Increasing Engagement in Agile Environments

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Executive Overview

Increased employee engagement has been associated with many benefits such as increased productivity, higher profitability, greater customer loyalty/engagement, higher quality, decreased absenteeism, and lower employee turnover [1]. However, only 15% of employees worldwide state that they are engaged with their work [2].

While there are many facilitation tips and techniques to increase engagement, these tips and tricks for more impactful processes and procedures only temporarily scratch the surface toward greater engagement. And, unfortunately, they often don't offer solutions for lasting changes. For increased engagement over the long term, the root causes for being disengaged must be identified and addressed.

There are many possible root causes of poor engagement, some of which include: lack of motivation, working in silos, not feeling heard, lack of inclusion, and lack of authentic recognition. Ultimately, there can be 70% of variance in team engagement due to actions by those considered to be in management roles [1]. So, those in leadership roles, whether in formal or informal leadership roles, should be better equipped to enable employees to have greater engagement so that the benefits associated with higher engagement can be realized.

Key Take-Aways

- While better processes and tools might help temporarily soothe some symptoms of poor engagement, it is essential to address the root of the problem: why is this person not engaged in the first place?
- There can be multiple root-causes for disengagement; and, it is not unusual for those root-causes to feed upon each other, further compounding the problem.
- Lack of engagement is a complex issue often felt/experienced by individuals; as such, addressing poor engagement should be done on a person-by-person basis and not as a generic one-time improvement program to "increase engagement."
- It takes time and intentional action to address the root causes for poor engagement.
- It's not a "fix them" issue – its about setting the environment together for high engagement.

Introduction

A common question during coaching sessions and training workshops from my clients who are trying to increase their overall organizational agility is "How do I get more engagement out of my employees, especially from those who don't like an agile approach?" Often the question is posed by them in frustration. They are looking for a quick solution to entice buy-in or make others engage during the execution of activities or tasks within an agile framework.

Several articles discuss increasing engagement via the use of effective facilitation techniques [3]. Specifically for Scrum, there is advice for more effective Daily Scrums [4] or more engaging Sprint Retrospectives [5].

However, working in an agile environment requires operating with a flexible mindset, specifically emphasizing people over process. Please be careful, however, when reading that last sentence. This does not mean that all process gets thrown out in an agile environment. We want just the minimum process(es) needed to make sure things can run as smoothly as they can *without* overburdening the teams or organization with *too much* bureaucracy or process.

While a shift in facilitation techniques or tools may help provide some level of preliminary relief, employee engagement will likely not be fixed with these approaches because they favor fixing a process. And, unfortunately, some of those techniques that address only the process could backfire, leading to even greater disengagement.

The hard truth is that high employee engagement is not a light switch to turn on and off at will. Increasing engagement is a journey. It takes time and intentional effort to set the environment and culture where high employee engagement is the norm. Further, what provides the fuel for engagement for your people, teams, and organization today may not be what works in the future; the factors that lead toward greater engagement shift over time.

So, to make lasting change, we should be looking more intentionally at the people, not just fixing processes or procedures. We should be trying to identify and address the root causes for why those employees may have a lack of engagement in the first place.

Disengagement, especially from a root-cause perspective, is a complex topic. It's not unusual for one root cause to have a ripple effect into another area. Regularly gathering constructive feedback and having a continuous improvement mindset is essential to help, over time, iteratively and incrementally address employee engagement challenges.

What is engagement?

There are many opinions, from business blogs and books to scholarly journals, about what employee engagement is. There is no single definition. So, it might be beneficial to shape your own interpretation of "what is engagement" by considering the views from several prominent authors.

For instance, in his groundbreaking work in the early 1990s, Kahn [6] introduced the concept of personal engagement of an individual at work. He focused on how personal engagement influences the level of effort that worker might put into completing tasks. When a person brings their "preferred self" to work, they *actively* and *fully* perform in their role from several different perspectives, such as physically, cognitively, and emotionally [6].

As a counterpoint to personal engagement, Kahn also states that personal disengagement could be characterized by withdrawal, lack of connection, and emotional absence. Disengagement can ultimately lead to passive and/or incomplete performance in their role [6].

Another author, Shuck [7], describes several views of employee engagement, highlighting how it might be considered a trait of the employee (i.e. inherent in their operating DNA). By contrast, employee engagement could also be considered a psychological state of the employee that fluctuates over time, influenced by many different factors like personality or disposition.

Regardless, Shuck asserts that employee engagement is a characteristic unique to the individual and their personal interpretation of their environment. Employees *opt-in* based on feeling motivated, safe, and having reasonable resources to get their work done [7].

Other definitions of employee engagement include:

- "the strength of the mental and emotional connection employees feel toward the work they do, their teams, and organization" [8]
- "the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace" [1]
- "[a] discretionary effort [for] employees to go above and beyond [without being a workaholic] versus simply getting the job done without attracting negative attention" [9]

Overall, when considering the various views of employee engagement, it's not just about the individual employee, but is also about the environment in which they work. In other words, we cannot forget about the entire system that surrounds and influences the individual employee.

Employee Engagement versus Employee Satisfaction

It's important to distinguish what employee engagement is and is not. It is easy for there to be confusion between employee engagement and employee satisfaction. However, there is a subtle yet very important distinction between these two concepts.

Shoobridge [10] describes employee satisfaction as the level of happiness an employee experiences in that organization. This can be measured via several factors such as pay and benefits, workload, relationship with peers and management – in other words, all the "hygiene" factors. Employee satisfaction generally addresses the question: Is this employee content?

While an employee may be happy or satisfied, this does not necessarily equate to their level of job performance, meaning they may not be engaged with the actual work which, ultimately, affects overall performance.

To contrast employee satisfaction, Shoobridge asserts employee engagement can be considered from the organization's point of view. The company should ask if it's getting what it needs from the employee? Further, does the employee possess these four perspectives of engagement:

- Rational engagement - *Does the employee believe in the mission, vision, goals?*
- Emotional engagement - *Is the employee proud of their work and the organization?*
- Motivational engagement - *Does the employee want to go above and beyond for the team and clients?*
- Devotional engagement - *Does the employee envision the long term or set goals for growth?*

When employees possess these four characteristics of engagement, then overall performance of the organization becomes better [10].

Final thoughts of defining engagement

There are many different views and definitions for engagement. Because there is no single definition, the question becomes What does engagement mean to you and your organization? Consider the views of engagement from the many authors above and decide what resonates with you and your organization. Having a clear definition and context can not only help set expectations, it helps clarify actions to take to increase engagement overall.

Benefits of High-Employee Engagement

There is no shortage of research and articles touting the benefits of engagement. For instance, a recent Gallup article found that there are benefits in teams with higher engagement, including increased productivity, higher profitability, greater customer loyalty/engagement, higher quality, decreased absenteeism, and lower employee turnover [1]. Similarly, Willis Towers Watson found that organizations with higher employee engagement correlates to higher profits, better customer service/experience, higher productivity, and safer work environment [11].

Why is High-Employee Engagement Hard?

With all the research that shows the benefits to high employee engagement, why does it appear to be so hard to establish and maintain?

Some of potential reasons could be:

- Increasing engagement is a journey that takes time, which can be more difficult and consuming than quick fixes.
- To increase engagement, we must work with individuals to understand how they interact with others on the team and in the organization, not just address process and tools
- Factors for engagement shift over time. Employees grow and/or change. Environments change. What works sufficiently well today might not necessarily work tomorrow.
- It can be hard to make the business case for investment in increasing engagement since these are unseen “soft” skills; it’s not unusual for sponsors or executives to want hard return on investment numbers before investing in their employees.

Potential Root Causes for Lack of Engagement

The following describes some potential root causes for withering engagement. From experience, there is no single “tried and true” best practice or silver bullet. However, several suggestions for addressing disengagement are offered as inspiration. To get started, tailor your approach to the individual and their needs.

1. Lack of motivation

One potential root cause for lack of engagement is a shortage of motivation. For instance, Daniel Pink asserts that there are three drivers of employee motivation, including: a sense of autonomy, mastery, and purpose [12]. Gallup has stated that employee engagement is driven by several factors, including a sense of purpose and the presence of consisting coaching to help the employee get to the next level [1]. So, if the team member is not feeling empowered to make decisions, not given time, not being coached in pursuit of learning or mastering a skill, and not working on things that seem inspiring or fulfilling, then there can be a lack of motivation.

Some approaches to address lack of motivation include:

a. *Increase Empowerment.*

- Scenario One: *You* have the "power."

  If you are in a position of formal authority (such as a manager, director, lead, or senior-level position) or informal authority (those who are influential but do not have a formal title), think about how you can "share the power" with that employee. When people feel either micromanaged or powerless, they typically disengage mentally and/or physically [13].

  In alignment with the concepts of servant leadership, embrace sharing power, especially when it comes to making decisions. Ask yourself the following questions:

  - Are there things you are working on today that you do not have to be working on, especially if there are other things you would prefer to work on (i.e., topics that are more interesting for you)?
  - What can you relinquish to others who might view that task as a learning and/or growth opportunity?
  - If you transition these things to your employee, what degree of transparency would you like to see from your employee regarding those decisions to make you comfortable with the empowerment?

  Remember, if you empower someone, you need to empower them. Resist the temptation to override them. However, there are absolutely appropriate times to step in, especially if that person you empower will seriously injure/harm themselves, others, or the organization.

- Scenario Two: *Others* have the “power” over you.

  Consider this question: are there decisions that you can make today for which you feel you should not have to get “approval”? If so, consider your relationship with your supervisor/manager/boss. Can you have an open, respectful, and collaborative conversation about your needs and/or your desire to make more impactful decisions?

  Perhaps tailor the conversation from the perspective of these talking points:

  - This is a learning opportunity for growth for you towards a next position.
  - If I can do this for you, it frees up your time to do more interesting work.
  - While these will be the types of decisions I’m empowered to make now, I won’t do it in a vacuum. I’ll be transparent with you as my manager on these decisions and why they were made. We’ll come to agreement on what that transparency looks like.

b. Increase Coaching/Education for Mastery.

Mastering new skills in today’s volatile and uncertain world is no longer optional. The world is simply changing at an exponentially rapid pace where the acquisition and application new skills is constantly in need. To increase mastery (for either yourself or someone on your team), consider the following:

- Establish a self-improvement/education plan, but do so with as light as touch as possible. Some people like the structure and thought process offered when filling out a template; some people don’t. Forcing everyone to fill out a mandatory self-improvement plan has the potential to backfire.

- There are many local and international professional organizations, such as Agile Alliance, Scrum Alliance, and Project Management Institute – all of which tend to have local affiliates/chapters. Many offer free or low-cost education opportunities. There are free Meetups and quality content on social media platforms such as YouTube. As with any self-directed learning, try to obtain information from at least three reputable sources on your topic of interest, with at least one source as a counter-argument, so that a more informed conclusion can be made.

- If offered at your organization, take full advantage of any formal training opportunities, whether it's internal training courses (in-person and/or online/self-paced), external training courses, or in several circumstances, taking course(s) externally for a certification or a degree at a local college/university.

- While increased your knowledge in the classroom, meetups, etc., are fantastic, it is better to apply the education somewhere in your professional or personal life. Until you practice it, it's theoretical. There is wisdom in the sayings "practice makes perfect" or "practice makes proficient."

  It is often easiest and/or quickest to gain experience from your current work/projects with the persons you know first. So, try to find opportunities to grow/learn within your current team or department first, then neighboring teams next, then teams outside of your immediate department/division after that. If you cannot get the experience internally within your current organization, again, consider volunteering at a professional organization (such as Agile Alliance, etc., as mentioned above) or applying the skills in a volunteer role in your community.

c. Solidify a sense of purpose.

Why would you want to work on something if it has no meaningful difference? Multiple authors [12, 14] talk about the importance of feeling like what you're working on has a sense of purpose and fulfills a need. For greater motivation, an employee/individual needs to feel a meaningful connection to the overarching purpose of their work. To greater solidify a sense of purpose, consider the following questions:

- Are the organization's goals/objectives clear? There could be a gap in a personal sense of purpose and what the business purpose [15]. Perhaps do an exercise that establishes:
  (1) what is important to the organization
  (2) what is personally important to the employee/individual
  (3) the strength of the connection of the important things between the organization and the person and asks if there is a high correlation between what is important to the organization and the individual employee.

- Are the goals or objectives of your organization (or even the product or projects the employees are working on) inspirational? Does the employee resonate with what the organization is trying to do at a foundational (or gut) level? If the goals or objectives of the organization, product, and/or project are not exciting to the persons working on them, is it reasonable for them to have high motivation?

- Does the employee have a clear understanding of the level of impact of their work on the team, organization, and clients/stakeholders who use whatever it is that employee creates? From my experience, most people want to feel useful – they generally want to feel on some level that their work matters to someone else. Those in leadership positions (either formal or informal) should strive to thoughtfully and respectfully point out and/or clarify impacts of an employee's work on others.

2. *Working in Silos*

Consider this proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others."

One of the foundations of engagement is collaboration. A study by researchers at Stanford University found several positive benefits of working together versus working alone, including: (1) Those that worked together on a challenging puzzle persisted 48% to 68% longer than those working alone. (2) Those working together said they found working on the hard puzzle more interesting (versus having to finish the puzzle due to obligation or competition), more engrossed in the tasks, and expressed greater enjoyment than those working alone. Overall, the researchers assert that working together can help fuel intrinsic motivation [16].

Collaboration can be especially challenging when silos are present. Silos exist when there are hand-offs of work product from one person or department to another, each typically using specialized and/or focused skills to successively add value to that work product on their own, usually in isolation from each other. Silos can exist even within teams themselves, often creating "sub-teams" within a team itself.

Several drawbacks [17] to working in silos include:

(1) a lack of ownership (the decision was made before me.)
(2) a lack of team mentality (I only need to do my job/task – that other "thing" is someone else's responsibility)
(3) the loss of focus on organizational goals, and
(4) a breakdown in communications.

While this is not an all-inclusive list of drawbacks, working in silos can lead to a lack of commitment, which can easily turn into what appears to be lack of engagement.

Often, it will take more than a single skill (or person) to get a product or service completed and ready for consumption by the target customer (whether that person is internal or external to the department or organization).

To increase collaboration and communication to address working alone/working in silos, consider the following approaches:

a. *Encourage Pairing.*

Pairing could be described as when two persons work together *as equals* to achieve an outcome. Pairing works best when it is a "pull" opportunity (i.e., both parties would like to work together) versus a "push" relationship (i.e., forcing persons because pairing is deemed a "required" practice for the organization).

- The pairs do not have to work exclusively and all day with each other. Use small time boxes to focus the work. The Pomodoro Technique [18] can be useful, in that the pair sets a timer for how long they want to work together (perhaps up to 30-60 minutes). When the timer goes off, they decide whether to continue pairing on that task/item, to deem the work item as "done," or to abandon the task/item. In any case, it should be made transparent to others on the team the outcomes of the pairing.

  A common objection to pairing is often along the lines of, "Why do we need to have two people working on a problem that could be done by just one person? – This is an inefficient use of time." Yes, there can be an initial dip in overall output productivity. However, the observed slow-down in productivity is around 15%, not 50% as presumed, when pairing individuals [19].

  However, when my clients' teams thoughtfully pair persons on a consistent basis, those that use pairing far outperform those that don't - sometimes by 50% to 200% more output than before pairing. Why? When pairing, knowledge is gained and/or shared instantaneously (no lag time), which can be helpful for especially challenging tasks. Further, learning how different parts of systems integrate together (whether they are technical or non-technical "systems") can be helpful in understanding how the many parts of the product come together and behave as a holistic system.

b. *Establish Cross-Functional Teams.*

Structure the team to include cross-functional members, meaning that the combined set of skills amongst every member of that team as a whole should have all the knowledge and capabilities necessary to get a work item to completion without having to rely exclusively on external persons. Furthermore:

- Ensure that the team members dedicate as much time as possible to that specific team. Team members should spend an overwhelming majority of their day (suggested 80% or greater) on work contained within that cross-functional team. This can minimize context switching. By keeping them focused on solving as few problems at the same time as possible, this can lead over time to a greater overall volume of completed work [20].

- Structure the work to eliminate silos. Organize the work tasks/outcomes to require more than one skill set; make sure that the tasks are designed in such a way to take advantage of the cross-functional structure of the team.

c. *Reward Teams not just Individuals.*

If possible, structure rewards/bonus/compensation/reviews with a significant portion based on teamwork and working together. If incentives are structured only towards individuals, it may be challenging to get them to work together.

3. Not feeling listened to (i.e. not being heard and/or feeling ignored/discounted)

In a recent coaching session, a client stated that they felt unheard at work, which directly resulted in their lack of engagement. This was a person with significant direct and deep experience in a highly visible task that was of strategic importance to that organization. However, when making suggestions, they stated that their ideas were continually ignored/met with silence or publicly shot down.

When people feel invisible or “anonymous”, they will not feel fulfilled in their work, especially if they feel devalued or non-existent [14]. In the scenario mentioned above, the client’s excitement of working with this team on a very visible product faded because they felt their ideas were consistently ignored and/or mocked. They felt like an outsider rather than a team member, and, over time, they became less and less engaged.

Some approaches to address not feeling listened to:

a. *Evaluate the Effectiveness of Communication Skills.*

   There could be a communication gap, perhaps in the style and/or medium of communication, from the person not feeling heard. Encourage the person not feeling included to self-reflect and seek feedback from their peers in a variety of aspects that may impact their communication effectiveness, such as:

   - Communication style/approach, including both verbal and non-verbal communication.
   - Potential inconsistency in behavior, such as passive/aggressive and/or throttling to high levels of engagement followed by lack of presence or lack of follow-through.
   - Modes of communication. For example, should they have called (or held a video conference meeting) instead of sending an email and/or slack message? If they only use a written medium (instead of interacting with another individual, as mentioned in the Agile Manifesto), there could be unintended misinterpretation in the coding (sending) or receipt (reading) of the messages.

b. *Submit ideas anonymously.*

   There can be a psychological safety felt by participants when there is a degree of anonymity in proposing ideas, especially for those less likely to speak up in a large group. Fantastic success can come from the "divergent-convergent" brainstorming technique (aka the Sticky Notes approach), that is typically executed in three steps:

   1. Persons anonymously and individually answer an open-ended question with as many responses as possible with each concept noted on separate sticky notes (i.e., the "divergent" stage). This can be done either in person or with any number of online virtual white board tools. Give this brainstorming step a maximum timebox of around 5(ish) minutes or so.

2. After brainstorming, have all the team members "swarm" to move the sticky notes with all the individual ideas around on the workspace board, grouping those responses on sticky notes into categories or themes. (i.e., the "convergent" stage)
3. The themes (i.e. categories) are then read aloud to ensure understanding (and, sometimes, can subsequently generate even more ideas).

Using this approach tends to enable a broader range of ideas to be identified, since this offers insights from various personalities, like the outgoing individuals who may inadvertently over-influence and/or over-drive the conversation and those that are more reserved or shy.

c. Pair with an influencer.

If you don't feel listened to, then chances are, there is someone who people do listen to. Pair with that person to get your ideas heard. Over time, if the "influencer" person is truly embracing a learning environment and servant leadership characteristics, they should make it known that it was your idea, gaining you credibility through others.

Overall, when it comes to feeling unheard (i.e., feeling like they are being ignored), a passive-aggressive cycle of someone shutting down tends to not only appear, but also tends to reinforce itself in a negative spiral. The internal dialogue can go like this: "I won't say anything anymore because when I do say something, I am ignored. When I don't say something, I'm chastised for not being engaged." This can be an especially hard cycle to break, often requiring multiple one-on-one sessions to build confidence up again.

4. Lack of Inclusion

Decisions are based 70% on emotion and 30% on rational factors [21]. So, if a person is merely feeling not included, they could shut down, and therefore, not want to engage.

While lack of inclusion is closely related to the challenge of not being heard, the subtle difference is that a lack of inclusion tends to result from feeling left out, whether it's perceived (it's what a person thinks or feels) or in actuality (no longer invited to meetings, not on emails or essential communications, etc.).

Increasing participation is one of the key approaches to address this gap. Participants naturally have more intrinsic buy-in (i.e. motivation from within one's own self) - and therefore greater engagement – when they have a say in the work they are performing. Some approaches to increase inclusion and participation could be:

a. *Involvement in the "upstream"*

Set a culture of engagement via inclusion [22]. Set time aside for inclusion activities instead of "just get this work done", especially for activities/tasks that typically happen "upstream" from the teams doing the work. Some examples might include participating in:

- Setting the strategy (how they will execute the vision)
- Setting the product development roadmap
- Design sessions
- Customer feedback sessions

Don't just invite the employee to be present in discussions/meetings. See how they can participate and contribute, as this is an important component for the employee to feel included.

b. *Involvement in setting up and/or improving the processes/tools*

When transitioning to an agile framework, many organizations try to radically reduce or eliminate processes and practices. Yet there is a *minimum* amount of tools, processes, and procedures needed in any organization, whether formalized via documentation or merely existing as unwritten "understood" practices. One of my mentors called this "minimum viable bureaucracy" – just enough process to keep things running.

So, using agile frameworks does *not* mean that *all* process goes away. When employees are involved in setting up their own processes and tools, there tends to be greater buy-in.

c. *Involvement in decision making*

Participatory Decision Making (PDM) is the active involvement of employees in an organization's process of determining decisions. Because organizations typically consist of individuals who come from different backgrounds and knowledge, PDM can often yield a more diverse and more innovative set of options as compared to individual decisions [23].

Involvement in the decision-making process has been noted by multiple authors as a healthy way to increase employee engagement.

5. Lack of recognition

Predictive Index's 2020 Report: The Impact of Behavioral Drives in a Remote Workspace stated that half the respondents in its survey felt that their companies offer sufficient opportunities for recognition. While this is promising because half the respondents feel this way, half of the respondents did not [24]. Further, recognition builds confidence [24], which can lead to greater engagement.

Some further statistics regarding appreciation include [25]:

- Employees who felt appreciated by their employers were 38% more engaged
- 80% of employees said recognition motivated them to work harder

Recognition, much like motivation, can be highly personal. A "one size fits all" recognition model will likely not find universal acceptance by recipients.

Some approaches to address lack of recognition include:

- Say "thank you." 50% of employees who received a thank you from their superior increased their level of satisfaction [25].
- Offer authentic recognition rather than a superficial token. Explain why that person is being recognized and the amazing impact that their actions have had for other teammates, customers, etc.
- Some people like public recognition and some do not. If unsure, recognize the person first in a private setting, then ask permission to share in a public setting, such as a weekly staff meeting, email, social media posting, etc.
- Make the recognition equitable and inclusive. Be aware if only one person continually gets recognized and/or if there are person(s) who have never been recognized.

Measuring Engagement

How can you assess good employee engagement? Unfortunately, measuring engagement is challenging, especially since it can be difficult to clearly and concisely define it.

A quick internet search shows that there is no shortage of tools claimed to measure employee engagement. One recommendation is to measure the following 10 items to help paint an overall holistic picture of employee engagement, including: feedback, recognition, happiness, relationship with peers, relationship with managers, personal growth, alignment, satisfaction, wellness, and ambassadorship [26]. Multiple well-known consulting organizations also offer their own proprietary (and fee-based) approach.

In formal research settings, Shuck [7] describes multiple instruments used for measuring employee engagement, such as the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), the Psychological Engagement Scale (based upon qualitative work by Kahn noted in the introduction), Job Engagement Scale (JES), and Shuck's own Employee Engagement Scale (EES).

Regardless of the tool used, whether a non-validated survey such as that offered by consulting firms or a more formal research-based instrument, it is essential to look at employee engagement from multiple points of view.

Conclusion

An organization's employees create value for the institution [27]. Ultimately, it's the employees' involvement that determines a company's success [28], making employee engagement a competitive differentiator [27] in today's marketplace.

There are no quick fixes when it comes to working to address the root causes for lack of engagement. Healthy workplace behaviors, especially by those in management and/or other leadership positions, need to be consistently modeled and encouraged.

While many of the approaches listed above may start with a leader initiating a conversation with the person who is disengaged, the person lacking engagement must also do their part to reconnect.

About the author, Dr. Steve Martin

Dr. Steve Martin is the President of Agility Guides, LLC. He is a trusted agile consulting partner, coach, trainer, and facilitator with over 25 years of experience in multiple industries, from startups to the Fortune 100. Steve specializes in working with senior leadership (CxOs) and management teams, iterating on transformation strategies, organization design, and reengineering business processes using agile and lean startup principles. Steve also is an experienced team coach, helping teams and organizations define and deliver amazing products and services to their customers.

Over the years, Steve has attained multiple certifications, including Certified Scrum Trainer (CST), Certified Agile Leadership (CAL) Educator, and Path to CSP Educator from the Scrum Alliance. He also currently holds the Project Management Professional (PMP) and PMI-Agile Certified Professional (PMI-ACP) certifications from the Project Management Institute. Steve has also served on several non-profit professional Board of Directors, including Agile Austin as well as with the Project Management Institute Massachusetts Bay Chapter.

Steve recently successfully defended his dissertation "Culture of Control and its Relationship to Successful Large Scale Agile Transformations," earning him a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree. He continues research is in the fields of organizational culture, leadership, and organizational change, and its impact on organizational agility.

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