

Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)

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In January 2016, Scaled Agile Inc launched version 4.0 of the Scaled Agile Framework. Please note that SAFe and Scaled Agile Framework are registered trademarks of Scaled Agile, Inc. Training and certification are available from Scaled Agile Inc.

As you will recall, part of the Agile manifesto states:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

SAFe supports these agile principles.

Like any project method, poor implementation will often give you a poor result. So, the adage 'if you don't know where you are going any road will get you there' is a common experience of poorly managed agile projects. Having been asked many times to repair projects after the auditors and executive find nothing delivered after a long time and huge expenditure, SAFe provides an easily understood and readily implementable methodology to drive success and ensure alignment with business outcomes. Interestingly, there is a lot of talk about scaling agile and the need to get the first agile team to be effective before using that as the model for the second and subsequent teams. Scrum Alliance's Jim York has a good article on the agile mastery scaling proposition.

There are nine SAFe Lean-Agile principles:

1. Take an economic view
2. Apply systems thinking
3. Assume variability; preserve options
4. Build incrementally with fast, integrated learning cycles
5. Base milestones on objective evaluation of working systems
6. Visualize and limit WIP, reduce batch sizes, and manage queue lengths
7. Apply cadence, synchronize with cross-domain planning
8. Unlock the intrinsic motivation of knowledge workers
9. Decentralize decision-making

Historically, scrum, extreme programming and other agile methods tend to emphasise the team. SAFe presents a single, unified view of the work to managers, allowing them to drill down for details or up for trends and analysis.

A self-managed team in SAFe might typically be eight to ten people, with everything they need to deliver the product, end-to-end: benefits, requirements, coding, testing and deployment. Putting several teams together creates what SAFe calls a release train, which organizes around a program

of work. The program provides the opportunity for strategic review and alignment with business requirements every six to eight sprints.

A portfolio is a collection of these programs. SAFe calls this "Program Portfolio Management," and suggests that one office should have the responsibility for strategy and investment funding across the portfolio.

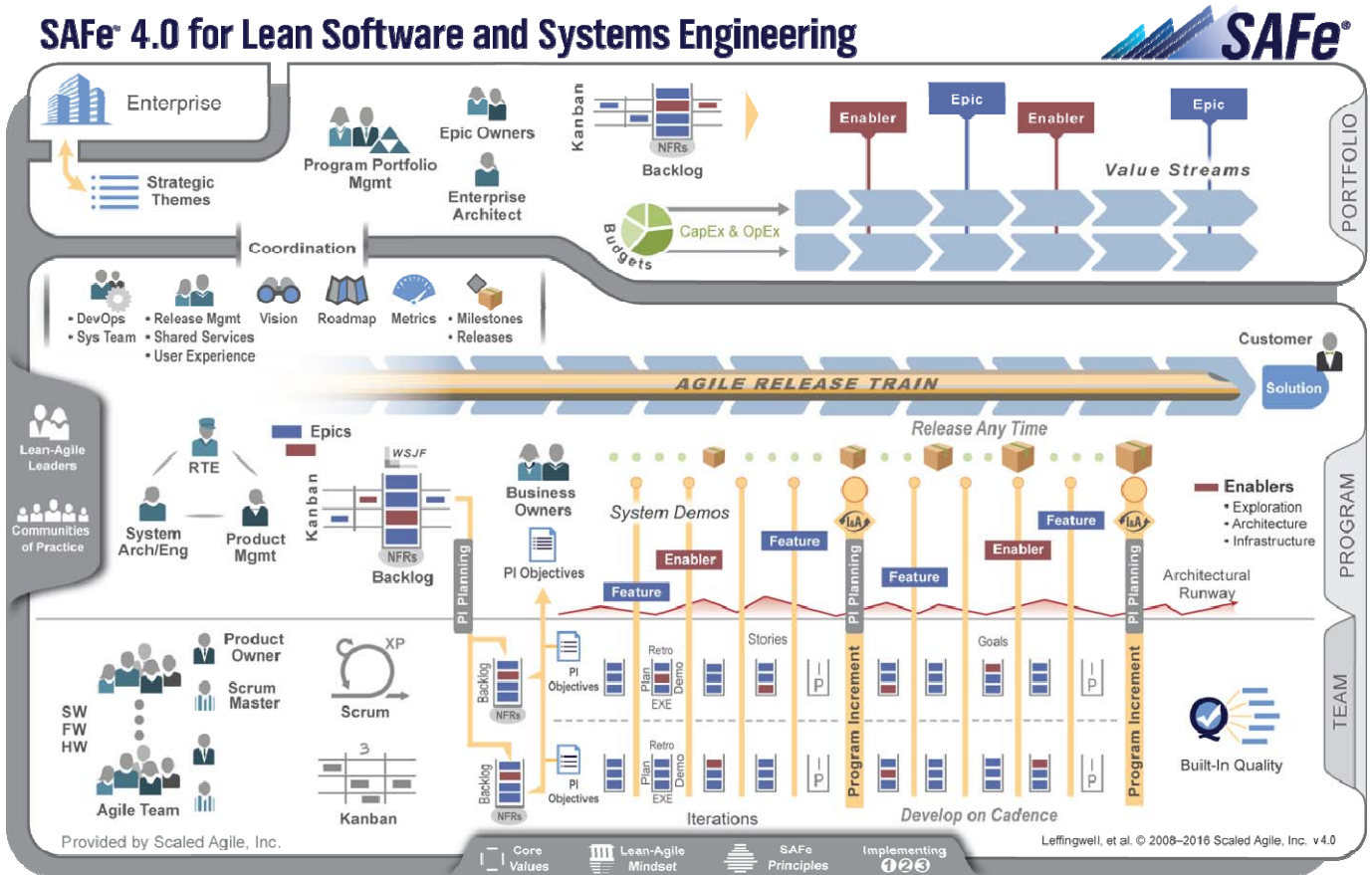


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The SAFe 'release train' is concept that supports a long-term program that may have many teams, streams and projects. It provides the opportunity for teams to synchronize deliverables, lining up sprints, potentially shippable product, and releases; so the product can be deployed at the same time for each increment.

Useful References

Heusser, Matthew (2015). Introducing the scaled agile framework, <http://www.cio.com/article/2936942/enterprise-software/introducing-the-scaled-agile-framework.html>, 17 Jun 2015.

Leffingwell,, Dean (2016). Safe lean agile principles abridged update, <http://www.scaledagileframework.com/safe-lean-agile-principles-abridged-update/>

Presentations and downloads, free public website: <http://www.scaledagileframework.com/>

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