



MY AGILE JOURNEY

How we turned around Srijan
from an ailing business in 2010
to a rapidly growing one by 2014

WHO IS THIS TALK FOR?

- CEO's and managers of 'software services companies' looking to find *predictability in their revenues*
- Sales/pre-sales leaders, project managers and developers who are looking for tools to sell Agile contracts

JOURNEY

Without a grand vision or mission

Get Set Go!

2002

2004

Started working in open source PHP Web Content Management -- Postnuke, TYPO3

TYPO3 in India = SRIJAN

2006

2007

Tryst with Drupal!

India Environment Portal
KNOWLEDGE FOR CHANGE

First Drupal (5.x) project launch

2008

2010

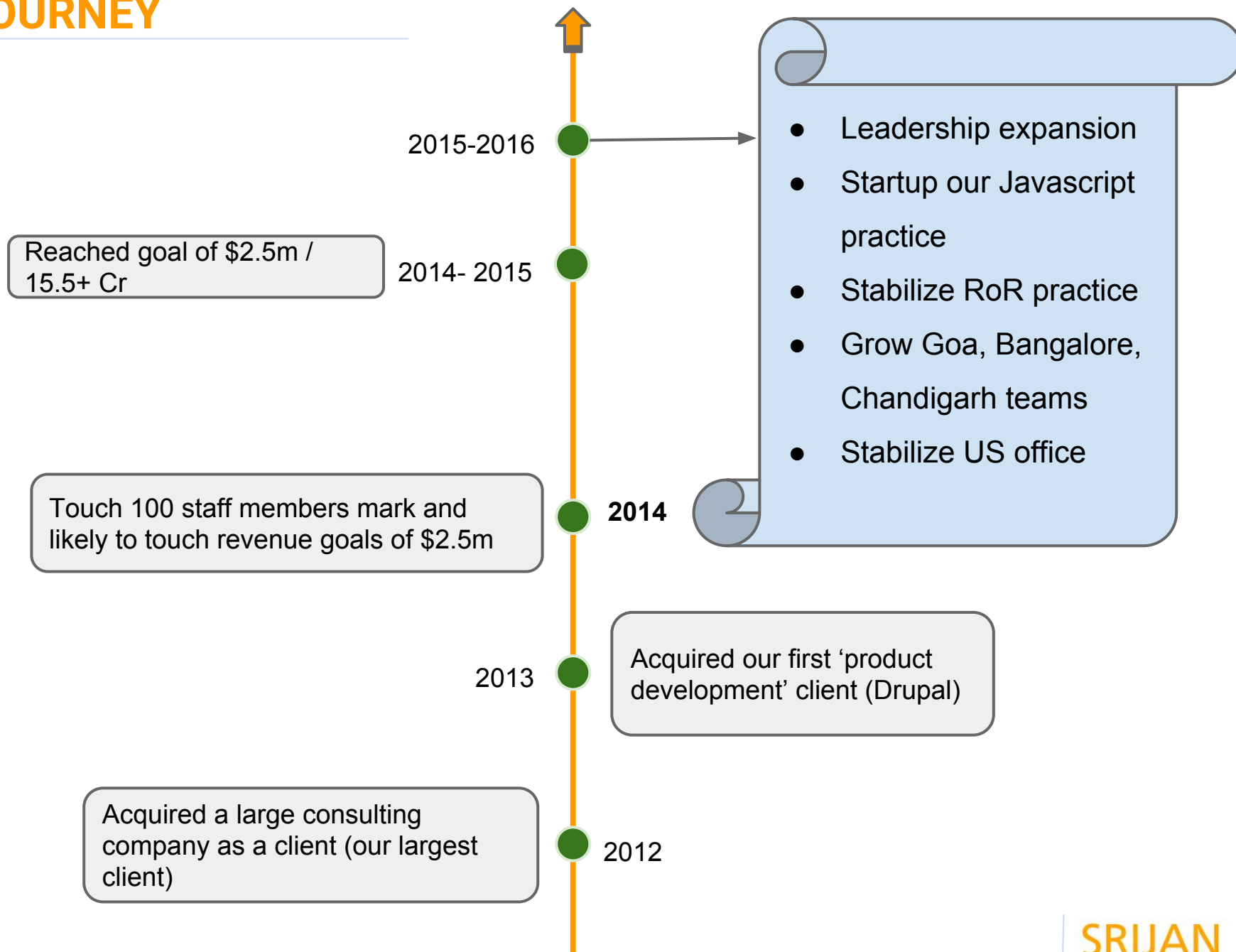
We begin to **focus on Drupal**; drop Ruby on Rails, TYPO3, Django from service offerings

Our Agile journey begins!

2011



JOURNEY



BUT WE DID NOT
FIND THE SUCCESS
EASY

EARLY YEARS (2002 - 2006)

- Small Team 10-15 people
- Short-term projects
- Fairly Profitable
- Mostly incoming leads
- Germany + Netherlands formed 80% of business
- Srijan was among the first to implement open source CMS in enterprises (Airtel, Bharti -- TYPO3)

MIDDLE YEARS (2007 - 2010)

- Project sizes were increasing
- Yet remained 'fixed cost'
- Incorrect estimations (nearly always)
- Tail of the projects always dragged (endlessly)
- Each time we bore the brunt (of such cost over-runs)
- Change requests were "difficult to capture", "scope" and estimate
- Fingers pointing all over (sales -- developers)

MIDDLE YEARS (2007 - 2010)

- Financial constraints led to staffing developers on new projects (before completing one at hand – endless project tail!)
- One-person-team staffed on a project, was not unusual
- Low developer morale
- Low leadership morale
- Poor financial health (even after a lot of hard-work for years)
- We were in a crisis

*“WHEN YOU WANT SOMETHING, ALL
THE UNIVERSE CONSPIRES IN
HELPING YOU ACHIEVE IT”*

~ PAULO COELHO, ‘THE ALCHEMIST’

BREAKTHROUGHS

- NASSCOM # Emergeout 2011
 - Heard a speaker from the NASSCOM mentoring program:

“Infosys knows its revenues 2 years ahead;

I got out of projects; looked for clients offering long-term contracts”

NASSCOM #EMERGEOUT 2011

- “How could i get long-term contracts for Srijan?”
- “How could i negotiate with clients wanting to build products, that fixed costs won’t work?”

BREAKTHROUGHS



[Avienaash Shiralige, Agile Buddha](#)

- We conducted our first SCRUM/Agile training with trainers from XEBIA
- Engaged XEBIA in repeated training sessions for our developers on writing better software
- Agile contracting was becoming the conversation

BREAKTHROUGHS

- AGILECON FEB 2012 -- Met an Agile Coach

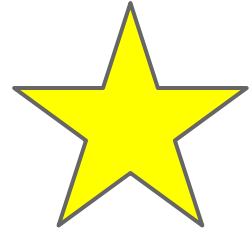
“Break your projects down into phases;

Charge for estimation (discovery), then move on to development. Have a separate ‘handover phase’.

Products evolve! It’s a bad idea to write hundreds of pages of requirements & tech documentation”

BREAKTHROUGHS

- A phone call for Drupal (our SEO worked!)
- Engaged with this management consulting firm -- the most important client in Srijan's lifetime
- They liked our freshly acquired Agile/SCRUM thinking



WHAT STARTED CHANGING

- The *financial cushion* offered by this management consulting firm offered me the space to negotiate “**Agile Contracts**” and break away from fixed cost
- Converted a fixed-cost product development client to an *Agile engagement*
 - our refusal to do business under fixed-cost attracted them
 - they loved “our integrity”
- Meanwhile, our first SCRUM trainer had moved out of his company; accepted offer to spend 2 days a week

WHAT STARTED CHANGING

- Staffing “Teams” (not offering costs based on hours-estimates)
- Focus on delivery every 2 weeks with client demos
- More engaged clients
- Billing cycles became month-wise; leading to better financial health, better cash-flows
- Project changes were being managed much better than ever before

WHAT STARTED CHANGING

- Devs were focussed on one-project-at-a-time
- No one-person-project-"team"!!
- Long-term contracts and cash flows enabled hiring better people
- Higher employee-engagement, satisfaction

TAKE-AWAYS

:: SELLING AGILE CONTRACTS



Agile is not agile without
agile contracting!

SELLING AGILE CONTRACTING

Oh yes, we love agile!

But how much will this project cost?

Well, we've got quotes from 3 other firms; why can't you?

But this is such a big product, how can i share an estimate?

Have you received an x hours and y cost? Are you doing an apples to apples comparison?

STAFFING SHEET

Based on gut/ experience, we've put together this 'staffing sheet'. We require a 2-week paid Discovery after which we can firm up these estimates

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1			Discovery		Development Phase							Production Deployment, Training	Support after going live	
2	SCRUM Week Starting -->	28-Jan	4-Feb	11-Feb	18-Feb	25-Feb	4-Mar	11-Mar	18-Mar	25-Mar	1-Apr	8-Apr	15-Apr	
3	Occupancy													
4	Scrum Master	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%
5	Drupal Architect	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
6	Sr. Drupal Developer	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%
7	Drupal Developer	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
8	Drupal Themer	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
9	QA Engineer	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%
10														
11	Available Man-Days													
12	Scrum Master	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	2.5
13	Drupal Architect	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0
14	Sr. Drupal Developer	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	2.5
15	Drupal Developer	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0
16	Drupal Themer	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
17	QA Engineer	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	2.5

SELLING AGILE CONTRACTING

Oh this is too expensive. You are twice as high as even our local UK vendor!

Well, that's your business model; i do not want to get involved!

I'm wondering how that might be?

Clearly they cannot be charging higher rates than us.

Perhaps they have not shared the exact roles and the occupancy they would staff the team for!

But you'd better do.

Do you want people dedicated to your project -- or would you prefer that the team be doing 2 projects simultaneously?

This decision will hurt your project or make it successful!

TAKE-AWAYS

:: BEING AGILE (ALIGN YOUR VALUES)

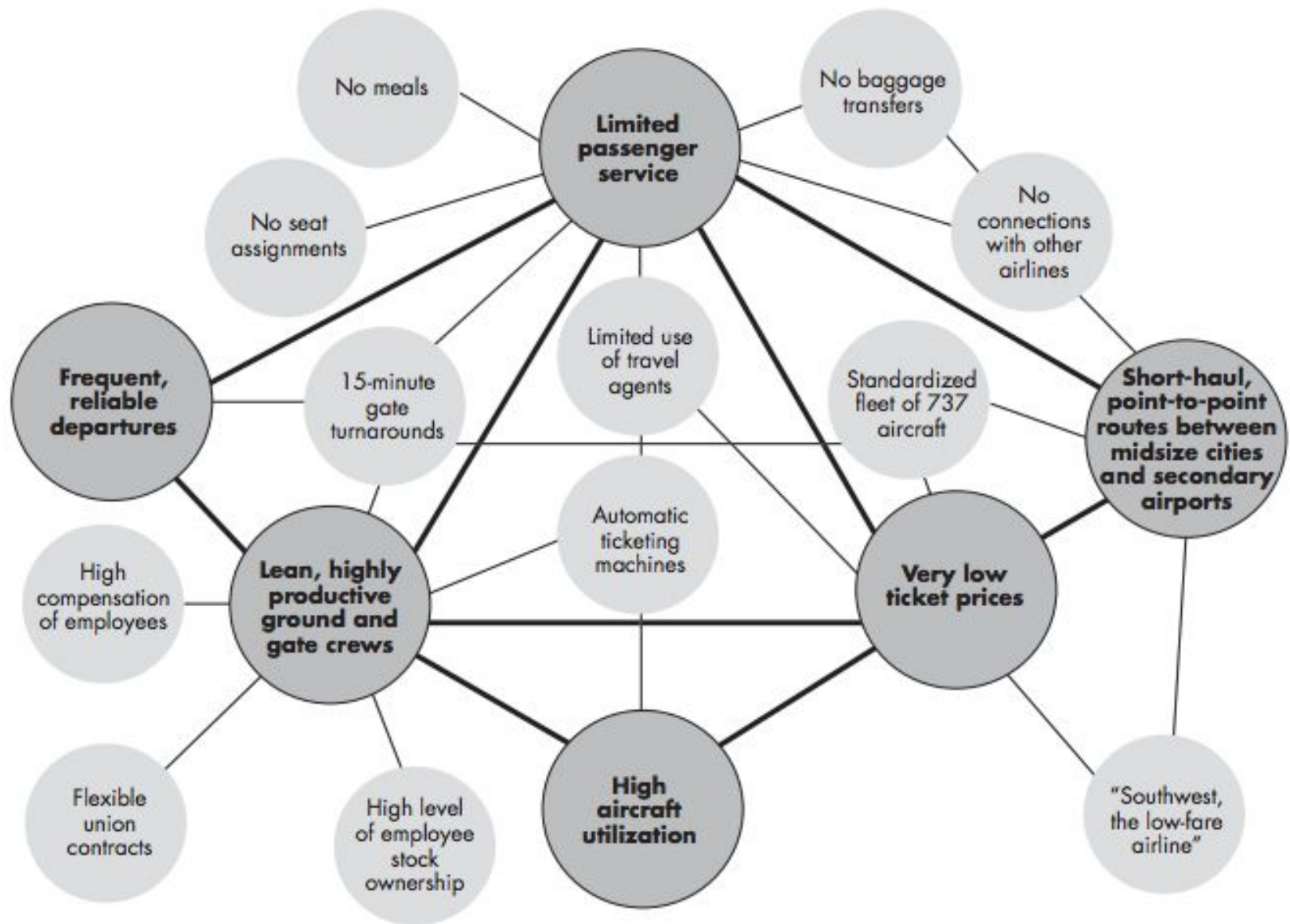


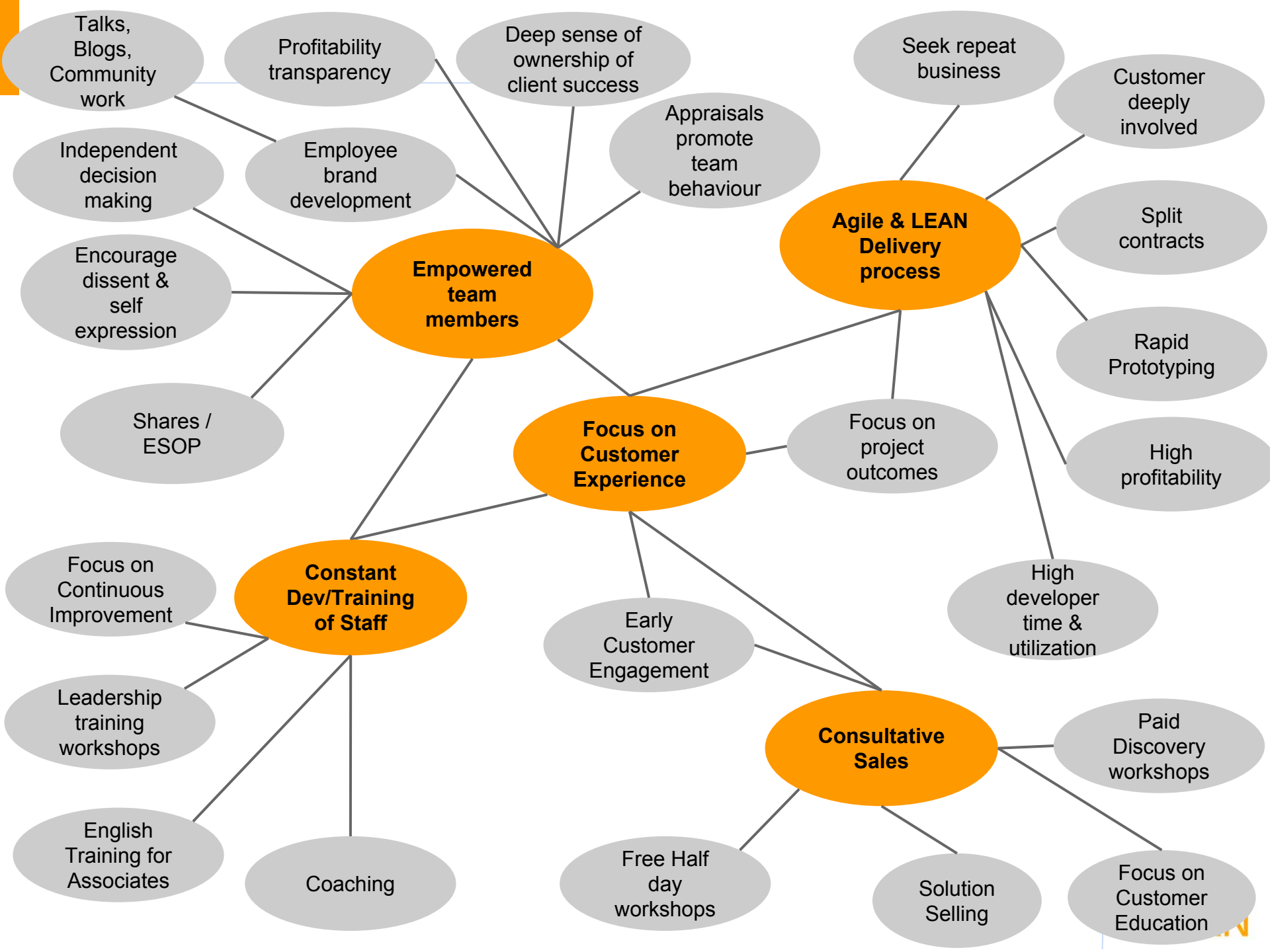
Agile is not agile without your
org values aligned

AGILE VALUES (MY OWN VERSION)

- Empowered teams and individuals
- Courage
- Expression of dissent
- Financial transparency (weekly burn rate, earnings, burn)
- Decision making (wrong decisions can be corrected; not taking decisions hurts everyone)
- Learning and 'continuous improvement'

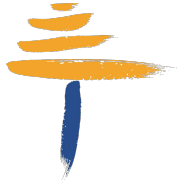
Southwest Airlines' Activity System





BEING AGILE

- Empowered Teams
- Solution Sales
- Constant learning and training of teams -- not only Agile principles; but also English communication, values alignment
- Participative/consultative decision making
- Alignment of appraisals that encourage team-behaviour
- Development of 'coaching' skills among Team Leaders



Reaching me

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Thank You!