



HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE

Surescripts Experience Report

PETER CALLIES

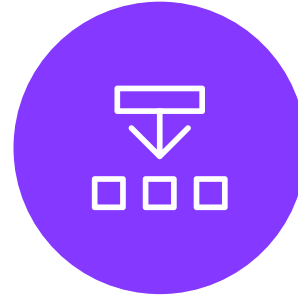
HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE

THE SURESCRIPTS EXPERIENCE

Surescripts' purpose is to serve the nation with the single most trusted and capable health information network, built to increase patient safety, lower costs and ensure quality care.

We've grown from 90 to 600 employees in the past ten years. In that same period of time, our business has gone through a couple major transitions and we're now in an extremely competitive environment. Aligning our product investments to strategy is important.

Agile has allowed us to grow and has given us the ability to understand capacity in a way that allows us to align with our strategy.



DECOMPOSE WORK



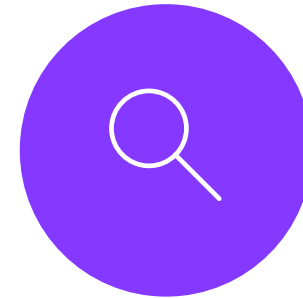
**MANAGE CAPACITY
AS TEAMS**



**INCORPORATE CAPACITY
INTO BUSINESS
PLANNING**



ALIGN TO STRATEGY



INSPECT & ADAPT

HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE

DECOMPOSE WORK

- ▶ Adopted team-based Agile in 2011.
- ▶ VP of Product Management at the time had Directory 5.0 envisioned as a large batch of features that would only be valuable if they were all delivered at once.
- ▶ Led to a loud discussion between the Product VP, our CIO, and a C-suite executive.
- ▶ Once that VP was out of the way, Product quickly realized the benefits of small batches and cadenced delivery.
- ▶ Directory 5.0 really did take 2-3 years to deliver in total, but features that provided value were released on a quarterly basis.

**TEAM-BASED AGILE
WASN'T ENOUGH**

HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE



MANAGE CAPACITY AS TEAMS

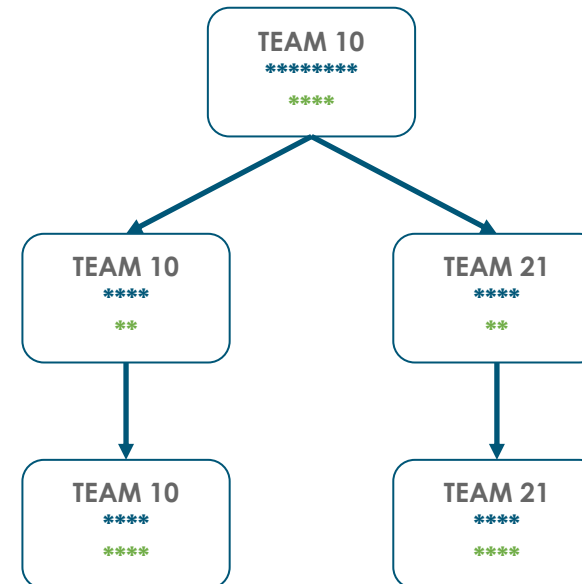
- ▶ Prior to Agile, people would come up with the biggest projects they could imagine.
- ▶ In addition to the delivery cadences, we introduced stable teams with Agile.
- ▶ Product soon started estimating their features in percentages of an Agile team per quarter.
- ▶ As we grew, we were no longer adding n engineers and y QA people, we were adding teams because they provided delivery capability, not just skills.
- ▶ We even talked about our growth plans with our Board of Directors in terms of teams.

DECOMPOSING WORK WASN'T ENOUGH

1. Hire key roles (e.g. Agile Product Owner and lead software engineer) into existing team

2. Split into two teams with mix of existing and new employees on each

3. Finish hiring roles on both teams



* - existing employee
* - new employee

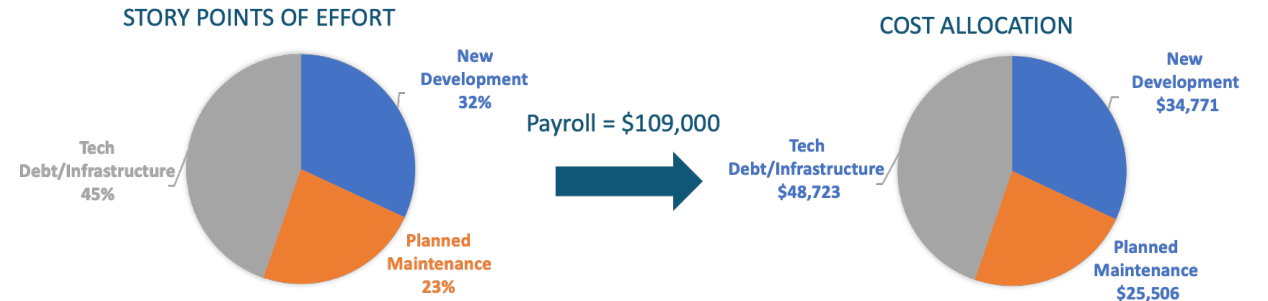
HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE



INCORPORATE CAPACITY INTO BUSINESS PLANNING

- ▶ Stable, similarly-sized teams resulted in an average cost per team, and this was used for business plan estimates.
- ▶ Extrapolating relative-effort estimating resulted in relative-effort costing.
- ▶ We've gotten this relative-effort costing approved by our auditors and we've automated the reporting so we can see how we're trending at any point in time.

MANAGING CAPACITY AS TEAMS WASN'T ENOUGH



HALF AGILE ISN'T AGILE



ALIGN TO STRATEGY

- ▶ We do an annual strategy review:
 1. Purpose
 2. Our portfolio
 3. The environment
- ▶ Our strategy has three main legs.
- ▶ These three legs contain seven priorities across them.
- ▶ Each priority has suggested tactics for next year and for the the following three years.
- ▶ Product initiatives are tied to the priorities
- ▶ Product VPs expected to adapt initiatives.

PLANNING AT THE INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT LEVEL WASN'T ENOUGH

WHAT IS STRATEGY?

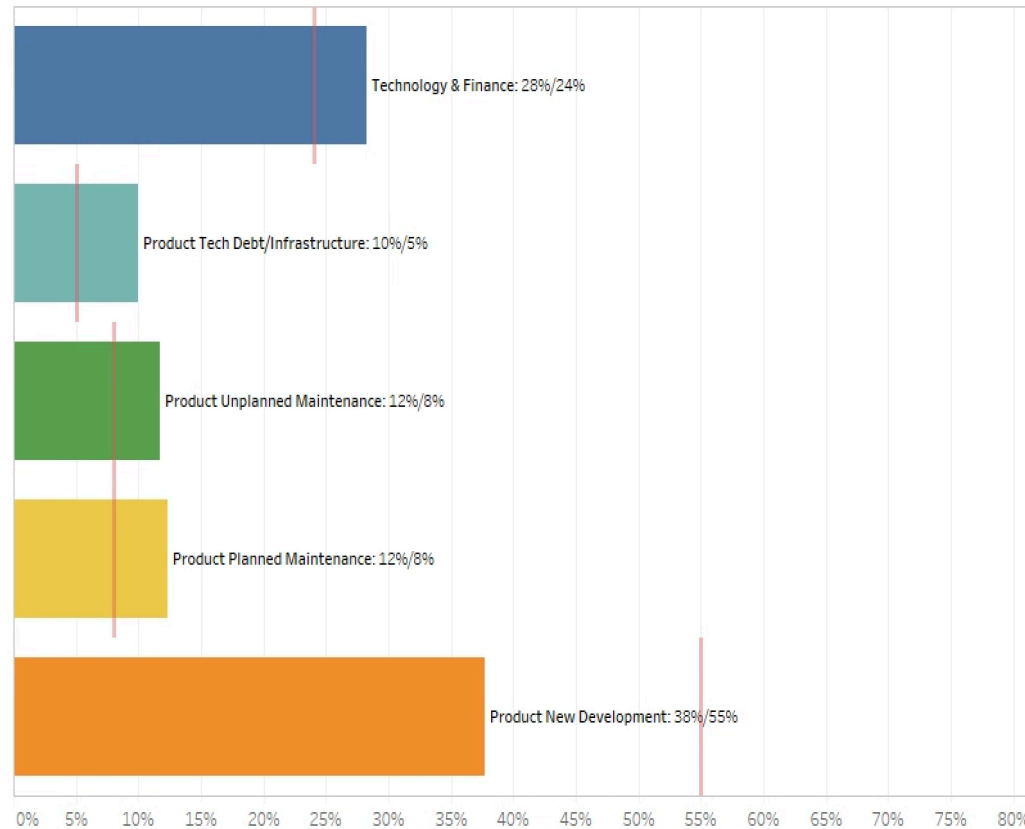
- ▶ Focus on 2 choices: Where to Compete & How to Win.
- ▶ Strategy is about increasing the odds of success.
- ▶ Make the logic explicit, and test it rigorously.

-Roger Martin, "The big lie about strategic planning", Harvard Business Review, 2014

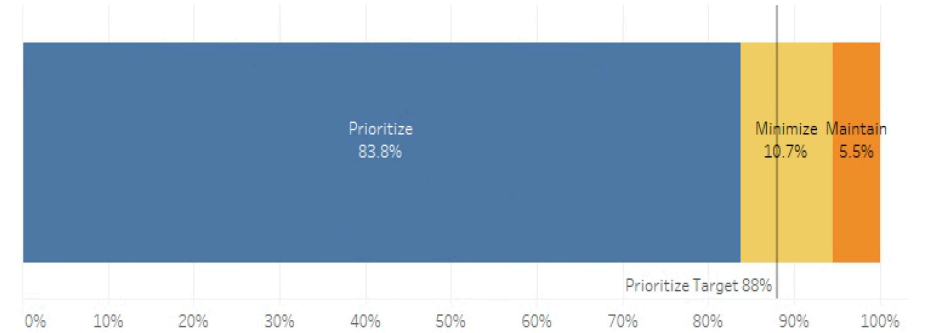


INSPECT & ADAPT

Investment Plan



Investment Plan - Strategic Alignment



Investment Plan - Product/Enabler

