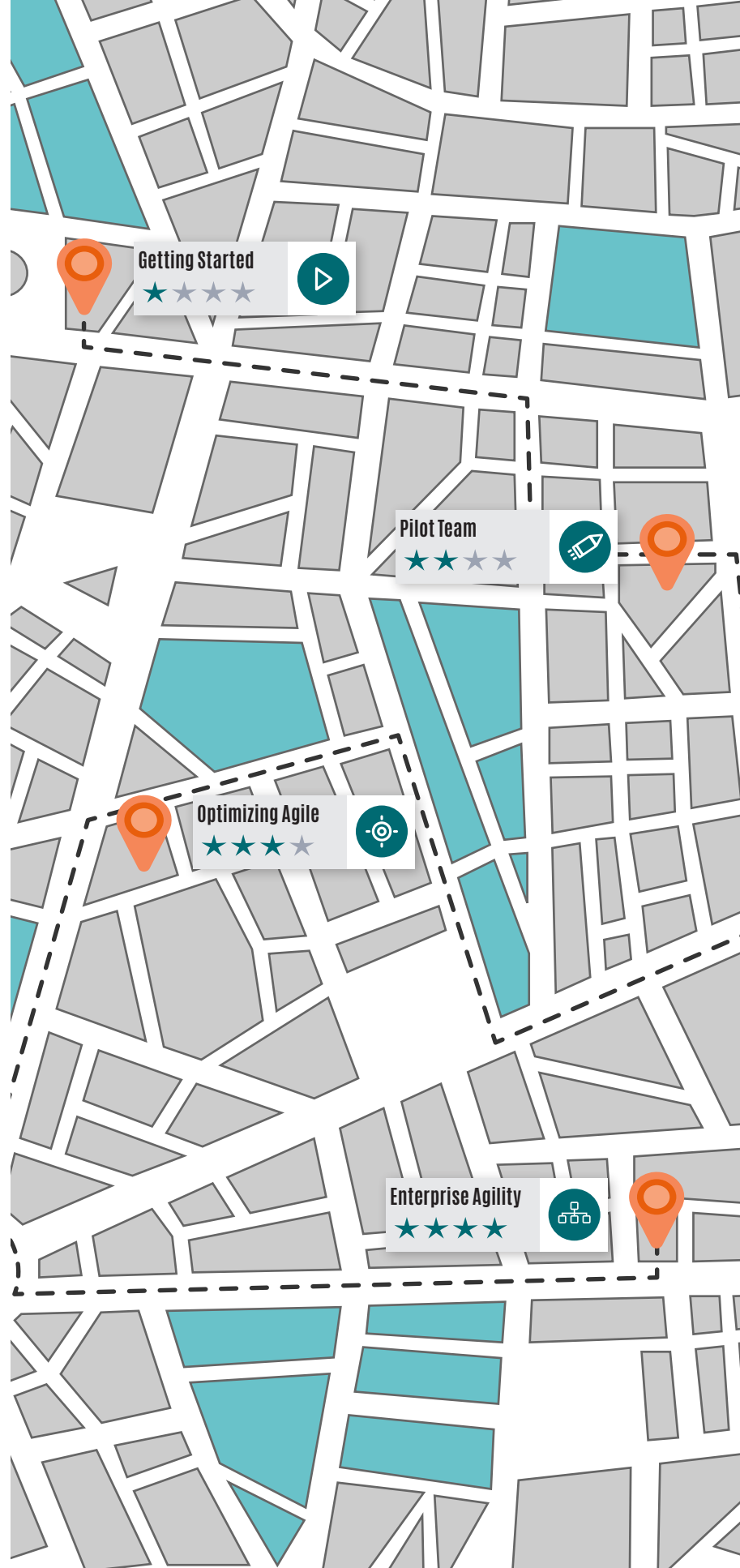# THE AGILE JOURNEY

WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR AGILE JOURNEY?

Becoming Agile is often referred to as your Agile Journey. While no two organizations take the same path, there are four distinct stages successful organizations go through.

This document is designed to help you identify what stage you are at, the barriers you may experience and how to overcome them.

Getting Started
★ ★ ★ ★

Pilot Team
★ ★ ★ ★

Optimizing Agile
★ ★ ★ ★

Enterprise Agility
★ ★ ★ ★

THE AGILE JOURNEY

DESPITE KNOWING THAT TWO-THIRDS OF PROJECTS FAIL TO MEET THEIR GOALS, ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO RELY ON WATERFALL METHODS.

Waterfall projects continue to fail and we somehow remain surprised. Large projects have sizeable budgets, high visibility and a lot at stake. So despite data telling us that waterfall projects notoriously fail to deliver, executives tend to stick to familiar methods because we often fall back to what we know, which for most folks is a rigidly defined linear process.

Speed, Quality, Predictability, and Agility

However, Agile continues to show increased speed, quality, predictability, and most importantly, the ability to adapt to changing requirements.

As more organizations attempt to go Agile, it has become more important to help them chart a course in their Agile Journey. While no two organizations take the same path, it is clear that successful ones go through four distinct stages. At each stage they complete similar tasks and face similar obstacles; some persevere and venture to subsequent stages, but far too many stall.
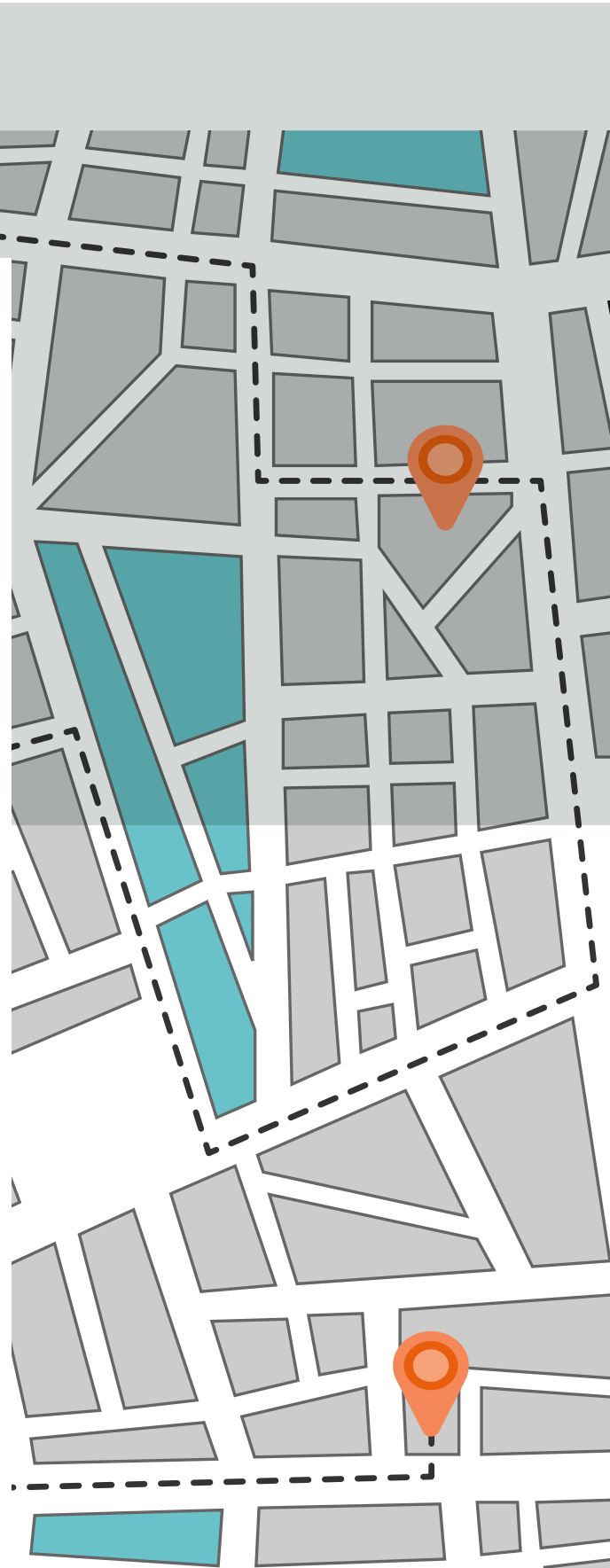
THE FOUR STAGES
OF AGILE TRANSFORMATION

GETTING STARTED

Everyone must start somewhere. In this stage you are setting your road map for Agile transformation, including:

▷ Executive Alignment

▷ Management Commitment

▷ Goals Set

▷ Conduct Basic Training

▷ Project Identification

PILOT TEAM

Your pilot team is critical to your success. In this stage, you begin to define how Agile looks in your organization, including:

▷ Dedicated Cross-Functional Team

▷ Prioritized Product Backlog

▷ Ceremonies and Cadences

▷ Basic XP Practices

OPTIMIZING AGILE

With a pilot team in place, this stage involves rolling out Agile to new teams and adding more advanced Agile practices, including:

▷ Advanced XP Practices

▷ Predictable Velocity

▷ Iterative Release Planning

▷ High Performing Teams

▷ Removing Organizational Impediments

▷ Relevant Metrics and Reporting

ENTERPRISE AGILITY

Scaling Agile to the enterprise can be extremely difficult. This stage involves reevaluating your organization, including:

▷ DevOps

▷ Testing Automation

▷ Scaling Agile Beyond Software

▷ Capability Planning/Management

▷ Value Stream Mapping

GETTING STARTED

ASSESSING YOUR CURRENT AGILE READINESS AND LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR PRINCIPLES CRITICAL FOR AGILE SUCCESS

STAGE 1 TASKS TO COMPLETE:

☐ ASSESS YOUR AGILE READINESS
☐ EXECUTIVE ALIGNMENT
☐ MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT
☐ GOALS SET
☐ CONDUCT BASIC TRAINING
☐ IDENTIFY PROJECT

Top Down Alignment and Commitment :

Not effectively planning any project will lead to an excessive investment in time and resources before any tangible value can be seen, or real feedback obtained. Not setting a proper road map at theexecutive level can result in missed opportunities to establish and build confidence in Agile, ultimately leading to antsy stakeholders and a loss of active support.

Because Agile is often a bottom-up endeavor, it often fails because executives are not bought in. The need for change and why Agile is the solution needs to be communicated and reiterated with management's words and actions. That is why a large part of this initial stage of your Agile Journey should be dedicated to executive alignment and getting management commitment.

Setting Goals and a Road Map :

You need to work through setting your overall Agile transformation goals to ensure there is consensus around the value Agile will bring and the delivery scope that will realize that value. From there you can explore what specific items of scope will show specific value or benefits.

Finally, as a team, work through a realistic and logical delivery schedule and road map that shows benefit early on and provides a logical plan that you can follow.

How We Can Help At Stage 1 of Your Agile Journey :

Too often, companies recognize the benefits of Agile and decide to just jump in. Teams attempt specific agile practices, but never really adopt an Agile mindset. They bypass the initial planning phase and then are surprised when their Agile transformation loses steam.

That is why at Stage 1 of your Agile Journey, we first recommend an Agile Readiness Assessment to evaluate how open and knowledgeable your organization is for Agile. While helping to identify Agile skills and experience gaps that you can begin to develop through training and coaching, the assessment also evaluates how ready your culture is. You can identify likely obstacles and set a road map that delivers value early and plans for the barriers you expect to face. This helps in establishing goals and management alignment from the start.
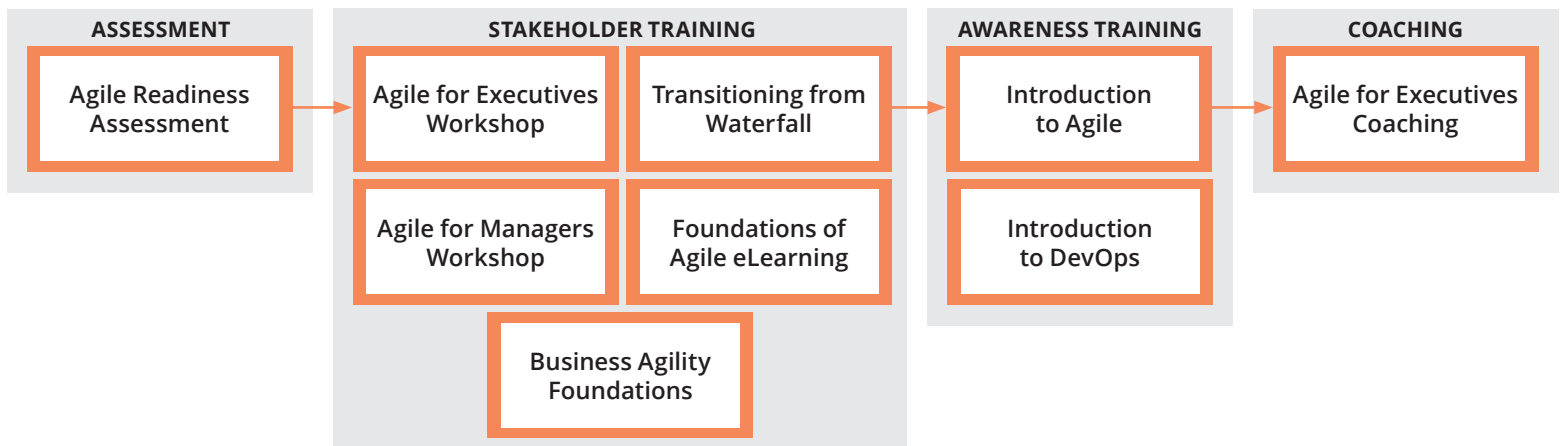
⚠ Barriers Often Faced at Stage 1:

▶ Lack of experience with Agile methods

▶ Company philosophy at odds with core Agile values

▶ Lack of management support

▶ Inability to change organizational culture

ASSESSMENT	STAKEHOLDER TRAINING		AWARENESS TRAINING	COACHING
Agile Readiness Assessment	Agile for Executives Workshop	Transitioning from Waterfall	Introduction to Agile	Agile for Executives Coaching
	Agile for Managers Workshop	Foundations of Agile eLearning	Introduction to DevOps	
	Business Agility Foundations			

PILOTING AN AGILE TEAM

THE LAUNCH OF YOUR FIRST AGILE TEAM SETS THE STANDARD AND FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR YOUR AGILE ROLLOUT

STAGE 2 TASKS TO COMPLETE:

☐ DEDICATED CROSS-FUNCTIONAL
   TEAM
☐ PRIORITIZED PRODUCT BACKLOG
☐ CEREMONIES AND CADENCES
☐ SPRINT PLANNING
☐ DAILY STANDUPS
☐ SPRINT REVIEWS/DEMOS
☐ RETROSPECTIVES
☐ BASIC XP PRACTICES

Establishing Your First Agile Team Dedicated to Your Agile Launch:

With a plan and road map in place, it is time to launch your pilot team. Unfortunately, many organizations fail during this stage because they did not complete all of the tasks in Stage 1. Instead, they prematurely launch their initial Agile team. The team creates their backlog and adopts some Agile ceremonies, but without managerial support, they are quickly pulled back into waterfall methods by stakeholders outside of the initial project. Often, this is because members of the pilot team are shared across multiple projects, instead of being dedicated to the pilot project.

To be successful during Stage 2 of your Agile Journey, you must create a cross-functional pilot team who is dedicated solely to your initial launch. They should be given the space and managerial support to function as an Agile team, unhindered by outside processes.

Adopting Agile Roles and Practices:

Once pilot team members are identified, they should receive training as a team to establish rapport and team roles. This gives teams the ability to storm and norm in a classroom, allowing them to perform in your pilot project. After team training is completed, deeper dives into specific roles should be conducted to increase team performance.

How We Can Help At Stage 2 of Your Agile Journey :

The Agile Team Readiness Assessment is designed to identify skills gaps of your pilot team and recommend specific role-based training to increase your likelihood of success. The 360-degree approach to Agile transformation allows us to provide all necessary training, while also supplying real-world coaches who can assist in getting your pilot team off the ground.
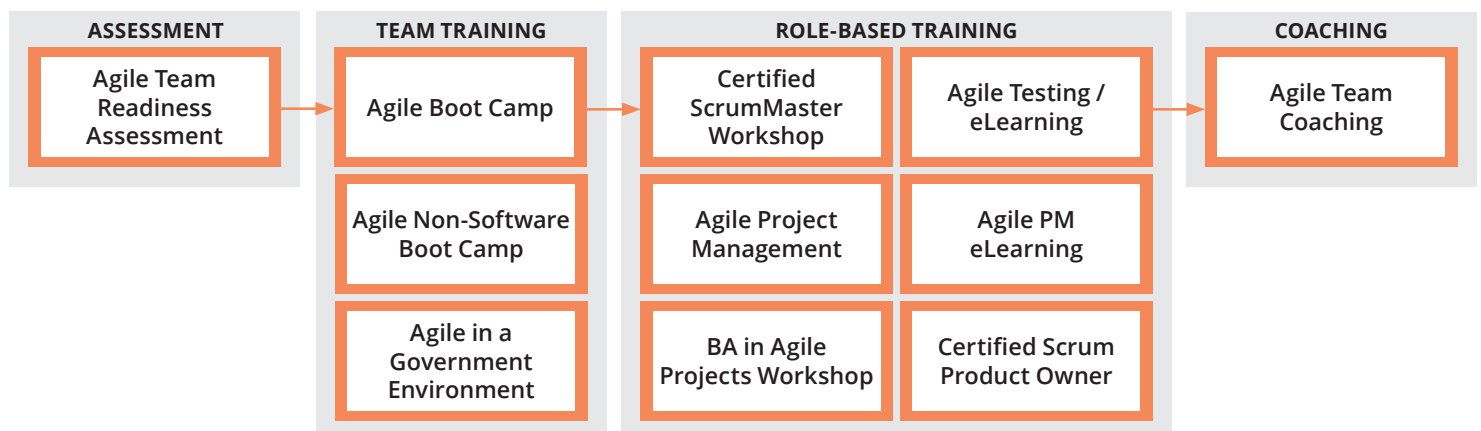
⚠ Barriers Often Faced at Stage 2:

▷ Competition for shared resources

▷ Product backlog prioritization disagreement

▷ Conflict between stakeholder needs

ASSESSMENT	TEAM TRAINING	ROLE-BASED TRAINING		COACHING
Agile Team Readiness Assessment	Agile Boot Camp	Certified ScrumMaster Workshop	Agile Testing / eLearning	Agile Team Coaching
	Agile Non-Software Boot Camp	Agile Project Management	Agile PM eLearning	
	Agile in a Government Environment	BA in Agile Projects Workshop	Certified Scrum Product Owner	

OPTIMIZING AGILE

HONING SKILLS AND USING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PILOT TEAM TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH NEW AGILE TEAMS

STAGE 3 TASKS TO COMPLETE:

- ☐ ADVANCED XP PRACTICES
- ☐ PREDICTABLE VELOCITY
- ☐ ITERATIVE RELEASE PLANNING
- ☐ HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS
- ☐ REMOVE ORGANIZATIONAL IMPEDIMENTS
- ☐ RELEVANT METRICS AND REPORTING

Risks Increase as New Agile Teams Stand Up:

At Stage 3 of your Agile Journey, you hopefully have a successful pilot under your belt and are beginning to launch new Agile teams. However, this is also where most Agile transformations stumble.

The reason: as more teams launch, corners begin to be cut, ceremonies get skipped and agile gets watered down. Teams start to lose their way and it gets harder and harder to get your Agile Journey back on course.

That is why the Optimizing Agile stage should center around making sure you are creating high performing teams that are delivering value early and often.

Look to Hone Existing Skills and Leverage New Tools:

Many organizations see this as a great time to give teams a refresher, while increasing knowledge and skills. This is especially true for training that focuses around overcoming requirements gathering and user story writing issues that tend to plague groups at this stage.

As you get closer to completing all the tasks at this stage, you can look to new methods and tools like DevOps and Team Foundation Server (TFS) to help you get even more out of Agile.

⚠ Barriers Often Faced at Stage 3:

▷ Teams are struggling to write proper user stories

▷ Teams aren't collecting the right requirements

▷ Testing is not sinking up properly with production

Our Agile Journey Stage 3 Services:

At this point in your Agile Journey, you will have teams of all shapes, sizes and experience levels. Some will be high-performing teams successfully showing value, while others will be internally developing and growing ScrumMasters, product owners and Agile champions every day. All however, will be able to clearly pinpoint areas to optimize their skills and abilities. That is why training at this stage centers around taking a deeper dive in specific areas and tools that commonly plague Stage 3 organizations. We also introduce technical and program coaching to help you prepare for taking the next step into Enterprise Agility.
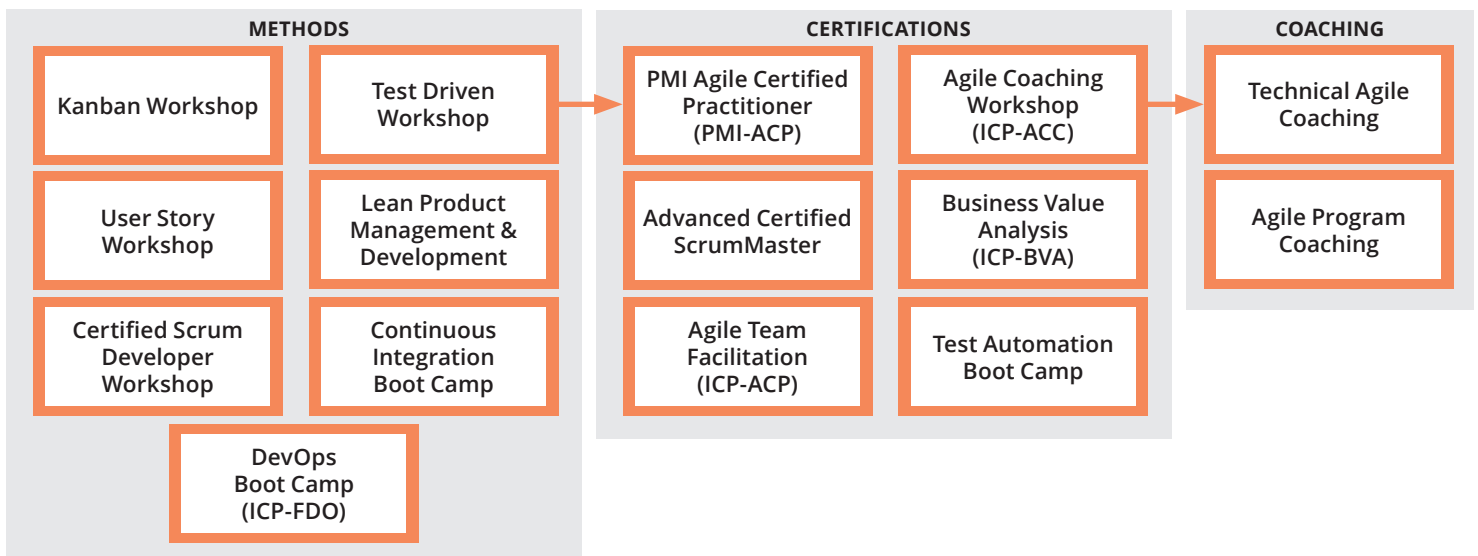
METHODS		CERTIFICATIONS		COACHING
Kanban Workshop	Test Driven Workshop	PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)	Agile Coaching Workshop (ICP-ACC)	Technical Agile Coaching
User Story Workshop	Lean Product Management & Development	Advanced Certified ScrumMaster	Business Value Analysis (ICP-BVA)	Agile Program Coaching
Certified Scrum Developer Workshop	Continuous Integration Boot Camp	Agile Team Facilitation (ICP-ACP)	Test Automation Boot Camp	
DevOps Boot Camp (ICP-FDO)				

ENTERPRISE AGILITY

SCALING AGILE TO YOUR PROGRAM AND PORTFOLIO LEVELS TO CREATE A TRULY AGILE ENTERPRISE

STAGE 4 TASKS TO COMPLETE:

☐ DEVOPS
☐ TESTING AUTOMATION
☐ SCALING AGILE
☐ CAPABILITY PLANNING/ MANAGEMENT
☐ PORTFOLIO VALUE STREAM MAPPING
☐ PROGRAM VALUE STREAM MAPPING

Aligning Agile Teams at the Program and Portfolio Level:

While numerous high-performing Agile teams are now delivering value and running efficiently, these individual teams are often only looking at their own projects and their own backlog. The next step in your journey is bringing Agile to the program and portfolio levels by aligning teams, project managers and ScrumMasters at a higher level.

Instead of focusing on the top priority in their own backlog or being held up by other teams, aligning all of your Agile teams and their sprints allows you to get even more value out of Agile.

Bringing Lean and Agile Concepts to the Rest of the Organization:

The final stage of your Agile Journey involves the adoption of lean and Agile concepts by the rest of the organization. However, many organizations underestimate the amount of effort required to bring about a cultural transformation. This means getting the entire enterprise behind Agile, from Development to HR, Finance and Operations. By mapping your organization's value streams, you can truly become an Agile enterprise.

Our Agile Journey Stage 4 Services:

To successfully scale Agile, you must transform your organization at three levels: portfolio, program, team. Whether you decide to follow Scaled Agile's SAFe philosophy or Large-Scale Scrum (LeSS) or the Scrum-of-Scrums, ASPE can help you scale Agile to the program and portfolio levels, and ultimately across the enterprise.

Being the final, and often the most difficult stage of the Agile Journey, we recommend reassessing the agility of your organization. Odds are, your original Agile transformation road map has evolved, so it helps to take a fresh look. From there, we can help you start aligning teams at the program and portfolio levels and map your value streams. By combining the assessment and our coaching, we can help you identify whether a particular Scaled Agile Framework fits your organization or whether a hybrid, custom solution makes the most sense.

From there, we can help you develop a road map that charts a path for scaling Agile across your entire organization.

⚠ Barriers Often Faced at Stage 4:

▷ Servant leadership is not a core value

▷ The amount of cultural transformation required is underestimated

▷ Teams continue to operate in silos

▷ Non-Agile groups butt heads with your Agile team

ASSESSMENT	BUSINESS AGILITY	SAFe®		COACHING
Enterprise Agility Assessment	Continuous Delivery Workshop (ICP-IDO)	Implementing SAFe® with SPC	SAFe® Scrum Master (SSM)	Agile Coaching Workshop
	Building an Effective Agile Organization (ICP-TAL)	SAFe® 4.6 for Teams (SP)	SAFe® 4.6 Advanced ScrumMaster	DevOps Coaching
	Agile Portfolio & Program Mgmt (ICP-PPM)	Leading SAFe® 4.6 (SA)	SAFe® 4.6 Release Train Engineer (RTE)	
	Enterprise Product Ownership (ICP-EPO)	SAFe® 4.6 Product Owner/Product Manager (POPM)	SAFe DevOps (SDP)	