Quality is Not Allowed in Agile

Paul Carvalho
Pandemic 2020
Agile/Lean P2P

QDI — QUALITY DRIVEN INC

@carl_agile #SayNoToQuality

Quality is value to some person (at some time)

~ Gerald Weinberg

Quality *is* subjective. *And* it changes with every change in context.

2020-10-26

Observation on Quality in the Tech Industry

- Almost every company gets "quality" wrong

- If the definition of "quality" is subjective, how many people (opinions) are involved throughout the entire development and delivery process?
    - How many people are in your company?
    - Is every single person aligned with the same definition of quality at the same time?
    - Are you sure? No, really, <u>do</u> <u>you</u> <u>know</u>?

- Companies tend to push something out and convince customers, employees and the greater public afterwards that it is quality.
    - Where is the energy and $$$ spent? Why?

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

What Does Agile *Say* About Quality? Nothing.
*It Suggests How to **DO** Quality.*
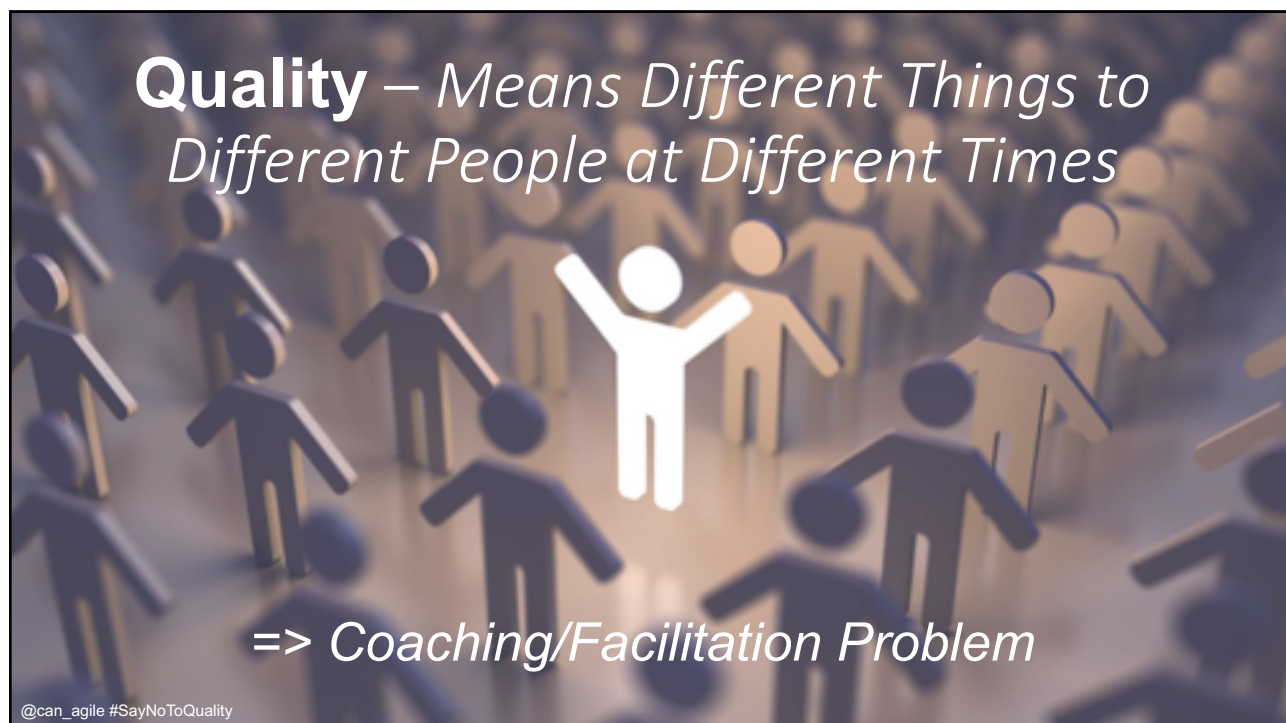
1. Collaborate: clarify "quality"

(Plan)

2. Express "quality"

(Do)

Individuals & Interactions
Working Software
Customer Collaboration
Responding to Change

3. Collect Feedback

(Study)

4. Refine, repeat

(Act)

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Anti-Patterns

"It's obvious. Everyone knows what Quality means."

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Quality – *Means Different Things to Different People at Different Times*

=> Coaching/Facilitation Problem

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Quality is a Meta Pattern**

- A pattern of patterns connected in a specific context and time

- You unlock (uncover, elicit, clarify..) the meta pattern with a *key*
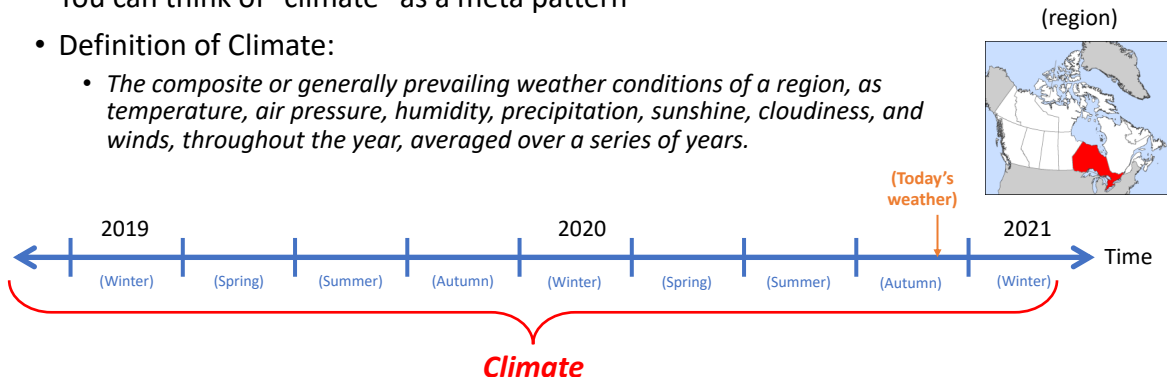 - For example: for Product Quality, use Weinberg's definition as your guide

*** I have discovered a truly remarkable proof of this theorem which this margin is too small to contain.*
~ Pierre de Fermat

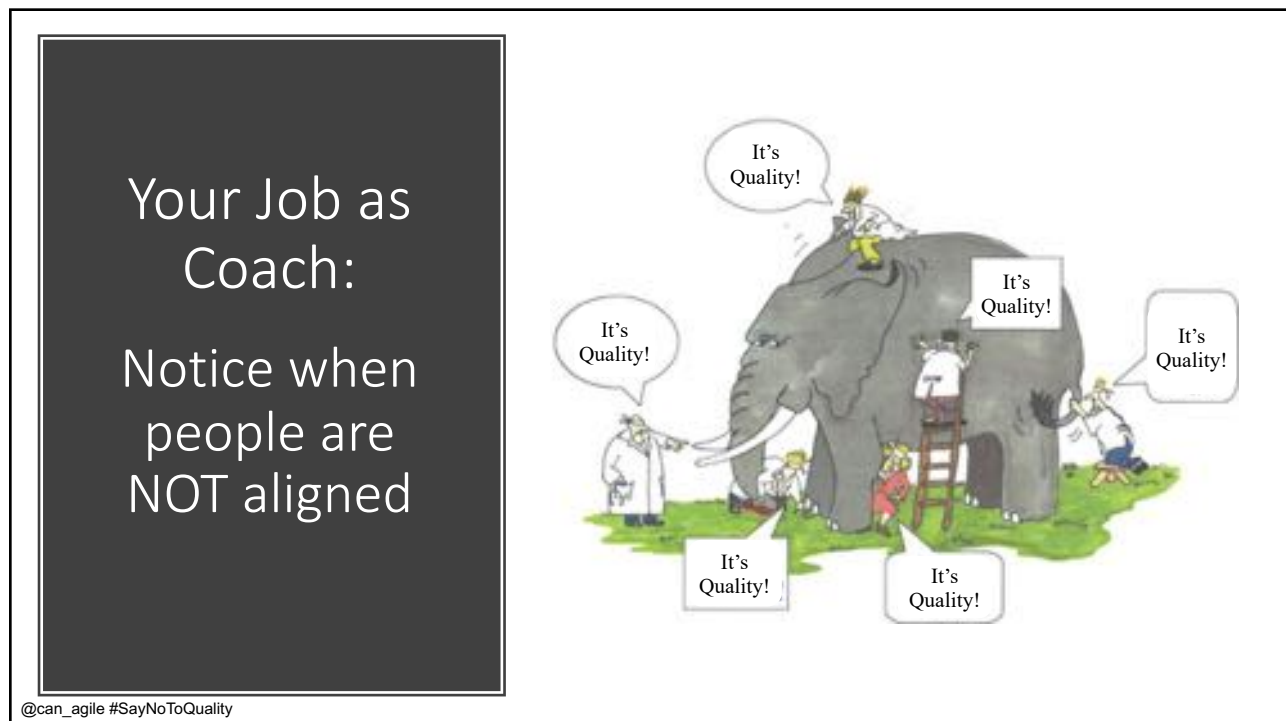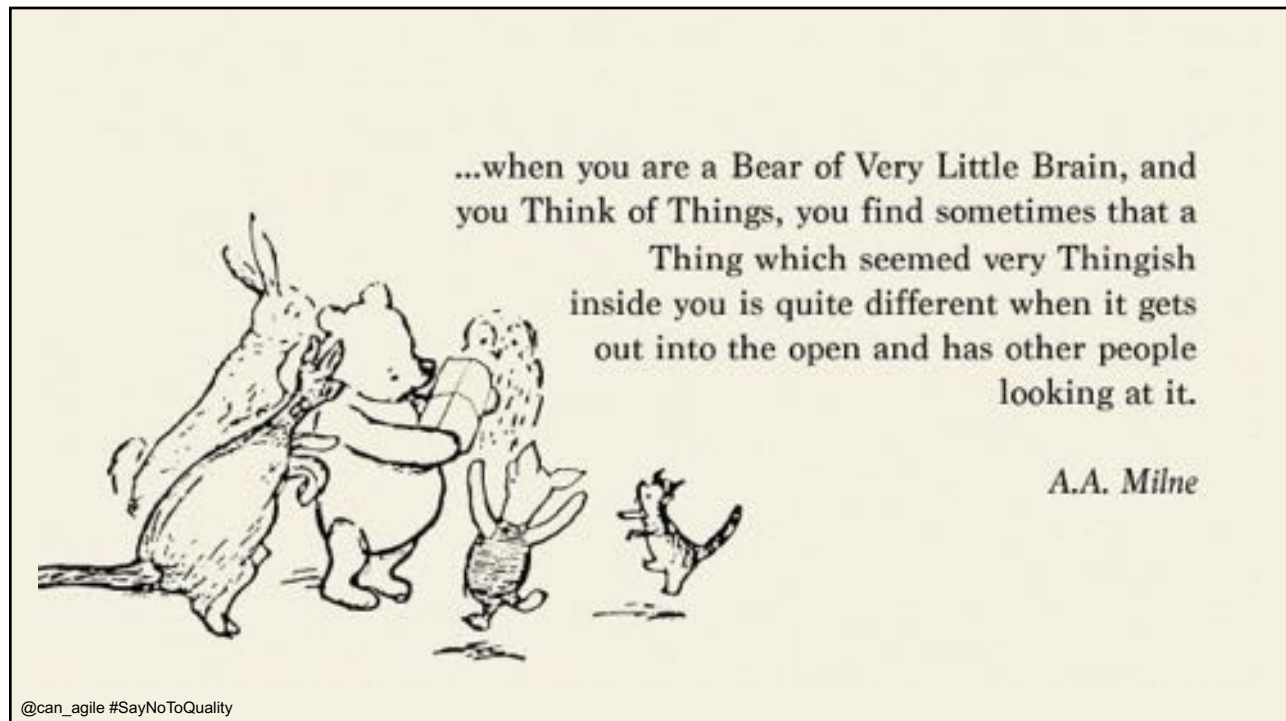@can_agile / © Paul Carvalho 2020

Meta Pattern Example

- You can think of "climate" as a meta pattern
- Definition of Climate:
  - *The composite or generally prevailing weather conditions of a region, as temperature, air pressure, humidity, precipitation, sunshine, cloudiness, and winds, throughout the year, averaged over a series of years.*

(region)

(Today's weather)

| 2019 | | | | 2020 | | | | 2021 | Time |
| (Winter) | (Spring) | (Summer) | (Autumn) | (Winter) | (Spring) | (Summer) | (Autumn) | (Winter) | |

Climate

Climate is NOT: today's weather, temperature, seasons, amount of precipitation, and so on
- It represents the pattern of patterns we see over years
- Like Quality, Climate shifts by region, over time, with more data, ...
- *Unlike Quality, Climate **doesn't** change depending upon who's looking at it!*

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

...when you are a Bear of Very Little Brain, and you Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out into the open and has other people looking at it.

A.A. Milne

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Your Job as Coach:

Notice when people are NOT aligned

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

It's Quality!

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Coaching Tool: Clean Language

> *"Clean Language is a way of asking questions and listening to the answers in a way that gets below the surface – finds out what they really mean by what they say."*
> ~ Judy Rees

Our unconscious mind uses and responds to symbols – including language

We unconsciously use metaphors to express our ideas – up to six every minute! (see References)

Unfortunately, symbols and symbolic examples (like metaphors) are open to interpretation

We are often unaware of this when we "communicate"

Ask questions to elicit clarity, like :

When you say X, what kind of X (is that X)?

Is there anything else about X?

What needs to happen for X?

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Coaching for Alignment – example:

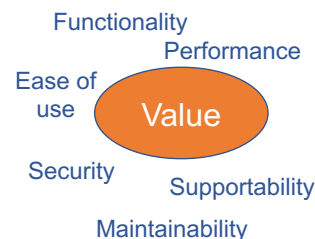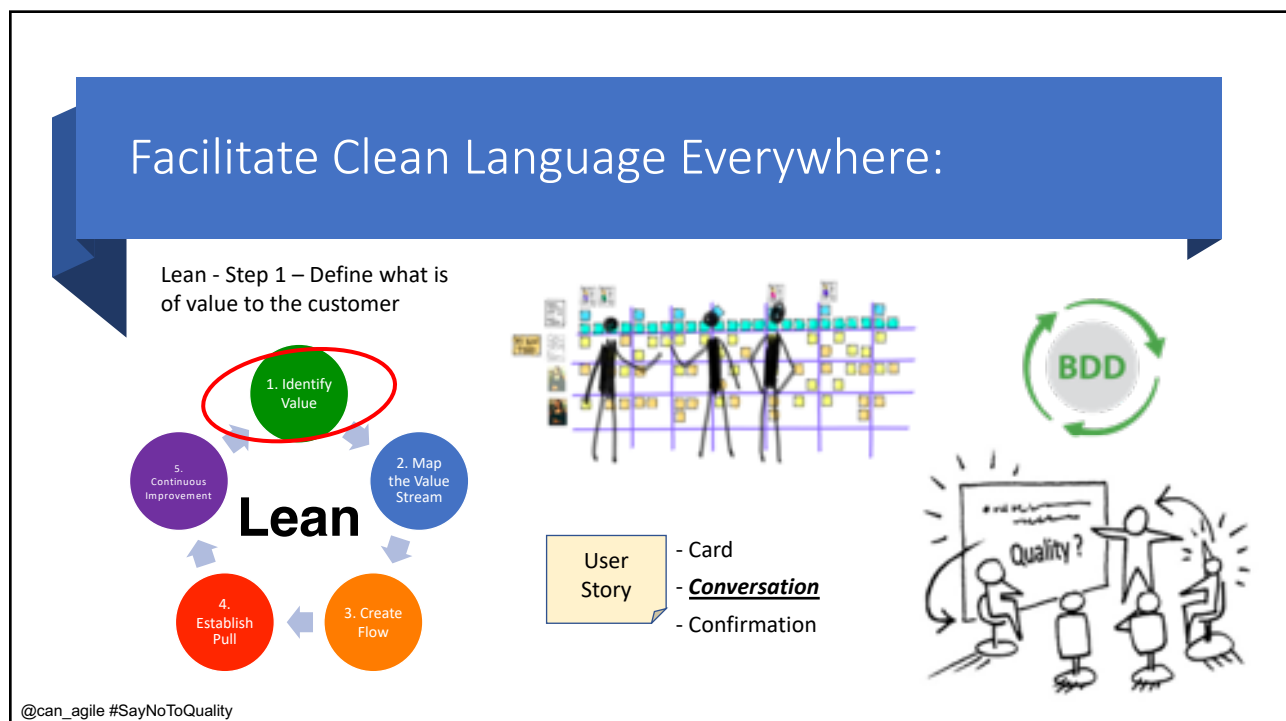➢ When you hear someone say "Quality" – **STOP** and "clean" it up *5-Why's* style:

"Quality"

(key*) →

Functionality
Performance
Ease of use
Value
Security
Supportability
Maintainability

Stakeholders
Developers
"user"
Regulator, Auditor
Person
Customer
Competitor

(Coach)

Clean Language:
- And ... what kind of **X** is that **X**?
- And ... is there anything else about **X**?

*Key here: Jerry Weinberg's definition

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

BEWARE
THE PHRASE
"NON-FUNCTIONAL"

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

USE A NEGATIVE PHRASE TO MEAN A SPECIFIC THING

"IT'S A TRAP!"

ADMIRAL ACKBAR

@can_agile #SayNoToNonFunctional

Facilitate Clean Language Everywhere:

Lean - Step 1 – Define what is of value to the customer

1. Identify Value

5. Continuous Improvement

Lean

2. Map the Value Stream

4. Establish Pull

3. Create Flow

BDD

User Story
- Card
- *Conversation*
- Confirmation

Quality ?

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

More Coaching Tools Include..

- The goal is to help people clarify what they mean when they say the word "quality"
- Depending upon the context, there are many different tools you might use to help others express their thoughts, including:
  - *Value Stream Mapping/Design*
  - *Data-Driven Design*
  - *Specification By Example*
  - *Story Mapping*
  - *and more...*

KEY IDEA: Every time someone says the word "Quality" ASSUME that <u>no one</u> is on the same page.

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Aside: Quality vs Testing

- Quality is about relationships and understanding
  - Quality is **demonstrated** as a measure of your alignment with your target audience
- Testing is a discovery approach for development

Michael Jordan => knows Quality
- Has experience, but not playing
- Understands players
  - Who they are
  - What they are doing
  - Why they're doing it (goals)
- *Congruent* with players/teams and can communicate needs/wishes to others
- Be like Mike

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

WARNING: YOU SHOULD NEVER CALL TESTERS 'QUALITY ASSURANCE'

- Implies that your testers:
  - Are **_responsible_** for quality
  - Know your customers and users best
  - Are the ones talking to your customers
  - Define what should be built (coded) into your products & services
  - Have control over delivery and release decisions

- If these conditions are not true, who are you misleading and why?

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Final Thoughts

- "Quality" is NOT a sacred word - it's a dirty word

- Avoid the word "Quality" if you want the ability to deliver it

- Delivering Quality is a Team sport

@can_agile #SayNoToQuality

Thank you.

Paul Carvalho

Twitter: @can_agile

www.Quality-Driven.com

References

Clean Language:
- www.unconsciousagile.com/clean_language

Presentation PDF:
- www.quality-driven.com/shared/