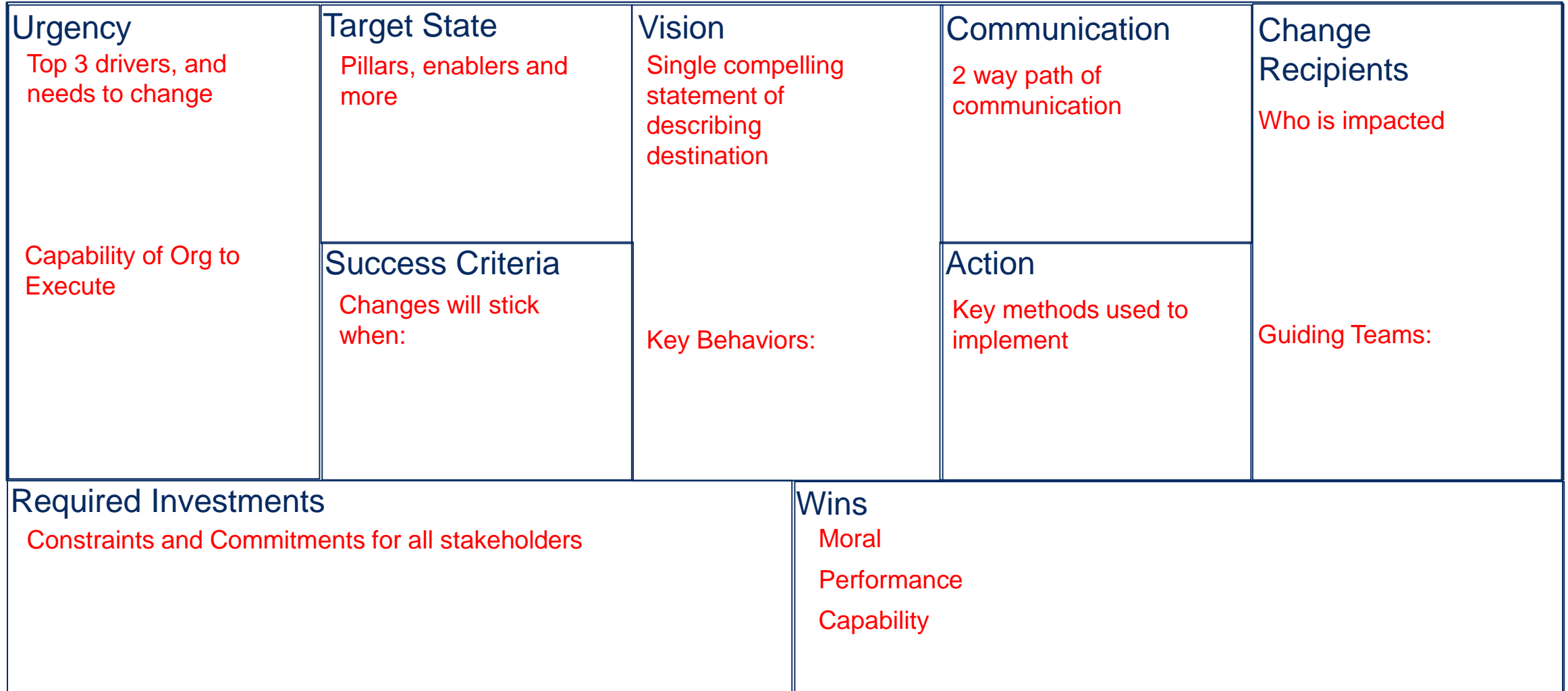
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Other Useful Patterns

- **The Redirect or False Start** is a pattern in which the presenter goes down a path in a predictable manner, then stops and restarts down a different path. The change in direction catches listeners off guard and causes them to concentrate on the new information being presented.

- **Convergence or Converging Lines** is a pattern that is useful in scenarios that begin without a consensus approach or common theme. Use this pattern in situations where there are several competing approaches that either need to be synthesized or where a final decision needs to be made to choose an approach.

- **The Onion or Nested Loops** is a useful pattern to draw an audience to a final conclusion incrementally. Each layer of the presentation could be considered as a separate narrative that brings the audience closer to the core message.

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Eight Attributes Of An Effective Story

- **Plot –** the story listeners with a strong sense that direction.

- **Inevitable –** the story generates a feeing in the listener that "it had to happen."

- **Simple** – the story should only include the detail needed for the story.

- **Relevant** – the purpose and plot of the story matter to those who hear it.

- **Inclusive** – the whole organization can see themselves in the story.

- **Emotional** – the story engages the listener at an emotional level and it involves multiple senses.

- **Friendly, not cynical** – the story generates feelings of hope, understanding or satisfaction.

- **Shared by many people** – the story compels listeners to share and refine the story as part of the act of being passed on.

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Lean Change Canvas (Jeff Andersen)

Urgency

Top 3 drivers, and needs to change

Capability of Org to Execute

Target State

Pillars, enablers and more

Success Criteria

Changes will stick when:

Vision

Single compelling statement of describing destination

Key Behaviors:

Communication

2 way path of communication

Action

Key methods used to implement

Change Recipients

Who is impacted

Guiding Teams:

Required Investments

Constraints and Commitments for all stakeholders

Wins

Moral

Performance

Capability

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The Exercise

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Exercise

1. Instructions
2. Vignettes
3. Lean Change Canvas

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The Exercise: Future Telling

- Break up into groups of ten identify a recorder and someone to act as spokesman.

- Each should have a copy of the case study, one monomyth worksheet and two blank change canvasses. Each group should have a pad of paper to record the team's story.

- Read the case study then craft a story to attain the goal (10 Minutes) use complete sentence in your story. Remember:

  - **Plot –** the story listeners with a strong sense that direction.

  - **Inevitable –** the story generate a feeing "it had to happen."

  - **Simple** – the story should only include the detail needed for the story.

  - **Relevant** – the purpose and plot of the story matter to those who hear it.

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The Exercise: Future Telling Phase 2

- Using the story, transcribe the story into the Lean Change Canvas (10 minutes).
  As you develop the canvas look for:

  - Gaps and ideas that need to fleshed out?

  - Are there teams or groups that will need to be engaged?

  - Does the change feel compelling?

  - Did you go overboard in anyone area?

- Refactor your story based on what you have learned from completing the Lean Change Canvas.

Monomyth Outline

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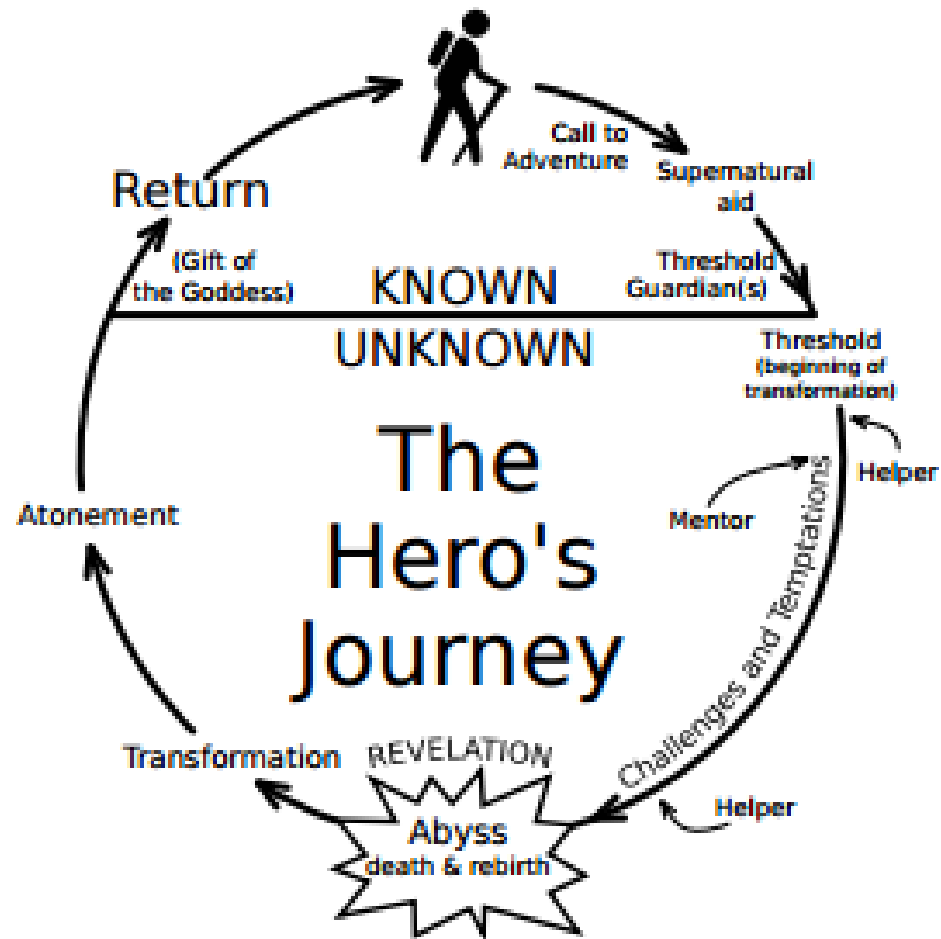
Vignette 1

The objective of the Estimating Improvement initiative is to increase estimating accuracy for software development projects across the development lifecycle to enhance business stakeholder satisfaction and consistently meet project commitments. The challenge is encompassed in three areas – we are not meeting the expectations of our business stakeholders, we need to improve accuracy and consistency of estimates (the science of estimates), and we need to incorporate additional rigor through standard work to reduce variation and mitigate risk.

Vignette 2

As a result of independent assessments of their software development capabilities, Joe's Discount Appliance Store have launched a number of improvement initiatives. Senior management have identified benchmarking and measurement as key parts of these initiatives and, as a driver for this proposal, the use of size based metrics has been identified as a high priority..

At the request of Joe's, this proposal will cover the implementation of a software size analysis capability at Joe's, including (as required) the identification and mapping of size based metrics to Joe's goals and the administration and governance of the measurement data. It is understood that significant work has already been done on the governance and measurement program by Joe's Discount Appliance Store and its other consultants.

Joe's has a history of unsuccessful attempts to implement measurement programs. The implementation of size-based measures which this proposal is intended to support will not be deemed successful unless it is accepted and actively adopted by Joe's software development groups. Done equals the size program is well designed, sustainable, adopted and accepted.

Vignette 3

Avon Lake is interested in improving the process used to deliver value. Agile techniques and frameworks are considered critical tools in software centric value delivery. Improvement requires assessing the current implementation of Agile against best practice models to identify strengths, weaknesses and improvement opportunities. Improvement opportunities must be significant in nature and actionable by Avon Lake. Recommendations that will not increase Avon Lake's value delivery or are at odds with Avon Lake's organizational cultural are not relevant therefore only recommendations deemed viable will be modeled to forecast impact.
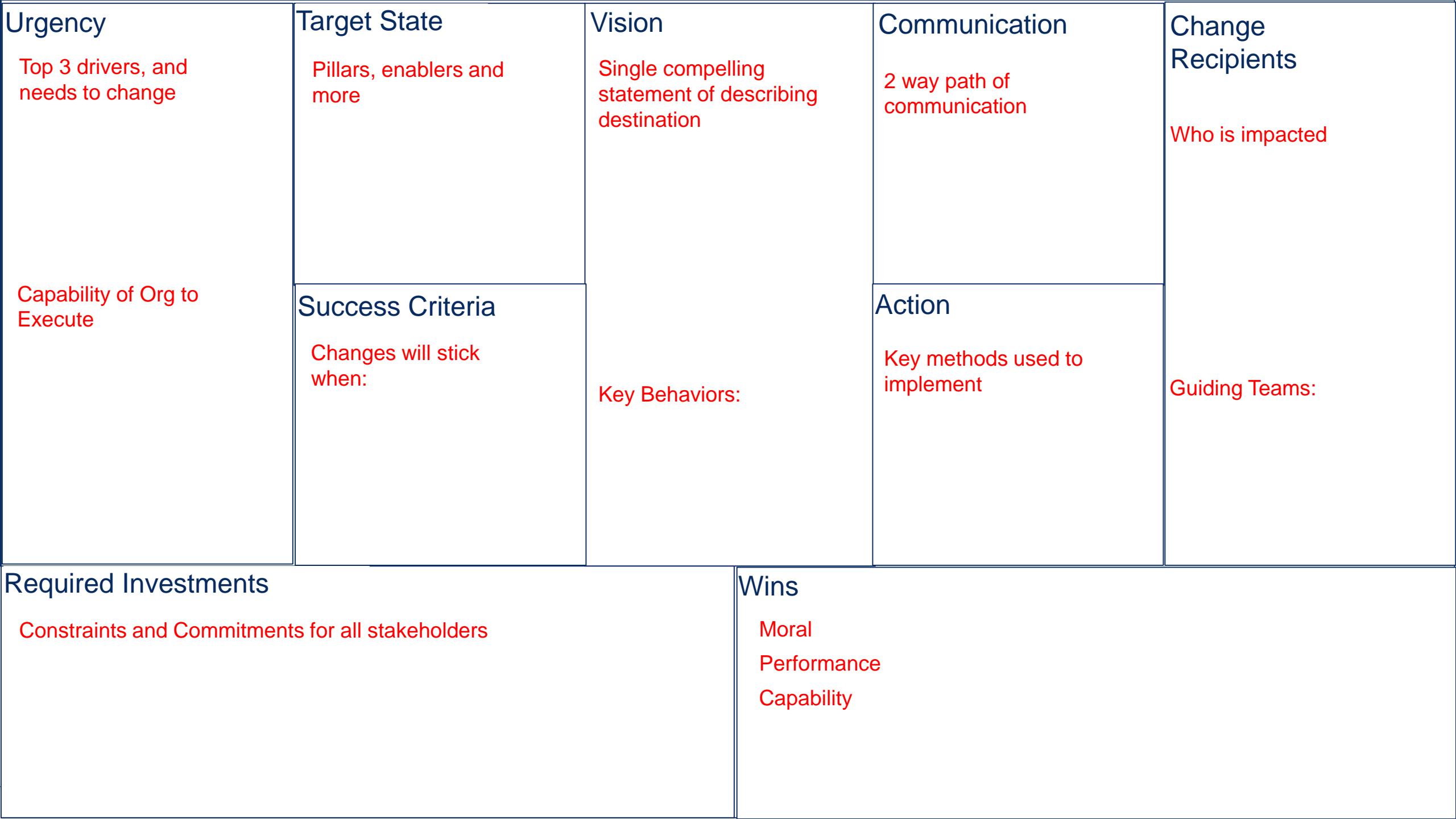
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Vignette 4

The benefits of software estimation are numerous and wide-ranging, and can often depend on the organization; however, on the whole, a robust estimation program will reduce project risk, increase delivery confidence and help set IT investment priorities. While many companies, aware of these benefits, employ some type of estimation, very few use the data as effectively as they could.

An American multinational consumer goods company had gathered a lot of data on its software projects, but it was unsure how to best utilize that data in an estimation program. A project was begun with the goal to sort through the data and establish a customized estimation program for ongoing use.

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Vignette 5

An organization in the wholesale electricity industry has multiple Agile teams within its IT department. The teams were effectively using Scrum, but management agreed that the Scrum framework did not provide sufficient structure for managing multiple Agile teams.

As such, management began to research other methodologies the teams could use, leading them to the Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®). SAFe is a proven, publicly-facing framework for applying Lean and Agile practices at enterprise scale. It synchronizes alignment, collaboration and delivery for large numbers of teams. Given the department's number of Agile teams, SAFe seemed like it could be a good fit for the goals of the organization, even though the teams work on different products. A team was charged with developing a hybrid Agile approach.

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Changes will stick when:

Vision

Single compelling statement of describing destination

Key Behaviors:

Communication

2 way path of communication

Action

Key methods used to implement

Change Recipients

Who is impacted

Guiding Teams:

Required Investments

Constraints and Commitments for all stakeholders

Wins

Moral

Performance

Capability

Urgency	Target State	Vision	Communication	Change Recipients
	Success Criteria		Action	

Required Investments	Wins