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GDC 10 Europe

Game Developers Conference™ Europe

August 16-18, 2010

Cologne Congress Center East | Cologne, Germany

Visit **www.GDCEurope.com** for more information

Global Agile Game Development:
No Passport Required

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.

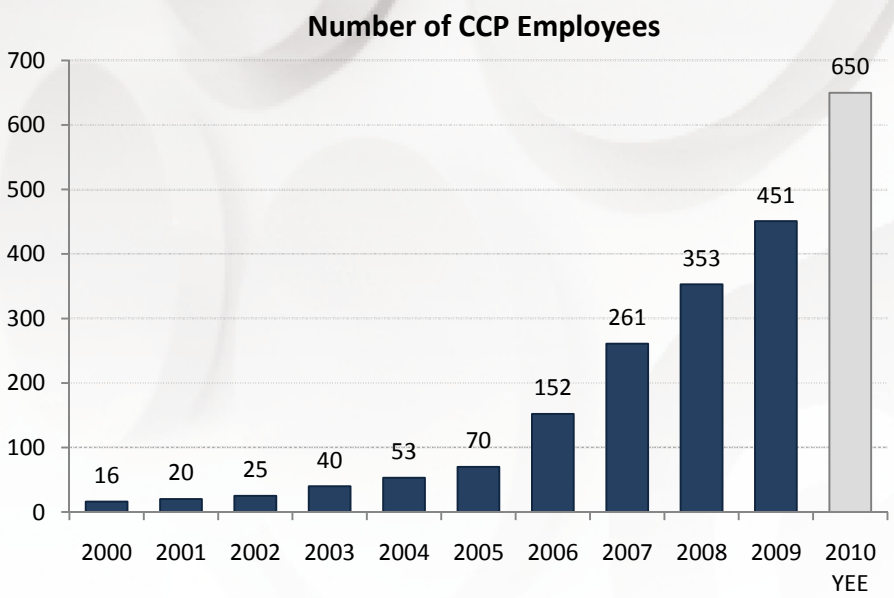
Sounds crazy?

"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 are spread between four offices in three continents
- Iceland / Reykjavík
  - Headquarters
  - ~280 Employees
- China / Shanghai
  - ~100Employees
- USA / Atlanta
  - ~175 Employees
- UK / Newcastle
  - ~17 Employees
- UK / London
  - Location of servers

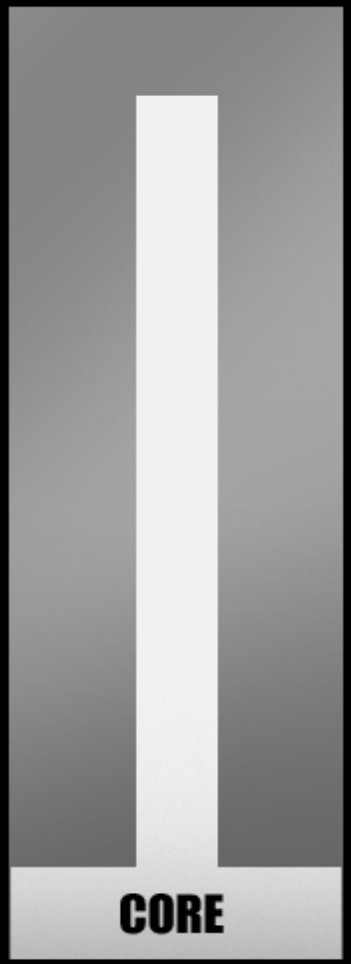
- CCP employees represent over 20 nationalities
- The number of languages spoken by employees exceed 30
- Melding the best of art, science, operations and business talent

EVE®
ONLINE

DUST
514™

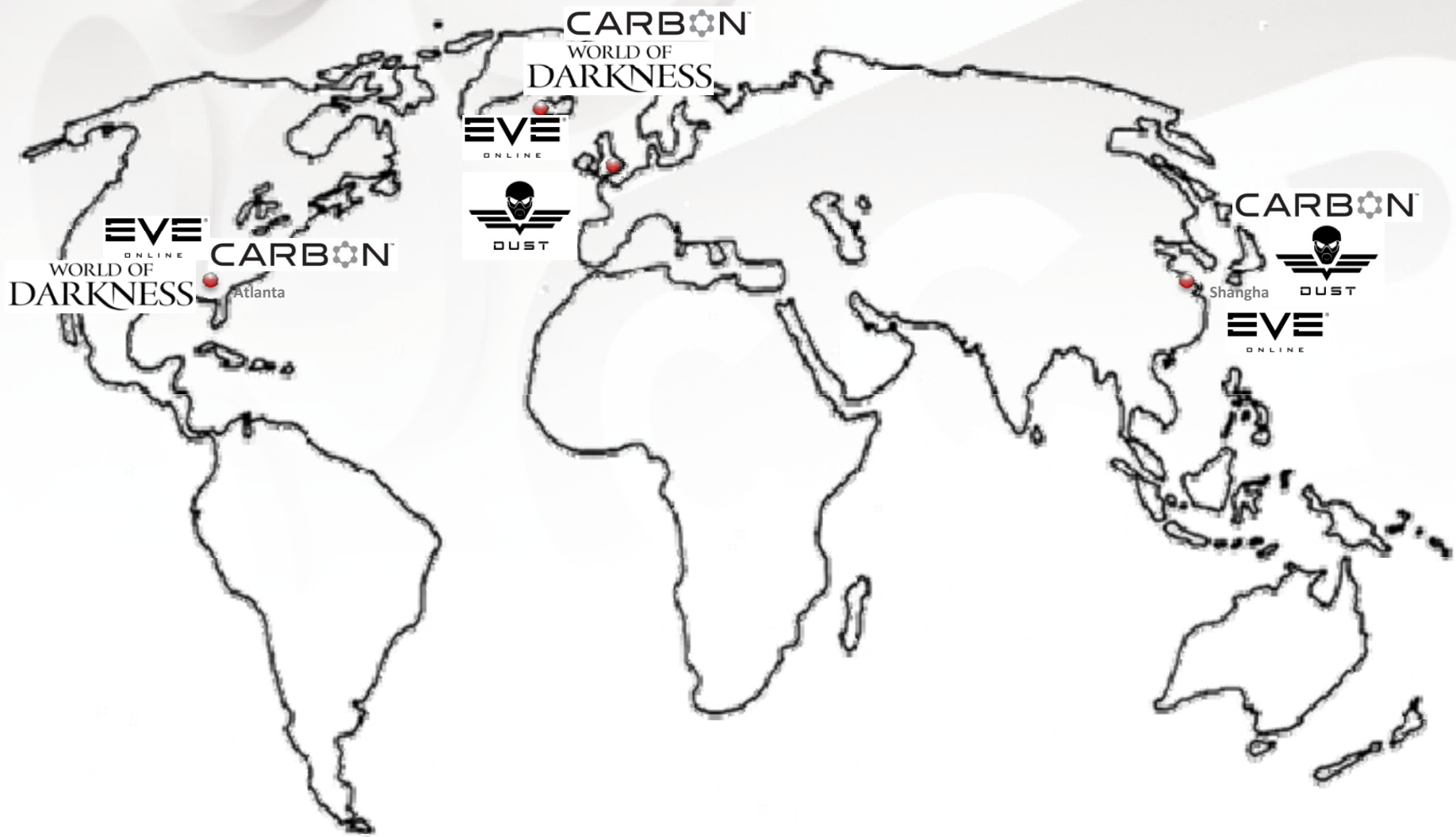
WORLD OF
DARKNESS

EVE
ONLINE


CORE

EVE ONLINE
WORLD OF DARKNESS
DUST 514
PRODUCTION
ASSET PIPELINES
TOOLS
CARBON™
METRICS
SUPPORT
HOSTING

Global Development

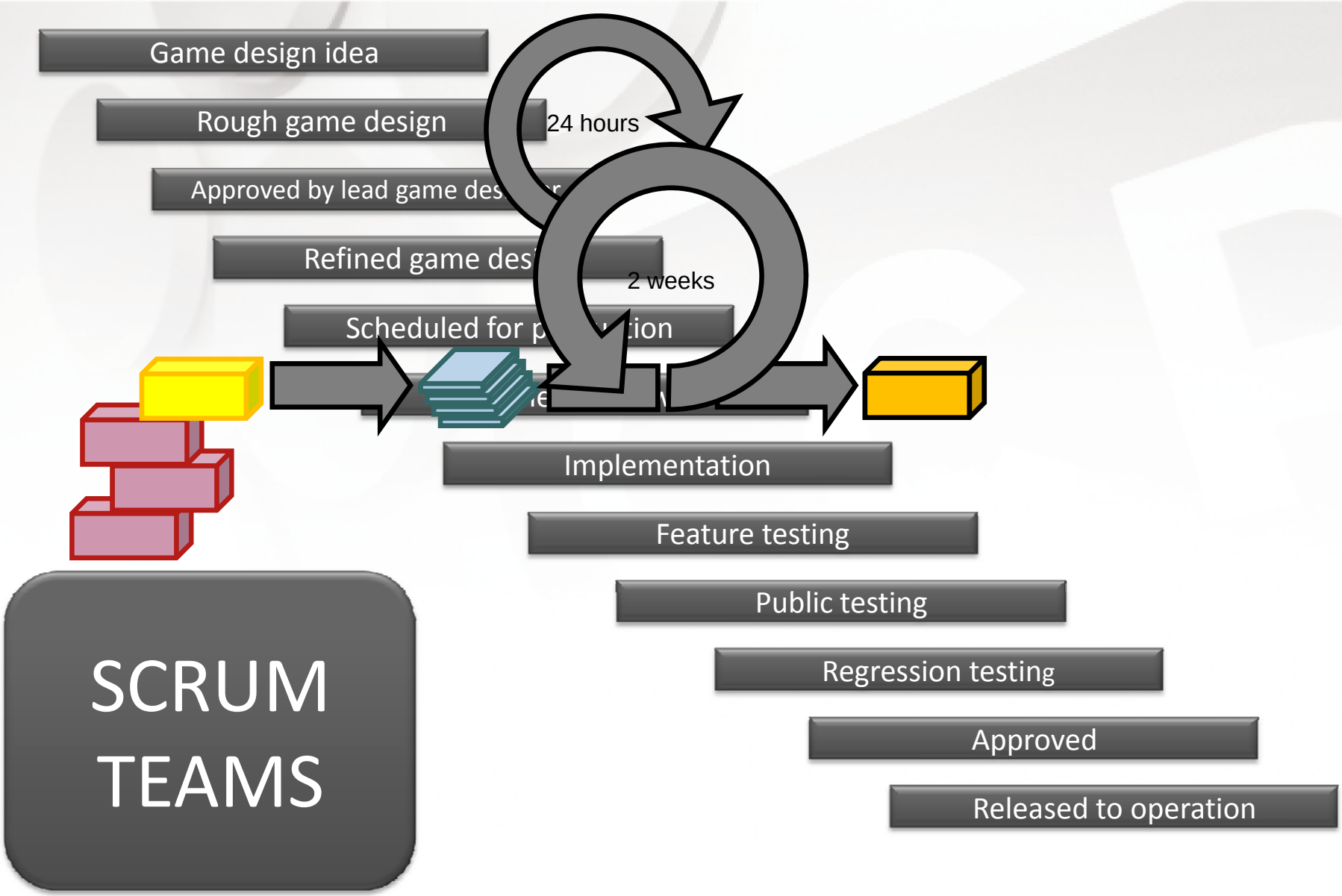


EVE Online

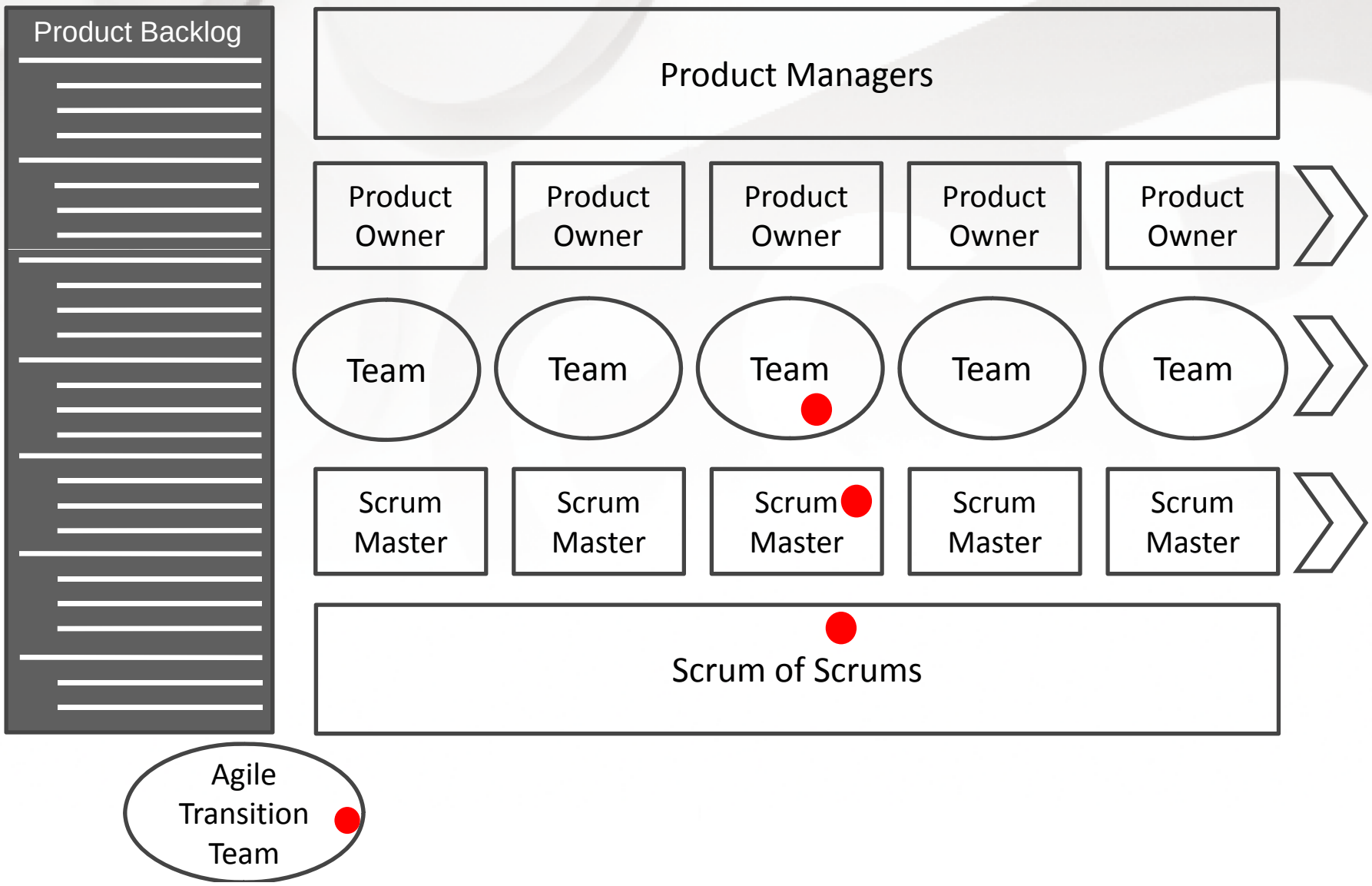
EVE Online Expansions

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

Transition EVE to Agile

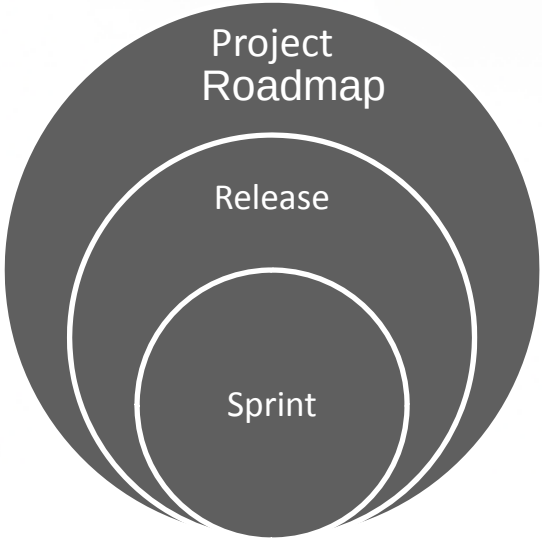


Large-scale organization

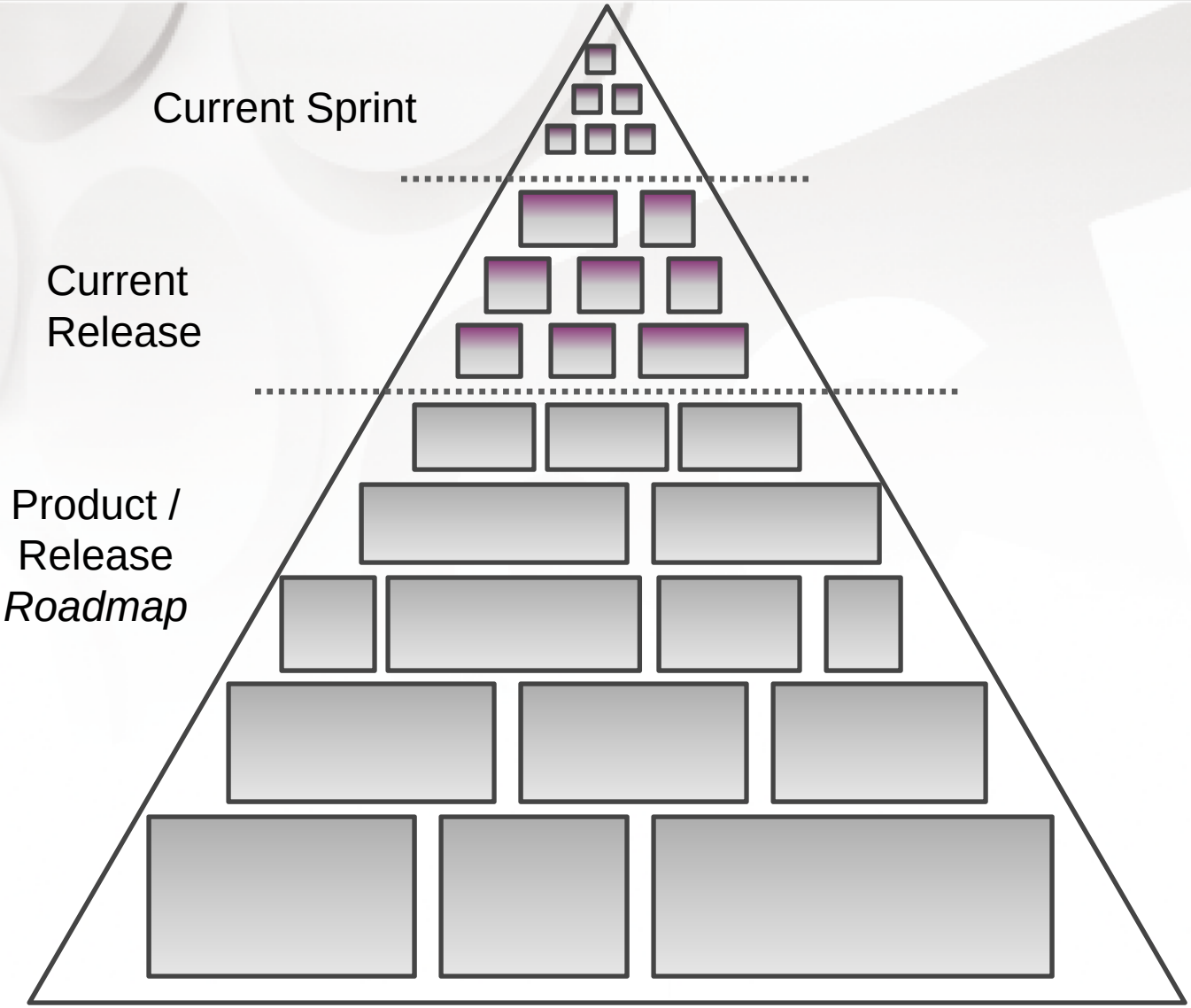


Shorter More Frequent Releases

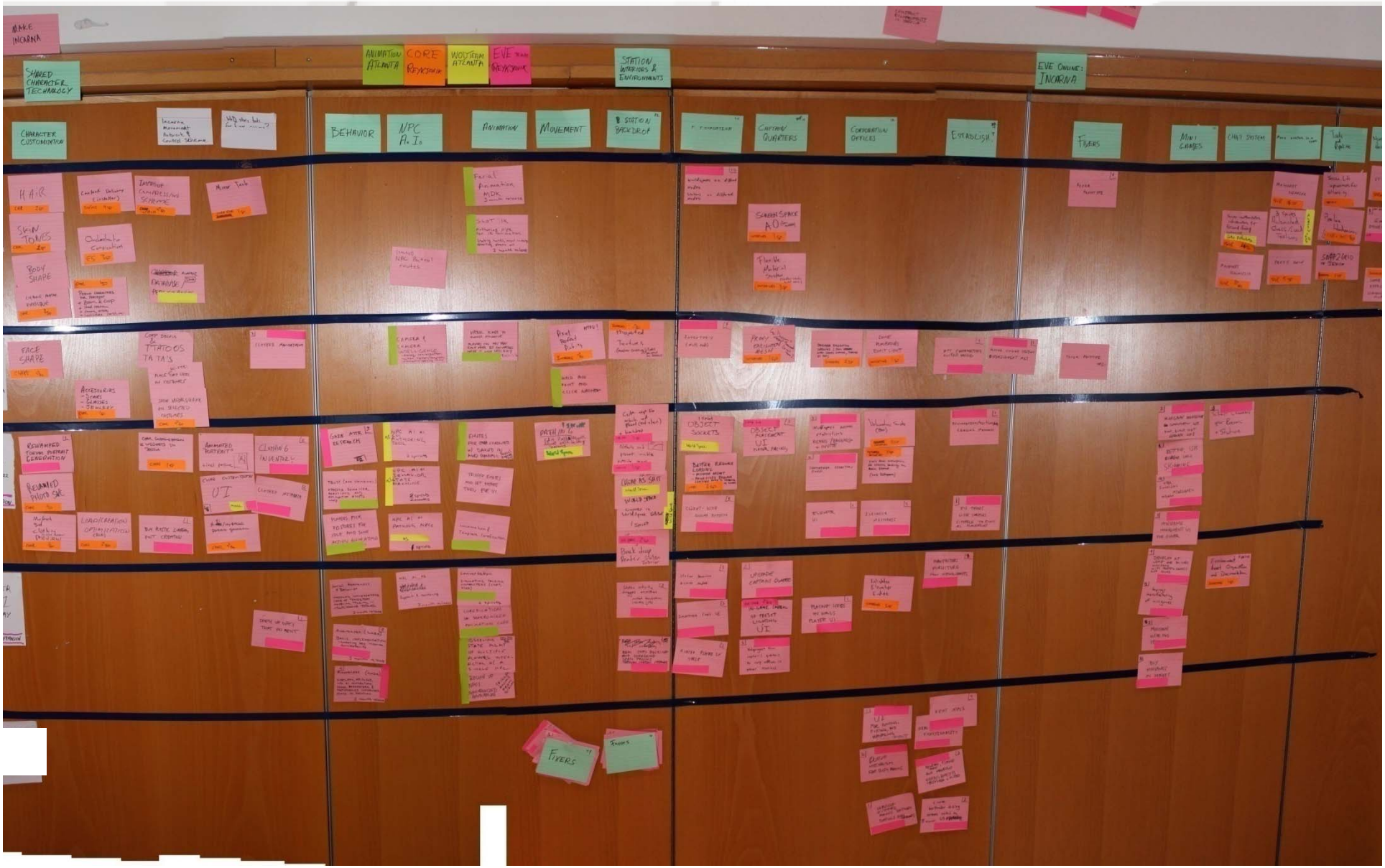
- 4 – 5 Sprints plus a hardening sprint
  - Hardening sprints are for polish
  - No new feature development
- Focus around clear release goals
- Teams define, build, and verify features or components
- Output stable polished vertical slice of the product



Shorter More Frequent Releases



Product Roadmaps



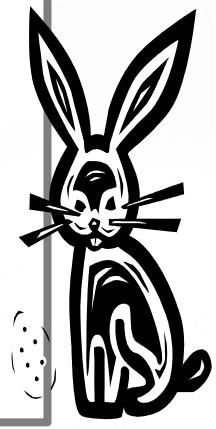
Release Plan

Release 3
NYX
1. Mar– 21. May

Release 4
TBD
31. May – 13. Aug

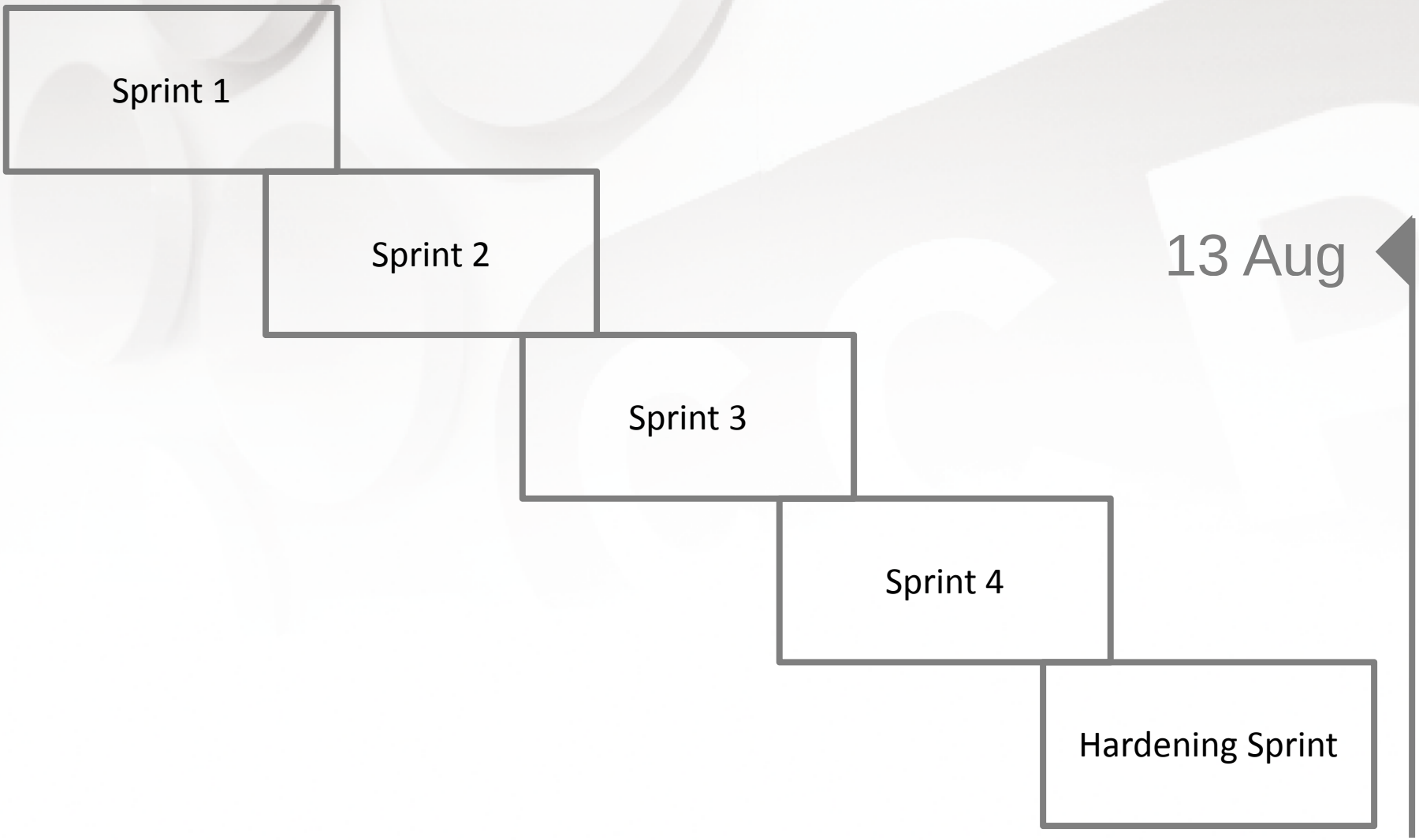
Release 5
TBD
23.Aug – 12. Nov

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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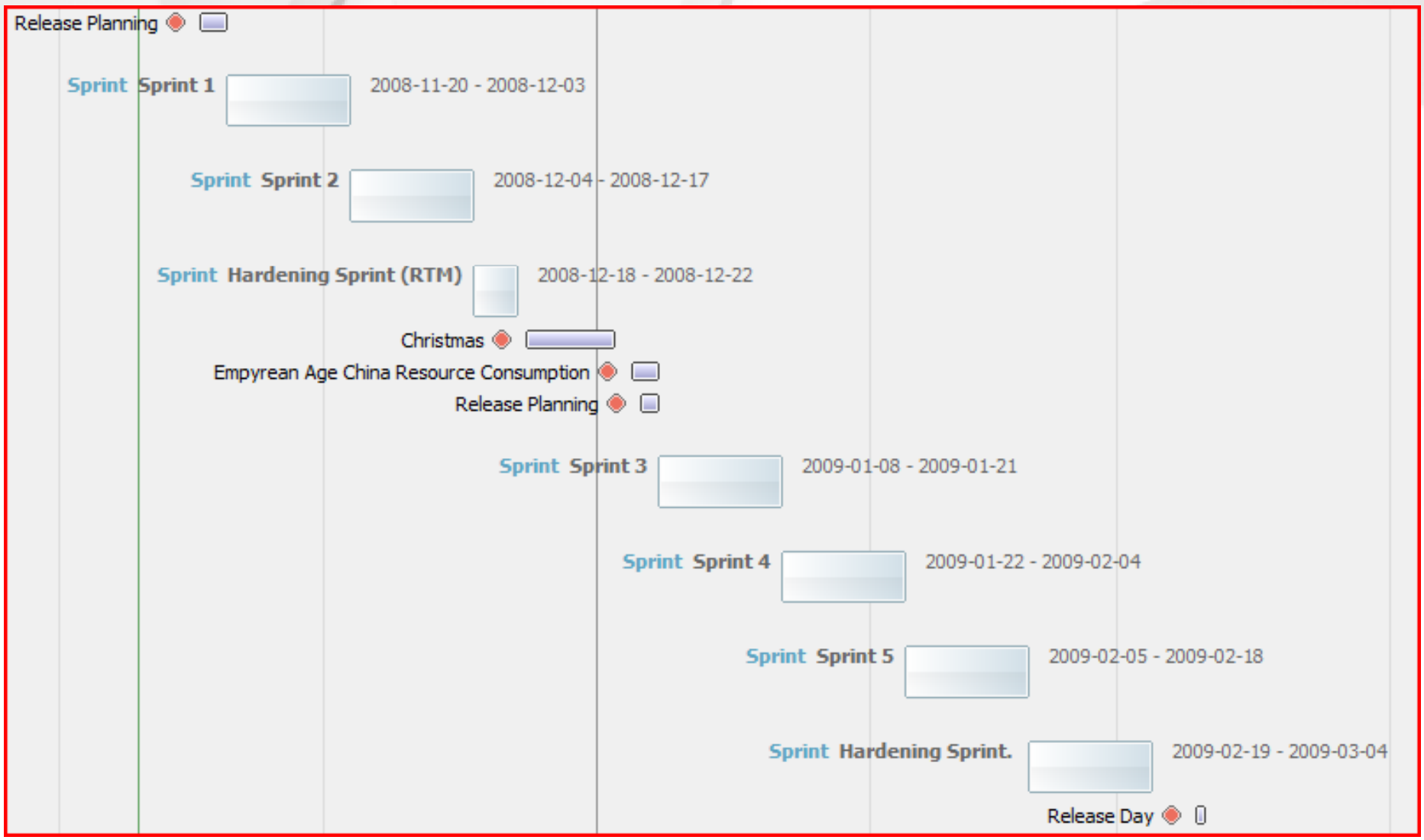
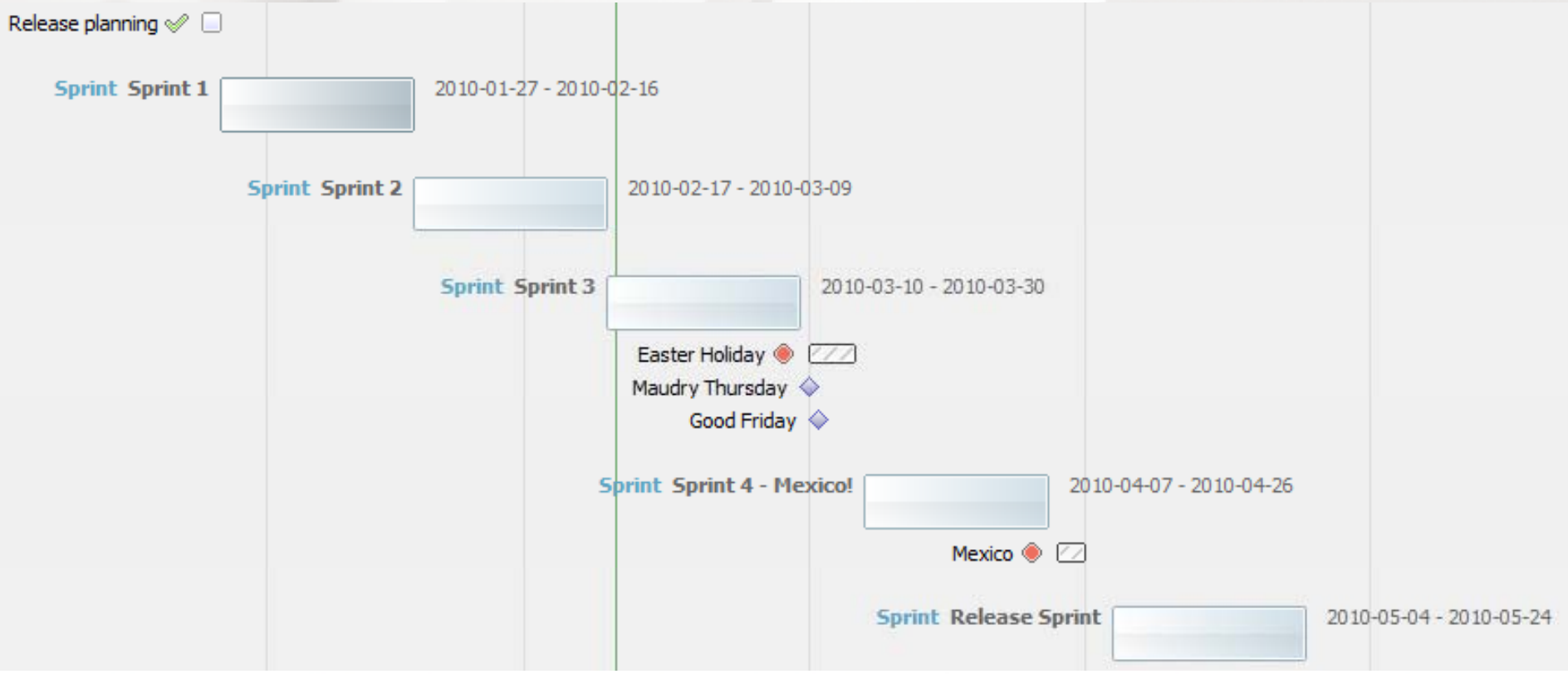


Release Plan



Features & Stories

How would you like to view the items?

Create and structure items in a hierarchy. Let other people participate by delegating parts of product backlog.

Items in a hierarchy | Items on a wall | Items prioritised

Insert backlog item | Delete | Undo | Redo | Show or Hide items | More.. | Find | Print

Item name

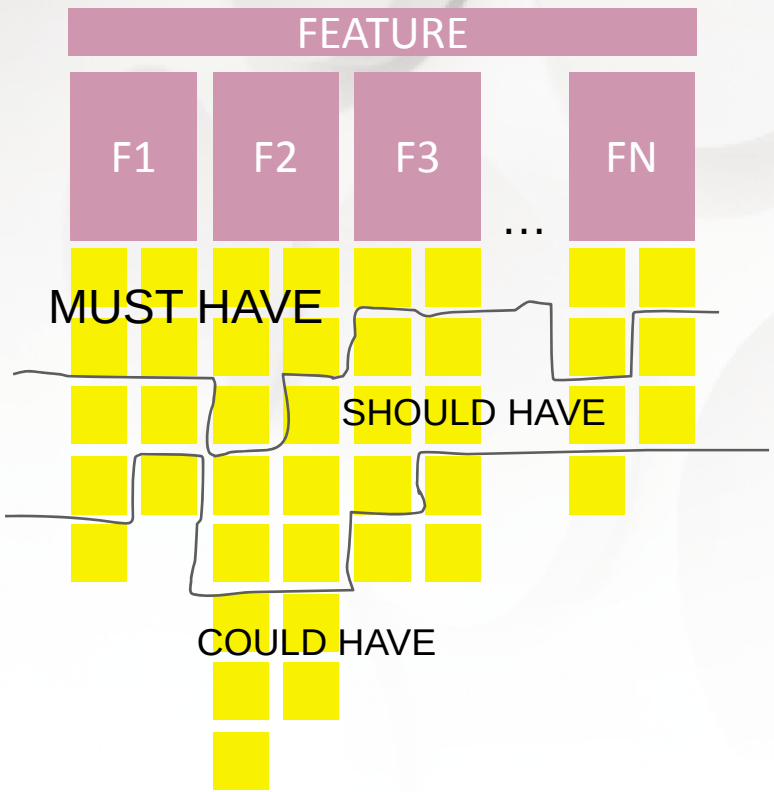
Major Feature (Epic)

Sub Feature

Stories

- EVE Online: Tyrannis
  - Planetary Interaction
    - Internal Trade
      - As an industrialist, I make a trade agreement with other industrialists on the planet, so that I can profit from specialization
      - As an industrialist, I can execute a sale based on a trade agreement, so that I can profit from specialization
      - As an industrialist, I can cancel a trade agreement, so that I can back out if the agreement is not being honored
      - As an industrialist, skills can affect attributes on my pins, so that I can specialize as an industrialist
      - As an industrialist, I haggle with other players at trade pins, so that I'm encouraged to interact with others
      - As an industrialist, pins can affect attributes on other pins, so that I can invest myself in the planet
      - As an industrialist, pins can affect attributes on my pins winthin a certain radius, so that I can invest myself in the planet
    - Pins
      - As an industrialist, building pins and links have an associated power cost, so that I cannot spam pins and links on planets
      - As an industrialist, my infrastructure pins function according to spec, such that I can run my operation on the planet
      - As an industrialist, I can see the location and basic information of my pins on the planet, so that I can easily get an overview of them
      - As an industrialist, I can build a particular pin within my deployment zone on a planet, so that I can expand my colony
      - As an industrialist, I can see detailed information about one of my pins, so that I can manage it
      - As an industrialist, I have a polished detailed information view for pins, so that I can easily manage it
    - Command Pins
      - As an industrialist, I can deploy a command pin on a planet from my cargo such that I can build a colony
      - As a industrialist, I can click a "deploy command pin" button in the planet view, so that I can deploy command pins without using a right-click menu
      - As an industrialist, I can export commodities from the planet via my command pin, so that I can profit from my operation
      - As an industrialist, my command pin can store a finite amount of commodities, so I can export them off the planet at my leisure

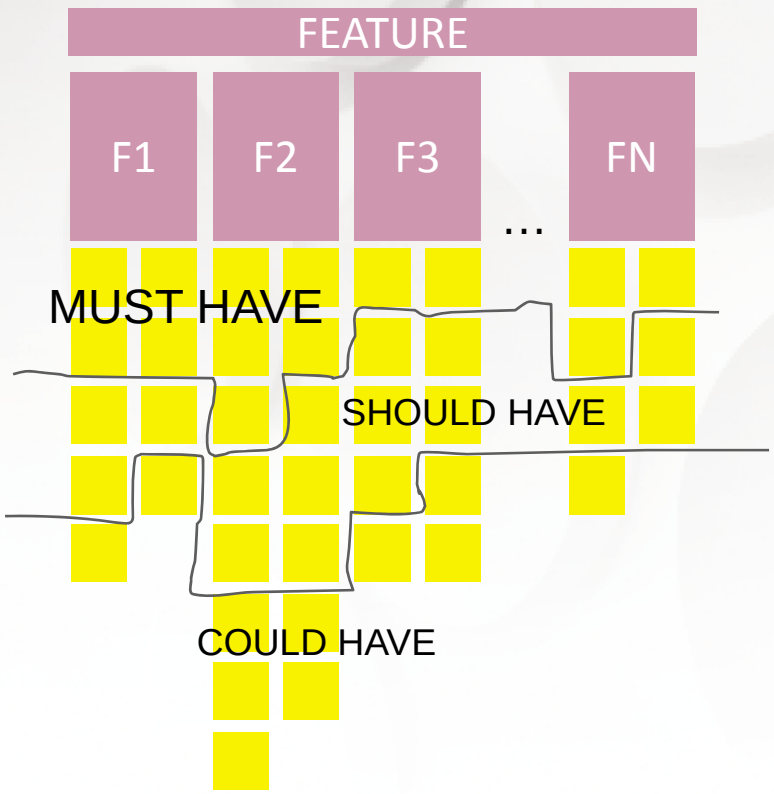
Features & Stories

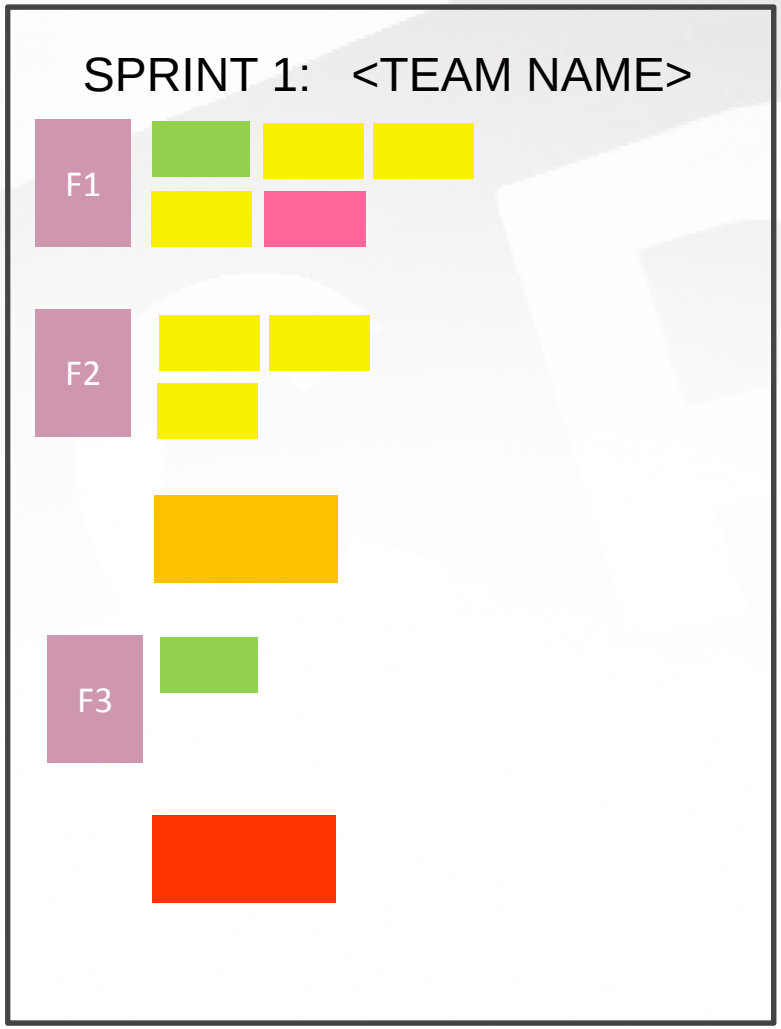


MuSCoW Analysis

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

Features & Stories





Release Planning Day

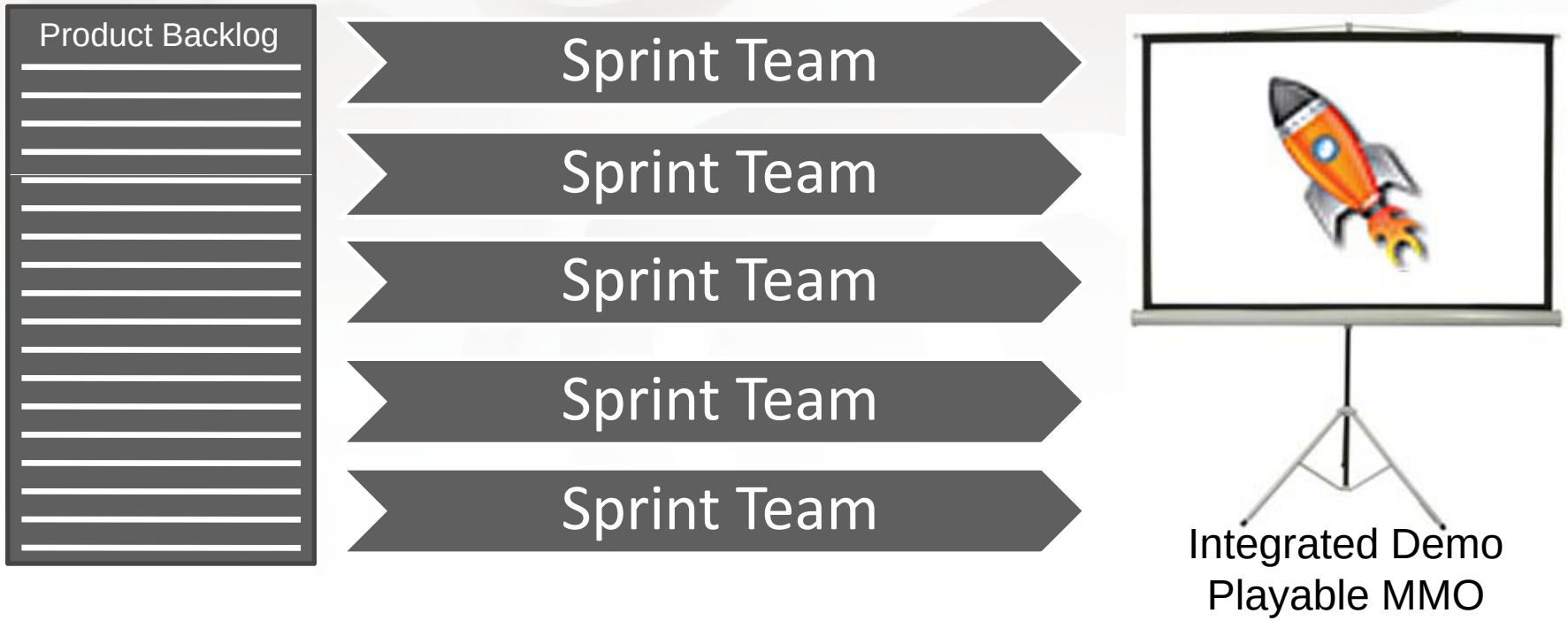
Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

Release Planning Day

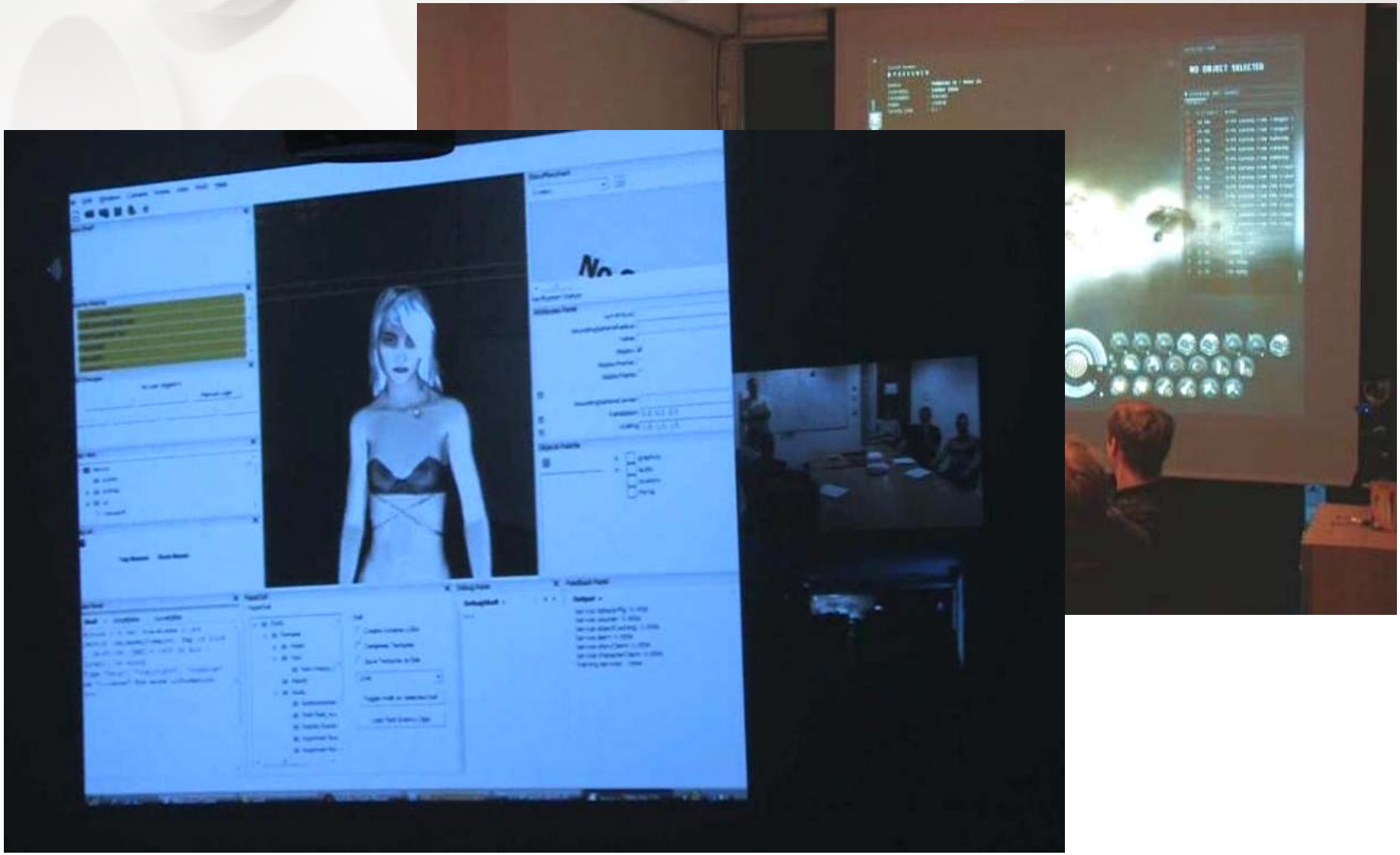
Release Planning Day

Synchronized Iteration Cadance



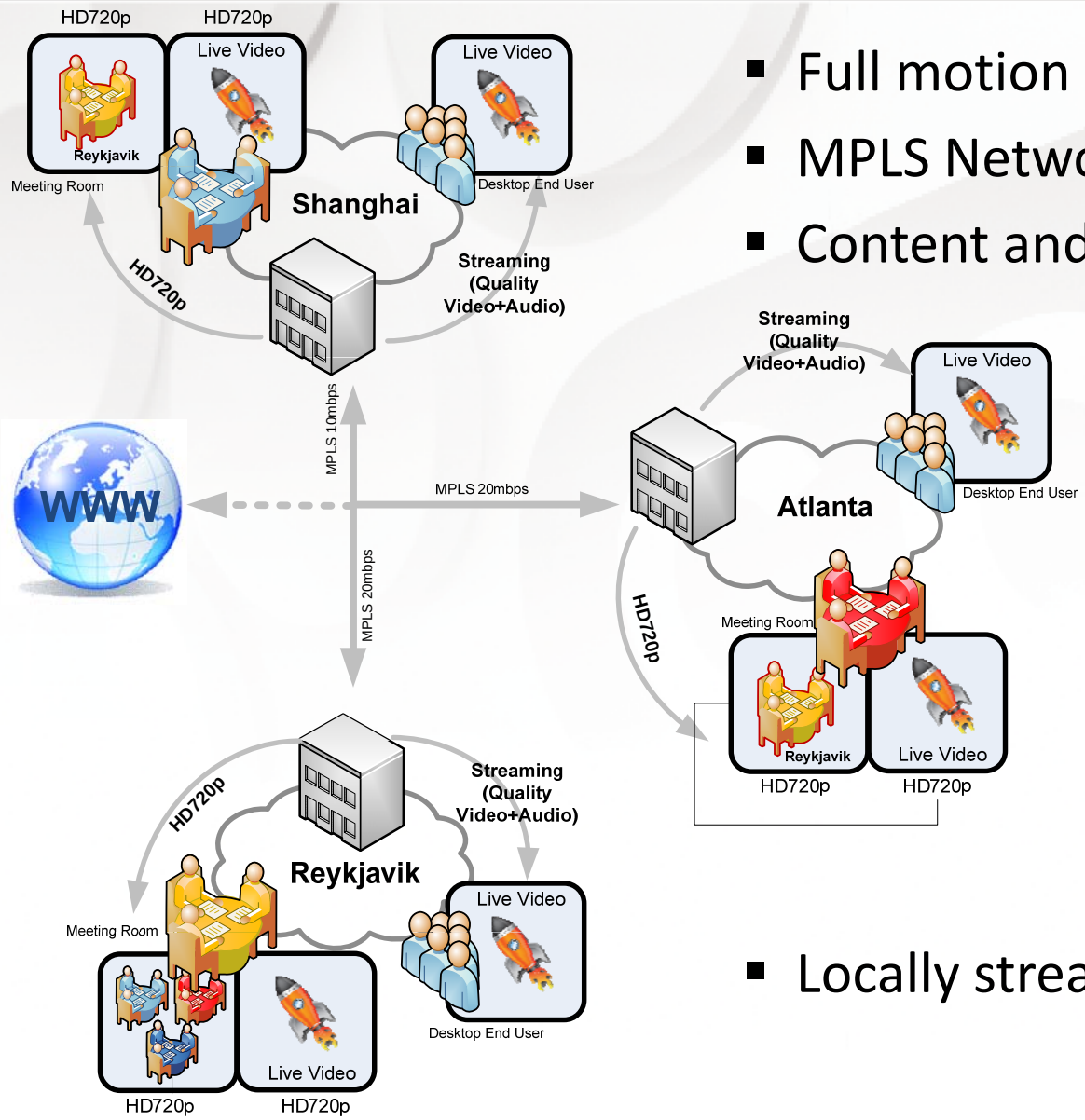
2 Weeks

Global Sprint Review



Global Sprint Review

Global Demo via HD Video Conference



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

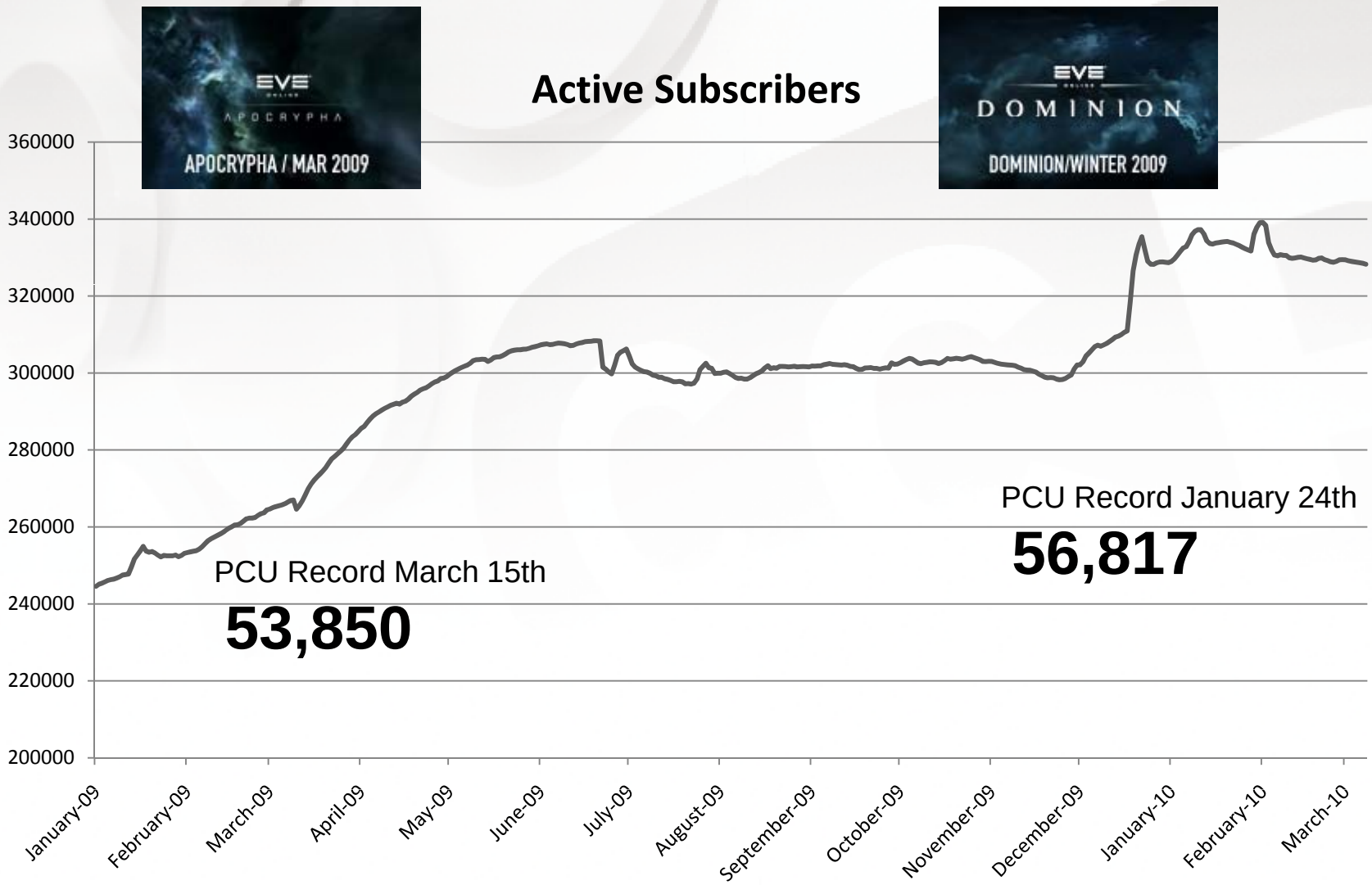
- Locally streaming in all offices.

Release Boundary

- Hardening sprints.
  - Stabilization and polishing.
  - Large scale tests.
  - Not a duping ground for sloppy work.
    eg. Bug-fixing, Tuning, Balancing.
- Release overhead
  - Creating patches & Installers
  - Uploading to CDN and verifying
  - Updating game cluster

Road to success

- Empowered Teams
- Self managing and self organizing
- Release Planning by the teams
- Shorter more frequent releases
- Tools that scale


Active Subscribers
EVE
APOCRYPHA
APOCRYPHA / MAR 2009
EVE
DOMINION
DOMINION/WINTER 2009
360000
340000
320000
300000
280000
260000
240000
220000
200000
PCU Record March 15th
53,850
PCU Record January 24th
56,817
January-09
February-09
March-09
April-09
May-09
June-09
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

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

- 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.

Cohesive Teams

- Keep the teams together
  - Build up well gelled cohesive teams
  - Avoid local optimization
  - Increases knowledge transfer

Continuous Improvement

改善

Applying the Keizen mindset of continuous improvement by reflection and adaptation

At all level of the organization

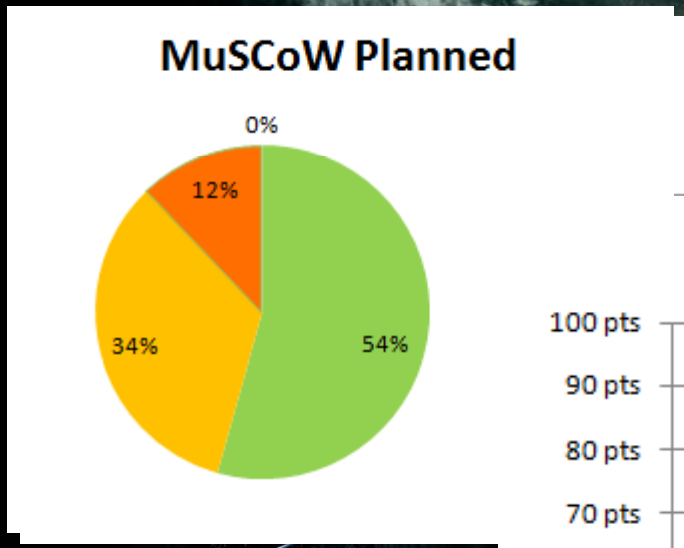
- Team retrospectives, Scrum of Scrums, Scrum Master Retrospectives, Product Owner Retrospectives, Release Retrospectives, Agile Transitioning Group.

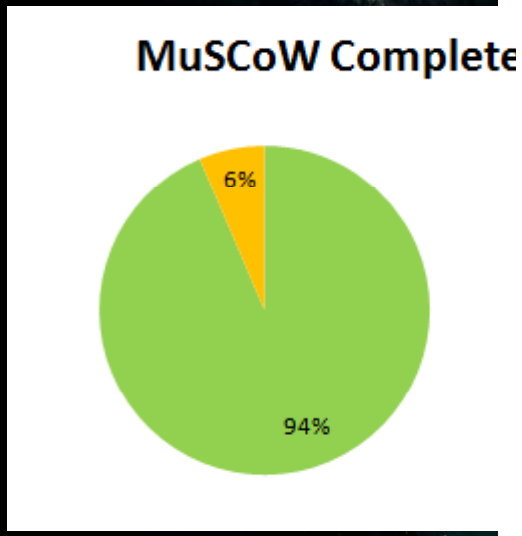
At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

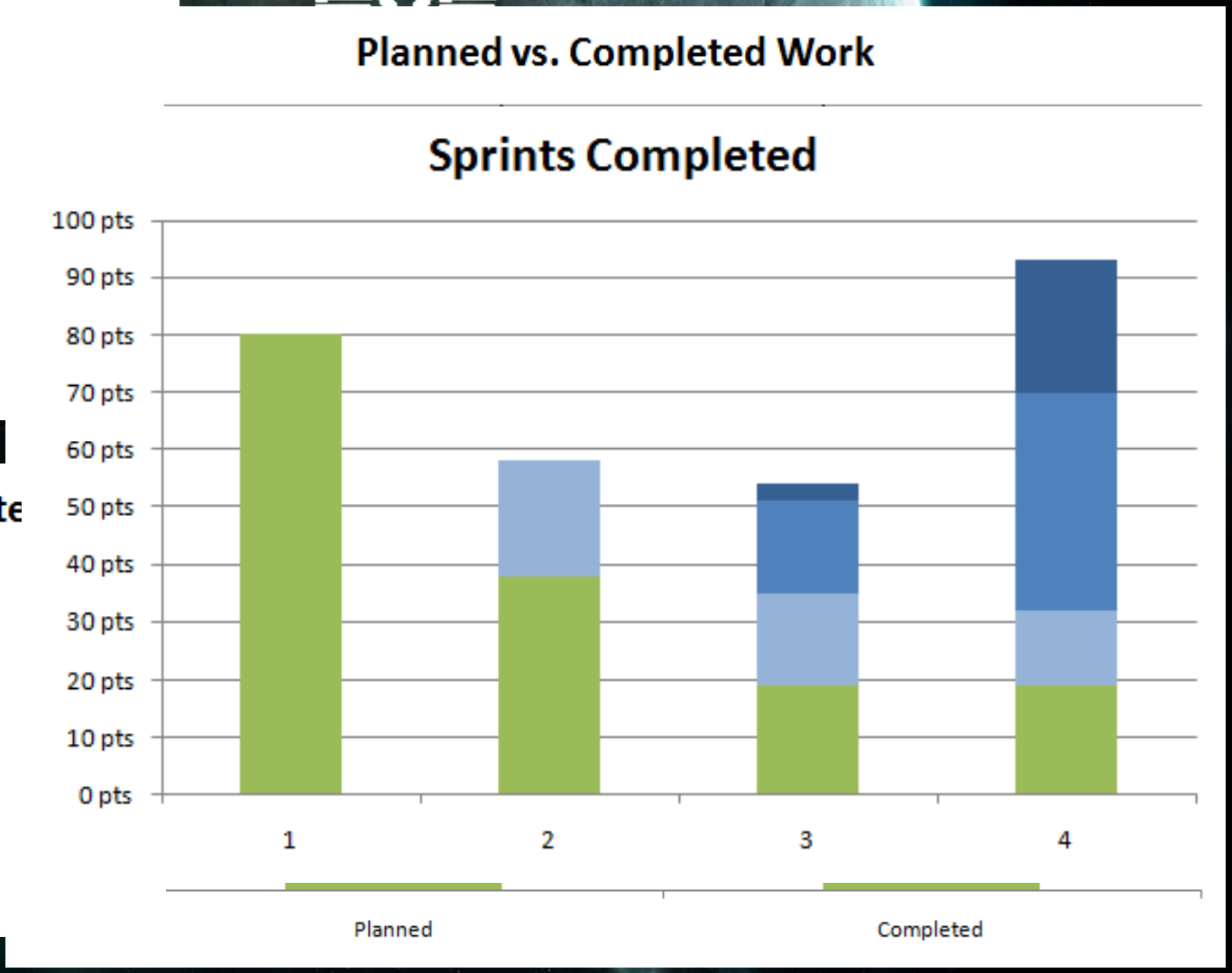
Continuous Improvement

- **Oh No! There are only Musts**
- **Usage velocity for continuous improvement**
- **Plan for iteration**

Continuous Improvement







Continuous Improvement

EVE online

TYRANNIS

european games award

Best European Online Game:

EVE Online: Tyrannis

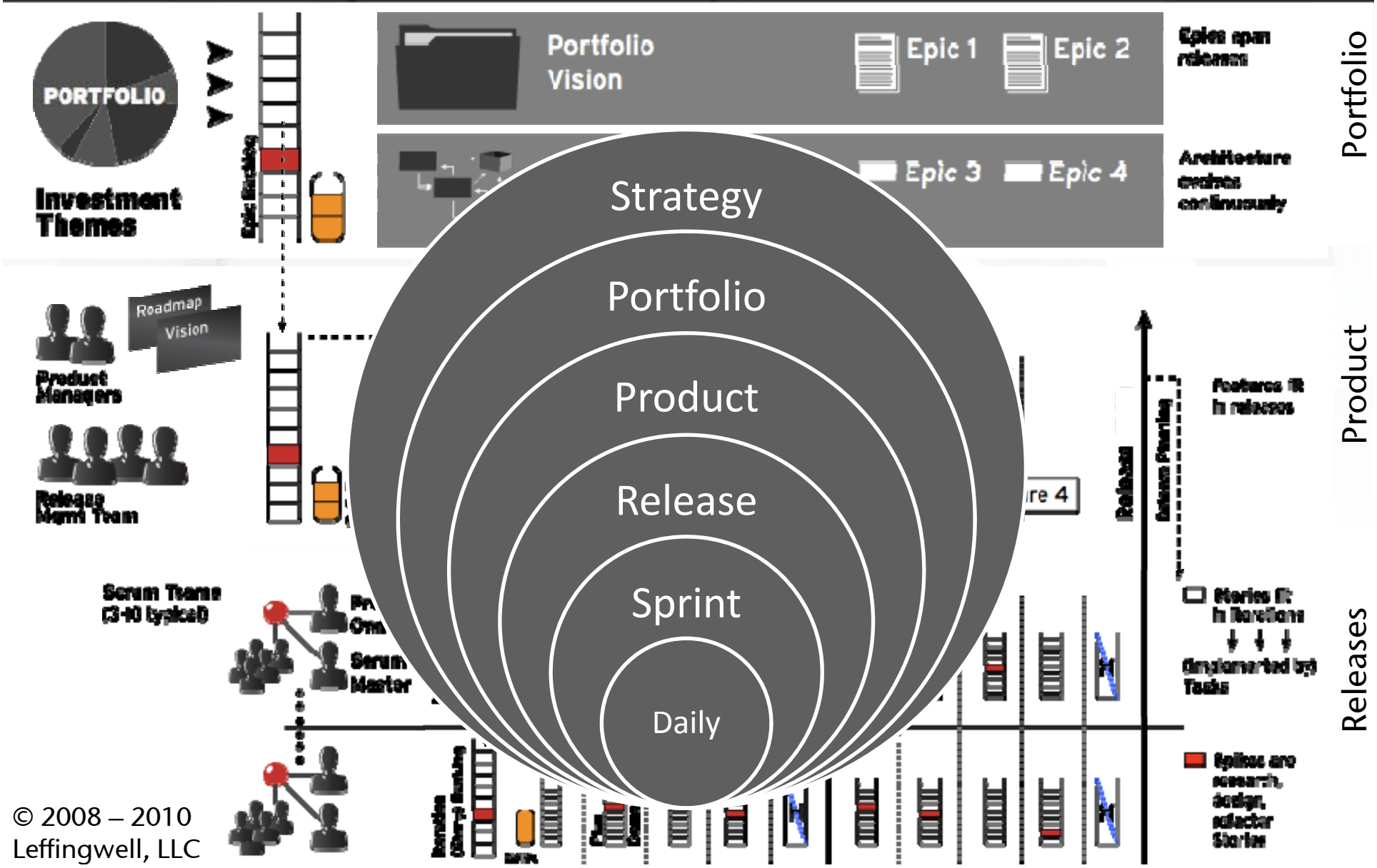
New PCU Record:

60.453

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.

Agile drives the entire Development Organization



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The CCP Release Train

DUST 514: NYX
R3 MAY 21st

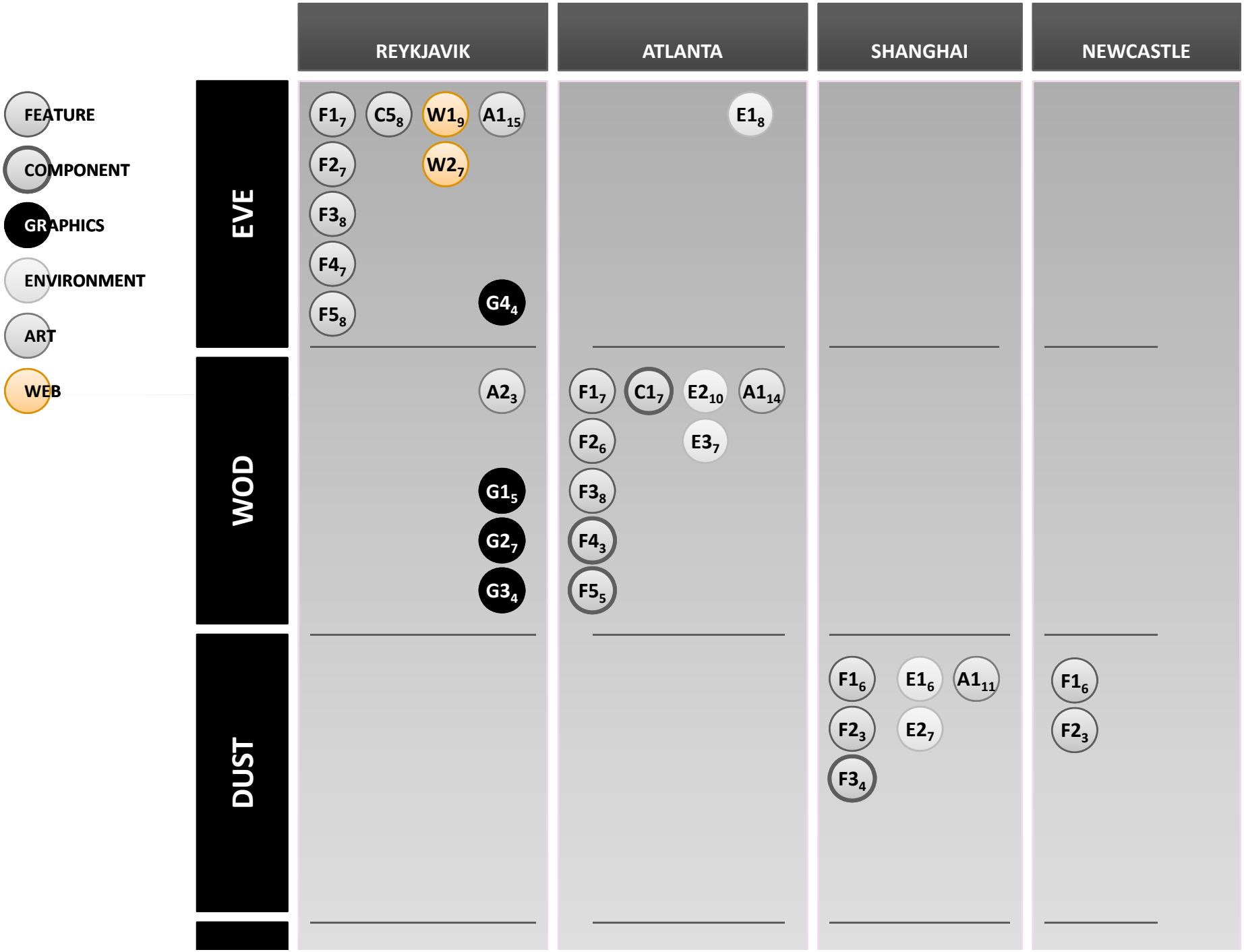
DUST 514: ARES
R4 SEPTEMBER 21st

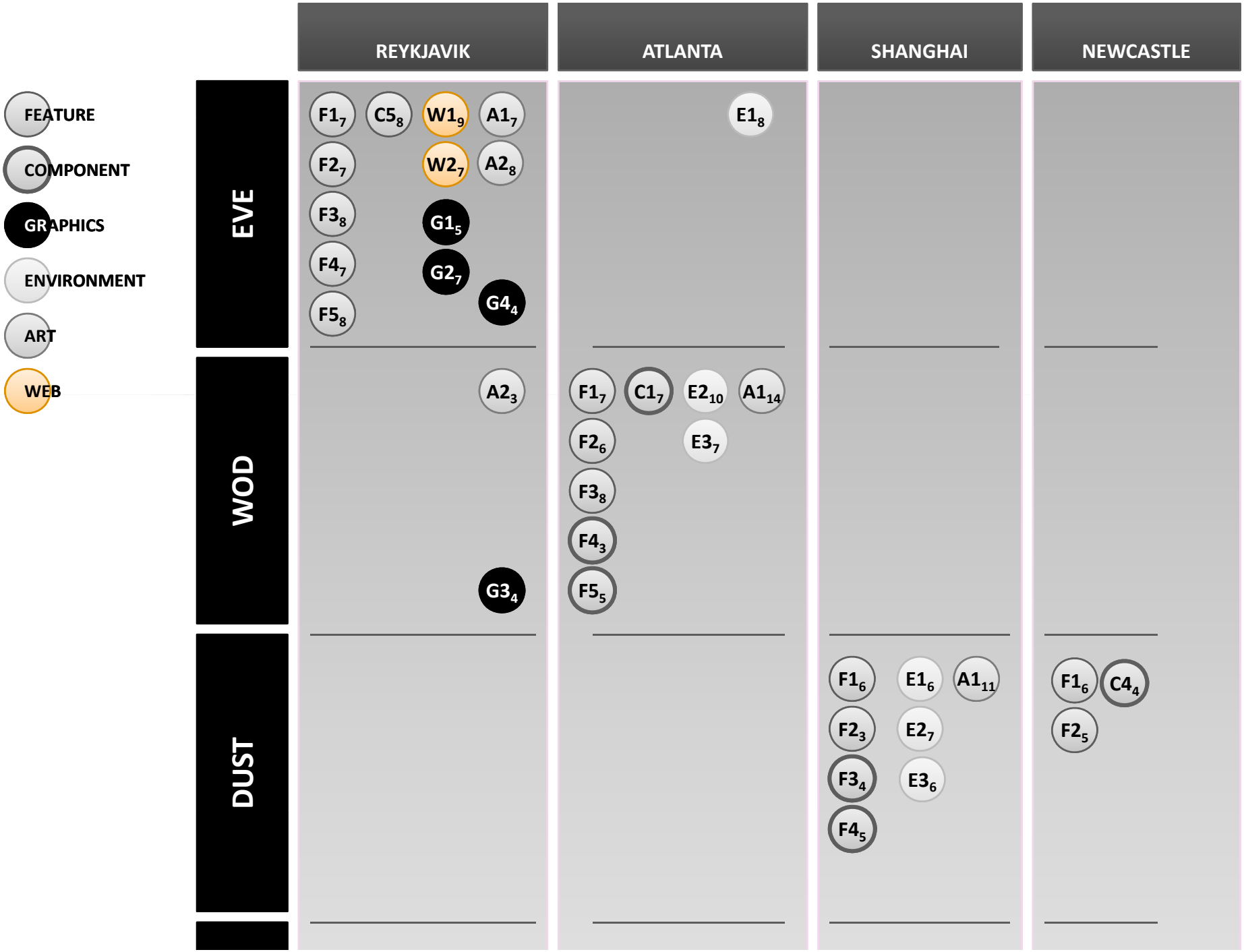
EVE: TYRANNIS
JUNE 9th

EVE: WINTER2010
NOVEMBER 16th

WOD: MilestoneX
R9 JULY 1st

WOD: MilestoneY
R10 OCTOBER 15th


FEATURE
COMPONENT
GRAPHICS
ENVIRONMENT
ART
WEB
REYKJAVIK
ATLANTA
SHANGHAI
NEWCASTLE
EVE
WOD
DUST
F1 7
C5 8
W1 9
A1 15
F2 7
W2 7
F3 8
F4 7
F5 8
G4 4
E1 8
A2 3
F1 7
C1 7
E2 10
A1 14
F2 6
E3 7
F3 8
G1 5
F4 3
G2 7
F5 5
G3 4
F1 6
E1 6
A1 11
F2 3
E2 7
F3 4
F1 6
F2 3


FEATURE
COMPONENT
GRAPHICS
ENVIRONMENT
ART
WEB
REYKJAVIK
ATLANTA
SHANGHAI
NEWCASTLE
EVE
WOD
DUST
F1 7
C5 8
W1 9
A1 7
F2 7
W2 7
A2 8
F3 8
G1 5
F4 7
G2 7
G4 4
F5 8
E1 8
A2 3
F1 7
C1 7
E2 10
A1 14
F2 6
E3 7
F3 8
F4 3
F5 5
G3 4
F1 6
E1 6
A1 11
F2 3
E2 7
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>

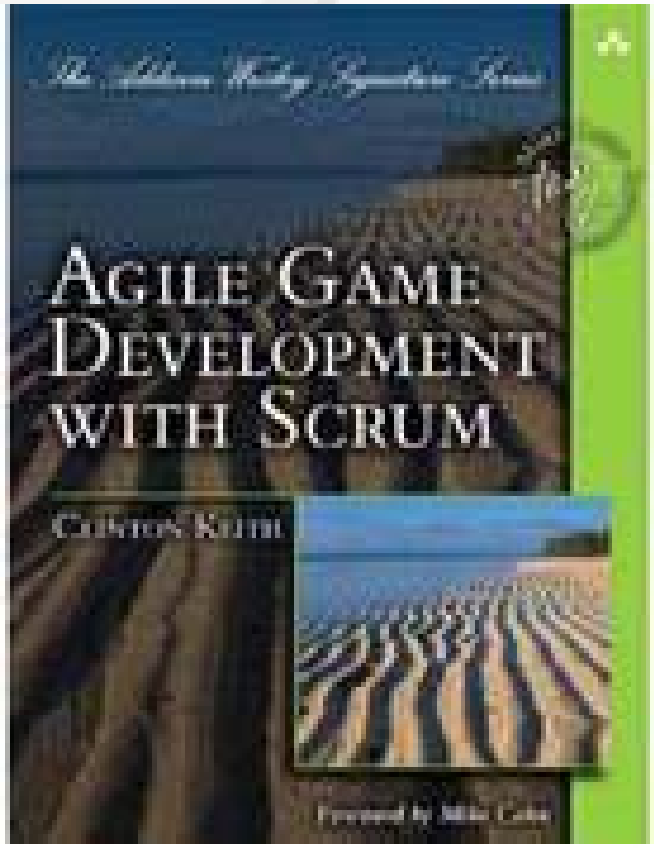
Contact

Aðalsteinn ´”Alli” Óttarsson

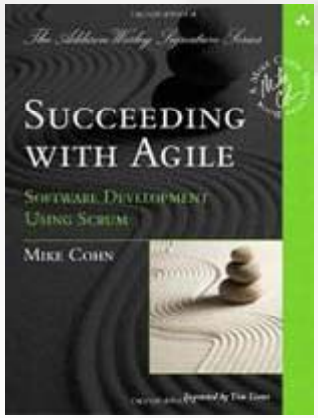
alli@ccpgames.com

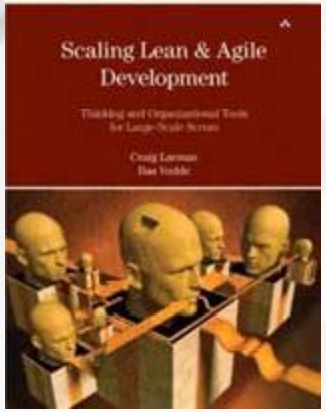
http://blog.ccpgames.com/alli/

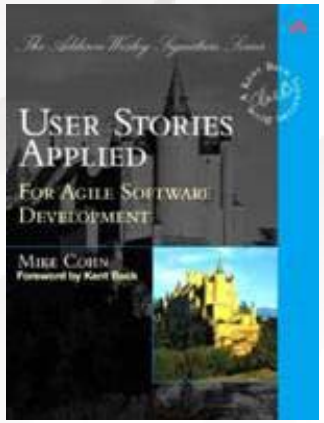
Books

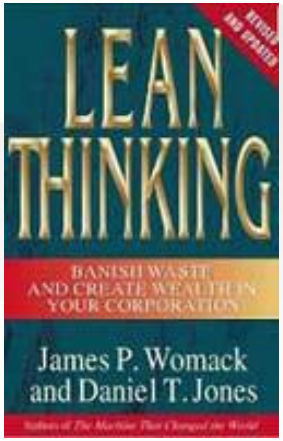


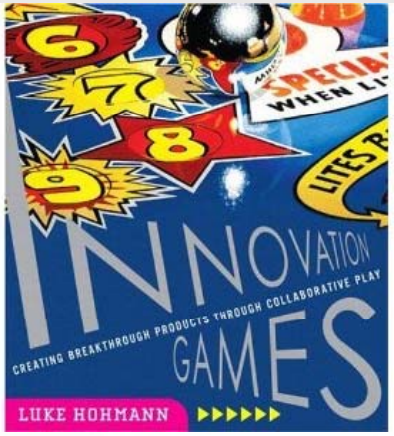
Books


Succeeding with Agile
Software Development Using Scrum
Mike Cohn

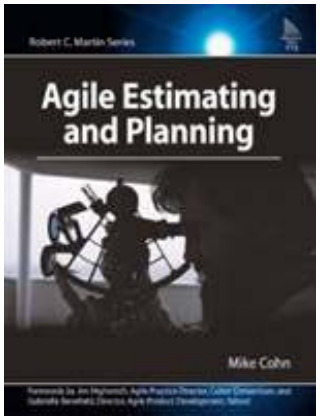

Scaling Lean & Agile Development

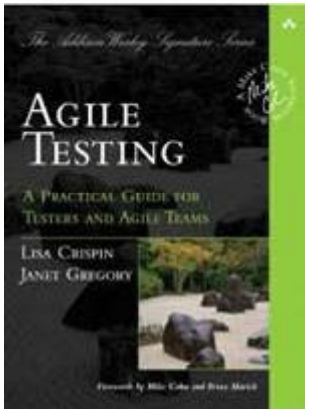

User Stories Applied
For Agile Software Development
Mike Cohn


Lean Thinking
Banish Waste and Create Wealth in Your Corporation
James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones

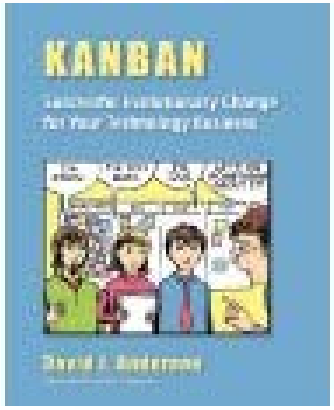

Innovation Games
Creating Breakthrough Products Through Collaborative Play
Luke Hohmann

Scaling Software Agility
Best Practices for Large Enterprises
Dean Leffingwell


Agile Estimating and Planning
Mike Cohn


Agile Testing
A Practical Guide for Testers and Agile Teams
Lisa Crispin
Janet Gregory

Implementing Lean Software Development
Mary and Tom Poppendieck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