

# Accidental Adoption

The Story of Scrum at amazon.com<sup>®</sup>

# I'm Alan Atlas. You can find me at...

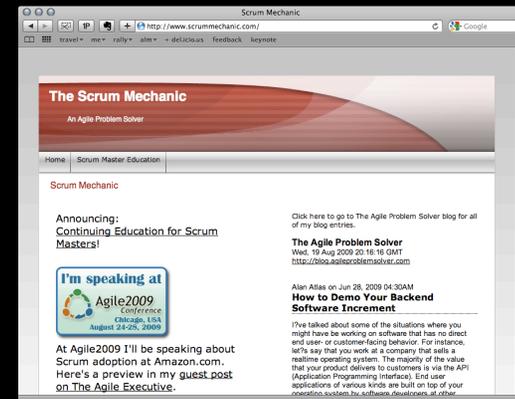
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*Once upon a time...*

# Scrum at amazon.com<sup>®</sup> in June 2004...

teams using scrum

---

3

number of developers

---

?

other agile flavors

---

?

individuals on internal  
scrum mailing list

---

3

csm graduates

---

~0

reputation of scrum

---

**unknown**



# Working Backwards....

It's a development **philosophy**, not a **methodology**

It's good, but not good enough

# Working Backwards....

Start with the customer and then...

... work backwards to the project

Press Release, FAQ, User Manual

Code? Oh yes, you should do some of that too.













*What happened  
next, Daddy?*

From: aatlas@amazon.com  
Subject: Introduction to Scrum  
Date: August 11, 2005 9:44:38 PM PDT  
To: scrum@amazon.com  
When: Tuesday, August 25, 2005 3:00 PM-5:00 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time  
(US & Canada).  
Where: Conf US 103

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Scrum is a relatively new development methodology that is being adopted worldwide. This short introduction will cover the Agile movement, the basics of the scrum process framework, and the expected benefits of Scrum.

Please forward this to anybody that you think might be interested.

alan

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# Scrum at amazon.com<sup>®</sup> In January 2007...

teams using scrum

---

?

number of developers

---

?

other agile flavors

---

**3** teams

individuals on internal  
scrum mailing list

---

**100**

csm graduates

---

**150**

reputation of scrum

---

**slightly  
positive**

## reputation of scrum

---

Development teams like it

Slightly positive overall

Significant failure cases

Resistance in many areas

Misunderstanding among management

Confusion with Lean Manufacturing



June 2008: **Jackpot!**



# July 2008: Scrum Gathering



# Scrum at amazon.com® In January 2009...

teams using scrum

**50%**

number of developers

**1000s**

other agile flavors

**3 teams**

individuals on internal  
scrum mailing list

**600**

csm graduates

**450**

reputation of scrum

**mostly  
positive**

# reputation of scrum

---

Positive overall

Significant failure cases

Resistance in many areas

Misunderstanding among management

Confusion with Lean Manufacturing

*Lessons Learned...*

# Prime Impediments

Lack of teams

Lack of permission

Lack of knowledge

# Community Matters

Email alias (with actual traffic)

In-person events

Outreach (simple communication makes a difference)

Center of gravity (corporate resource)

# Coaching Matters

Moral support

Immediate success in lots of cases

Credibility with managers

Better understanding of implementation of Scrum

Reduction of skepticism and resistance

# Managers Matter

Middle managers must be a part of things

Can inadvertently kill an adoption via lack of knowledge

Can kill an adoption on purpose

Can be a critical success factor...

... for adoptions that need support / air cover

# Bottom-up Is Not Enough

Eventually executive sponsorship is a necessity

Without it, adoption stalls at the team level

Enterprise level change requires it...

... PMO, Portfolio Management

... CRM, HR Policies, Etc.

# Attribution

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Slide and Presentation Design



