Agnostic Agility: Editable Cards

Richard Cook

Principal Consultant

References

Ivar Jacobson Consulting
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https://www.ivarjacobson.com/home

Some useful practice references to help teams decide how they want to work, whether their focus is on improving how they collaborate or how their work is flowing.

Essence
https://www.ivarjacobson.com/Essence

Scrum Guide
https://scrumguides.org/

Scrum@Scale Guide
https://www.scrumatscale.com/scrum-at-scale-guide/

Scrum@Scale Practice Cards
https://pex.ivarjacobson.com/sites/default/files/practice/scrum_at_scale_2020_11.html

Kanban Guide
https://kanbanguides.org/

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Achieving Agility: Getting Started

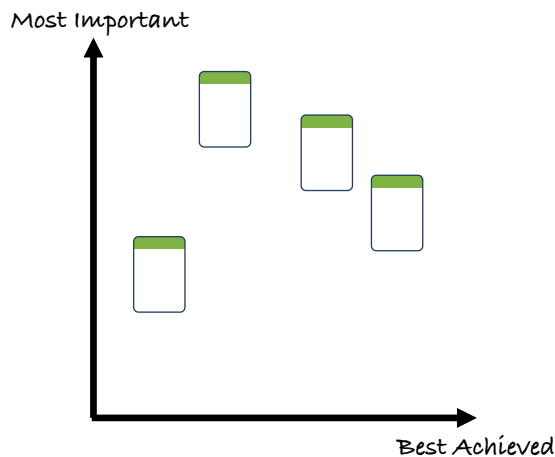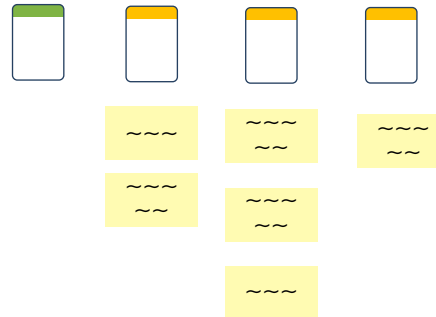|			
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Prioritise	Reduce Context Switching	Maintain a Backlog	Make Work Visible
Use Workflow Boards	Resolve Impediments	Regularly Identify Improvements	Prioritise Improvements
Create Feedback Loops	Produce Output Incrementally	Adaptive Planning	Regular Planning Cycle
Measure Progress Objectively	Agile Progress Reporting	Understand Throughput	Estimate Effort Relatively

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Transform How You Work (1 of 4)

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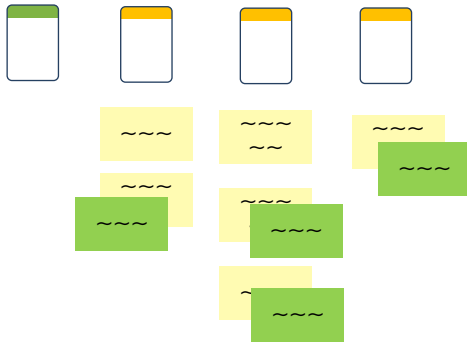
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Transform How You Work (2 of 4)

2. Which outcome do you most need to progress? Discuss each **STRATEGY**: What practices do you use? What are your gaps and challenges? Capture key points.

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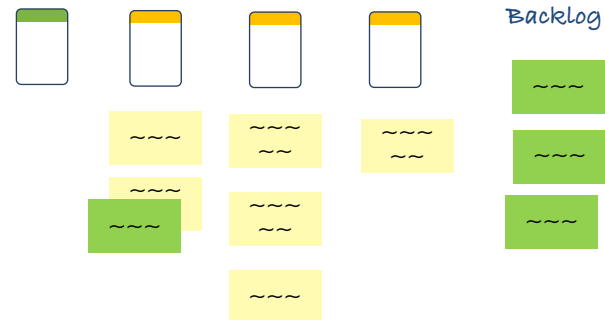
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Transform How You Work (3 of 4)

3. Capture ideas for addressing some of your challenges.

Transform How You Work (4 of 4)

4. Prioritise into your transformation backlog.

Backlog

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Increase Productivity

So that we make best use of the capacity available to us at a more sustainable pace.

Strategies
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- Maintain a Backlog
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So that we're always striving to find better ways to achieve our goals.

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Example Application
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Quick-Start
Sequence a to-do list at the start of each day then work top-down, striving to complete each job before starting the next.

See Also:
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What would make your work a little bit easier?
Try to commit to one small improvement every week.

See Also:
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- *Regularly Identify Improvements*
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Create Feedback Loops

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- Frequent adaptation based on emergent knowledge increases your chances of success.

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- Plan work in short, predictable cycles.
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Refresh your to-do list at the start of every week. Did you achieve your to-do list last week? What can you achieve this week?

See Also:
- *Regular Planning Cycle*
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Produce Output Incrementally

So that we drive fast feedback, increasing our learning opportunities.

Advantages
- Regularly checking fitness for purpose reduces rework and improves quality.
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See Also:
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- *Produce Output Incrementally*
- *Regular Planning Cycle*

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Regular Planning Cycle

So that we can learn quickly, evolving our plans to better reflect the reality we see.

Advantages
- Understanding throughput and predictability allows for long term forecasting and progress tracking.
- Allows for focus on achieving short term goals.

Example Application
- "Sprints" of 1- or 2-weeks' duration.
- Measure throughput using Velocity – jobs per cycle.
- Create forecasts using the "Yesterday's Weather" pattern.

Quick-Start
Have a discussion with your team at the start of each week. What can you commit to achieve that week? Did you achieve what you set out to do last week? What have you learned?

See Also:
- *Adaptive Planning*
- *Create Feedback Loops*
- *Understand Throughput*

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Measure Progress Objectively

So that we can predict a path forward based on achievements so far.

Advantages
- Empirical data makes forward planning more realistic.

Example Application
- The measure of progress is based on the number of completed jobs.
- Jobs are defined as small, valuable increments of work.
- Effort is estimated relatively.
- Throughput is measured as Velocity.

Quick-Start
Try to predict the amount of work you can do this week based on the number of jobs you completed last week.

See Also:
- *Agile Progress Reporting*
- *Produce Output Incrementally*
- *Understand Throughput*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Agile Progress Reporting

So that we can track deliveries and rapidly respond to problems.

Advantages
- Able to keep deliveries on track more effectively.
- Make better decisions about scope and allocation of capacity.

Example Application
- Relative estimation used and velocity known.
- Burn-down/burn-up charts represent progress.

Quick-Start
Regularly check: are you getting through this week's jobs fast enough? Do you need to adjust expectations or push back on interruptions?

See Also:
- *Measure Progress Objectively*
- *Understand Throughput*
- *Regular Planning Cycles*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Understand Throughput

So that deliveries are informed by actual performance.

Advantages
- Enables more realistic planning.

Example Application
- Velocity is measured: *average effort points per cycle*.
- Teams address root causes of variable velocity to become more predictable.

Quick-Start
Each week, count the jobs completed that week. Use this to forecast the next week of work. Is your throughput predictable?

See Also:
- *Adaptive Planning*
- *Regular Planning Cycle*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Estimate Effort Relatively

So that we have a fast and useful measure of job size, even when we're not certain.

Advantages
- Faster estimating, useful for large backlogs.
- Ability to estimate despite unknowns.
- Cost can be factored into prioritisation.

Example Application
- Estimates are provided by the team doing the work.
- Consensus is reached by the whole team.
- Use of methods like affinity estimation and planning poker.

Quick-Start
Try using T-shirt sizing for the jobs on a to-do list so that you get used to comparing jobs: Small, Medium and Large.

See Also:
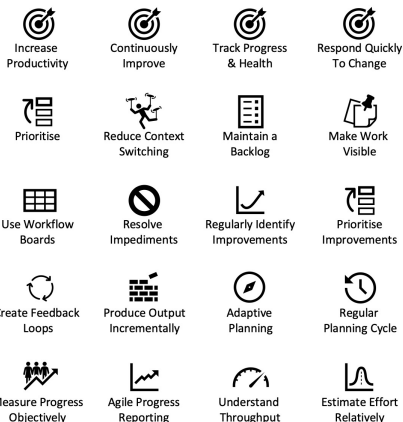- *Prioritise*
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Method Agnostic Agility Cards

Richard Cook

Principal Consultant

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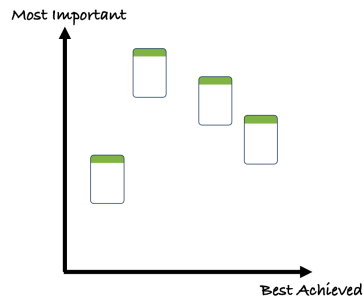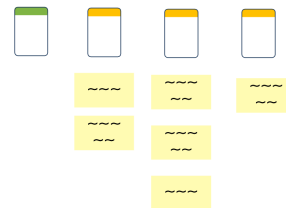## Transform How You Work (1 of 4)

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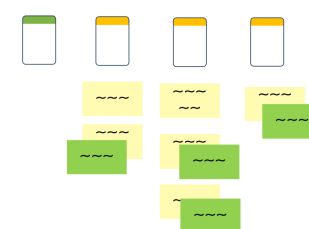
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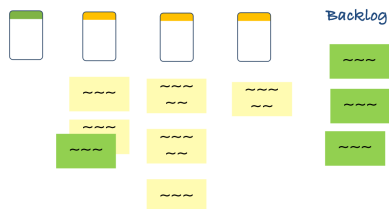

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Transform How You Work (3 of 4)

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Transform How You Work (4 of 4)

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- Measure throughput using Velocity – jobs per cycle.
- Create forecasts using the "Yesterday's Weather" pattern.

Quick-Start
Have a discussion with your team at the start of each week. What can you commit to achieve that week? Did you achieve what you set out to do last week? What have you learned?

See Also:
- *Adaptive Planning*
- *Create Feedback Loops*
- *Understand Throughput*

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Measure Progress Objectively

So that we can predict a path forward based on achievements so far.

Advantages
- Empirical data makes forward planning more realistic.

Example Application
- The measure of progress is based on the number of completed jobs.
- Jobs are defined as small, valuable increments of work.
- Effort is estimated relatively.
- Throughput is measured as Velocity.

Quick-Start
Try to predict the amount of work you can do this week based on the number of jobs you completed last week.

See Also:
- *Agile Progress Reporting*
- *Produce Output Incrementally*
- *Understand Throughput*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Agile Progress Reporting

So that we can track deliveries and rapidly respond to problems.

Advantages
- Able to keep deliveries on track more effectively.
- Make better decisions about scope and allocation of capacity.

Example Application
- Relative estimation used and velocity known.
- Burn-down/burn-up charts represent progress.

Quick-Start
Regularly check: are you getting through this week's jobs fast enough? Do you need to adjust expectations or push back on interruptions?

See Also:
- *Measure Progress Objectively*
- *Understand Throughput*
- *Regular Planning Cycles*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Understand Throughput

So that deliveries are informed by actual performance.

Advantages
- Enables more realistic planning.

Example Application
- Velocity is measured: *average effort points per cycle*.
- Teams address root causes of variable velocity to become more predictable.

Quick-Start
Each week, count the jobs completed that week. Use this to forecast the next week of work. Is your throughput predictable?

See Also:
- *Adaptive Planning*
- *Regular Planning Cycle*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*

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Estimate Effort Relatively

So that we have a fast and useful measure of job size, even when we're not certain.

Advantages
- Faster estimating, useful for large backlogs.
- Ability to estimate despite unknowns.
- Cost can be factored into prioritisation.

Example Application
- Estimates are provided by the team doing the work.
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Quick-Start
Try using T-shirt sizing for the jobs on a to-do list so that you get used to comparing jobs: Small, Medium and Large.

See Also:
- *Prioritise*
- *Maintain a Backlog*
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Handouts

Richard Cook

Principal Consultant

Increase Productivity

So that we make best use of the capacity available to us at a more sustainable pace.

Strategies
- Make Work Visible
- Maintain a Backlog
- Use Workflow Boards
- Prioritise
- Reduce Context Switching
- Resolve Impediments

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Make Work Visible

So that *all* our work is known, enabling full transparency for better decisions.

Advantages
- No work is hidden, eliminating so-called "dark work" and enabling wholly inclusive prioritisation decisions.

Example Application
- Backlog Refinement as a regular, whole team collaboration; typically, 1 hour per week.
- Changes in demand, including impediments, raised during daily alignment.

Quick-Start
Make sure *all* your work is in a to-do list or backlog. Use simple labelling to show what is in progress now and what is complete.

See Also:
- *Maintain a Backlog*
- *Use Workflow Boards*
- *Prioritise*
- *Resolve Impediments*

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Maintain a Backlog

So that the intent and value of work is clear, and priorities are transparent.

Advantages
- Easily identify what needs to be done next.
- Able to see the full scope of demand on the team.
- All items are prioritised against each other; enables hard choices of what to do first, what to stop.

Example Application
- Backlog Refinement as a regular, whole team collaboration; typically, 1 hour per week.
- Each work item on the backlog has a tangible benefit.

Quick-Start
Create yourself a prioritised to-do list that you check and adjust at the start of each day.

See Also:
- *Prioritise*
- *Make Work Visible*
- *Produce Output Incrementally*
- *Create Feedback Loops*

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Use Workflow Boards

So that we can quickly see the state of all our work.

Advantages
- Focuses discussions on the work in progress and how to finish, speeding up completion of tasks.
- Visible boards reduce the effort needed to update stakeholders; see what's progressing and blocked.

Example Application
- Viewed during daily alignment to create focus.
- Is kept up to date by the team.
- WiP limits are applied to reduce context switching.

Quick-Start
Use columns "to-do, doing, done" on a wall or in a tool like Teams Planner to show the state of ongoing work. Label anything that's blocked.

See Also:
- *Make Work Visible*
- *Maintain a Backlog*
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Prioritise

So that we can focus on delivering the greatest benefits first.

Advantages
- Allows teams to better align for fast delivery.
- Brings focus, reducing context switches.
- Reduces decision latency: what to work on next is clear; what work to stop, equally so.

Example Application
- Greatest benefit for lowest cost of effort.
- Prioritise frequently as part of maintaining a backlog.

Quick-Start
Sequence a to-do list at the start of each day then work top-down, striving to complete each job before starting the next.

See Also:
- *Reduce Context Switching*
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*
- *Maintain a Backlog*

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Reduce Context Switching

So that we can focus on finishing the job we're doing.

Advantages
- Improved focus increases throughput and helps create a sustainable pace.

Example Application
- Work in Process (WiP) limits on the workflow board.
- Pull work from a prioritised backlog.
- Manage interruptions with the Interrupt Pattern.

Quick-Start
Create some time during your daily routine to focus on your top priority. Block out your calendar, disable email notifications and other interruptions.

See Also:
- *Maintain a Backlog*
- *Prioritise*
- *Use Workflow Boards*

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Resolve Impediments

So that we can speed up the completion of work being done *right now.*

Advantages
- Get more work done.
- Organisational issues often emerge, creating bigger benefits than the job you're unblocking.

Example Application
- Impediments raised during daily alignment.
- Immediate escalation through a scaled impediments pipeline when no team resolution.
- Maintain a visible impediments board alongside the Backlog.

Quick-Start
Stop living with delays and problems. Raise them now in the hope of a resolution!

See Also:
- *Prioritise Improvements*
- *Make Work Visible*
- *Use a Workflow Board*

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Continuously Improve

So that we're always striving to find better ways to achieve our goals.

Strategies
- Create Feedback Loops
- Resolve Impediments
- Regularly Identify Improvements
- Prioritise Improvements

Create Feedback Loops

So that we can regularly adapt plans and ways of working based on what we learn.

Advantages
- Frequent adaptation based on emergent knowledge increases your chances of success.

Example Application
- Plan work in short, predictable cycles.
- Daily alignment, adapt plans as issues emerge.
- Review of work done each planning cycle.
- Regular retrospectives, measure improvements.

Quick-Start
Refresh your to-do list at the start of every week. Did you achieve your to-do list last week? What can you achieve this week?

See Also:
- *Regular Planning Cycle*
- *Produce Output Incrementally*
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Regularly Identify Improvements

So that we can continuously assess the effectiveness of our ways of working.

Advantages
- Able to regularly assess working practices, process, environment to drive effectiveness.

Example Application
- Regular retrospectives.
- Kaizen: plan to action potential improvements every cycle.
- Measure your impact; verify the effectiveness of potential improvements.

Quick-Start
Try running an open and honest conversation with your team. What works well, what could be better?

See Also:
- *Prioritise Improvements*
- *Regular Planning Cycle*
- *Understand Throughput*
- *Create Feedback Loops*

Prioritise Improvements

So that all improvement opportunities are critically assessed.

Advantages
- The *right* changes allows teams to accelerate faster.

Example Application
- Greatest potential benefit for lowest effort.
- Don't change too much at the same time, so that cause and effect are clear.
- Improvements prioritised into the backlog.
- Allocate a % of team capacity for improvement.

Quick-Start
What would make your work a little bit easier?
Try to commit to one small improvement every week.

See Also:
- *Estimate Effort Relatively*
- *Regularly Identify Improvements*
- *Maintain a Backlog*

Track Progress & Health

So that we can reduce decision latency, mitigating risks as we go.

Strategies
- Use Workflow Boards
- Agile Progress Reporting
- Understand Throughput
- Estimate Effort Relatively
- Measure Progress Objectively
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Produce Output Incrementally

So that we drive fast feedback, increasing our learning opportunities.

Advantages
- Regularly checking fitness for purpose reduces rework and improves quality.
- Address unknowns early by demonstrating work in progress.
- Prevents gold-plated solutions by encouraging just enough work to meet the intent.

Example Application
- Break work down to maximise learning opportunities; what's the minimum you can do to gain feedback?
- Use acceptance criteria to tightly control scope.

Quick-Start
Before starting new work: What do you need to learn? Who can give you feedback? What is the minimum you can do to satisfy that need?

See Also:
- *Create Feedback Loops*
- *Adaptive Planning*

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Respond Quickly to Change

So that we can spend effort where it is most needed, while minimising disruption.

Strategies
- Adaptive Planning
- Create Feedback Loops
- Regular Planning Cycle
- Produce Output Incrementally
- Measure Progress Objectively

Adaptive Planning

So that we can redirect our work to have the greatest impact, without delay.

Advantages
- Allows plans to evolve based on emerging knowledge.
- Better able to navigate complexity and uncertainty.
- Feedback loops inform incremental course corrections.

Example Application
- Regular planning, weekly or bi-weekly (e.g., Sprint Planning.)
- Regular alignment, such as Daily Stand-up meetings.
- Produce output incrementally to maximise learning.

Quick-Start
Think about the feedback that would most help you to get the next job right. Actively seek that feedback as early as possible, adapting your approach in response.

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See Also:
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- *Produce Output Incrementally*
- *Understand Throughput*

Regular Planning Cycle

So that we can learn quickly, evolving our plans to better reflect the reality we see.

Advantages
- Understanding throughput and predictability allows for long term forecasting and progress tracking.
- Allows for focus on achieving short term goals.

Example Application
- "Sprints" of 1- or 2-weeks' duration.
- Measure throughput using Velocity – jobs per cycle.
- Create forecasts using the "Yesterday's Weather" pattern.

Quick-Start
Have a discussion with your team at the start of each week. What can you commit to achieve that week? Did you achieve what you set out to do last week? What have you learned?

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