Game Developers Conference® | **March 9-13, 2010** | Moscone Center | San Francisco, CA

THINK SERVICES
A DIVISION OF UNITED BUSINESS MEDIA LLC

Building Global Bridges
The Benefits of Cross-Border Agile Game

Aðalsteinn “Alli” Óttarsson

Who am I ?

- Aðalsteinn “Alli” Óttarsson
- Sr. Technical Producer
- Core Technology Group
- Joined CCP in 2001
- Originally a programmer turned producer
- I have contributed to all the EVE Online releases
  - and all the game projects we are currently working on.

13 years ago ...

Reynir, our founder, had an idea about spaceships ...

... flown by hundreds of thousands of (real) people over the internets in the same universe

... and everybody would pay us monthly for flying them

... and he was requesting $5 million to make it

... in a 300,000 people country which predominant industry was fishing.

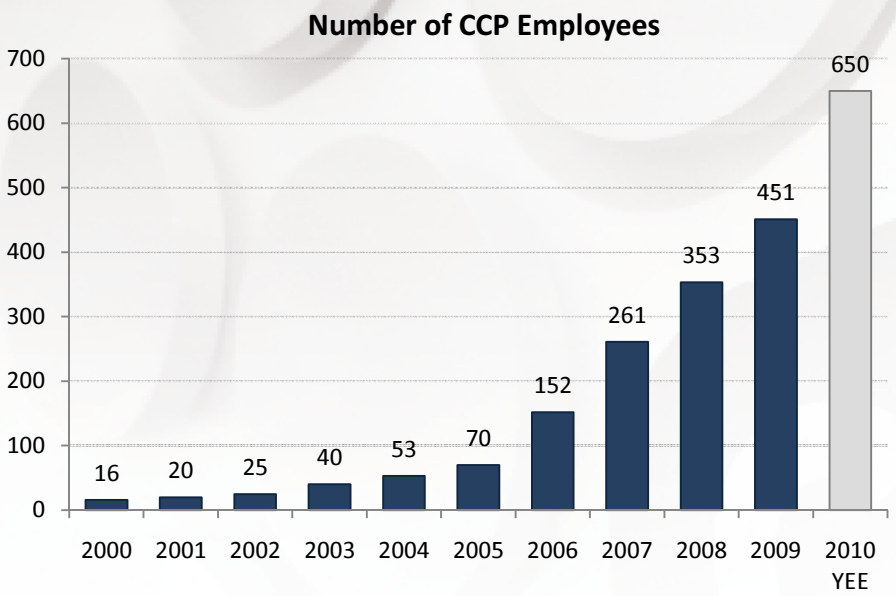
Sounds crazy?

"Venturing on a project so massive in scope, so unprecedented and unproven in so many ways, is only done by either madmen or idiots…"

"…We *were* probably both."

- REYNIR HARDARSON, creative director and founder of CCP

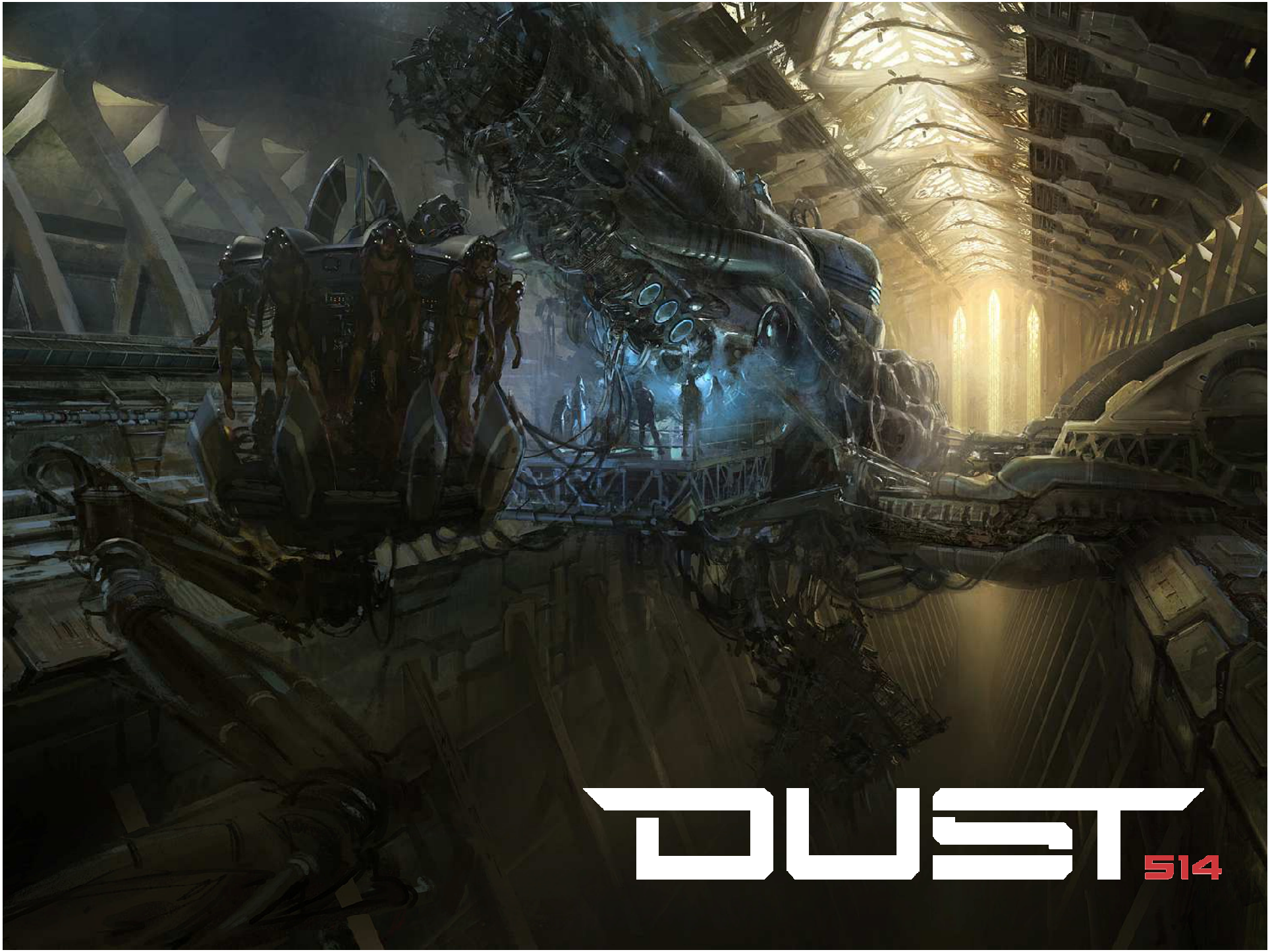
CCP Overview



- CCP employees represent over 20 nationalities
- The number of languages spoken by employees exceed 30
- Melding the best of art, science, operations and business talent

- CCP employees are spread between four offices in three continents
- Iceland / Reykjavík
  - Headquarters
  - ~240 Employees
- China / Shanghai
  - ~80 Employees
- USA / Atlanta
  - ~150 Employees
- UK / Newcastle
  - ~13 Employees
- UK / London
  - Location of servers

EVE
ONLINE


DUST
514

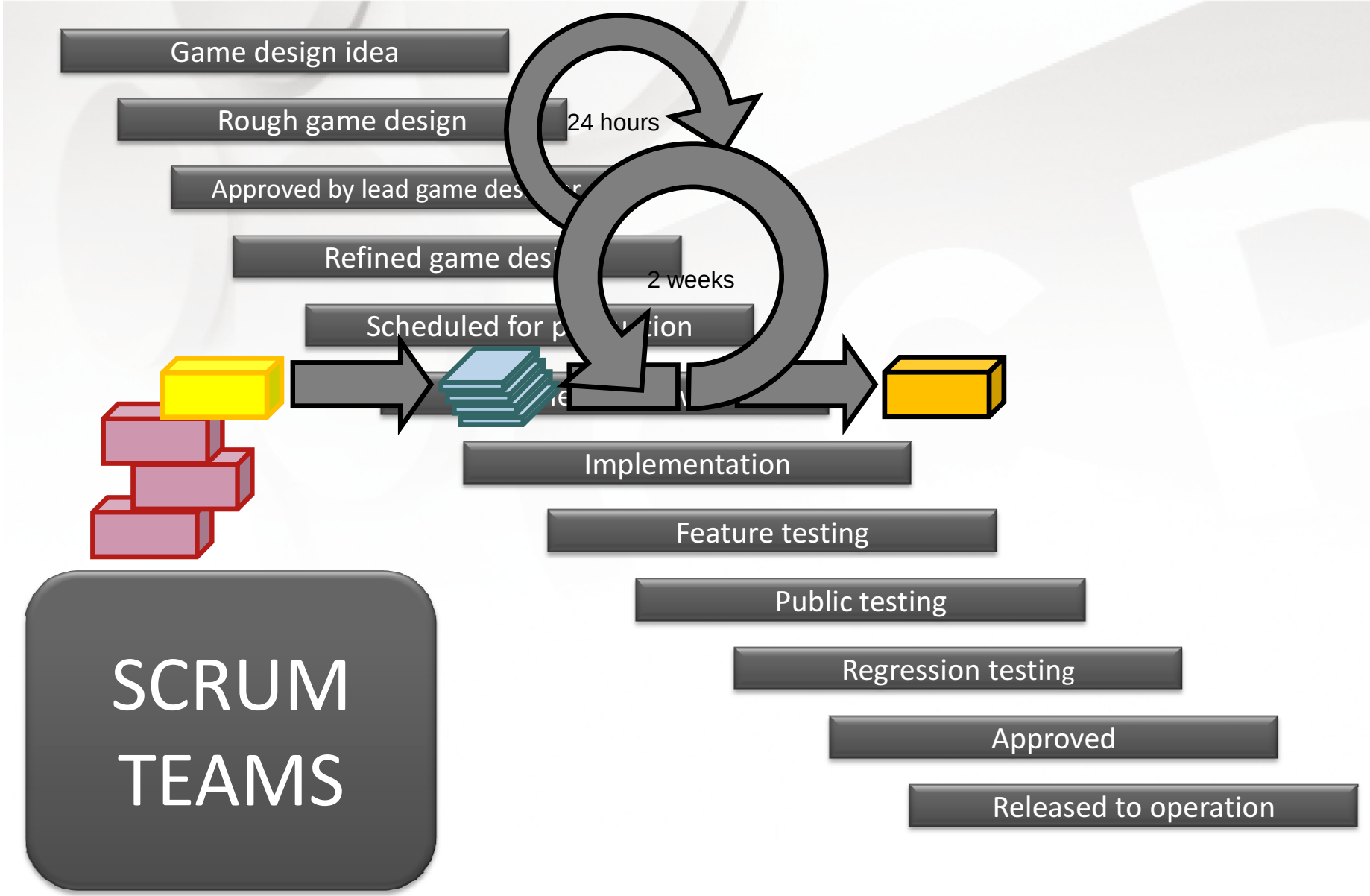
Global Development

EVE Online

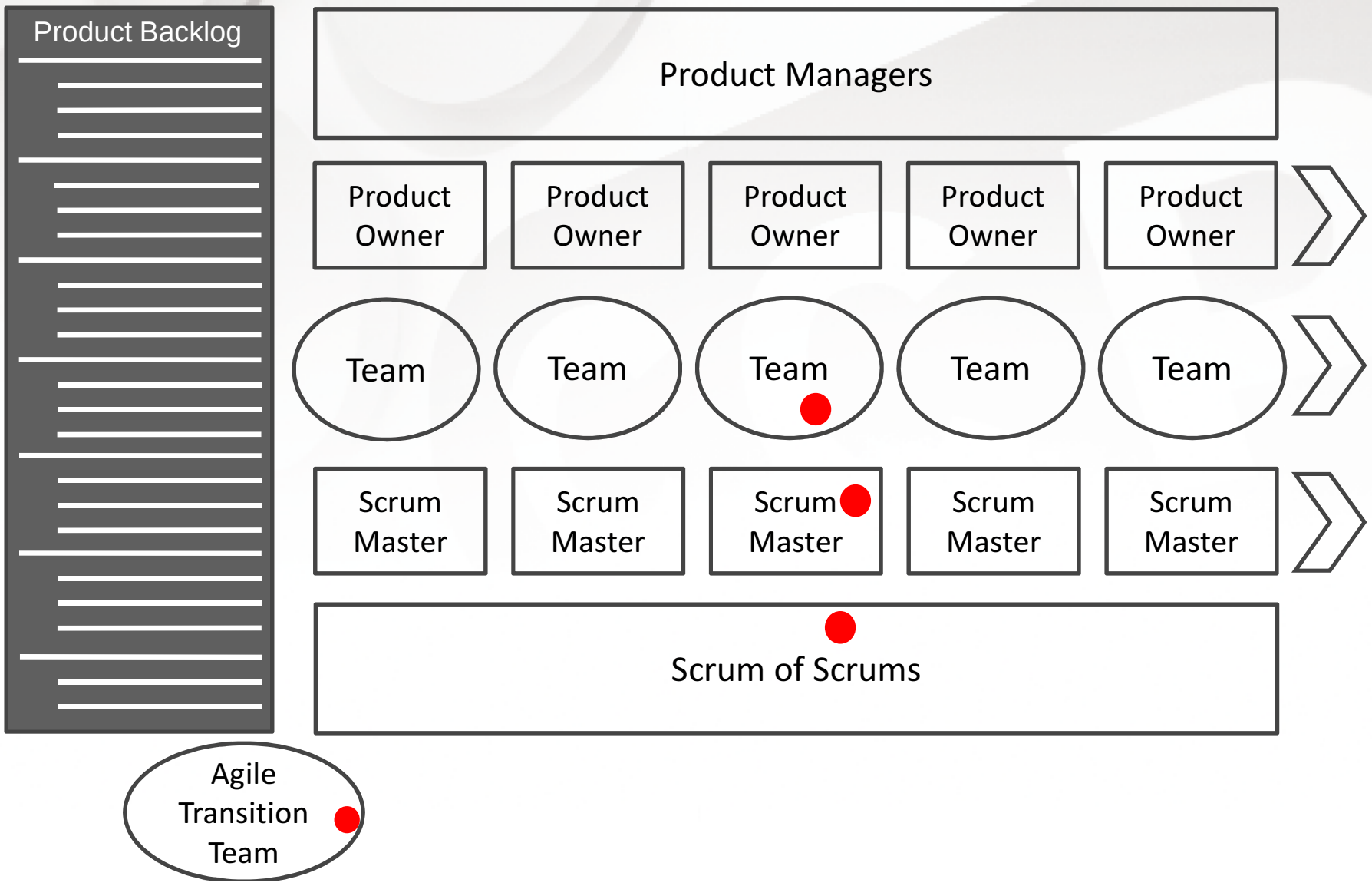
EVE Online Expansions

- Over 120 Developers
- 3 Offices in 3 Continents
- Biggest EVE Expansion to Date
- Shorter development time than previous expansions

Transition EVE to Agile

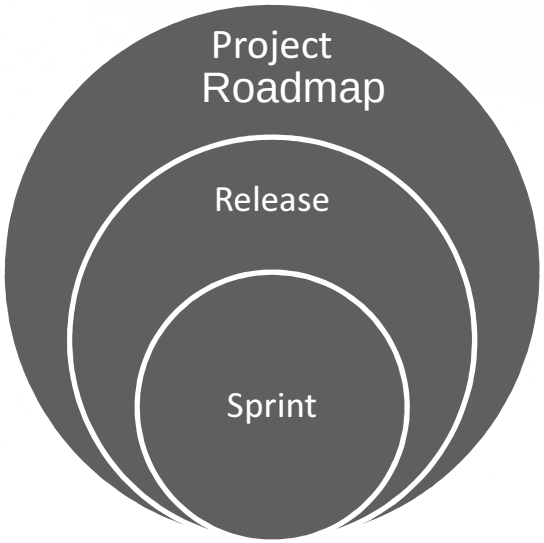


Large-scale organization

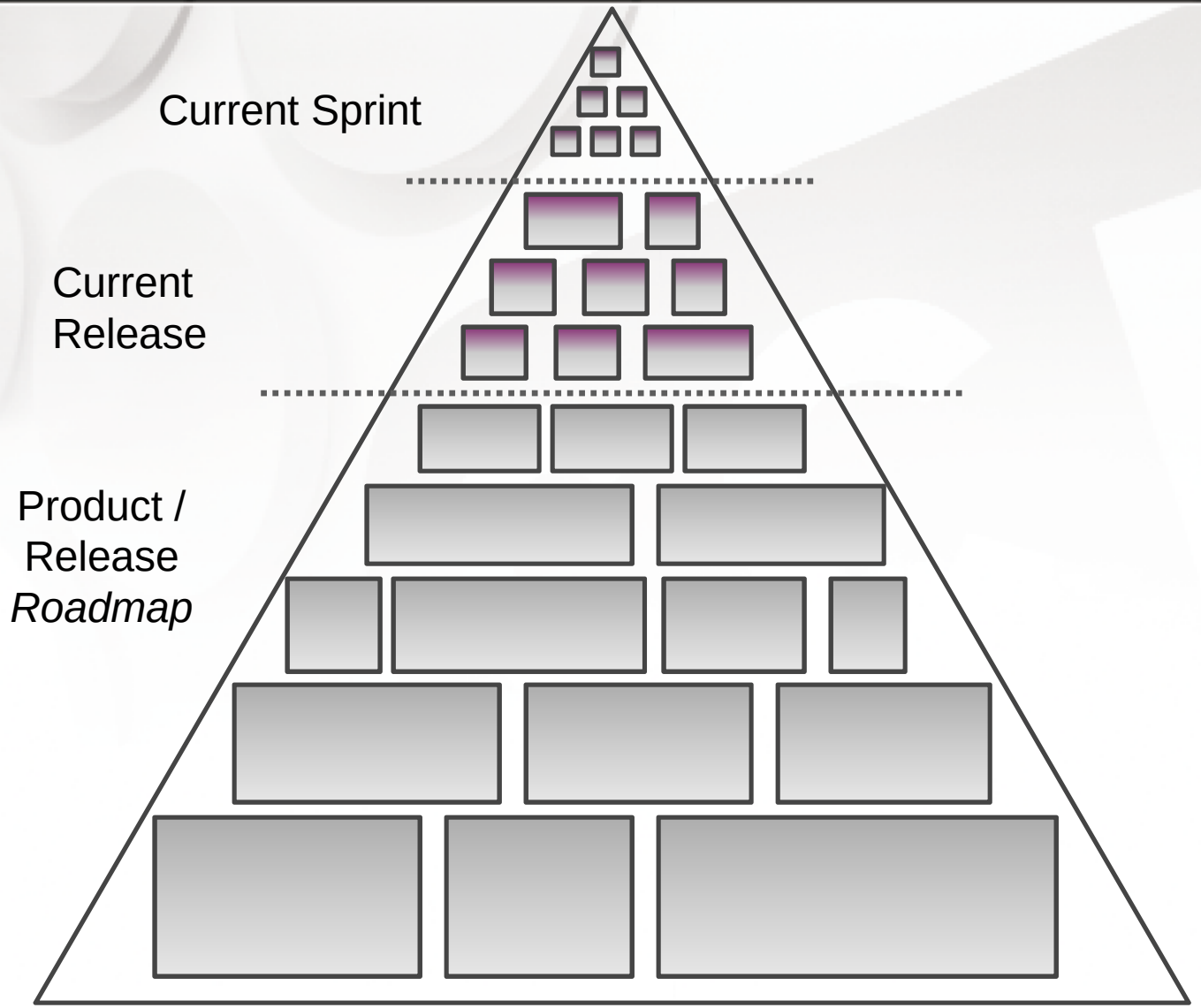


Shorter More Frequent Releases

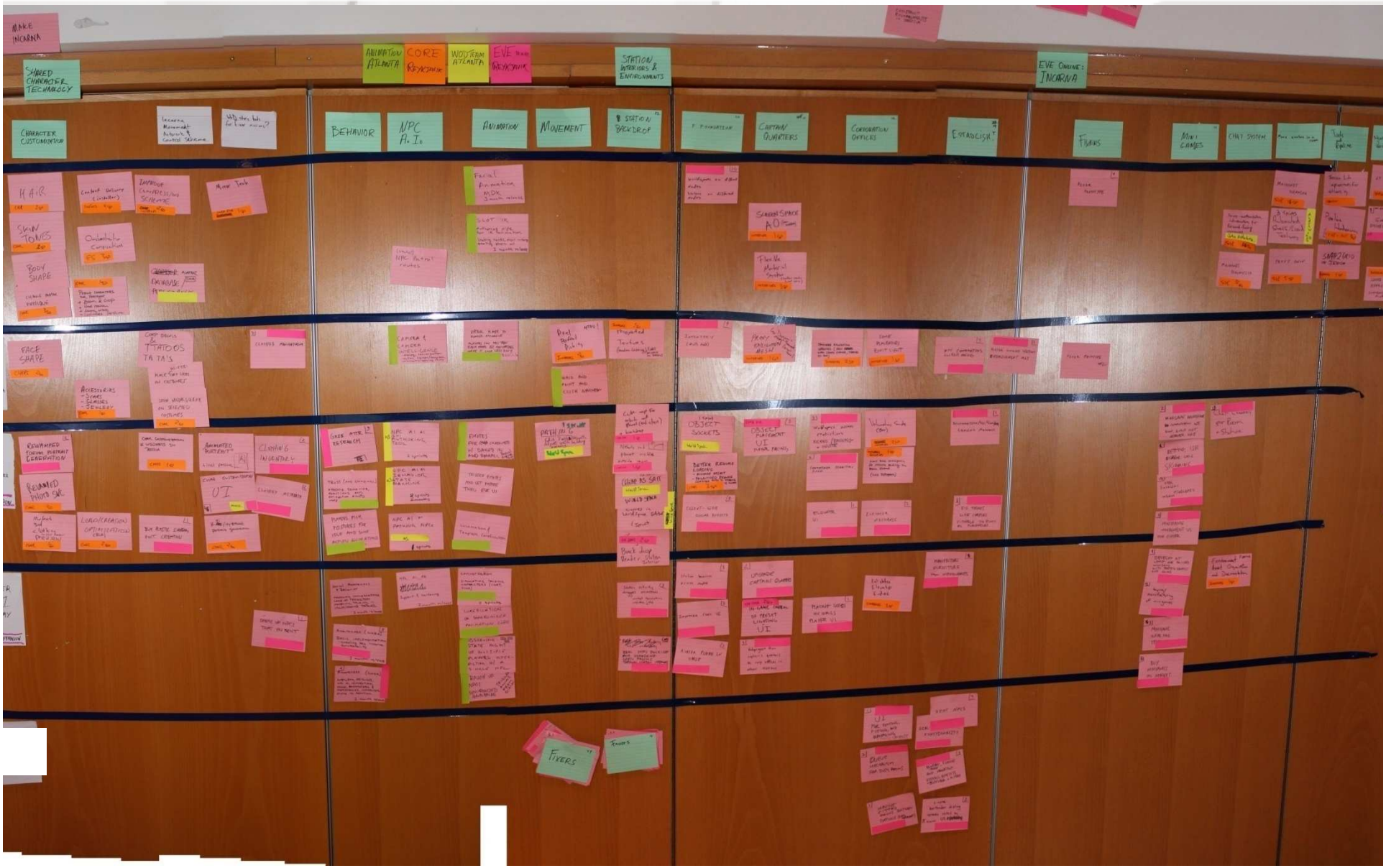
- 4 – 5 Sprints plus a hardening sprint
  - Hardening sprints are for polish
  - No new feature development
- Focus around clear release goals
- Teams define, build, and verify features or components
- Output stable polished vertical slice of the product



Shorter More Frequent Releases



Product Roadmaps



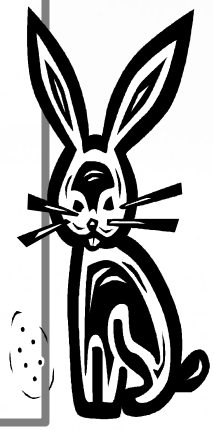
Release Plan

Release 3
NYX
1. Mar– 21. May

Release 4
TBD
31. May – 13. Aug

Release 5
TBD
23.Aug – 12. Nov

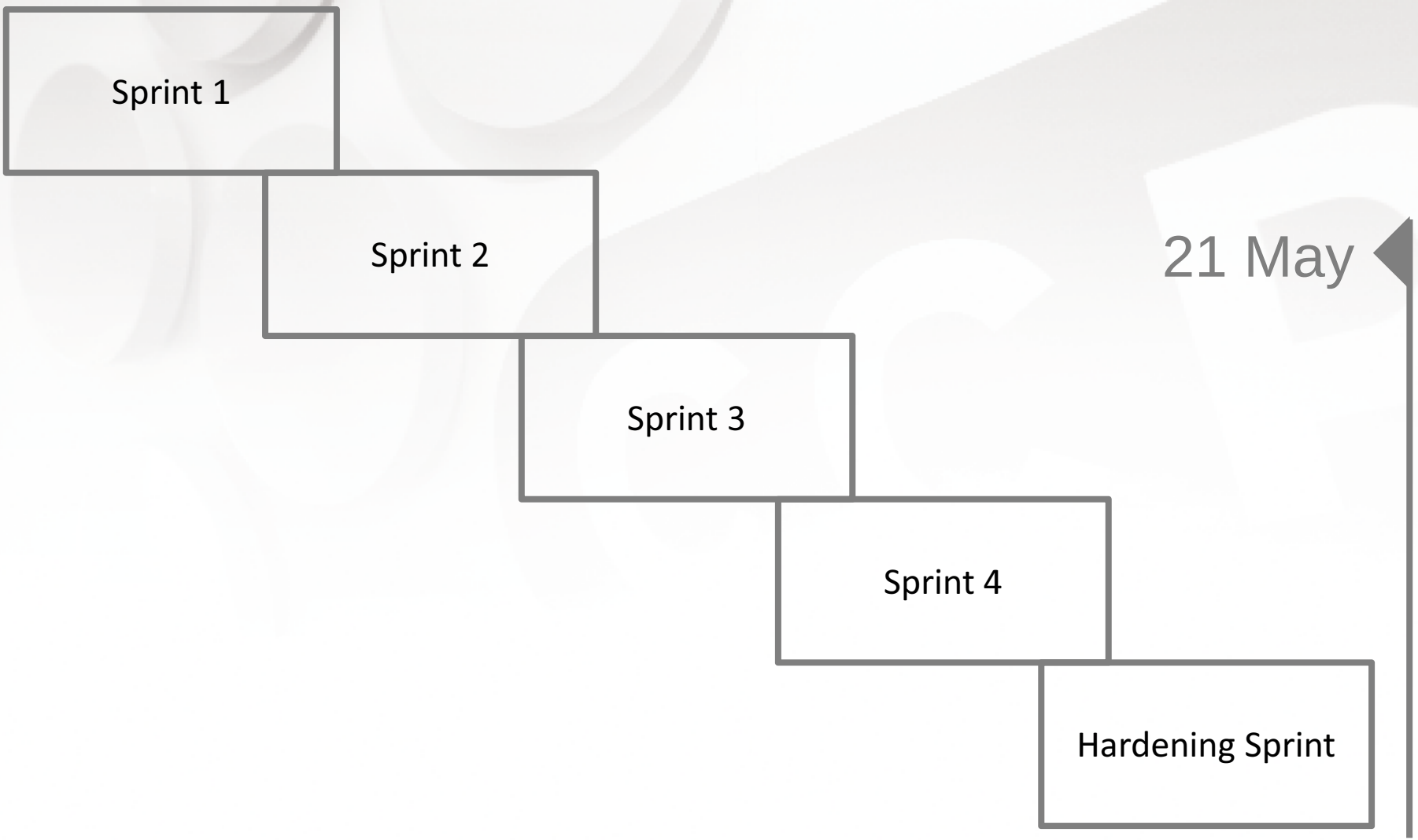
Release 6
TBD
22. Nov– 10. Feb



March | April | May | June | July | Augus | Septem | October | Novemb | Decemb | January | Februar

2010 2011

Release Plan



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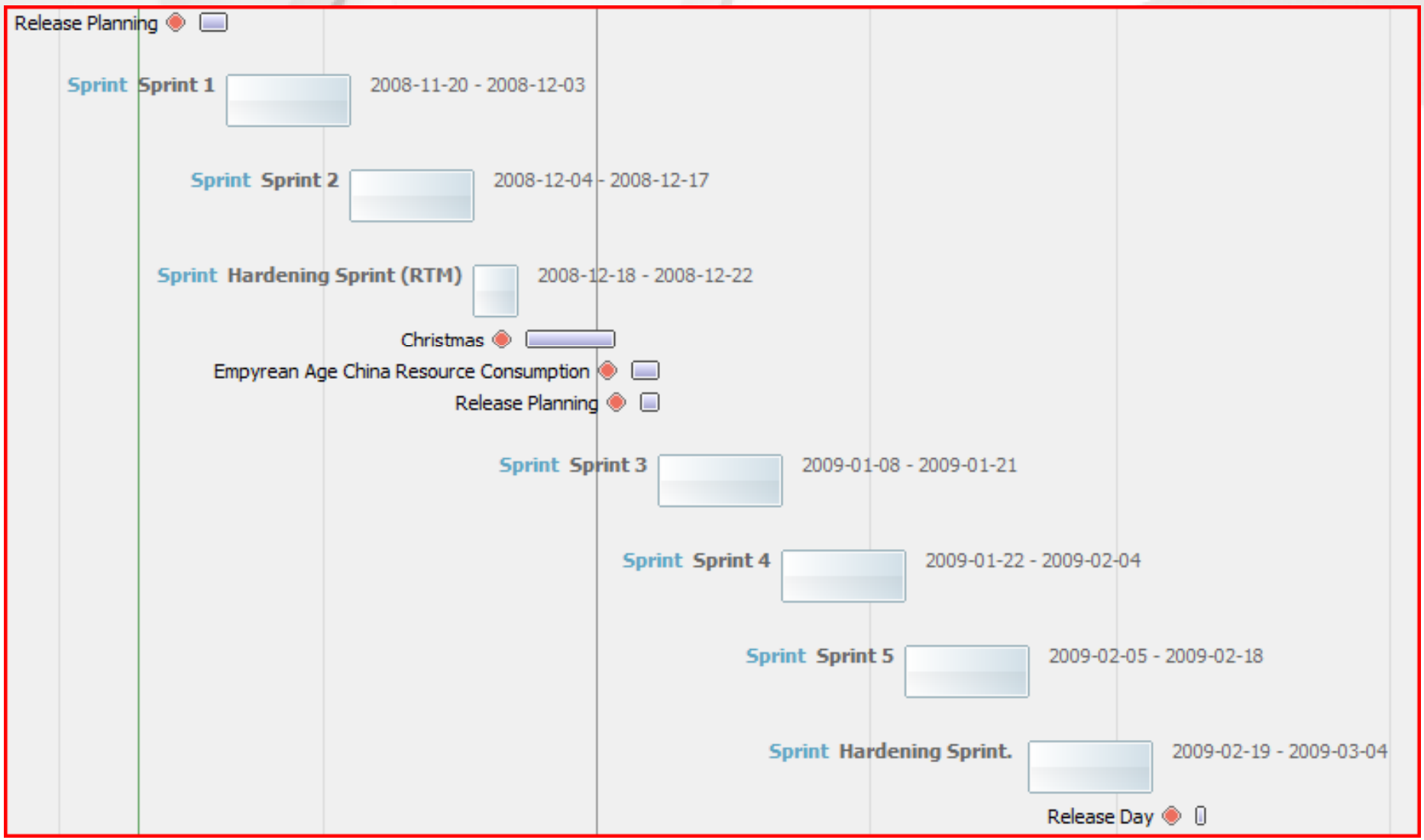

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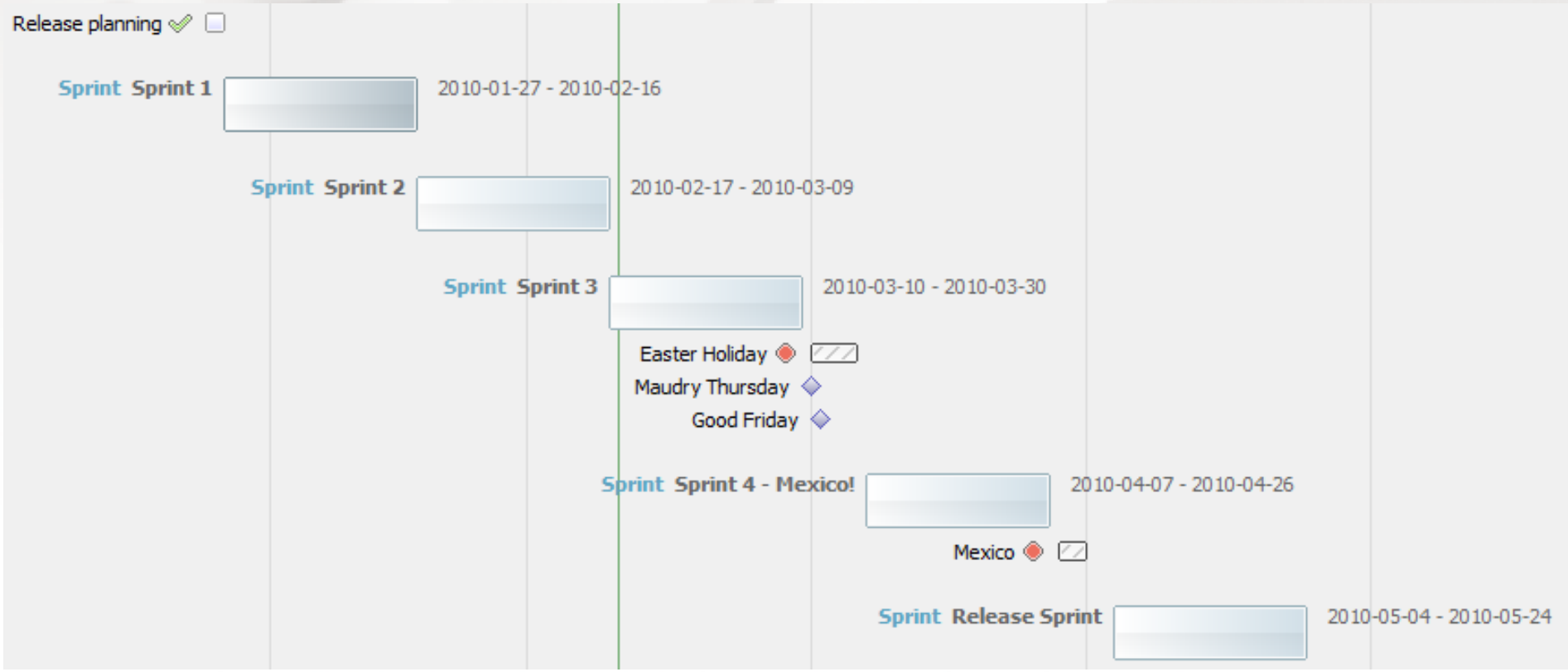
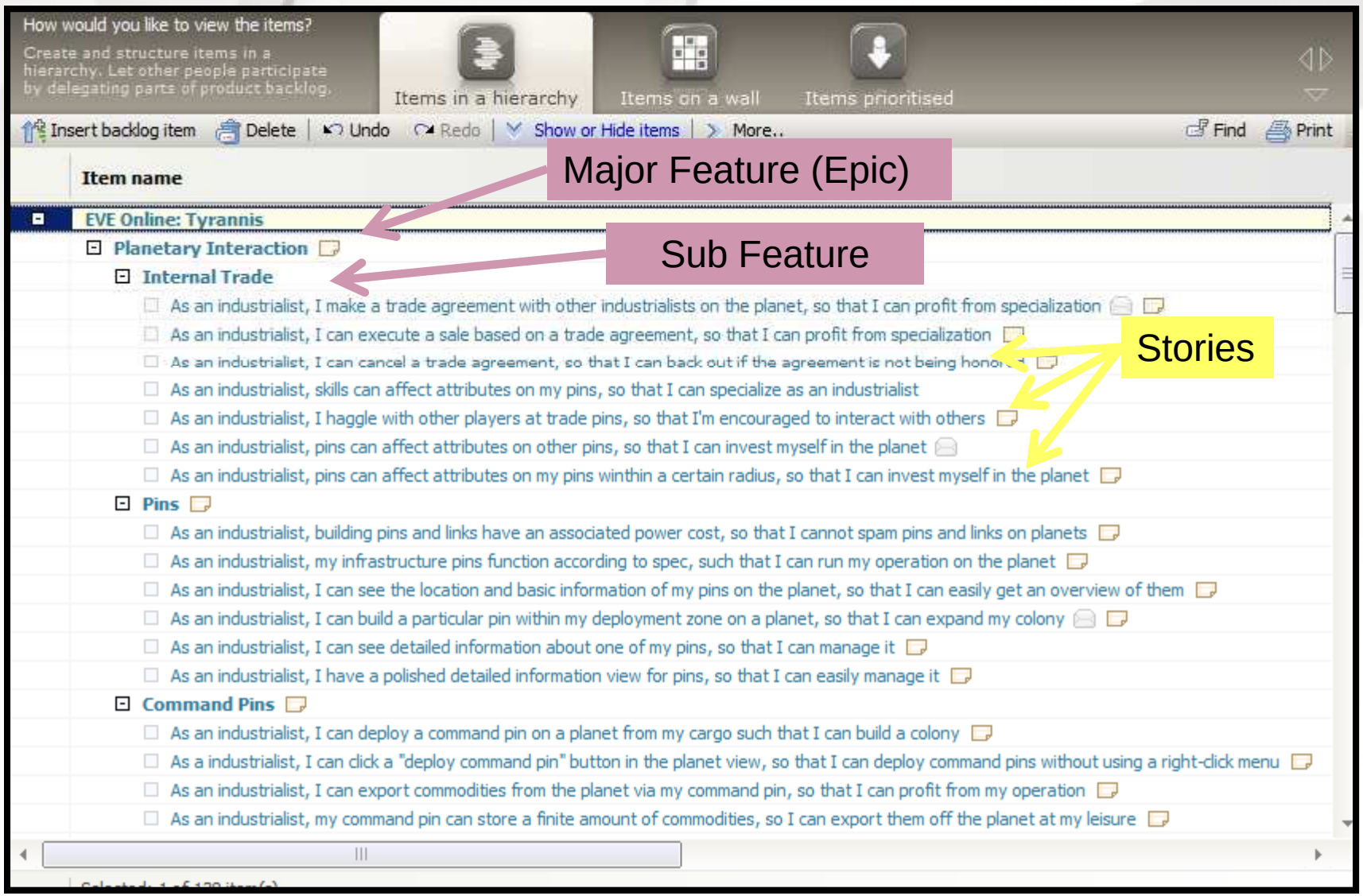


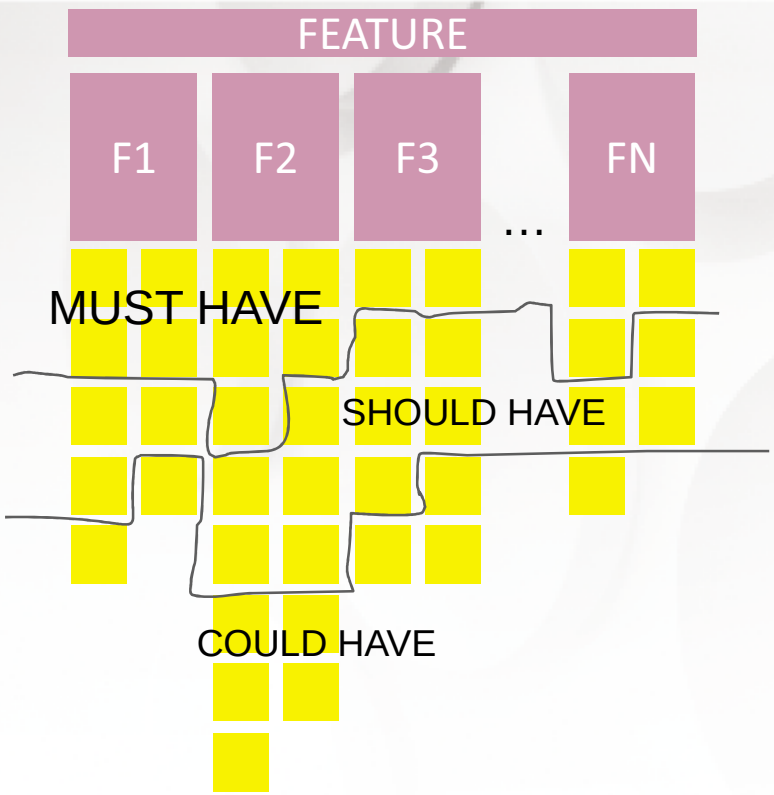
Features & Stories



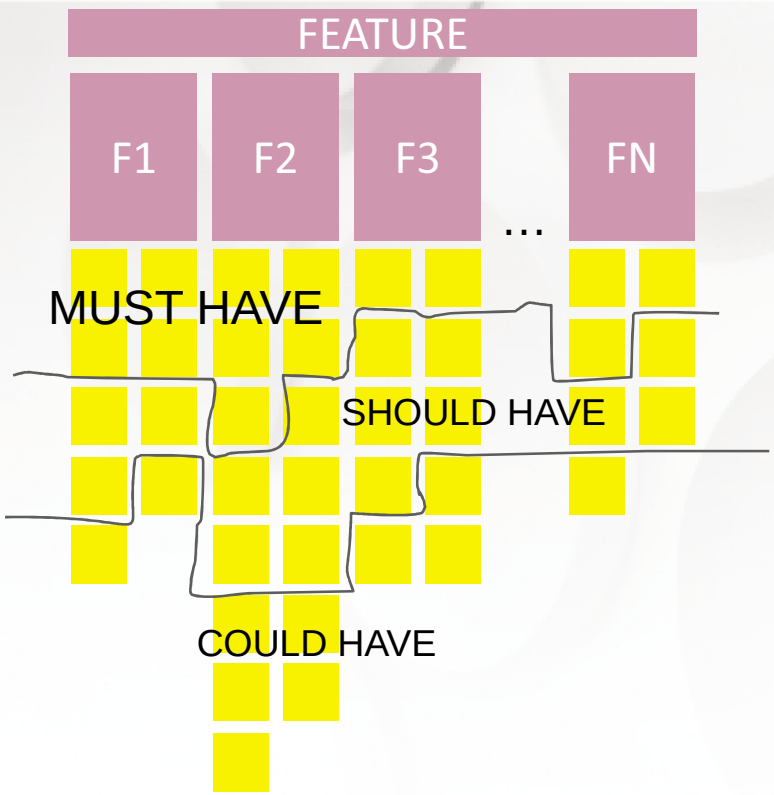
MuSCoW Analysis

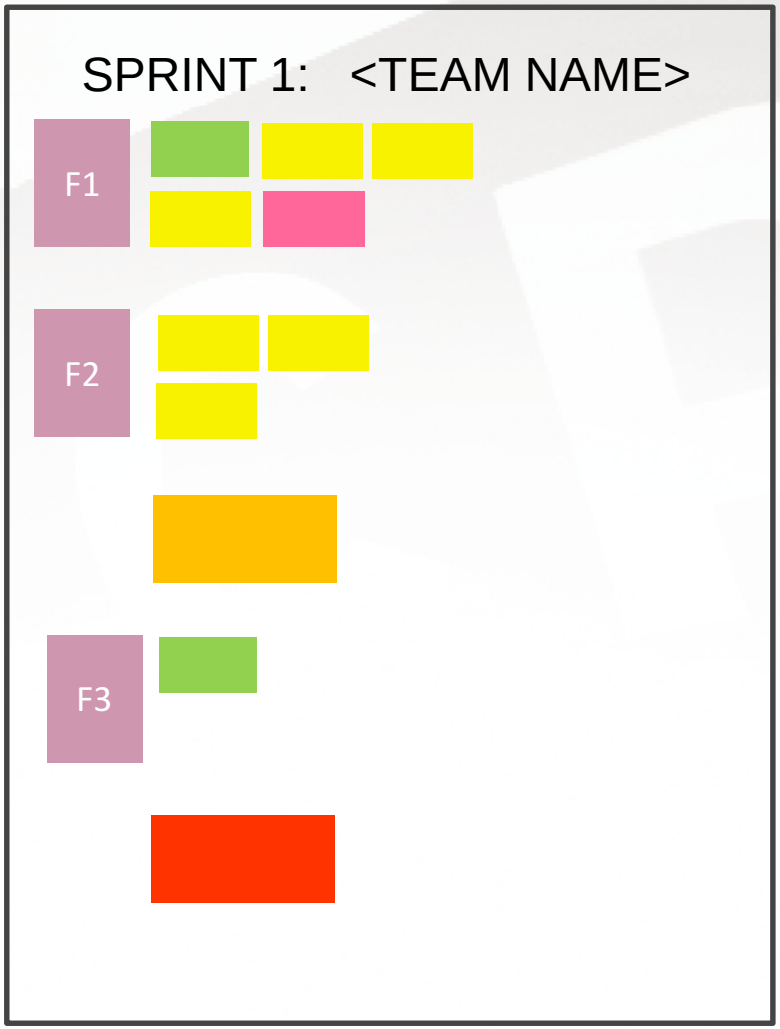
- Must Have
- Should Have
- Could Have
- Won’t Have

Features & Stories



Features & Stories





Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

Synchronized Iteration Cadance

Product Backlog

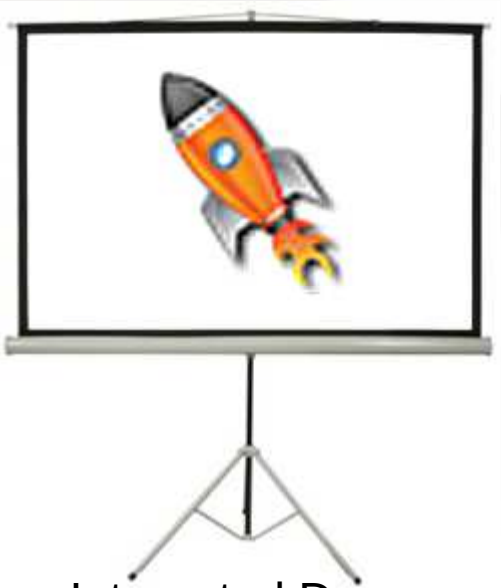
Sprint Team

Sprint Team

Sprint Team

Sprint Team

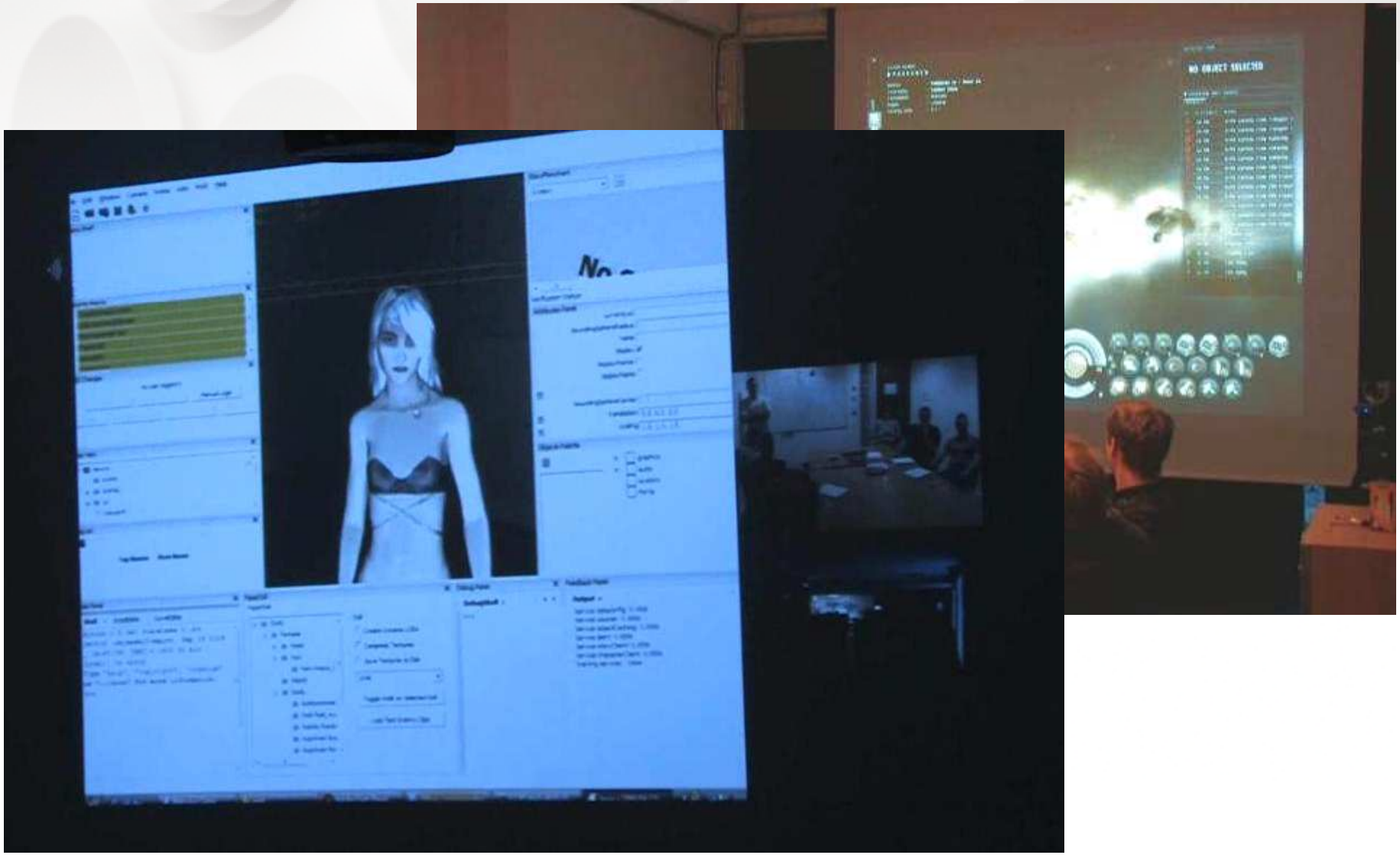
Sprint Team



Integrated Demo
Playable MMO

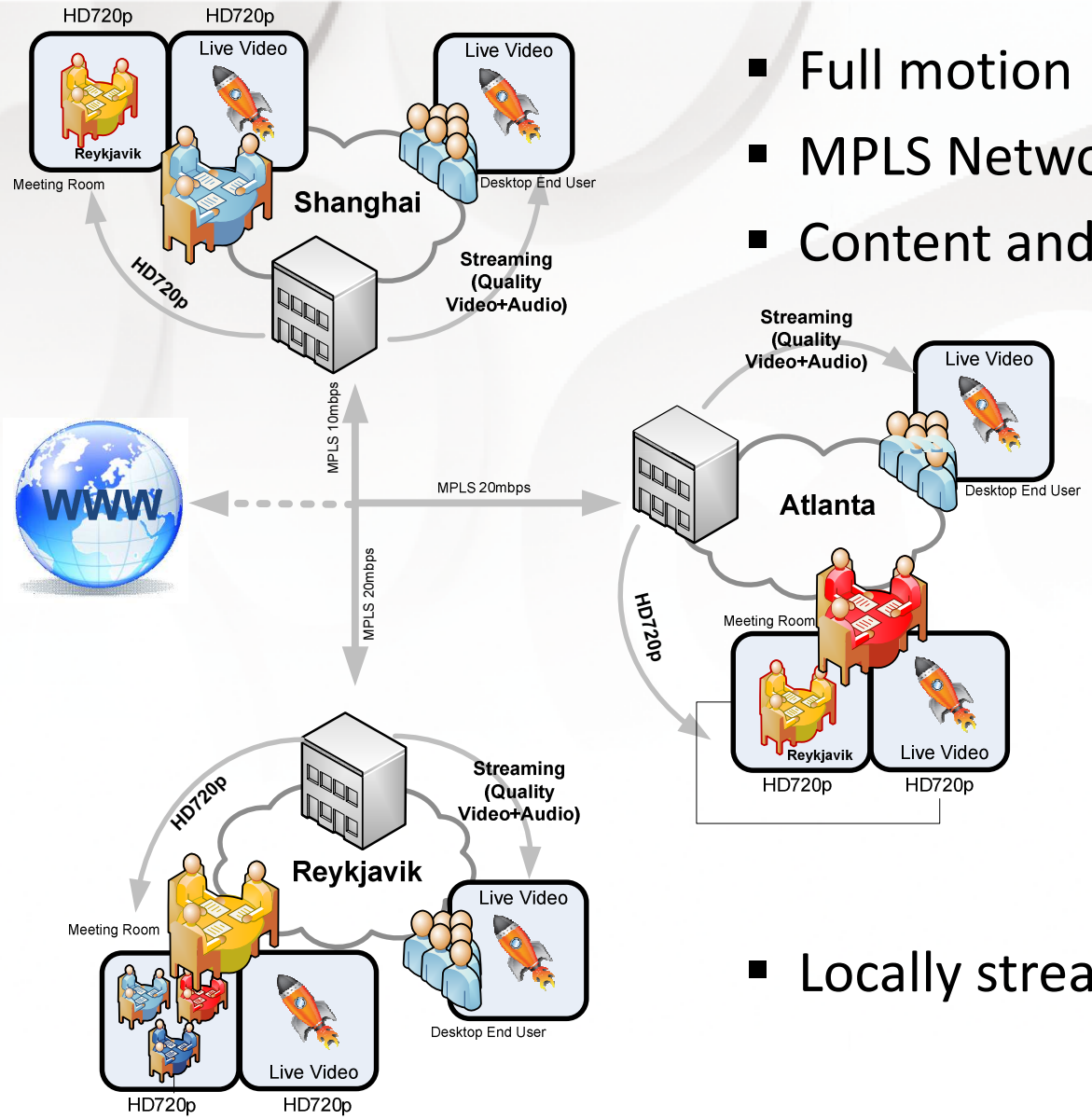
2 or 3 Weeks

Global Sprint Review



Global Sprint Review

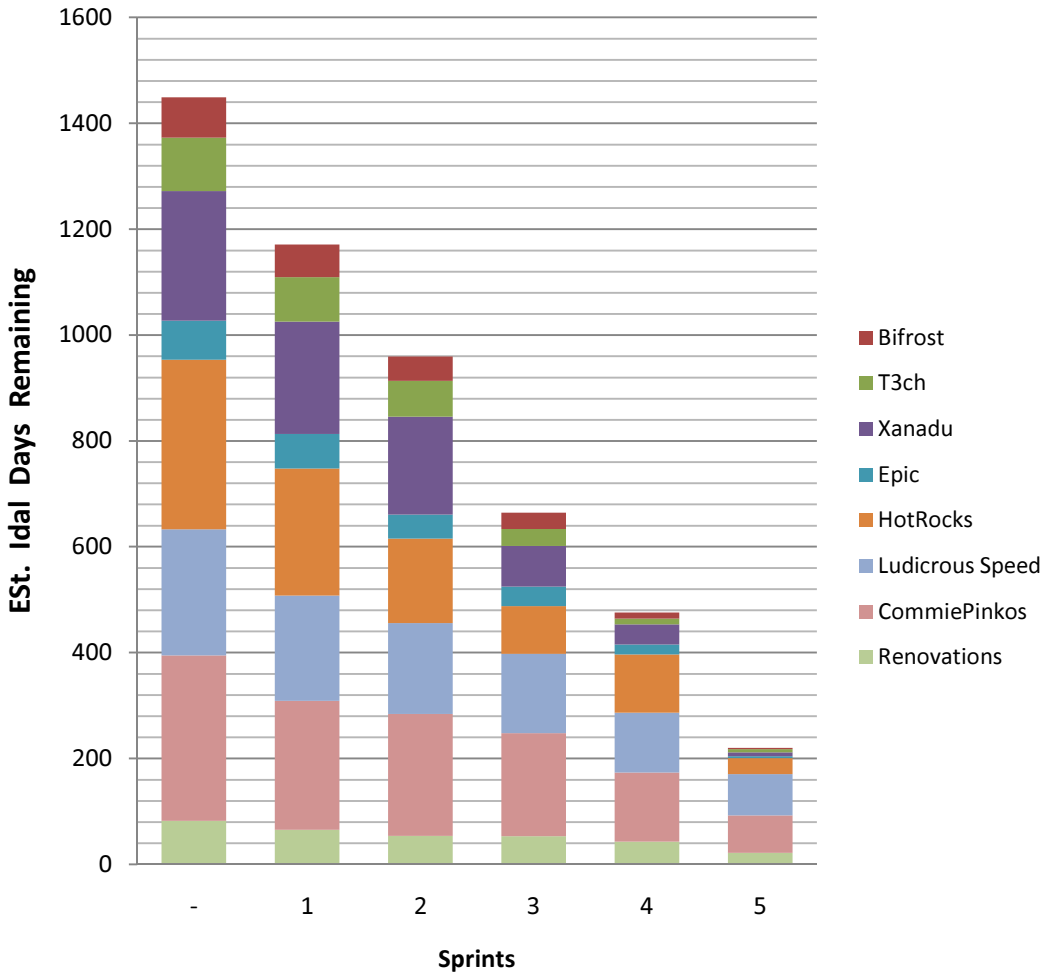
Global Demo via HD Video Conference

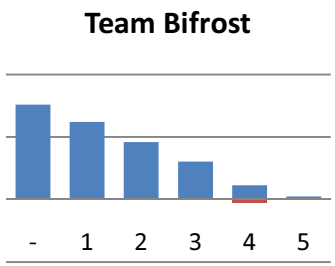


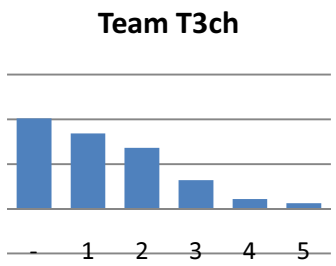
- Full motion 720p / 30 fps
- MPLS Network Infrastructure
- Content and presenter

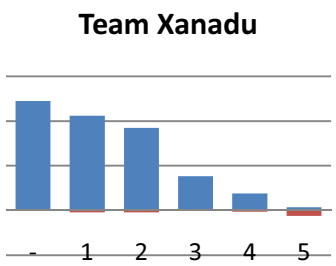
- Locally streaming in all offices.

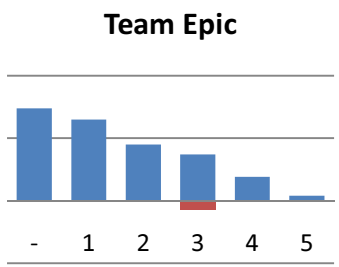
Release burn down

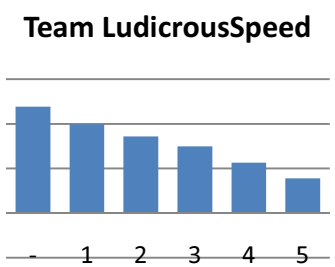


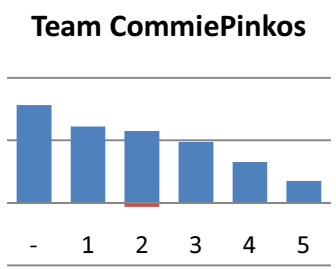


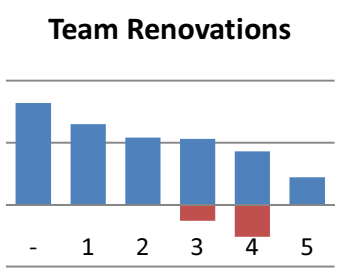


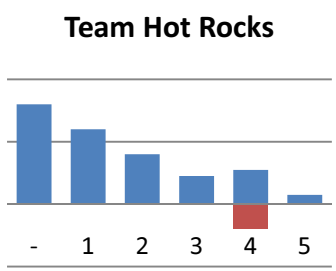






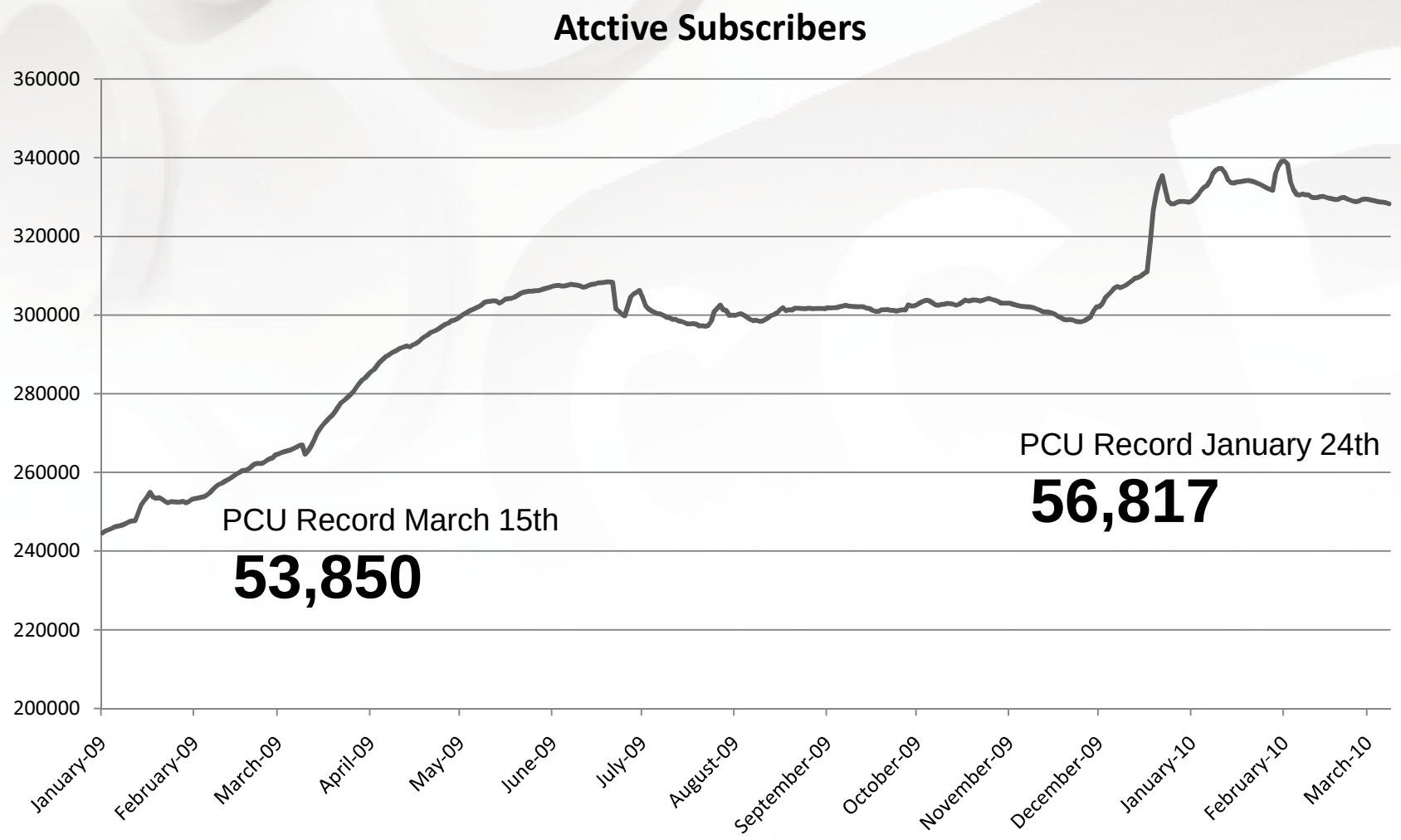






Road to success

- Empowered Teams
- Self managing and self organizing
- Release Planning by the teams
- Shorter more frequent releases
- Tools that scale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360000
340000
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PCU Record March 15th
53,850
PCU Record January 24th
56,817
January-09
February-09
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July-09
August-09
September-09
October-09
November-09
December-09
January-10
February-10
March-10

2009 Game of the year awards

FOCUS

The Scrum Values

COMMITMENT

OPENNESS

FOCUS

RESPECT

COURAGE

Continuous Improvement

改善

Applying the Keizen mindset of continuous improvement by reflection and adaptation

At all level of the organization

- Team retrospectives, Scrum of Scrums, Scrum Master Retrospectives, Product Owner Retrospectives, Release Retrospectives Agile Transitioning Group.

Where Agile becomes Fragile

- Maintaining Architectural Integrity
  - Agile methods promote emergent architecture.
  - What happens when architecture emerges from a dozen teams.
  - The role of the Technical Director / Architect.
  - Peer reviews, Teams cross reviews.

Where Agile becomes Fragile

- Art and asset creation
  - Getting art, assets, levels or content “Done” in a Scrum Sprint has varied results.
  - Throw outsourcing in the mix.
  - Lean Production shares a lot of values and principles with Agile methods.
  - Lean Production methods and Scrum can coexist.

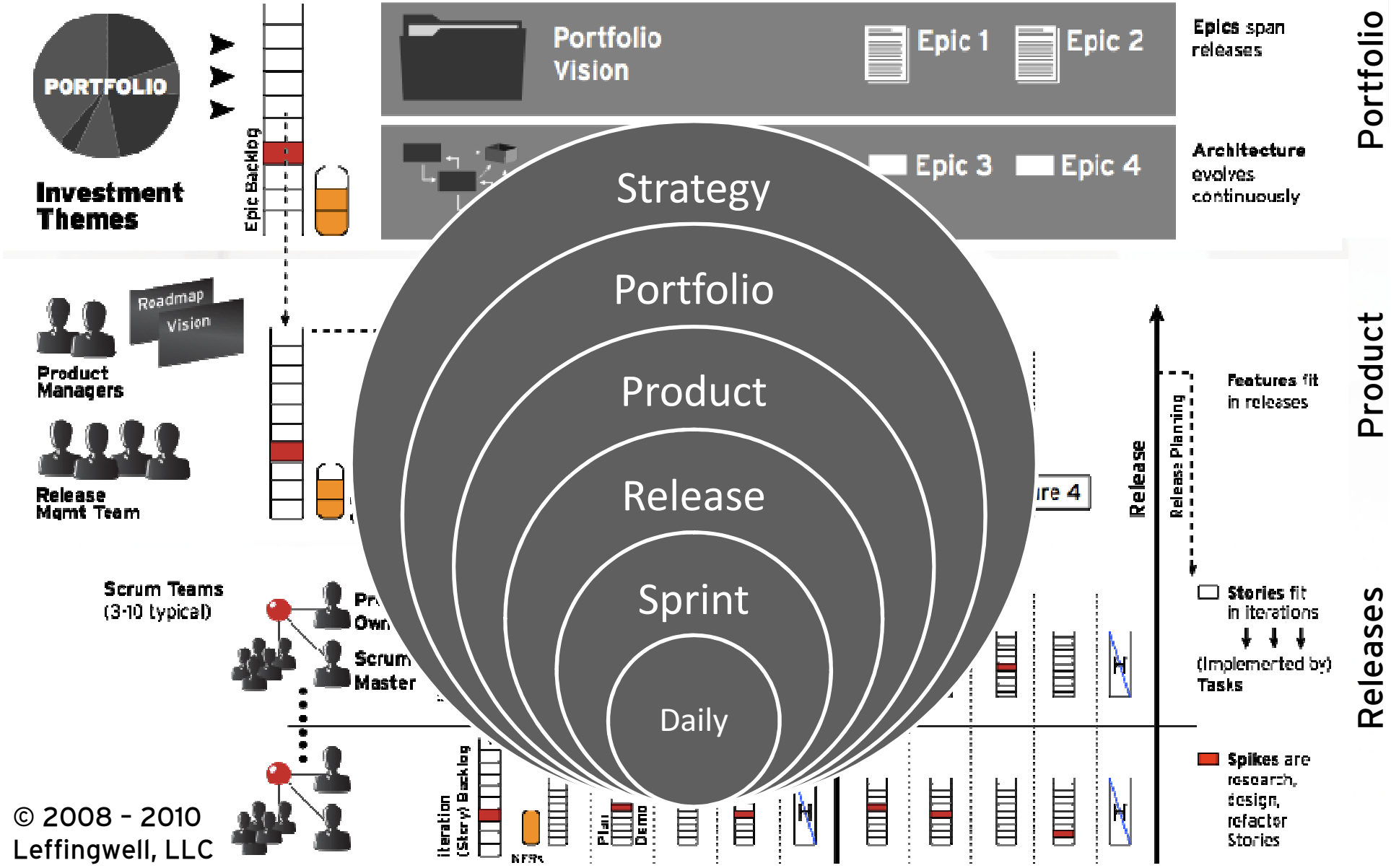
Where Agile becomes Fragile

- Game Design
  - With multiple large intertwined game systems it is very unlikely to arrive at a good design by piecemealing it together small bits at a time.
  - Game design is in essence iteration, we do it to explore multiple options ahead of implementation.
  - We've implemented a framework that draws a lot of values and practices from lean thinking and lean manufacturing. The design process focuses on early iteration, mass participation, ownership of the design among the people who will implement it.
  - Coming to a GDC near you.

Where Agile becomes Fragile

- Maintaining Legacy code
  - Agile methods promote test driven development.
  - Legacy code without test harnesses can severely affect velocity
  - Continuous Integration is a must.
  - Try to get as many test harnesses in the code and build processes as possible.

Agile drives the entire Development Organization



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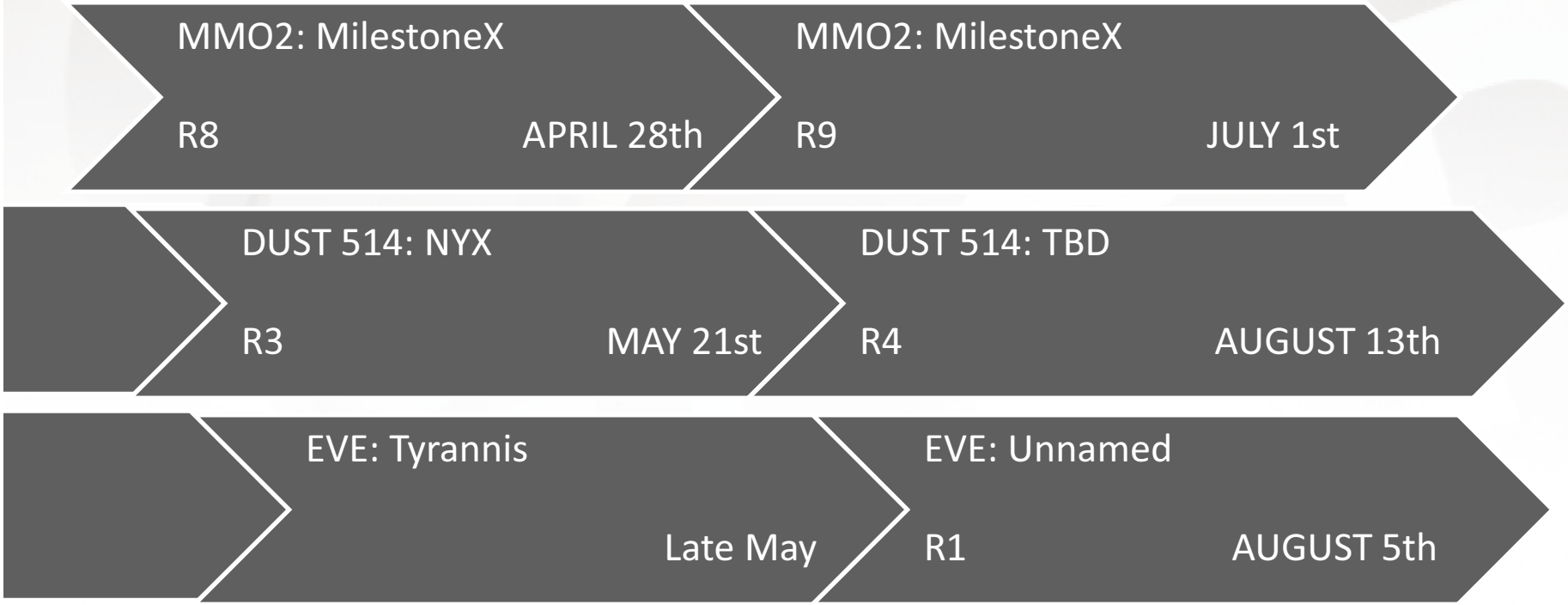
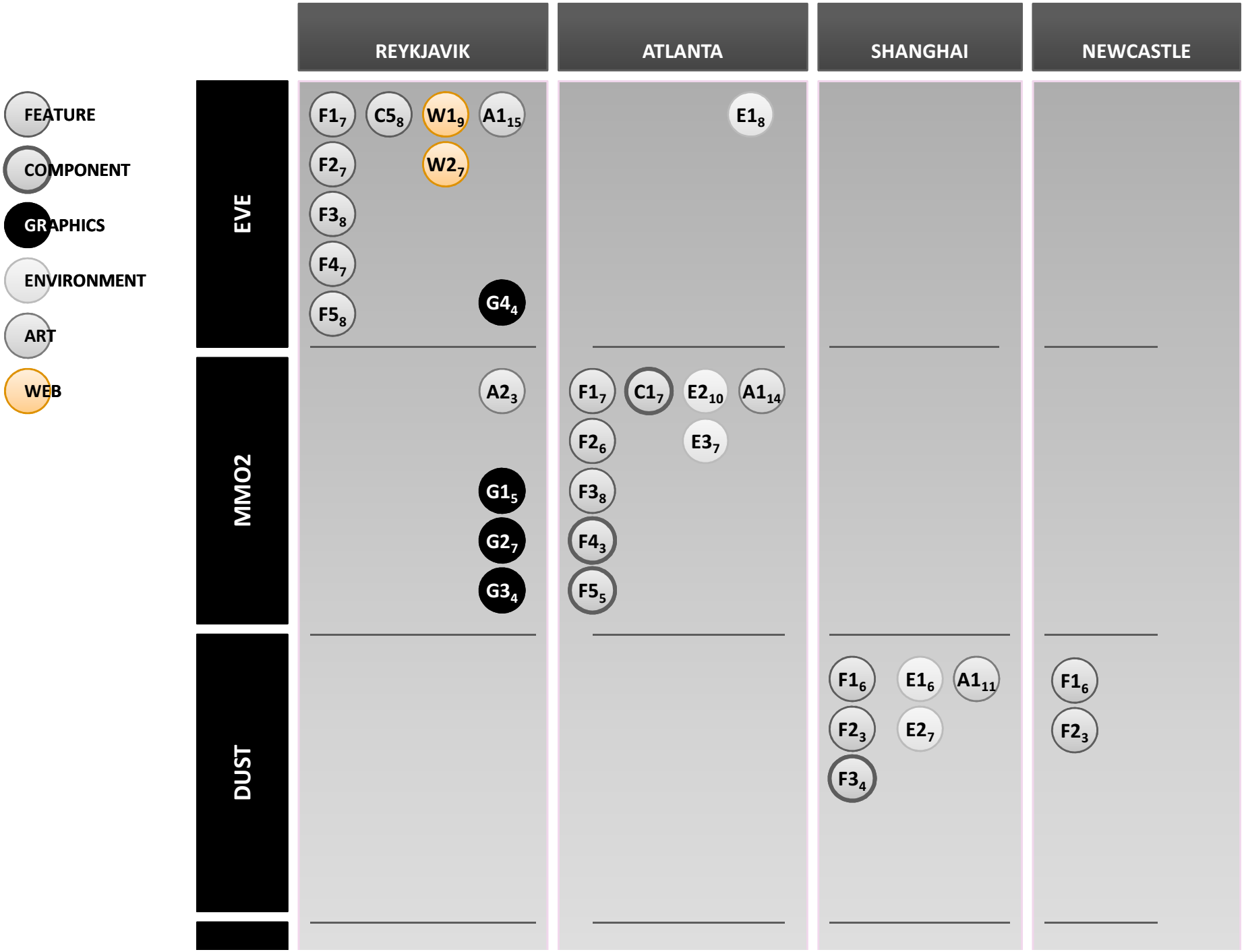
The CCP Release Train




FEATURE
COMPONENT
GRAPHICS
ENVIRONMENT
ART
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REYKJAVIK
ATLANTA
SHANGHAI
NEWCASTLE
EVE
MMO2
DUST
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C5 8
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A1 15
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F4 7
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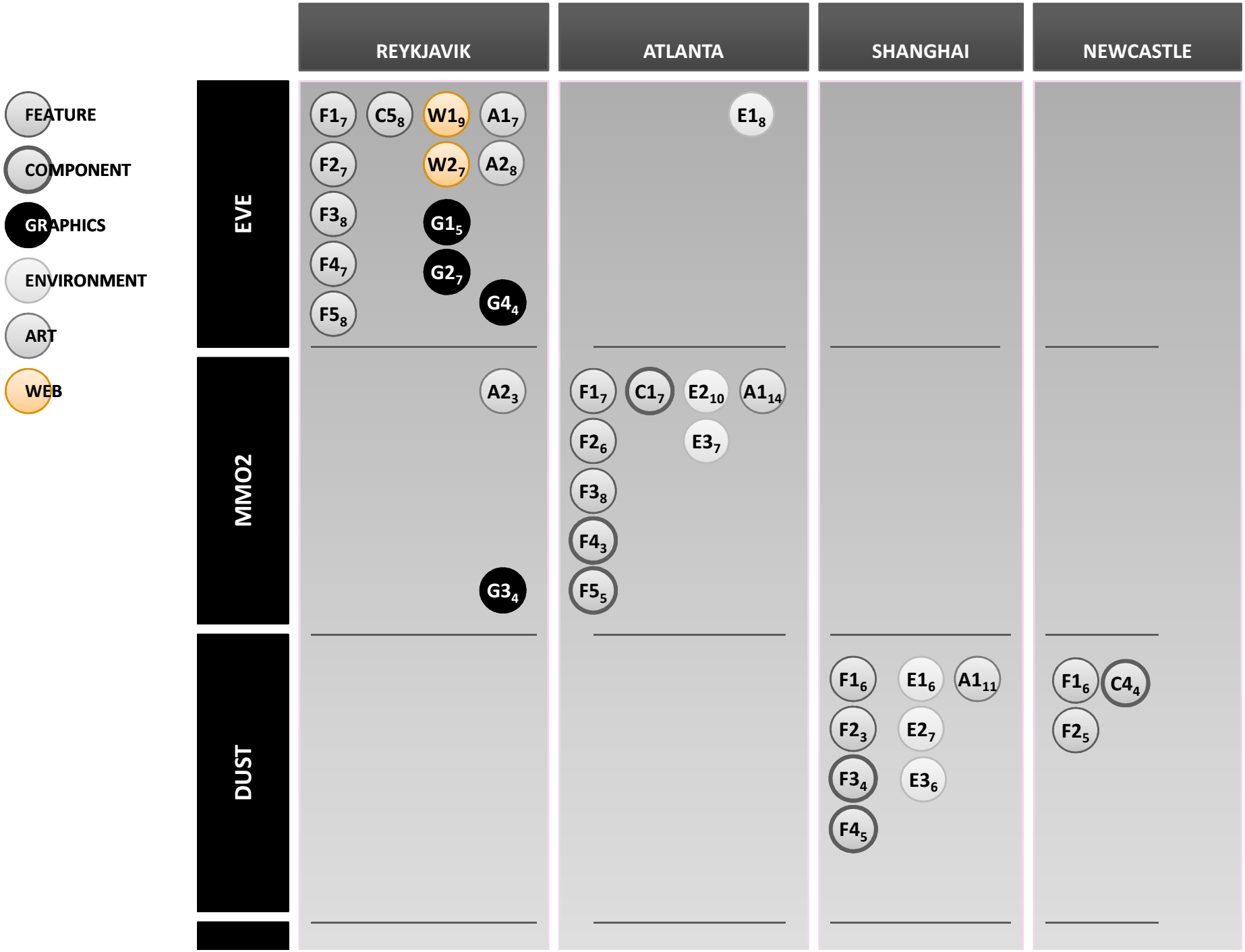
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F3 4
E3 6
F4 5
F1 6
C4 4
F2 5

Teams

WAR ON THE IMPOSSIBLE
CCP
UNITED WE ARE STRONG

Let’s talk about it...

<Cue: take questions from the audience>

Contact

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