

Cottage Street Consulting's Approach to Training

Don't train. Learn.

At Cottage Street Consulting, our experience has been that hands-on activities are the key to effective learning. All workshops are highly interactive, blending brief spurts of theory and principles with innovative, interactive exercises designed to make participants think and have fun. That's why we don't call it training.

Workshops are offered in 1 day and 2 day formats. They are taught onsite and in person for maximum impact in the shortest amount of time.

Workshop Offerings:

The following are brief descriptions for each of our current workshop offerings. If you are not finding the course that meets 100% of your needs, ask us about the option to "mix and match" topics from various workshops into a fully customized experience for your organization.

Workshops are limited to 20 attendees to allow for greater instructor interaction and better overall attendee experience.

Please note that 1 day workshops tend to be more of a standardized offering, providing overviews and introductions to concepts. Investing in a 2 day format allows for customization and greater direct application of the materials to your organization's specific and more immediate needs. Feedback from many participants of the 1 day format have indicated they wanted more and strongly desired the second day.

Certification Courses:

While all workshops in this catalogue are currently listed as non-certification courses, Steve is in the process of applying for the Certified Scrum Trainer (CST) designation. He's actively partnering with other authorized CSTs to deliver 2-day certification courses such as Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) and Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO). Reach out to Steve for details if certification is required!

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Scrum Foundations Workshop

Don't just "do" Scrum. Learn how to harness the value of using Scrum for your teams for more impactful results.

- Description
 - Scrum done well can help organizations deliver high value solutions quickly to their customers with higher satisfaction. In this workshop, we'll go beyond learning about the standard ceremonies, roles and artifacts. Through various hands on activities and exercises, participants will feel and gain deeper understanding of how all the Scrum concepts work together.
- Topics Covered
 - What's the problem?
 - Agile Values and Principles
 - Standard Scrum Ceremonies (Sprint Planning, Daily Standup, Sprint Review, Sprint Retrospective)
 - Scrum Roles (Product Owner, Scrum Master, Development Team Member)
 - Scrum Artifacts (Product Backlog, Sprint Backlog, Working Software)
 - Overview of Prioritizing and Sizing Product Backlogs
 - Common pitfalls adopting and executing Scrum
- Target Attendees:
 - Team Members, such as Developers, Business Analysts, Quality, and UX
 - Product Owners, Scrum Masters, and Project Managers
 - Managers
- You might also be interested in:
 - Product Owner Foundations Workshop
 - Release Planning Workshop
 - User Story Workshop

Kanban Foundations Workshop

Not ready for Scrum? Let Kanban help your organization drive quicker and higher quality results while dipping your toes in Agile.

- Description

There's more to Agile than Scrum. Based in Lean thinking, Kanban focuses on increasing value and reducing waste simultaneously by looking at the whole system itself, not just an individual or a single team.

Organizations that embrace a Kanban approach find that they can get more items done, more quickly and with higher quality. They do this by limiting the number of items worked on at a time and ensuring transparency in their process.

Kanban tends to be a more "evolutionary" approach to Agile for those that want to try Agile without a full commitment to Scrum.

- Topics Covered

- What's the problem?
- Agile Values and Principles
- Lean Thinking
- 5 Core Principles of Kanban:
 - Visualizing the Workflow
 - Limiting the Work in Progress
 - Measuring and Managing the Process
 - Making Process Policies Explicit
 - Continuously optimizing processes

- Target Attendees

- Team Members, such as Developers, Business Analysts, Quality, and UX
- Product Owners, Scrum Masters, and Project Managers
- Managers

- You might also be interested in:

- Product Owner Foundations Workshop
- Release Planning Workshop
- User Story Workshop

Agile Foundations Overview: Scrum, Kanban, or XP?

Agile is more than Scrum. Learn various popular approaches to Agile, so you can select what works best for you.

- Description

There are several different approaches, or “flavors”, of Agile, each addressing a need from a different perspective. As you might expect, each approach has pros and cons, which can often be in the eye of the beholder.

So, how do you choose? Some of considerations when selecting a type of Agile include organizational culture, team maturity, executive and management capabilities, working styles of various groups, the customers you’re trying to service (internal or external), your industry/your marketplace, technical factors, and so forth.

We’ll provide brief overviews of the 3 most popular approaches to Agile, including Scrum, Kanban and Extreme Programming (XP). We’ll explore conditions that tend to favor one approach over the other, so you can determine for your projects and organization what might be best suited.

- Topics Covered

- What’s the problem?
- Agile Values and Principles
- Overview of Scrum (Ceremonies, Roles, Artifacts)
- Overview of Kanban (Lean Thinking, 5 Principles)
- Overview of Extreme Programming (14 Practices)
- Factors that favor Scrum, Kanban and XP
- Set action plan for your next steps

- Target Attendees

- Managers and Directors
- Scrum Masters, Product Owners, Product Managers, and Project Managers
- Senior/Lead Team Members

- You might also be interested in:

- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Kanban Foundations Workshop
- Product Owner Foundations Workshop

Product Owner Foundations Workshop

Learn approaches and techniques to enable more impactful Product Owners on your Agile teams, leading to more successful products.

- Description

The Product Owner role is one of the most exciting yet seemingly misunderstood roles in Scrum. In this workshop, participants will gain greater insights into the responsibilities of a Product Owner, and how that might differ from their existing role. We'll start with a brief overview of Agile Values and Principles and a quick tour of standard Scrum ceremonies, artifacts and three Scrum roles. Then we'll deep dive into activities and approaches to enable the Product Owner to be more successful on their day to day job.

- Topics Covered

- What's the problem?
- Agile Values and Principles
- Standard Scrum Ceremonies (Sprint Planning, Daily Standup, Sprint Review, Sprint Retrospective), Roles and Artifacts
- Product Backlogs (Structure, Prioritizing, Sizing)
- Features, Epics and User Stories
- Overview of Planning in Agile, including Release Roadmaps and Sprints Roadmaps
- Common Product Owner pitfalls

- Target Attendees

- Product Owners, Product Managers, and Business Analysts
- Scrum Masters and Project Managers
- Senior/Lead Team Members
- Managers

- You might also be interested in:

- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Release Planning Workshop
- User Story Workshop

Release Planning Workshop

Learn how to create release plans, which is a powerful tool that can help bridge vision and teams, providing clarity, transparency, and direction for all your Agile initiatives.

- Description

Delivering working product iteratively and incrementally is a core concept to Agile. However, many organizations and their customers still think about large, fully developed releases with “all” of the functionality contained therein. This typically introduces two types of risk: (1) product risk – if the timeline is long to introduce a product or feature, you may miss the market or actual need, and (2) technical risk – large releases inherently have greater risk due to complexity, often surfacing as quality issues.

This workshop is designed to help organizations think through how to establish a release strategy through Release Roadmaps. By carefully thinking through releasing chunks of functionality over time not only enables the introduction of value along the way, but also reduces risk. It enables room for the product to evolve as you learn how the customer interacts and reacts to the solution while addressing technical issues along the way.

- Topics Covered

- Recap of Agile Values and Principles
- Overview of Planning in Agile
- Personas – who are your customers and other stakeholders?
- Overview of Vision Statements
- Overview of Story Mapping
- Minimum Viable Product (MVP)
- Components of a Release Plan
- Approach for sizing/estimating releases
- Feedback loops

- Target Attendees

- Product Owners, Product Managers, and Business Analysts
- Key client/business stakeholders
- Scrum Masters, Project Managers, and Team Members
- Managers

- You might also be interested in:

- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Product Owner Foundations Workshop
- User Story Workshop

User Story Workshop

User stories are the cornerstone for any Agile project. Learn and apply user story techniques to your specific project.

- Description

User stories are the foundation for any work performed in Agile. However, many organizations try to think of user stories as a “new” format to write requirements. This, in turn, often results in traditional requirements simply rewritten in the standard user story format, but they are still requirements underneath.

User stories have an easy to understand format. However, they are fundamentally different from requirements. They focus more on outcomes and value (e.g. why are we doing this?) for your users rather than specifying “put this feature over here”. There’s a greater emphasis in collaboration and communication from a cross-functional set of roles, versus user stories being written from one perspective. Lastly, while requirements tend to have the “write and sign off once” mantra, user stories are intended to evolve over time, with more details added only when necessary.

It takes practice to write good user stories. In this workshop, not only will attendees be exposed to core user story theory, but we’ll also spend some time writing user stories for your actual projects.

- Topics Covered

- Recap of Agile Values and Principles
- Overview of Planning in Agile
- Personas – who are your customers and other stakeholders?
- Overview of Minimum Viable Product and Release Plans
- User story format (descriptions, acceptance criteria)
- INVEST principle for good user stories
- User story prioritization and sizing techniques
- Splitting user stories
- Definition of Ready and Definition of Done

- Target Attendees

- Product Owners, Product Managers, Business Analysts
- Senior/Lead Team Members
- Scrum Masters

- You might also be interested in:

- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Product Owner Foundations Workshop
- Release Planning Workshop

Lean Startup Principles

Are you sure your stakeholders actually want that? Learn how to incorporate insightful product development techniques to validate your solutions, reducing risk while accelerating value.

- Description

Lean Startup concepts introduced by Eric Reis have a profound impact on any organization trying to produce and release products that will have high value to their intended stakeholders. The switch from the “we have to do this” mantra to the “should we do this” mindset helps organizations quickly narrow in on what is really needed versus what is thought to be needed.

In this highly interactive workshop, we’ll cover how to approach projects and requirements as experiments and hypotheses, gathering feedback along the way to validate if you’re going in the right direction. Learn how embracing a transparent, open learning culture for your product development and delivery tends to reduce time to market and overall risk.

- Topics Covered

- Intro to Lean and Lean Thinking
- Customer Development
- Intro to Core Lean Startup Concepts (Hypotheses, Experiments, MVP, Build-Measure-Learn Loop, Pivot vs Persevere)
- Business Model Canvas, Lean Startup Canvas, and Pitch Statements
- Personas
- Experiment Dashboards and Experiment Reports
- Validating / Measuring Outcomes

- Target Attendees

- Product Owners, Product Managers, Business Analysts
- Scrum Masters
- Managers
- Team Members, such as Developers, Quality, and UX

- You might also be interested in:

- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Release Planning Workshop
- User Story Workshop
- Agile Foundations Overview: Scrum, Kanban, or XP?

Agile for Leaders

With self-organization and self-management as core concepts for Agile teams, discover how leadership and management changes in an Agile organization, and what you need to do differently as a Leader

- Description

Agile frameworks typically provide no guidance on leadership responsibilities, even though leaders have a critical role with teams and executives. Understanding how to operate effectively as a leader in Agile not only helps teams better deliver, but also enables the organization to adopt and apply Agile concepts more smoothly. This drives longer lasting benefits and experience greater product/project success.

Through hands-on exercises and group learning sessions, attendees will better understand how they and their teams should be working, how to spot trouble early, and how to adjust their actions to help create the right conditions for agility to take greater hold both within their teams and across the organization.

Note: This is not an introductory course. Attendees should have had some exposure to Scrum, Kanban or other Agile approaches.

- Topics Covered

- Recap of Agile Values and Principles
- Understanding your role as a Leader in Agile (Leadership vs Management)
- Motivation and Leadership Agility
- 7 Agile Leadership Principles
- Your next steps

- Target Attendees

- Managers and Directors
- Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and Project Managers
- Senior/Lead Team Members

- You might also be interested in:

- Agile Foundations Overview: Scrum, Kanban, or XP?
- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Kanban Foundations Workshop

Executive Agile Overview (this workshop comes in a half-day format)

As an executive in your organization, learn how you can impact the overall success of applying Agile approaches to enable greater attainment of your organization's goals.

- Description

To enable a more successful Agile adoption, an organization's executive leadership should have a common understanding of how transitioning to Agile approaches impacts their organization's delivery of products to their stakeholders. With over 70% of change initiatives failing, set your organization up for greater success by approaching Agile as a mindset across your enterprise, not a methodology to force on a team or department.

In this hands-on workshop, attendees will gain insights into core Agile concepts, including when to use what type of Agile when. Next, we'll explore why your executive team wants to adopt Agile. We'll then provide examples from other engagements of approaches and techniques that helped with greater adoption, and correlate how outcomes from these mini case studies might impact your organization.

- Topics Covered

- What is Agile?
 - Overview of Scrum, Kanban, Extreme Programming, Lean Startup Concepts
 - Trends and outcomes with Agile seen in industry
- Why consider Agile at your organization?
- What's needed from Executives for successful Agile transformations/rollouts? Includes:
 - Importance of a learning culture
 - Product that can be incrementally released to interested stakeholders
 - Communications
 - Pilot programs with dedicated teams
 - Enterprise view versus team/project view
 - Potential changes in responsibilities for Executives, Management and Teams
- Next Steps/Action Plan

- Target Attendees

- Executive Management (CxOs, EVPs, Senior/Managing Directors)

- You might also be interested in:

- Agile Foundations Overview: Scrum, Kanban, or XP?

Reenergize your Agile Transformation

Sometimes Agile transformations stall or have a hard time starting. In this thought provoking workshop, we'll discuss typical adoption anti-patterns, so attendees can determine their next steps.

- Description

Too often, transitions to Agile that start out with a bang quickly fizzle under the weight of the status quo, desire to keep existing business processes, and misunderstandings about Agile. If this has happened to your team, don't panic!

There are a set of observed typical anti-patterns seen by organizations– especially as they begin to understand Agile is not a process, but an approach to delivering superior value for your clients. In this workshop, we'll recap core Agile concepts, investigate into why you decided to attempt Agile, and generate list of current pain points. Based upon issues and drivers identified, we'll deep dive into various anti-patterns, and discuss several options for next steps.

Note: This is not an introductory workshop. This is a highly participatory workshop for those folks that have started down the Agile path and have hit a bump (or two), or for those that have “stalled out” in their adoption efforts.

- Topics Covered

- Recap Agile Values & Principles – where do you rate yourselves?
- Drivers for adopting Agile -why did you want to adopt Agile in the first place?
- Overviews of different types of Agile (Scrum, Kanban, XP, Lean Startup) – are you using the “right” approach for your organization?
- Roles & responsibilities
- Typical anti-patterns and how to combat them*:
 - Teams
 - Management
 - Executives
 - Process & Technology
- Circle of Focus – where should you focus your next steps?

* Attendees will pick area(s) of interest from the anti-pattern list. Based upon their selection, we'll do deep dives into those topics.

- Target Attendees

- Those with intermediate/advanced knowledge of Agile at their organization
- Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and Project Managers
- Managers and Directors

- You might also be interested in:

- Agile Foundations Overview: Scrum, Kanban, or XP?
- Scrum Foundations Workshop
- Kanban Foundations Workshop
- Release Planning Workshop
- User Story Workshop