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The Home of Scrum

Leading with Evidence: *Navigating Complexity through the Agile Product Operating Model*

Addressing the Core Barriers to Value

11th Feb 2026

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Quick Guidelines

- Your microphones will be muted throughout
- This session is recorded. The recording and slides will be available after the webinar within 24 hours.
- Please ask questions!
  - Submit questions by selecting the Q & A icon:

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Who is Scrum.org

Mission:
Helping People and Teams Solve Complex Problems

Ken Schwaber
Scrum.org Founder,
Chairman and
Co-creator of Scrum

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Dave West

- CEO Scrum.org
- Former CPO Tasktop
- Former Research Director, Forrester Research
- Former RUP Product Manager
- Author Head First OOAD, Nexus
- “Agilist” since ‘2003

Darrell Fernandes

- Executive Advisor
  - Scrum.org
  - Planview
- Former Head of Product Technology, TIAA
- Former CIO, SIPD, Fidelity Investments
- “Agilist” since ‘95
- “Product Modeler” since ‘07
- Mentor, Women Unlimited

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The Problem We're Solving

The Reality: Traditional operating models are no longer sufficient in an era of constant change and rising complexity.

The "Transformation Plateau": Many organizations move beyond waterfall but get stuck in a "Sometimes" mode—having agile vocabulary but lacking agile muscle memory.

The Danger: This middle ground creates an illusion of progress while outcomes remain inconsistent.

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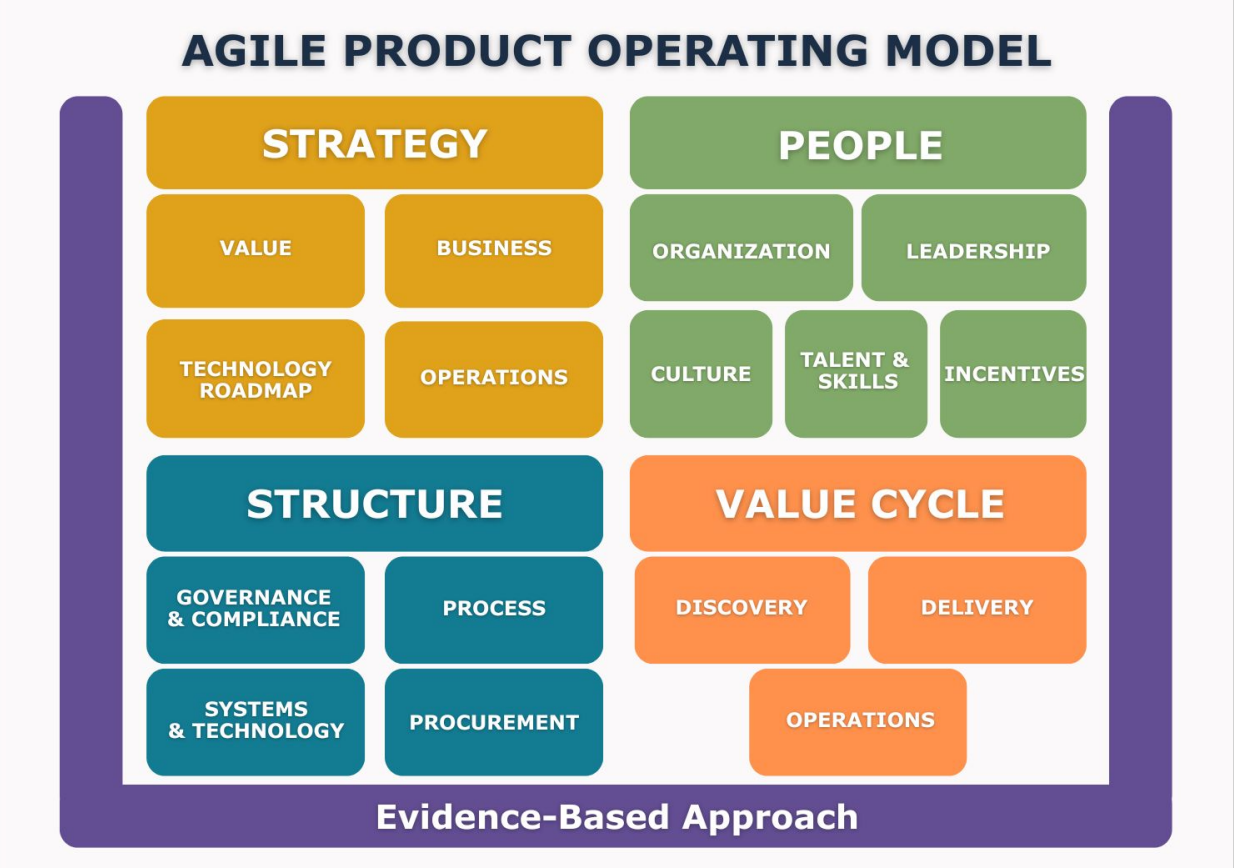
Agile Product Operating Model



- **A Holistic Approach:** APOM extends Professional Scrum to help organizations deliver value continuously and thrive in uncertainty.
- **Core Principles:** It combines modern product management, agile delivery, and Evidence-Based Management (EBM).
- **Alignment:** The model is designed to align organizational practices clearly with digital goals.

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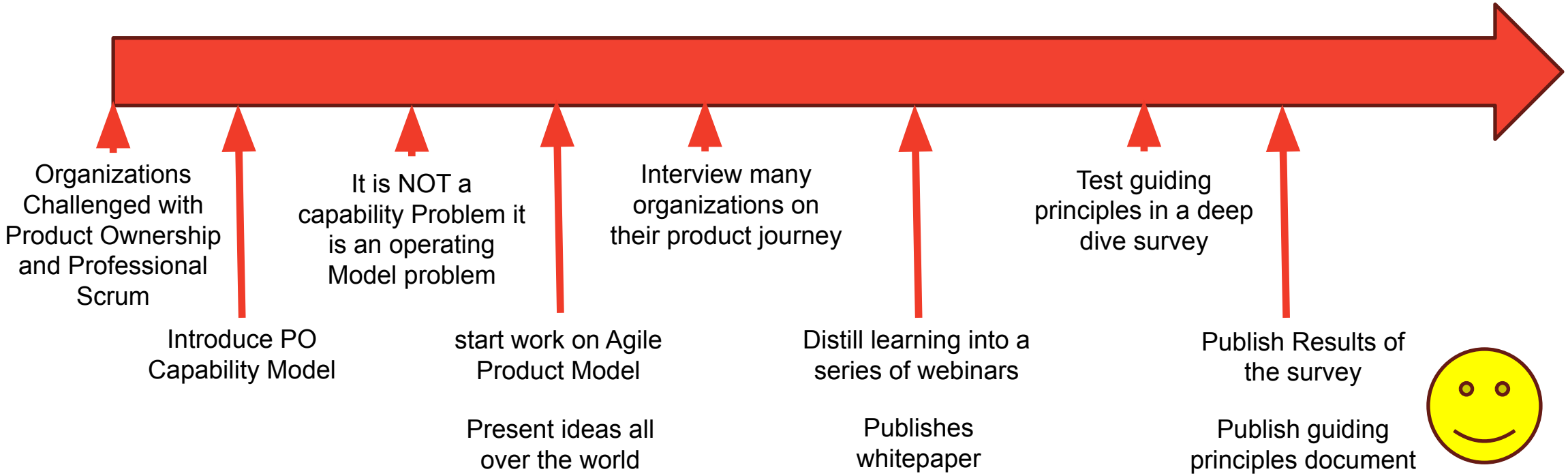
APOM History



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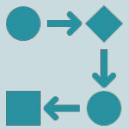
The Consistency Crisis



Key Finding: Organizations adopt agile practices on a situational basis rather than systematically.

The Data Trap: High "Sometimes" and low "Always" responses reveal that teams apply principles when convenient, not by default.

The Barrier: This inconsistency is the primary barrier to maturity, leading to unpredictable outcomes.

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The Challenges

#1 - **The Evidence Gap**

#2 - **Portfolio Chaos at Scale**

#3 - **The Missing Middle**

#4 - **The Value vs. Features Tension**

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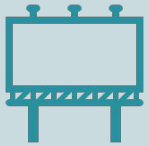
Challenge #1 - The Evidence Gap

Weak Empiricism: Reliance on evidence is weak; 28.7% report decisions are only half evidence-based.

Opinion Rule: 22.1% of organizations rarely use evidence, relying instead on opinions and assumptions.



Innovation Theater: Only 35.2% consistently use data-driven experiments, risking building features without building insights.

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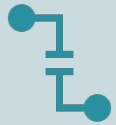
Challenge #2 - Portfolio Chaos at Scale



Weakest Link: Portfolio management scored the lowest across all metrics (38.9% effective).

Coordination Failure: 61.7% of respondents report inconsistent cross-product coordination.

Global Sub-optimization: Without effective portfolio functions, agile teams optimize locally at the expense of the enterprise (e.g., duplicated work, conflicting roadmaps).

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Challenge #3 - The Missing Middle

The Disconnect: 52.9% report a product-centric goal, yet only 14.7% report consistent leadership behaviors that empower agile ways of working.

The Impediment: Transformation stalls when middle managers fail to shift from command-and-control to servant-leadership.

Signs of Struggle: Managers demanding detailed upfront plans and measuring utilization rather than outcomes.

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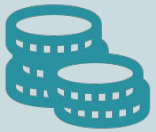
Challenge #4 - The Value vs. Features Tension

Prioritization Gap: Only 16.9% of respondents consistently prioritize value over outputs.

Mixed Focus: 63.9% of organizations report a struggle to maintain a consistent "value-first" focus.



Strategic Perception: Product development's role is ambiguous, with 33.1% seeing it as a cost factor as much as a strategic enabler.

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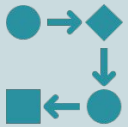
Strategic Recommendations

Value-First Strategy: Establish clear, measurable business-driven outcomes and move beyond feature delivery and deadlines.

Strategic Positioning: Position product development as a source of business or service growth, not merely an operational cost.



Systematic Practice: Commit to systematic, not situational, agile practice to move beyond the transformation plateau.

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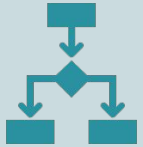
Your Next Steps

Download: Access the full "Unlocking the Agile Product Operating Model" whitepaper at Scrum.org.

Assess: Take the APOM survey to benchmark your organizational reality against aspirational goals. The “Guiding Principles of APOM” provide a great platform for assessing.



Align: Strengthen leadership behaviors and realign structures to the APOM model.

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