THE RELEASE TRAIN ENGINEER (RTE)

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Agenda

1. Introduction to the RTE.

2. Roles and Responsibilities.

3. Who can be an RTE?

4. RTE Ecosystem.

5. Challenges.

6. What makes an effective RTE?

7. Q&A.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RTE

The RTE in a Phrase

Flow of Value

in an

Agile Release Train (ART)

Verbs Associated with the RTE

Yes:

- Facilitates.

- Coaches / Mentors.

- Persuades.

- Exemplifies a Lean-Agile Mindset.

No:

- Directs.

- Manages.

- Uses Authority.

- Has a Traditional Mindset.

The RTE …

- Servant Leader.

- Facilitates Risks, Impediments and Dependencies.

- Grows the connection between IT and Business.

- Little official authority, lots of responsibility.
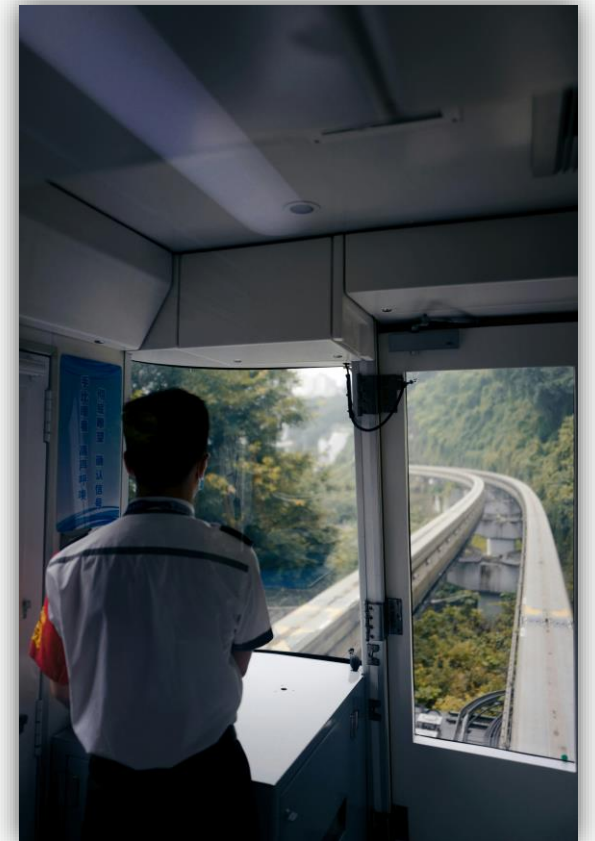
- They are NOT a Project / Program Manager.

Photo by billow926 on Unsplash

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RTE Responsibilities

- Facilitating PI Planning.

- Supporting PI Execution.

- Coaching the ART.

- Optimizing Flow.

- Improving Relentlessly.

Facilitating PI Planning

- Helping the ART Prepare for PI Planning.

- Facilitate PI Planning.

Supporting PI Execution

- Track Progress.

- Facilitate Events.

- Support Backlog Refinement.

- Promote DevOps and Continuous Delivery.

- Assist Business Owners.

- Coordinate Planning efforts with other ARTs.

Coaching the ART

- Coaching with powerful questions.

- Coaching SM/TCs in ART/Team events and practices.

- Coach ART Roles.

Optimizing Flow

- Establish Pull Systems to Optimize Flow of Value.

- Establish ART Flow Measures.

- Improve the Flow of Value.

- Facilitate Value Stream Mapping.

- Reduce/Eliminate cross-team dependencies.

Relentlessly Improving

- Drive Relentless Improvement.

- Leverage the SAFe Core Competency self-assessments.

- Collaborate with the VMO and LACE.

3. WHO CAN BE AN RTE?

Key Characteristics of the RTE Role

- Servant Leader – will put the Teams/ART first.

- Guides people in problem identification and decision-making.

- Persuades rather than uses Authority.

- Systems Thinker.

- Can Inspire and Motivate others.

- Diplomacy vs Saying it like it is.

- Gyshido experts (Get Stuff Done).

Candidates for the RTE Role

- Scrum Master/Team Coach.

- SPCs.

- Lean-Agile Coaches.

- Program / Project Managers (depending).

- Change Agents / Leaders.

- Above all – someone with a Lean-Agile Mindset.

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Maybe, not so much...

- Traditional Mindsets.

- Not engaged.

- Looking out for #1.

- Poor communicators.

- Faint of heart.

4. RTE ECOSYSTEM

The ART

- Teams.

- Triad – Product Manager / System Architect / RTE.

- Business Owners / Stakeholders (potentially).

- Suppliers / Vendors.

- SPCs and Lean-Agile Coaches.

The Business

- Business Owners.

- Stakeholders.

- Internal Customers.

- Other ARTs.

- Next growth areas in the organization.

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The Leadership

- Business Owners.

- Executives.

- Lean Portfolio Management.

- VMO / LACE / Communities of Practice.

Photo by Nathan Jennings on Unsplash

The Customer

- Internal Customers.

- External Customers.

Photo by Cytonn Photography on Unsplash

In Short...

Everyone!

Photo by krakenimages on Unsplash

5. CHALLENGES

Context

- Challenges are contextual, but there are some repeat across ARTs.

- Challenges vary as the maturity of the ART changes.

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Prepare for Launch!

- Forming the ART and Teams. Collective Ownership.

- Enough preparation vs too much.

- Newness of SAFe roles.

- Collaboration and Alignment between IT and Business.

- Putting the Values and Principles in practice.

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Early in the Life of an ART

- Tooling and DevOps maturity.

- Dependencies outside the ART.

- Communication / Collaboration outside the ART.

- Establish a problem-solving culture (Relentless Improvement).

- Growing the relationship between IT and the Business. *

- Celebrate the wins!

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Later in the Life of an ART

- Building the culture.

- Changes in the Teams and ART roles.

- Sharing the success of the ART with Executive Leadership.

- Leveraging the relationship between IT and the Business.

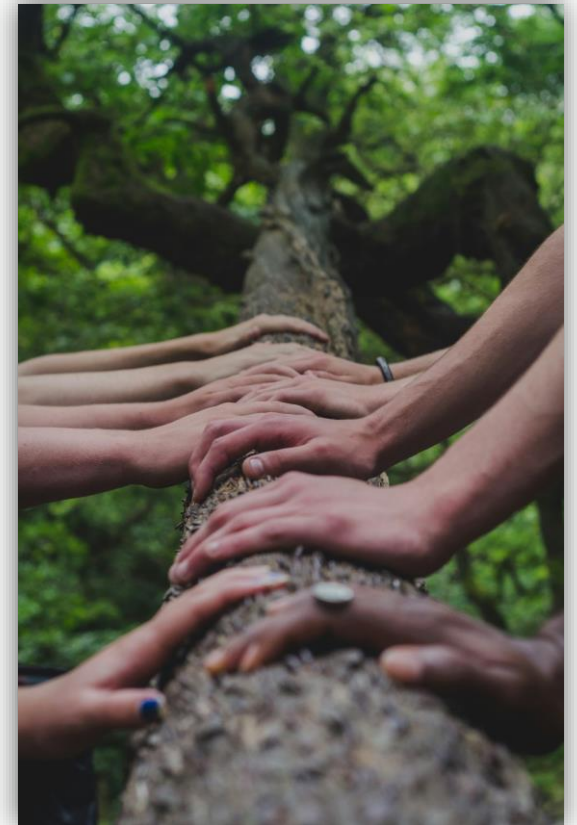- Growing beyond the ART into the organization.

- Restructuring the ART?

Photo by Shane Rounce on Unsplash

Anti-Patterns to Watch for

- Leaders are supportive, but not engaged.

- The ART starts to slide back to the old way...

- It becomes about the processes.

- Significant and stubborn resistance outside the ART.

- Lipstick on the Pig...

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It's a Hard Road

- This role can often feel like you're on an island by yourself.

- You will see things that others don't yet.

- Lots of coaching and leading required to reach momentum.

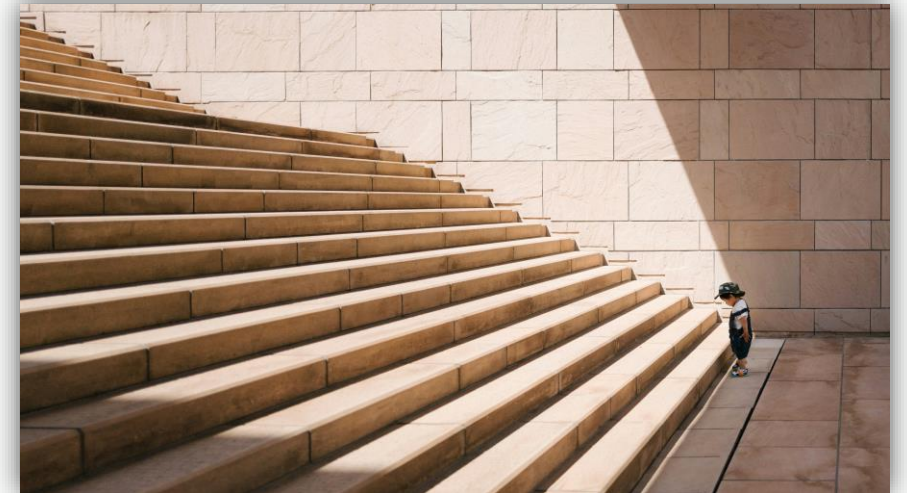- Detractors and late adopters are always present.

Photo by Jukan Tateisi on Unsplash

6. WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE RTE?

Embrace and Reinforce the Values and Principles

- Establish a Psychologically safe environment with mutual influence.

- Facilitate problem-solving culture. *

- Support personal development of teams/individuals.

- Lean-Agile transformation in a flexible, not rigid way.

Signs of Success

- Improved Flow.

- Improved Predictability and Quality.

- Established Problem-solving Culture.

- Others in the org showing an interest.

- Values and Principles become the ARTs way.

- You find yourself being bored at times.

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Leveraging Leadership

- Principle #2 - Apply Systems Thinking.

- WIIFM – Leadership.

- Grow Relationships.

- Become a Trusted Advisor.

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Adjust Focus for the Mature ART

- What does the ART need now?

- People in Roles may change over time.

- Processes need adjustments.

- DevOps maturity - automation.

- Customer Centricity deepens.

- Restructure the ART? Possibly. *

Photo by Honey Yanibel Minaya Cruz on Unsplash

The Goal – Work yourself out of a job

- Your goal should be to make the ART independent of you.

- They need to embrace the culture. Collective Ownership.

- Start to fade to the background more.

- You may find this part lonely but satisfying.

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RTE Summary

- Servant Leader with a Lean-Agile Mindset.

- Rooted in the SAFe Values and Principles.

- Form relationships early with the ART and Leadership.

- Grow a problem-solving culture.

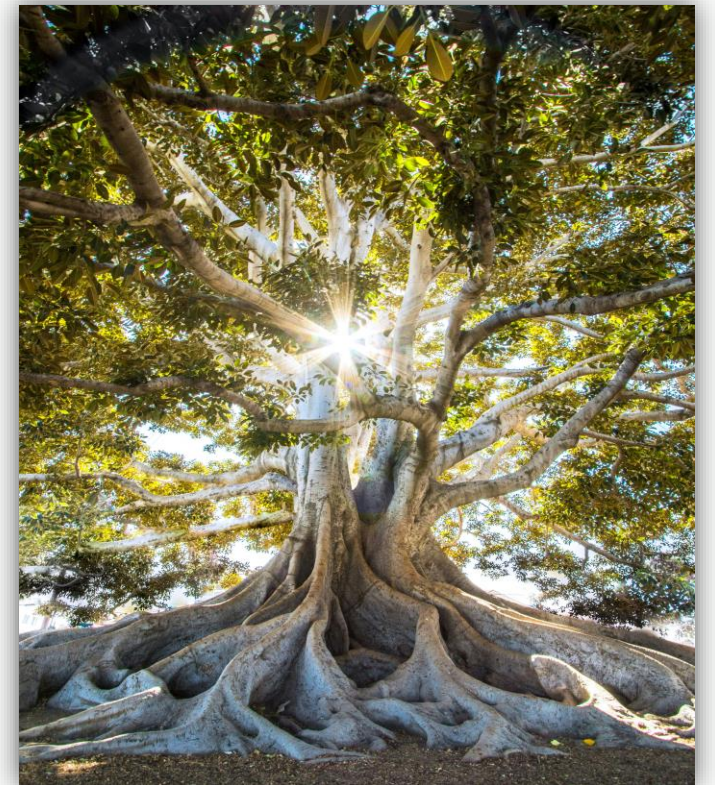- All towards facilitating the Flow of Value.

Photo by Jeremy Bishop on Unsplash

7. Q&A

References

SAFe RTE - https://scaledagileframework.com/release-train-engineer/

The SAFe Big Picture - https://scaledagileframework.com/

SAFe Values – https://scaledagileframework.com/safe-core-values/

SAFe Principles - https://scaledagileframework.com/safe-lean-agile-principles/

Lean-Agile Mindset - https://scaledagileframework.com/lean-agile-mindset

THANK YOU

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