



...solve thorny business challenges in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea

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# Here's how to quickly and successfully tackle the biggest challenges and opportunities facing your business...

Consider your biggest challenge or opportunity...

Are you doing enough to deal with it successfully?

What do you think? What is your real challenge – **people** issues or **system** issues?

Put this Business Breakthrough report to work and you might just be on your way to building stronger, more sustainable and more predictable success.

## A landmark story shows you the way...

Imagine for a moment what you would do if your multi-national, multi-million dollar joint venture partner shut down the factory you were working on together?

*"The local management considered the workforce the worst in the country. People drank on the job, didn't show up for work, and subtly sabotaged the products."*

Would you reopen the factory just 2 years later and rehire all the workers? Ignore all the managers? Go against the advice of your local partner, General Motors?

Toyota did – and even sent some of the workforce to Japan to learn the Toyota Production System.



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Almost immediately, the factory was producing cars with the same precision and with as few defects as cars that were produced in Japan.

*"Same people, different system."*

Not one of General Motors' factories could match the now Toyota-run factory. General Motors pulled out of the joint venture the same year they went bankrupt!

### IN A NUTSHELL:

The better your system for tackling challenges, opportunities and change, the more likely you are to succeed, no matter how good or bad you think your people are.

## What not to do...

Though this is relevant to businesses of all shapes and sizes, there are some big business stories to highlight the value of these insights.

- The London Stock Exchange cancelled their TAURUS project in 1993 with a cost to stakeholders of approximately £400million.
- The HS2 overspend is in the billions of pounds and is now shelved beyond Birmingham.
- And the NHS 'invested' £12billion over 9 years, only to see their 'Connecting Health' project fail – that's equivalent to spending £1million a week for 230 years!

## Look beyond motivation...

Despite the obvious imperative and significant motivation to prevent another 9/11, the FBI spent 10 years and \$600M to fail at building and installing a new computer system. By 2010, they were still using paper and computer mainframes.

These projects failed to **use a management system** that could deliver the result they needed in the budget agreed.

Instead, they did what's been done since Gantt charts first helped manage First World War trench construction – a 'waterfall' approach to planning and reporting. (Waterfall management follows a linear progression, in which each phase of a project is completed before moving onto the next.) Trench warfare ceased after WWI, but Gantt charts and waterfall management are still in use in the 21st century by many organisations.

World-leading research firms – Gartner, Forrester Research, Standish Group – now say that **the old style of the waterfall management system is obsolete.**

**Q.** Why does the waterfall process/project management methodology fail to deliver on time and on budget?

**A.** Because it involves too many people and too much planning and not enough deliverables often enough.

## A 21st century way that works...

"There are studies going back to World War II that lay out some of the better ways that people work. But for some reason people never really put together all the pieces."

– *Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time*, by Jeff Sutherland, J.J. Sutherland.

Thankfully, a few smart people at the FBI changed tack (those at HS2 did not).

Having spent approximately \$600M over 10 years with no result, they started fresh, reduced the team from 250 to 50 and delivered a working system in less than 2 years. They spent less than \$60M to get the much-needed result – in 2012 the system went live, preventing disasters and saving lives almost instantly.

They adopted **an agile management system** now actively used by the world's smartest organisations – from small engineering start-ups to military academies to teachers in schools across the Netherlands to Google, Salesforce, PWC (global accounting firm) and Amazon.

This agile management system **can help you succeed faster too.**

## What does agile look and feel like?

The founder of this 1995 approach, Dr Jeff Sutherland, has dubbed this a **framework, not a methodology.**

Here are the 4 agile principles:

- **People and interactions** over processes and tools
- **Working products** over comprehensive documenting

Scrum has become the default approach used by the tech industry to create new software, and it's spread into all walks of life – because it works so well and works fast.

"At its root, Scrum is based on a simple idea: whenever you start a project, why not regularly check in, see if what you're doing is heading in the right direction, and if it's actually what people want?"

And question whether there are any ways to improve how you're doing what you're doing, any ways of doing it better and faster, and what might be keeping you from doing that."

– *Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time*, by Jeff Sutherland, J.J. Sutherland

The simplicity of the Scrum Board (below) shows you that any organisation can put this to work:



- **Customer collaboration** over negotiation
- **Responding to change** over following a plan

Sutherland calls the framework:

**'Scrum'**, after the way a rugby scrum works – a small, focused, highly-connected and coordinated team achieving a quick, clear result every time they get together.

The Scrum foundations come from the Toyota Production System, a system that has influenced almost every successful manufacturer across the globe.

## From novice to mastery – Shu Ha Ri

A key insight is that Scrum is something you learn by doing, which reminds us of the profound saying:

"To know and not to do is still not to know." – Zen saying

Scrum has proven to work better in 3 distinct stages:

**Shu** follow the rules without deviating until you know them

**Ha** once you've mastered the basics, you can make innovations

**Ri** because you've mastered the Scrum practice, you're now able to be creative in an uninhibited way

The more experienced, proficient and relaxed you become with this way of working, the more you'll experience a state of flow – effortless mastery like that seen in the best gymnast, the best racing car driver, the best football team or the best work team.

## Put your Scrum framework to work...

Remember – to succeed, you start at **Shu** – follow the Scrum rules strictly when you start.

### Your people:

1. Pick a **Product Owner** – the person with the vision of what you are going to do, make or accomplish.
2. Pick a **Scrum Team** – a small team (3 to 9 people) with cross-functional skills to do the work; the larger the team (more than 9), the slower the progress and the less likely your efforts will be successful.
3. Pick a **Scrum Master** – the coach around the Scrum framework who helps eliminate anything slowing down the team.

### Your approach:

4. Create and prioritise a **Product Backlog** – a high-level list of everything that needs to be built or done to make the outcome a reality. The Product Owner should consult with all those involved to ensure that the Product Backlog represents what people want and what can be built – with a 20/80 approach to identifying the 20% of things that deliver 80% of the result.
5. **Refine and estimate** the Product Backlog – the Team estimate how much effort is needed on each element using relative terms (not time). Using the Fibonacci sequence is one possible grading approach – is a grade 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, or 13 level effort needed? (Please see the downloadable tools for more on Fibonacci and other relative grading systems.)
6. **Make work visible** – use a **Scrum Board** that clearly shows the Product Backlog as 'Do/Doing/Done' sticky notes that you can move across the Scrum Board columns of the same names, as seen in the Scrum Board picture above.

### Your meetings:

7. **Sprint Planning** – The Team, the Scrum Master and the Product Owner work out the next Sprint (1 to 4 weeks maximum). Everyone agrees to a without-fail Sprint goal that everyone wants to achieve. Each Sprint results in a completed, working, ready-to-use element of your whole project/challenge/opportunity.
8. **Daily Stand Up** (Daily Scrum) – this is the heartbeat of the fast-acting, agile, team approach to solving your challenges, making the most of your opportunities and developing new products, services, processes and more.  
Your Daily Stand Ups agenda (15 minutes max) should use the Scrum Board to make this visible for everyone:
  - What did you do yesterday to help the Team finish the Sprint?
  - What will you do today to help the Team finish the Sprint?
  - Is there any obstacle blocking you or the Team from achieving the next Sprint Goal?
9. **Sprint Review** – the meeting that demonstrates what's been achieved during the Sprint. Only demonstrate what meets the definition of 'Done'.
10. **Sprint Retrospective** – consider what went right, what could have gone better and what can be made better in the next Sprint.  
This requires trust and maturity to determine what needs to change – this might be resources, tools or training, or it might be better ways of working together or as individuals. Then immediately start the next Sprint.

## Build psychological safety with respect...

To create and nurture the transparency and accountability necessary to get things done during every 1- to 4- week Sprint, people must genuinely treat each other with respect.

To create this safe and trusting work environment, people need to be open and candid and know that, when they open up about things not going to plan, they won't be punished. You alleviate fear with respect and build psychological safety for everyone in the Scrum Team.

“You did this” or “You failed at that” comments are rooted in a blame culture and reduce psychological safety, a cornerstone element of all high-performing teams. Blame results in cover-ups, not in open transparency. Stay **system-focused** and you diminish blame and look out for what will accelerate progress.

**STOP** – thinking your people are to blame for lack of performance and progress in your firm.

**START** – to focus on an agile system that will help your small, cross-functional teams work faster.

The Daily Stand Up agenda questions listed in Rule 8 above help keep the focus on getting things done (and not on blame) **every day**.

The last question – Is there any obstacle blocking you or the Team from achieving the next Sprint Goal? – encourages everyone, especially the Scrum Master, to take responsibility for removing blockages, hurdles, hindrances or difficulties so that the Sprints can go faster.

On a 2-week Sprint, that's 10 (working day) opportunities to remove or fix a blockage or difficulty. No wonder more gets done this way.

## Sprints fail as well as succeed...

This sounds glib, but failures are learning opportunities. Question 3 of the Daily Team Stand Up agenda helps prevent failures, but they do happen. Blame doesn't help. Getting things done, learning lessons and removing blockages is the way forward.

## A PROVEN SOLUTION FOR YOU...

A Scrum Team, a Scrum Board, a Daily Stand Up and a 1- to 4-week Sprint to finishing something off will help you and your business make regular and tangible (measurable) progress, leading to greater success.

**GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW**

<https://businessbreakthrough.online/business-sprinters-win-tools-and-resources/>

## TIME TO DISAGREE:

“This sounds like a really intense way to work – no let-up – my team would revolt!”

You’re right to care about the impact of this framework on your team and how they will respond. But remember, the Product Owner and Scrum Master, along with the team, choose the Sprint’s cadence/speed/intensity. They can manage the pace. It has to feel fair, or the culture of your Scrum Team will turn sour.

The focus on finishing something regularly means that your team will respond well to a sense of achievement every 1 to 4 weeks. This builds enthusiasm and motivation

because of a strong sense of job satisfaction and connection to an important challenge, opportunity, project or product change.

“The labels and language all sound a bit weird, a bit different.”

Yes, it is different. But as the stories and research prove, the results are different too – in a positive way. Toyota, the FBI and schooling in the Netherlands prove it works.

It’s also pretty simple – a small multi-skilled Team, a Scrum Board and a 15-minute Daily Stand Up focused on getting parts of a project finished every 1 to 4 weeks. Don’t you want to give it a chance if it can deliver success faster than other ways of working? Getting better results

means doing something different.

As the saying suggests:

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.”

## ULTIMATE ARGUMENT:

“We aren’t the FBI or the NHS or HS2, we run a small business in comparison.”

The Scrum approach to agile management has proved to work in many settings – large and small.

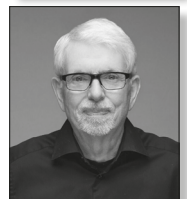
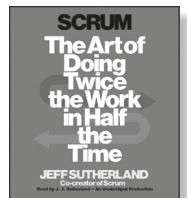
Can you at least try it for a while on a change management project or product innovation? Follow the rules closely as the *Shu Ha Ri* insight suggests. After you’ve tried it and have had a chance to build your expertise and confidence, make your mind up then as to whether to continue to use it.

## Want to know more?

Reading this report and the additional downloadable tools and resources is a great first step in putting agile management to work for your business.

Please check out the online tools and resources that accompany this report by clicking the link below.

For further reading, see J. J. Sutherland’s brilliant books on Scrum and agile project management.



## 4 helping hands for you...



- 1. Choose the right multi-disciplined (small) team** – 7 people (plus or minus 2 or 3) are capable of rapid change, productive improvements and an effective pace. Small teams also build a strong sense of camaraderie.
- 2. Build your Scrum Board of jobs (Do/Doing/Done)** – clarity and transparency about what has happened, what is happening and what is going to happen builds a sense of achievement.
- 3. Agree your Sprint Goal and Sprint Timeframe** (1 to 4 weeks) – get something finished, complete, working, over-the-line in every Sprint.
- 4. Run a Daily Stand Up** (and a **Sprint Review**) to work out what to do to remove blockages and to improve your speed of delivery.

This 4-step process can help you build an agile way of tackling your biggest opportunities and your biggest challenges so that you, your team and your business succeed faster than you are now.

## GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW

<https://businessbreakthrough.online/business-sprinters-win-tools-and-resources/>

Please use these tools and resources to build an agile system in your business to help you deal with the challenges, opportunities and changes.

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<https://businessbreakthrough.online/library>

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