Design for Hybrid Agile Adoption

(An Enterprise Agile framework to execute Agile Projects in an Onsite-Offshore and Outsourced Environment)

By Upadrista

Abstract:

A very systematic and authoritative approach has been demonstrated by Upadrista Venkatesh (Upadrista) via his new framework called as DH2A (Design for Hybrid Agile Adoption) on how to make agile successful in an onsite-offshore and outsourced environment. Not limited to a single project, an extension to the DH2A framework called as e-Dh2A (enterprise DH2A Rollout) is part of this reading material which defines a framework to roll-out DH2A across an organization which provides the enduring benefits of definite cost savings and the most qualitative software for project development.

The framework is coming into the industry via the authors new book called as *Design for Hybrid Agile Adoption – An enterprise agile framework for Distributed Teams*

The book is divided into three sections where the author in the first section specifically speaks about the evolution of DH2A and the advantaged distributed agile brings in, as compared to the collocated agile approaches. The author here also speaks about how different methodologies in the industry today failed to provide the enduring benefits of outsourcing which is the receipt of developing the framework called as "Design for Hybrid Agile Adoption".

The second section of this book defined the life cycle of "*Design for Hybrid Agile Adoption (DH2A)*" framework which evolved from authors vast experience of successfully executing agile projects in a distributed and outsourced environment that has given a new paradigm in the software development industry towards the success of distributed agile.

The final section of this book defines a Framework to roll-out DH2A across an enterprise called as the e-DH2A framework. Bringing the concepts of Program Management Office, e-DH2A marries both the worlds of a PMO set-up and DH2A to make DH2A roll-out consistent and successful across the organization.

Please reach out Upadrista on his email venkatesh@venkateshupadrista.com to receive few complimentary Chapters of the book.

Value is a driving factor in today's industry. What interests everyone in a concept is the value it derives at the end, and its predicted stability in the long run. Extracting value from a concept is not an engineering science but is the a thought converted to reality that come out of experience and becomes the guiding principles towards new disciplines which are the motivations towards the real changes.

As software development has come to the peak trend in globally distributed setting, many organizations has shown interest towards blending Agile with outsourcing and the offshore strategies but are largely skeptic about the challenges in terms of communication, culture and team collaboration. Distributed development is the fact of life for most of the organization and in today's epoch where everyone are targeted with stringent cost controls offshoring has played a very crucial role to meet this criteria. Distributed agile as the name denotes is a methodology to execute agile projects in a distributed environment with a common goal of project success in mind.

Thought collocated agile approaches today has seen judicious success towards project execution, it has moved the industry paradigm to decades back where projects were being executed in collocated approaches defeating the advantages of cost controls. With today's perception of many individuals towards distributed agile not being successful has drawn the industry skeptic towards the model and the prime reason towards this is due to the shine of success in distributed agile not coming to light thought the local communities apart from the little guidance to apply the principles for a successful distributed agile implementation.

In my own experience, I have seen some of my customers being skeptic towards the success of distributed agile and such a combination has occurred very frequently and has been treated as an unsuccessful buzz word in the industry. But on the other hand there were many matured organizations I came across where offshoring has been the core of their business fundamentals apart from adapting to the emerging industry practices and partnering with such organizations have given me an edge to demonstrate the success of distributed agile. My personally experience has seen the success of distributed agile and my inspiration towards "Design for Hybrid Agile adoption" model is a challenge to cope up with the trends and methodologies those have been under constant scrutiny to emerge with better models.

All recent methodologies are striving to be more effective and efficient for successful delivery of the projects with high client satisfaction and better productivity factors within specified and tolerable limits and distributed agile is one such leaning today.

The DH2A Framework:

DH2A has defined its life cycle based on several successful experiences of executing agile projects in an onsite-offshore environment which has given a new paradigm in the software development industry towards the success of distributed agile. With several matures models existing today, most of them address the non agile approaches combining the offshoring strategies while others combine agile in collocated strategies. DH2A is the only model which marries the worlds of offshoring, outsourcing and agile together and is the receipt of many challenges existing today in distributed agile which provides the utmost advantage by combining agile in an outsourcing & offshoring environment.

DH2A framework instigates a 5 phased approach as demonstrated in Figure 1.1 and is an outcome of many successful projects executed in agile combined with the outsourcing and offshoring strategies which has shaped the direct correlation to real time implementation. DH2A draws its success from the different patterns, best practices, processes and procedures defined to make a distributed team successful in the agile approach. You might be wondering why I am being so scrupulous to use the terms outsourcing and offshoring specifically in all my discussions. Thought today Outsourcing and offshoring are being used interchangeably in public discourse, the definitions are quite diverse. Outsourcing is the strategy in which work is subcontracted, such as product design or manufacturing, to a third-party company and offshoring is the process in which the work is transferred to low cost countries. Many of today's organizations combine the services of outsourcing and offshoring together to garner the superior benefits of cost controls.
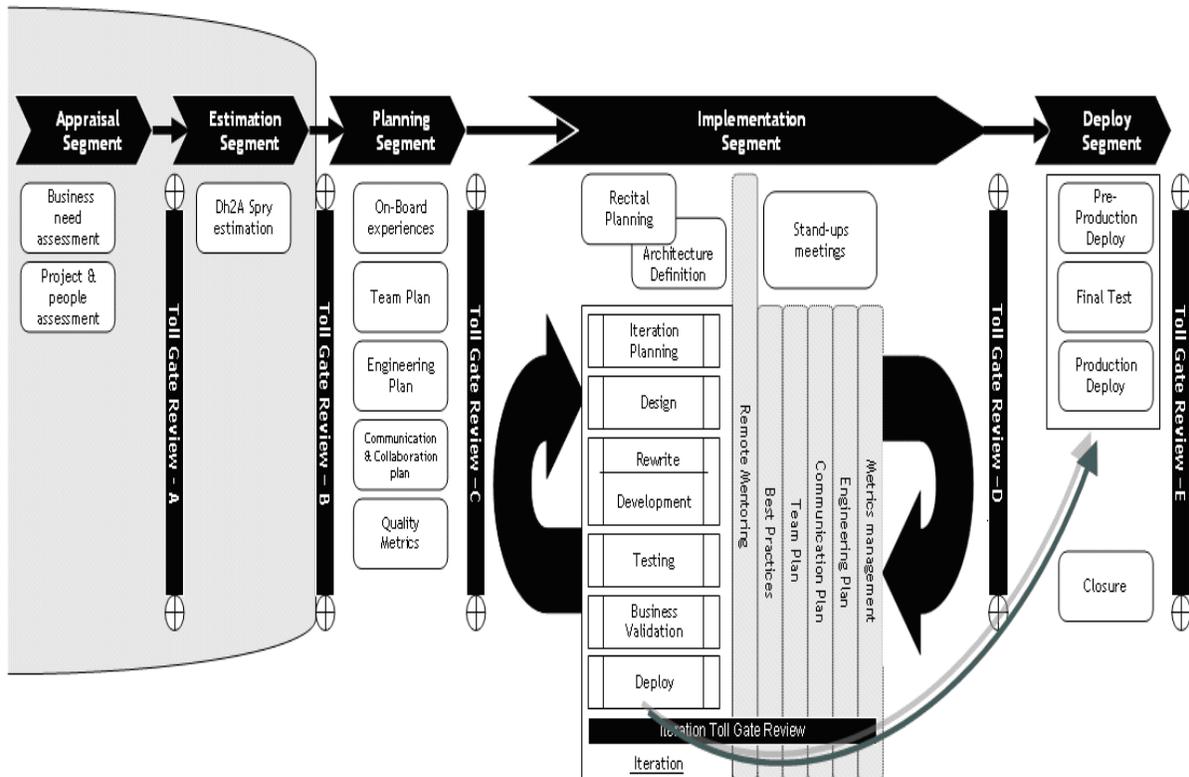
Figure 1.1: DH2A Framework

The reason for these discussion and definitions is to make the impression of DH2A clear in minds of each individual that the model is designed for projects which want to garner the benefits of agile in an onsite-offshore and outsourced model. DH2A thought strictly is defined to overcome the challenges of the distributed agile environment, however it ensures that the spirit of collocated agile is maintained which means that DH2A is also applicable for projects which want to execute in a collocated approach.

Thought this thesis paper does not speak in detail about the complete working of Dh2A Methodology, in summary some of the key fundamentals are demonstrated such that the superior benefits of the methodology is appreciated.

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DH2A Framework Key Practices in Summary:

1. Determinate Value and Assess Project Fitment with DH2A:

The Appraisal Segment is one of the segment in DH2A methodology, which provides a tool based approach to validate the benefits an organization would reap adopting the Dh2A methodology and appropriately organizations have to decide the DH2A way by analyzing the the enduring benefits they can reap out of the methodology. This phase also assesses the people and project capabilities to adopt Dh2A, as Dh2A believes in the fact that an organization can adopt Dh2A only if it can meet the DH2A demands. Until now none of the agile methodologies have assessed characteristics of projects and people to decide following a methodology which is one of the very unique differentiator of Dh2A methodology.

2. Fixed Price Contracts with DH2A:

The Estimation Segment of the Dh2A framework mandates any project to defined the cost of the project in conjunction with scope and time. Thought many organizations live with the limitations defined by the current Agile methodologies which demand to execute a project with an open ended scope or time and cost, DH2A standards on the estimation techniques is one of the differentiator with these methodologies as DH2A defined that any project for DH2A implementation will have a fixed cost, time and scope and those are the only projects that qualify for adopting DH2A Methodology. The Estimation Segment defines a methodology called as "Dh2A Spry Estimation" which demonstrates an approach to estimation a project in the fixed price model which is another unique feature of DH2A methodology.

> *A combination of the "Appraisal Segment" and the "Estimation Segment" facilitates the "Bidding/RFP Process" as DH2A mandates and defines a methodology to define cost of a project before start and customers have to select a vendor based on the project cost and the experience of an organization in DH2A*

3. Minimize Cultural Differences using DH2A:

DH2A demands a dedicated Video conference set-up at both onsite and offshore developer locations which should be used solely by the project teams which is the core towards minimizing the geographical and cultural difference using the DH2A methodology.
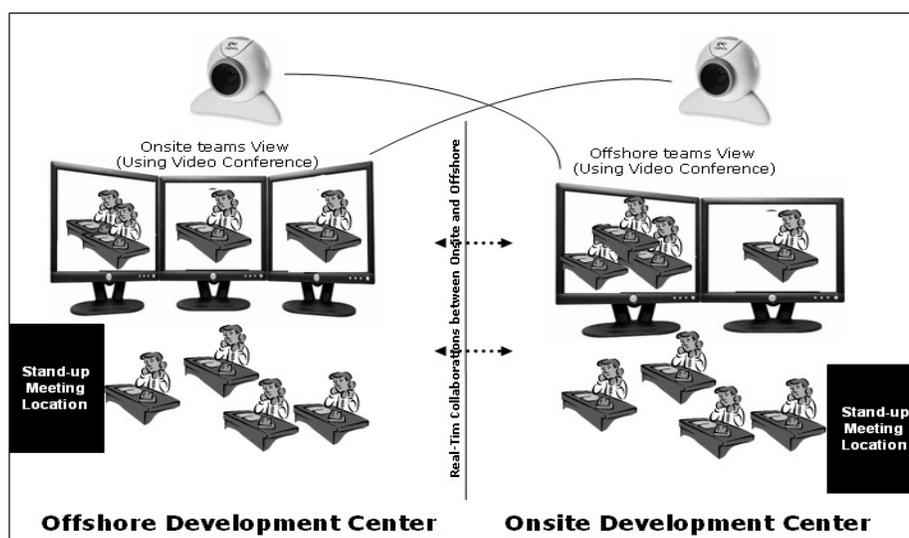

Figure 1.2 Video conference set-up between the remote locations

A DH2A rule, as shown in the Figure 1.2, it will boost the team's productivity and minimize the cultural difference if the video setup is located in the development location and that it's connected all times between both the onsite and offshore locations such that the face-to-face epoch incepts and is maintained, thought the teams are at distributed in different countries. The remote teams should be able to see each other just as they can see their collocated teams.

4. Improve Team Coordination with DH2A Remote Counseling:

Remote Counseling is one of the concept in which a DH2A resource owns up the responsibility to be the councilor to the DH2A team to train and handhold the complete team on Dh2A demands. Remote counseling program takes a 360% view as every member of the team takes charge being the remote councilor as the project progresses and as the DH2A maturity evolves within individuals.
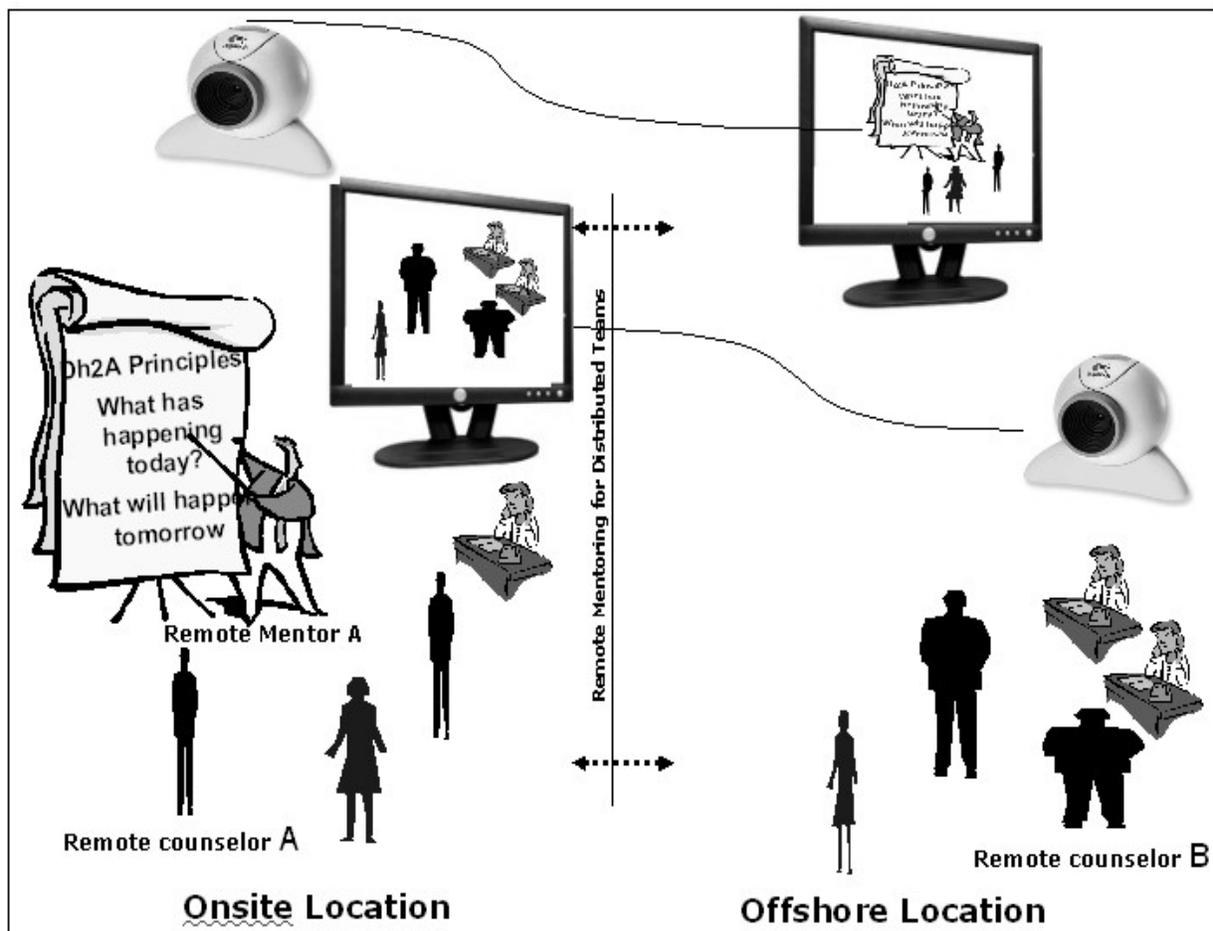

Figure 1.3 Remote counseling setup for Distributed Teams

So what are the roles and responsibilities of a remote councilor and why the concept of remote counselor in DH2A?

Some of the key responsibilities of the DH2A counselor are as follows:

- ➢ Mentor the teams in DH2A Methodology especially the DH2A Trainee Community

- ➢ Realign the team and project characteristics to the DH2A demands, when required

- ➢ Mentor and chair the daily stand-ups

- ➢ Handhold the teams

- ➢ Track the project success using DH2A Metrics

Remote Counseling has gained lot of momentum within the DH2A Community as experiments and experiences have demonstrated that "Cultural Differences" have highly been averted with the practice and has been the building block for brining people together.

5. Measure your Project Success with DH2A:

One of the toughest things in today's rapid changing and dynamic environment of software development is the effectiveness in which performance of the project can be assessed.

A simple example, when you are traveling on a road, how do you estimate the time taken to reach the destination which is considered in this case the success measurement?

The combination of the number of miles you have to travel by taking the shortest route determines your time estimation to reach your destination and without someone inventing the theory of time and distance measurement it would had not be possible to measure the success. The same is the case of software development projects where success is determined with the theory of estimation which is from the experiences of many organizations and individuals that have today become the baseline numbers for comparing your success results.

DH2A draws the concepts of assessing the success in the similar arrangement where

the core activities are compared and success is measured with the baseline data that are further captured as metrics. DH2A approach for metrics management is always a comparison of the past data with the actual results.

We have often seen that many organizations have established measurement programs, which fewer have, succeed with them, or many are those organizations who have established metrics programs to have them in order to conform to criteria established in the Capability Maturity Model, and these are the challenges that are into existence from decades.

With the newer methodologies evolving in the industry today, especially some Agile methodologies have emphasized very less on the metric management terming profoundly that "Agile methods does not mandate heavy weight process adherence". However none of the methodologies have dictated what are those light weights or minimal set of processes that every Agile project has to adhere such that a project is measured for success.

Overcoming these traditional challenges, DH2A defines a light weight metric management program which creates a platform to measure the success of any DH2A process. As most of the organizations today determine compliance to the Maturity models, the DH2A metric management in addition to measure the success of a DH2A project, adheres to the basic Maturity models guidelines and keep organizations inclined towards the existing norms.

6. Define the right roles with DH2A:

The modern definition to project execution emphasizes the delegation of personal accountability to each and every member of the team right from the project trainees up to the individual and group managers . Traditionally Projects of different sizes have different ways and requirements on how the people are assigned and aligned on the roles and responsibilities but the determining factor of a project success always has emphasized defining right roles to the right individuals. Therefore to reap success, DH2A emphases to select the right kind of motivated teams who are flexible towards adapting changes and DH2A certification awarded by the "DH2A Institute" towards the DH2A roles ensures that the right candidates are trained and certified on the competency areas

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Everyone needs to understand their roles in a DH2A project which are based on the maturity of individuals in the DH2A Methodology and each are expected to perform their duties in accordance. Unlike other methodologies where certifications are at the discretion of teachers own materials and knowledge in the subject matter, DH2A certifications for every DH2A role is based on the experience level of individuals in the DH2A Methodology.

The Enterprise DH2A Framework (e-Dh2A Framework):

The success of a project is often dependent on the people, processes and capabilities that cut across multiple disciplines and to make this success consistent across other projects of similar nature, similar processes and capabilities are to be implemented across the board. However the leap from a small success to organization wide success has never been an easy step and several experiences in several lines of business have claimed that the big-bang implementation have many times lead to failures thought some exceptions exists and the reasons for these failures are due to the lack of proper and consistent integration among defined disciplines, processes and the capabilities which results in sub-optimization, confusion, and potentially unnecessary expenditure.

The Enterprise DH2A Framework, also referred as e-DH2A, defines a framework to adopt DH2A Methodology across an organization. The success of e-DH2A Framework constitutes from two critical aspects by

➔ Defining a organization level PMO which monitors and manages the DH2A projects referred as the e-DH2A Office and

➔ Defining a staged approach to roll-out DH2A from one project to multiple projects

e-DH2A marries into its framework the alignment of DH2A to an organization Program Management Office such that an enterprise can work in a single frame and ensure that all projects proceed on the basis of their strategic alignment to the objectives of DH2A.
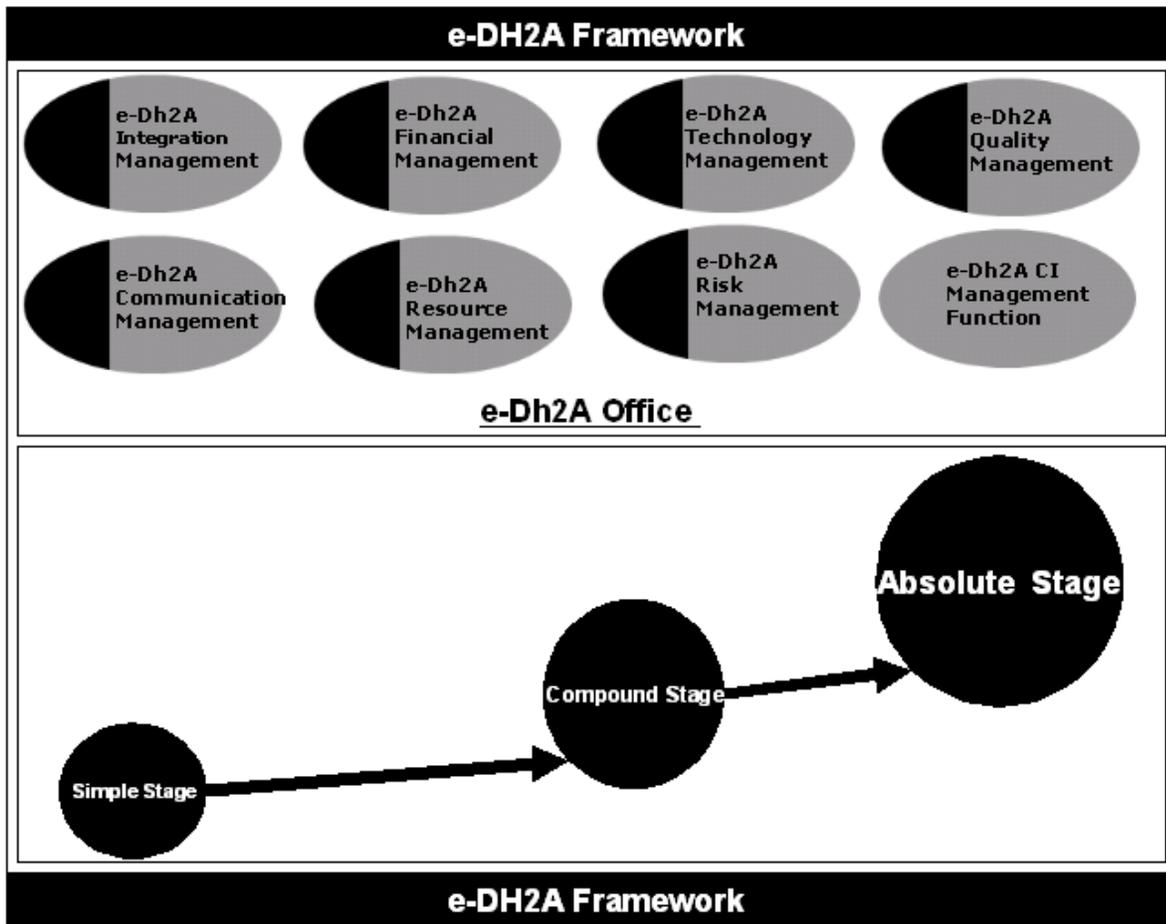
Figure 1.3 e-DH2A Framework

As depicted in Figure 1.3 , e-DH2A envisages a three phased approach to roll-out DH2A Framework across an enterprise and combines 3-goods by

1. Aligning the DH2A roll-out with the customer organization processes

2. Aligning the DH2A roll-out with the service provider organization processes and

3. Aligning the Program and Project management office of the service provider and customer organization to the DH2A demands

The core fundamentals of e-DH2A revolve around setting up the e-DH2A Office in alignment with the existing PMO for both the service provider and customer organization.

Transformation to DH2A for any organization mean some of the following:

1. Higher customer and team satisfaction

2. Lowering cost

3. Higher productivity

4. Increased Qualitative benefits

5. Increased Quantitative benefits

6. Faster release cycles

And to embark the journey of DH2A requires lot of rigor and passion to excel in your software development. Thought there is an initial investment towards the DH2A journey as it demands a cultural and structural change but the benefits realized in the long run are worth the investment. Any business transformation is an ongoing step wise approach and DH2A is no such exception as well. You cannot have an organization wide DH2A adaptability with a 30 day crash course.

About the author

Upadrista is a passionate and highly expertise in the Agile arena and speaks in multiple conference specially on the success of Distributed Agile and has guided several customers towards successful Agile implementation in a distributed environment. Currently he is researching his ambitious project on patterns of "Consultative Selling for Sales and Program Management" to build his new book for 2015.

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