The Rosetta Stone for Aligning Agile and Waterfall Delivery

By Jonathan Babcock and Kalle Wood

Business and process analysis techniques provide a common language for practitioners of different delivery methods.

In 1799, French officer Pierre Bouchard, while laboring to rebuild an ancient Egyptian fort in a town called Rosetta, discovered one of the most important archeological artifacts to date: the Rosetta Stone. Bouchard brought the stone to scholars, who, after studying it, recognized that it contained the same message about a pharaoh from 196 B.C. in three different Greek and Egyptian language scripts.

By comparing the message in the known Greek alphabet to the then-unknown hieroglyphic scripts, they were able to crack the hieroglyphic code that gave us insights into ancient Egypt. In today's world, organizations often need a similar solution as they try to reach a common understanding of what success looks like for strategic initiatives. The effort to gain shared understanding becomes more complex when multiple stakeholders, disciplines, and cultures are involved, and when teams are using different solution delivery methods.

Additionally, many organizations struggle to scale value across teams as they transition from traditional to Agile delivery methods. With these complicating factors, it is no surprise that many large initiatives fail to provide the promised benefits within an acceptable cost and timeframe.

Visual models are more likely than lengthy documentation to spark critical scope and dependency conversations.

We've found that most organizations, when faced with delivering complex initiatives, fall short in three critical areas:

· clearly defining scope;

· establishing shared understanding of the solution among stakeholders; and

· managing priorities and dependencies across multiple teams and delivery methods.

We'll explain how visual process models, coupled with sound business and process analysis principles, can be used as a modern-day Rosetta Stone. These techniques can establish a shared understanding of delivery complexities across diverse stakeholders and teams, and greatly improve the likelihood of success for large business initiatives.

CLEAR DEFINITION OF "DONE"
Many complex initiatives are destined for difficulty from the beginning when business stakeholders fail to communicate problems and objectives with sufficient context and clarity. Ideally, beginning with the initial business case and associated work request, stakeholders should provide observable and measurable acceptance criteria—"definitions of done"—at

each level of the solution definition hierarchy. Without clear acceptance criteria to articulate the business need and describe how to verify whether it has been met, teams struggle to know whether what they've delivered is sufficient or correct. It's like being pointed in the right general direction, then being asked to hit a target while blindfolded. You might get close to the mark, but you have no way of knowing for sure.

In Agile delivery methods, acceptance criteria are often included at the team level within user stories. Without clearly verifiable acceptance criteria also associated with the higher-level artifacts such as epics and themes, it is difficult to be sure stories are complete and aligned to the larger strategy.

In waterfall delivery methods, success begins with measurable and testable business objectives to which teams can anchor business, functional, and system requirements. This traceability enables visibility into potential gaps and helps prevent scope creep during the later stages of delivery.

Clearly defined acceptance criteria provide an opportunity for providers and users of solution delivery artifacts to calibrate their understanding of what success looks like, avoid confusion, and prevent wasted effort.

BUSINESS PROCESS FRAMEWORK AS A VISUAL SCOPING CHECKLIST
Often, key stakeholders and impacts are overlooked during initial scoping conversations because participants typically work from memory and don't have a method for determ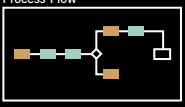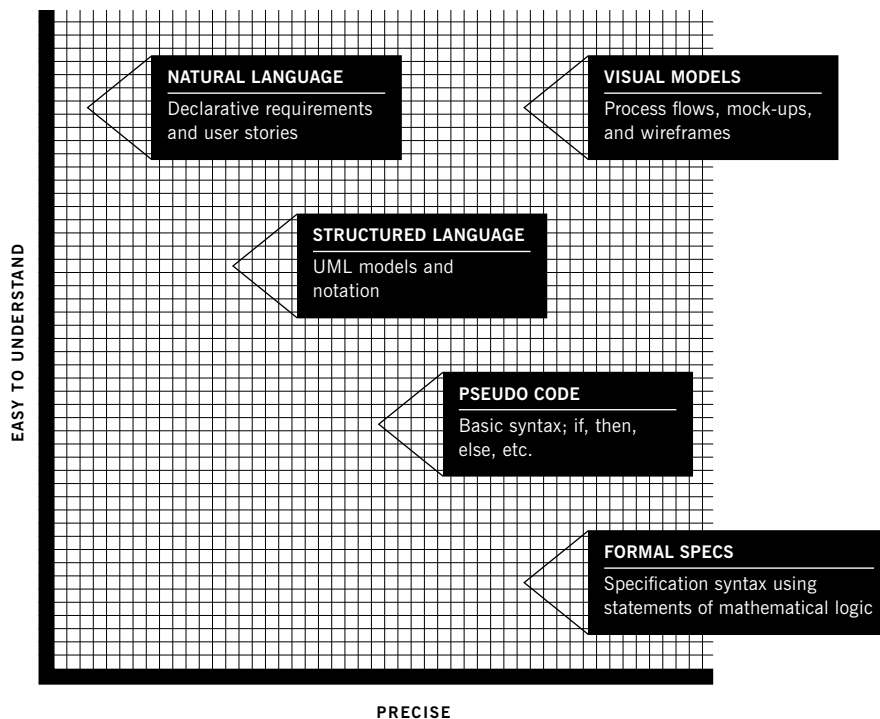ining when impacts have been properly scoped. These initial oversights typically result in requirements gaps, missed dependencies, and costly development changes.

We recommend using a business process framework as a visual checklist to ensure all areas of the business are considered during scope and impact discussions. A business process framework is a single-page, visual representation of the organization from a process perspective. It is organized into broad process areas, including strategic, operational, and supporting/back office functions. Each process area is then divided into process segments representing various activities.

Reviewing each process segment in checklist fashion with primary stakeholders and visually indicating the impacts—if any—to each segment instills confidence that no area of the business has been inadvertently overlooked. The visual checklist approach provides discipline,

AGILE ARTIFACTS	DELIVERY HIERARCHY	WATERFALL ARTIFACTS	SUPPORTING PROCESS MODELS
Theme/Epic	**Portfolio** Set Strategy and Prioritize Initiatives	Work Request or Business Case	Process Framework Impacts Major Minor None Use the process framework as a visual checklist at the inception of the initiative to directly mark affected business process segments and avoid overlooking impacted stakeholders and areas of the business.
Feature/Story	**Program** Coordinate & Manage	Business Requirements	Process Flow Agile Team Activity Waterfall Team Activity An experienced business analyst or architect facilitates collaborative development of process flows. These models provide visibility into the desired "big picture" across teams and drive discussions on dependency management and sequencing of work.
Story/Task	**Team** Deliver	Functional/System Specifications	Agile Waterfall Teams follow their current processes without change or disruption, referring to process models for context as to how their work fits into the big picture and to identify other teams they should collaborate with.

BIG IDEAS

SMALL DETAILS

Process Models as Connectors for Traditional and Agile Delivery

EASY TO UNDERSTAND

NATURAL LANGUAGE
Declarative requirements and user stories

VISUAL MODELS
Process flows, mock-ups, and wireframes

STRUCTURED LANGUAGE
UML models and notation

PSEUDO CODE
Basic syntax; if, then, else, etc.

FORMAL SPECS
Specification syntax using statements of mathematical logic

PRECISE

The Value of Visuals

objectivity, and completeness to help answer questions such as "Which areas of the business are affected?" and "Who should we talk to?"

PROVIDE A COMMON REFERENCE MODEL

Stakeholders and teams delivering complex initiatives have different perspectives, motivations, and needs for understanding scope and requirements. Historically, text-based documentation has been the primary means of conveying this information.

While statements in such a document or user story may be understandable on their own, they are not conducive to providing order, context, or a big-picture view of the desired solution. Even well-written text is open to different interpretations because of the inherent ambiguity of written or spoken language. By comparison, the intended meaning of visual models is more explicit and less prone to misinterpretation.

We recommend using business process models as a common reference point for creating understanding across diverse teams. Visual process flows add an element of clarity and precision to text-based methods of conveying critical information by showing where each piece fits in the context of the broader solution. This big-picture perspective makes process flows ideal for identifying handoffs between roles, cross-team priorities, and dependencies so they can be managed properly. Because process flows are so widely understood and used across organizations, industries, and delivery methods, they are well-suited for use in virtually any delivery environment.

MODEL THE SOLUTION TOGETHER

Make creating process models and frameworks a collaborative effort. Instead of having an analyst create them in isolation, develop these models collectively with providers of key inputs and consumers of the output. Visual models are more likely

than lengthy documentation to spark critical scope and dependency conversations early on, before successful delivery is threatened, and will help ensure teams are delivering the agreed-upon objectives.

Active participation in solution modeling helps build understanding of the underlying "why" behind critical decisions, and fosters a sense of alignment and ownership across participating stakeholders and groups.

MINIMIZE DISRUPTION TO TEAMS

Often, efforts to improve solution delivery include new processes, tasks, and deliverables with the goal of providing more thoroughness and predictability. However, these changes risk rendering stakeholders and teams less efficient and adaptable, especially in an Agile delivery environment where it is critical that teams self-organize and maintain a degree of autonomy. We recommend that the responsibility for creating business process frameworks, scenarios, and process flows reside outside of the delivery teams when possible. Providing these artifacts as inputs to team processes will enable them to realize the benefits with no encumbrance from additional process. Outside of asking that teams come together to "read from the same sheet" by sharing and discussing common reference models, they are free to continue using their current delivery methods and artifacts.

Applying these proven principles of business and process analysis will improve your organization's ability to successfully define and create a shared understanding of scope for complex strategic initiatives. You can help your organization effectively communicate and implement its high-level vision down to more granular details by creating your own Rosetta Stone of common visual reference models. ⋈

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1.

DEVELOP VISION AND STRATEGY

1.1	1.2	1.3
DEVELOP CONCEPT AND VISION	DEVELOP BUSINESS STRATEGY	MANAGE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

2.

MANAGE PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

2.1	2.2
MANAGE PRODUCT PORTFOLIO	DEVELOP PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

3.

MARKET PRODUCTS

3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7
RESEARCH CUSTOMERS AND MARKETS	DEVELOP SALES AND MARKETING STRATEGY	DEVELOP AND MANAGE MARKETING PLANS	MANAGE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS	ADVERTISE DEALERSHIP AND VEHICLES	MANAGE PRICING AND PROMOTIONS	MANAGE CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMS

5.

MANAGE CUSTOMER SERVICE

5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7
MANAGE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS	MANAGE WARRANTY REQUESTS	MANAGE SCHEDULED SERVICE REQS	MANAGE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS	MANAGE PRODUCT REPAIRS	MANAGE CUSTOMER SERVICE OPERATIONS	EVALUATE CUSTOMER SERVICE OPERATIONS

7.

MANAGE HUMAN CAPITAL

7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7
MANAGE HR POLICIES AND STRATEGIES	RECRUIT, SELECT, SOURCE EMPLOYEES	DEVELOP AND COUNSEL EMPLOYEES	MANAGE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	REWARD AND RETAIN EMPLOYEES	REDEPLOY AND RETIRE EMPLOYEES	MANAGE EMPLOYEE DATA

9.

MANAGE FINANCES

9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.7
PERFORM PLANNING/MGT ACCOUNTING	PERFORM REVENUE AND TAX ACCOUNTING	GENERAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING	MANAGE PROJECT ACCOUNTING	PROCESS PAYROLL	PROCESS PAYABLES AND EXPENSES	MANAGE TREASURY OPERATIONS

11.

MANAGE ENTERPRISE RISK

11.1	11.2	11.3	11.4
DEVELOP RISK MGT PLANS	MANAGE COMPLIANCE	MANAGE REMEDIATION EFFORTS	MANAGE BUSINESS RESILIENCY

12.

MANAGE EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

12.1	12.2	12.3
MANAGE OEM RELATIONSHIPS	MANAGE GOVT/ INDUSTRY RELATIONS	MANAGE SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS

13.

MANAGE BUSINESS CAPABILITIES

13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.7
MANAGE BUSINESS PROCESSES	MANAGE PROJECT, PROGRAM, AND PORTFOLIO	MANAGE ENTERPRISE QUALITY	MANAGE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE	MANAGE ENTERPRISE KNOWLEDGE	MANAGE PERFORMANCE	MANAGE HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.
SELL PRODUCTS

3.8	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
MANAGE BRANDING STRATEGY	MANAGE SALES LEADS	ONBOARD CUSTOMERS	SELL PRODUCT	SELL VALUE-ADD PRODUCTS	MANAGE CUSTOMER FINANCING

6.
MANAGE INVENTORY

6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6
ACQUIRE INVENTORY	WAREHOUSE INVENTORY	DISTRIBUTE INVENTORY	MANAGE VENDOR RELATIONS	ACQUIRE RETURNED INVENTORY	RECYCLE/DISPOSE OF INVENTORY

8.
MANAGE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7
MANAGE DEALER WEBSITE	MANAGE CRM	MANAGE SALES AND SERVICE TRANSACTIONS	IMPLEMENT SECURITY/PRIVACY CONTROLS	DEVELOP IT SOLUTIONS	DEPLOY IT SOLUTIONS	MANAGE COMPANY DATA

10.
MANAGE PROPERTY ASSETS

9.8	10.1	10.2	10.3
MANAGE INTERNAL CONTROLS	ACQUIRE PROPERTY	PLAN MAINTENANCE WORK	INSTALL ASSETS, EQUIPMENT, TOOLS

12.4	12.5
MANAGE LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES	MANAGE PUBLIC RELATIONS

MAJOR IMPACT	MINOR IMPACT	NO IMPACT

Sample Business Process Framework
This business process framework excerpt illustrates the result of stakeholders reviewing each process segment (or box) for impact and marking it accordingly. This approach minimizes the risk of overlooking critical stakeholders and areas of the business during scope efforts.