

# Evolving Agile

How Agile Professionals are Adapting to New Business Challenges

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# Robert Marten

20 Years in Agile/Project Management Leadership



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## Major Agile Job Cuts (2023–2024)

- **Capital One Cuts 1,000 Agile Roles** (January 2024)
  - Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters eliminated as Agile responsibilities shift to engineers and product managers.
- **Boeing Lays Off Agile Coaches** (Late 2023 – Early 2024)
  - Boeing trimmed Agile-related roles during broader layoffs in its IT and engineering teams.
- **Walmart Reduces Agile-Specific Roles** (2023)
  - The retail giant shifted Agile responsibilities to engineering teams, reducing standalone Scrum Master positions.
- **Major Banks and Financial Institutions Scaling Back Agile**
  - **Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase, and Citibank** streamlined Agile functions, favoring product-centric Agile models.
- **IBM & Other Large Enterprises Move Away from Dedicated Agile Roles** (2023-2024)



# Real life example

- Mid-sized SaaS company
- Agile from day 1
- 34 Scrum Teams
- 17 Scrum Masters
- Rapidly increasing questions of value
- Introduction of Prod Ops

# Assessment – *What we found...*

## **Product Ideation**

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- Inconsistent process and approaches
- Numerous roles/people involved
- Lack of transparency and communication

## **Development**

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- Effective scrum teams
- Increasing engineering accountability for their process/outputs
- Increased adaptability

## **Product Launch**

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- Black hole
- Customer facing teams surprised more than not
- Lack of understanding what happens here

# Here comes Prod Ops!



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- Unclear vision
- Uneducated partners on their role/mission
- Adding value wherever they could creating a mixed bag of tasks
- Unproductive handoffs throughout the PDLC





Dig In & Hope

Adapt

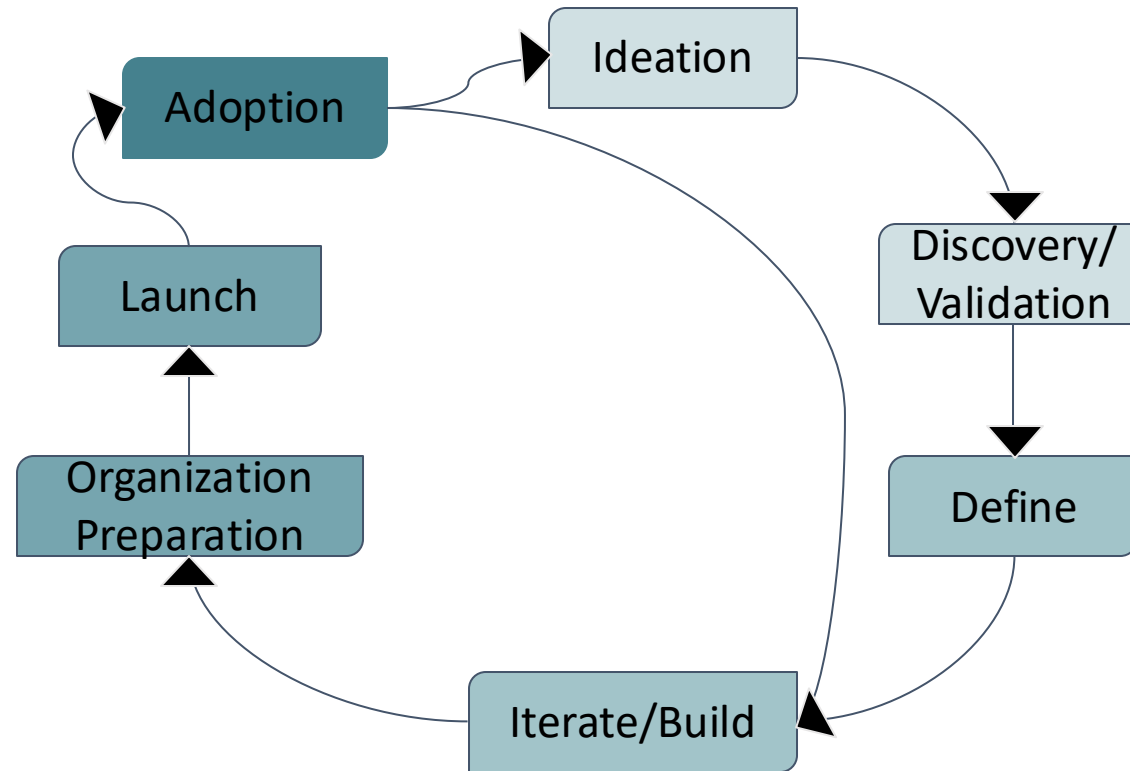
# From SDLC to PDLC

Scrum Master to Program Manager



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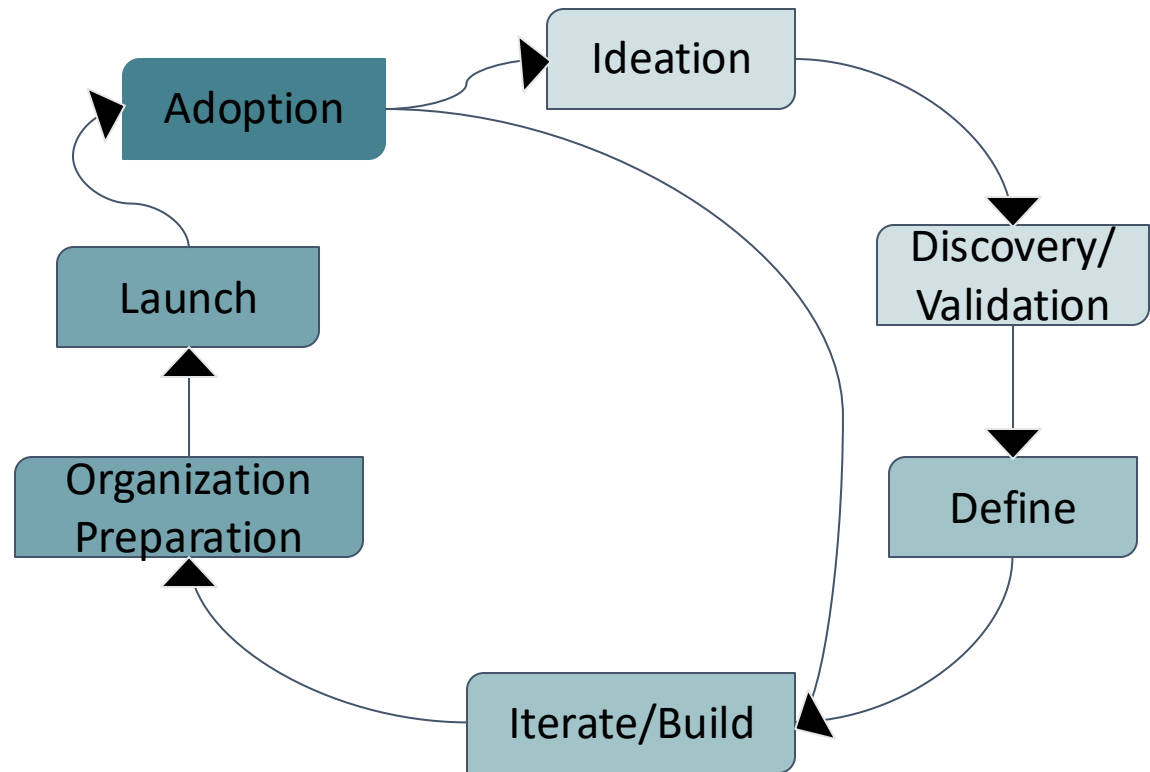
# Product Development Life Cycle (PDLC)



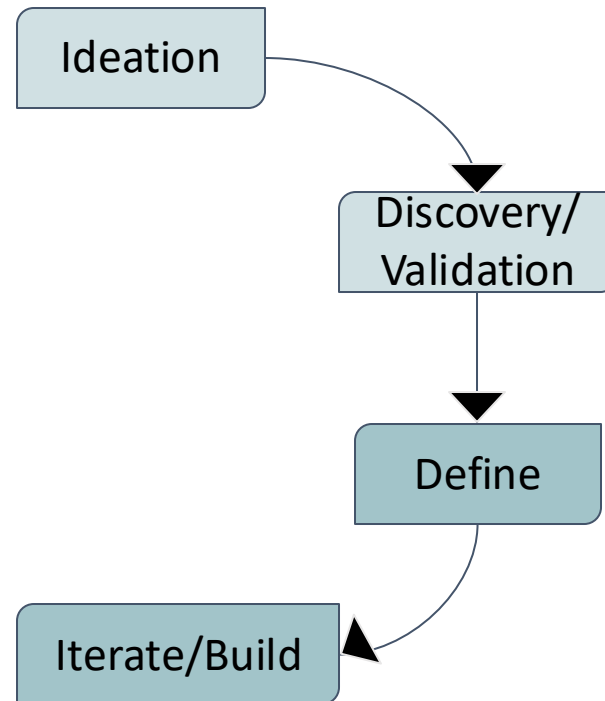
## Scrum Master Owned



## Program Manager Owned



# Product Development Life Cycle (PDLC)



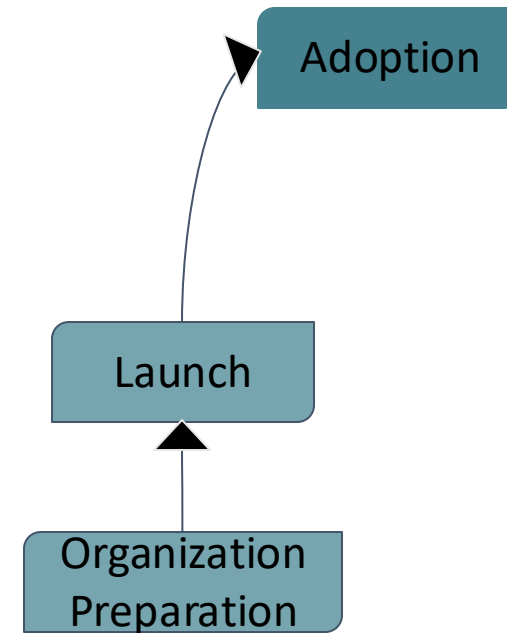
## Program Manager Stakeholders:

- Product Operations managers
- Scrum/Engineering Teams
- Product Managers
- Product Marketing
- Legal / Security

# Product Development Life Cycle (PDLC)

## Program Manager Stakeholders:

- Product Operations managers
- Product Managers
- Product Marketing
- Legal / Security
- Revenue/ Sales
- Enablement
- Support Teams



# Personal Benefit

1. Increase visibility within the company
2. Increase value they provide by increasing their ability to be strategic
3. Increase knowledge and exposure to other areas of the business



# Product Operations

## Product Operations Managers

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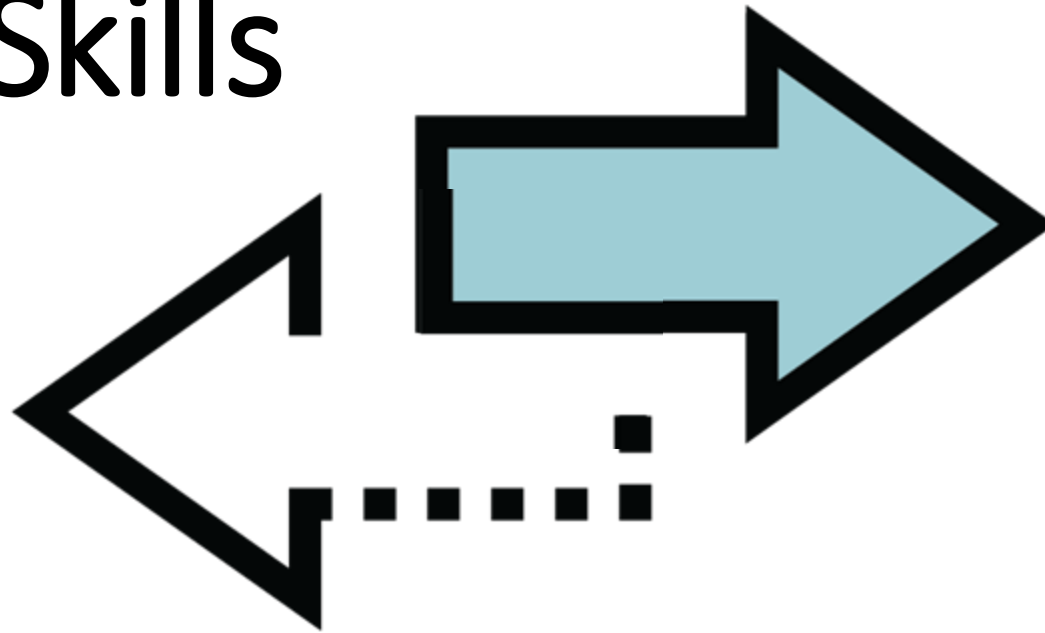
- Optimizing operating systems for scale
- Internal tool adoption
- Aggregated user data and insights (VOC)
- Tool administration and optimization

## Program Managers

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- Product development lifecycle optimization and execution
  - Adoption goal setting
  - Cross functional coordination
- GTM coordination and execution

# Transferable Skills



# Agile Facilitation → Process Optimization



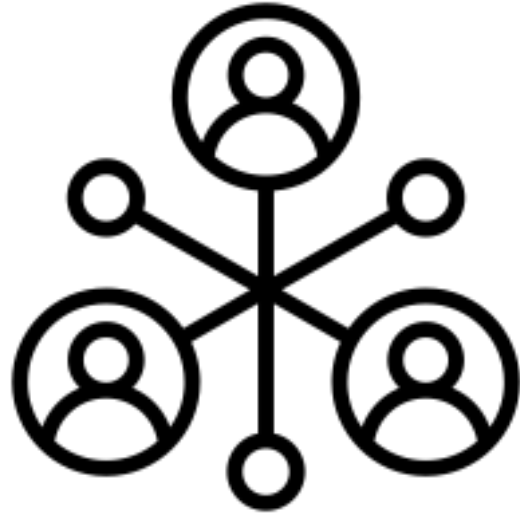
## Agile Skill:

Running sprint planning, standups, and retrospectives to improve team efficiency.

## Product Ops Skill:

Optimizing workflows, ensuring smooth collaboration between product, engineering, and customer teams. (In the case of program management, still leading or coaching the scrum process)

# Stakeholder Management → Cross-Functional Coordination



## Agile Skill:

Managing product owners, engineers, and leadership in Agile ceremonies.

## Product Ops Skill:

Aligning product, marketing, sales, and support teams to improve product delivery and go-to-market strategies.

# Data-Driven Decision-Making → Metrics & Analytics



## Agile Skill:

Tracking team velocity, burn-down charts, and Agile KPIs.

## Product Ops Skill:

Analyzing product usage data, customer feedback, and operational metrics to improve product success.

# Continuous Improvement → Process Scaling



## Agile Skill:

Identifying bottlenecks and experimenting with Agile frameworks for efficiency.

## Product Ops Skill:

Refining product development processes, launching best practices, and ensuring scalability.

# Communication & Collaboration → Product Enablement



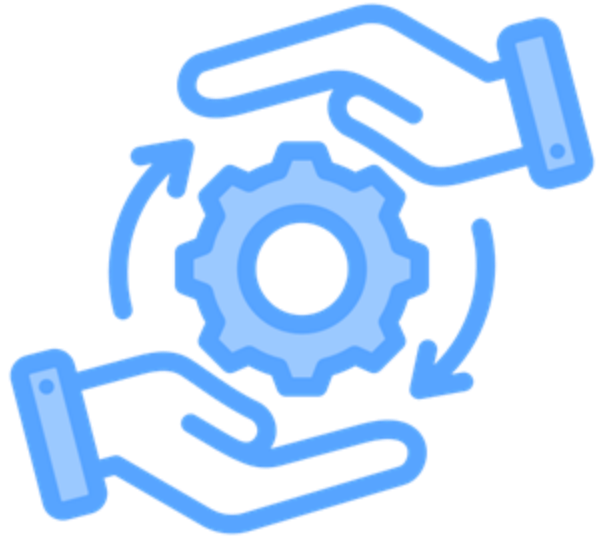
## Agile Skill:

Facilitating collaboration between developers and business stakeholders.

## Product Ops Skill:

Training teams on tools, processes, and product strategies to drive efficiency.

# Change Management → Implementing Product Strategy



## Agile Skill:

Adapting Agile methodologies to fit an organization's evolving needs.

## Product Ops Skill:

Managing rollouts of new product processes, tools, and cross-functional initiatives.

# The next wave...



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# The product movement

# Questions?



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