

How to get sh*t done – and done better – when everyone is under pressure

EMERGING ISSUES & GLOBAL TRENDS TRACK

RUTHANN RICHARDSON, CHIEF FUNDRAISING & MARKETING OFFICER, ACT FOR PEACE

JULIA STEEL, LEADERSHIP & WAYS OF WORKING COACH, JULIASTEEL.COM

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Pressure, the need to perform and a challenging work environment





BACK TO THE FUTURE

Back to 2021...



Our team

- **Small, dedicated but distributed team (Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane)**
- **Working hard to help support our partners and their communities.**
- **But we were experiencing stress and burnout as a result.**



Team were feeling

Overwhelmed

Distracted

Isolated

Excluded

Unmotivated

Ineffective

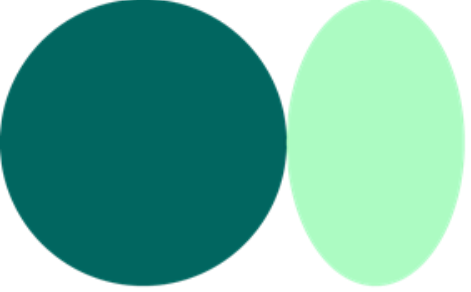


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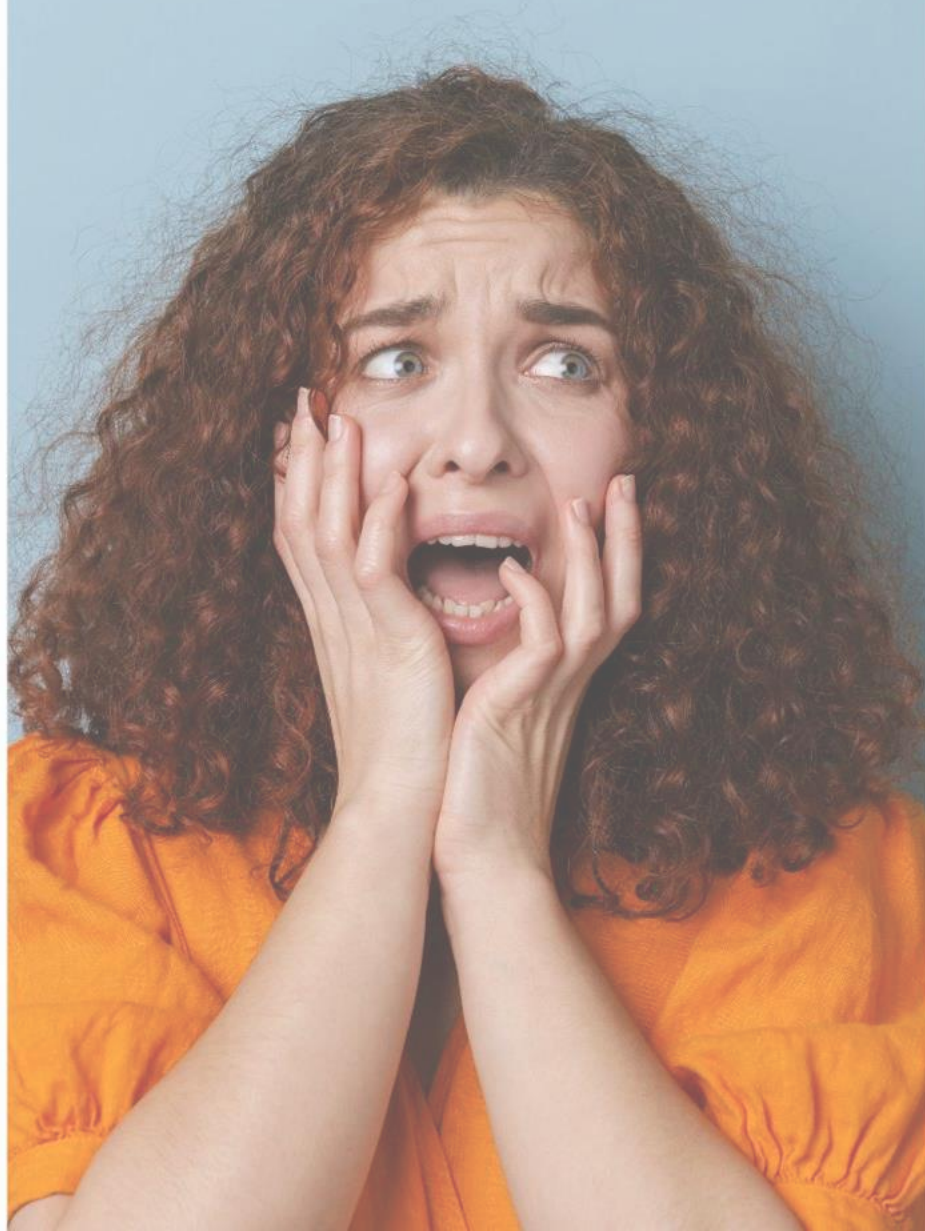


Big Question

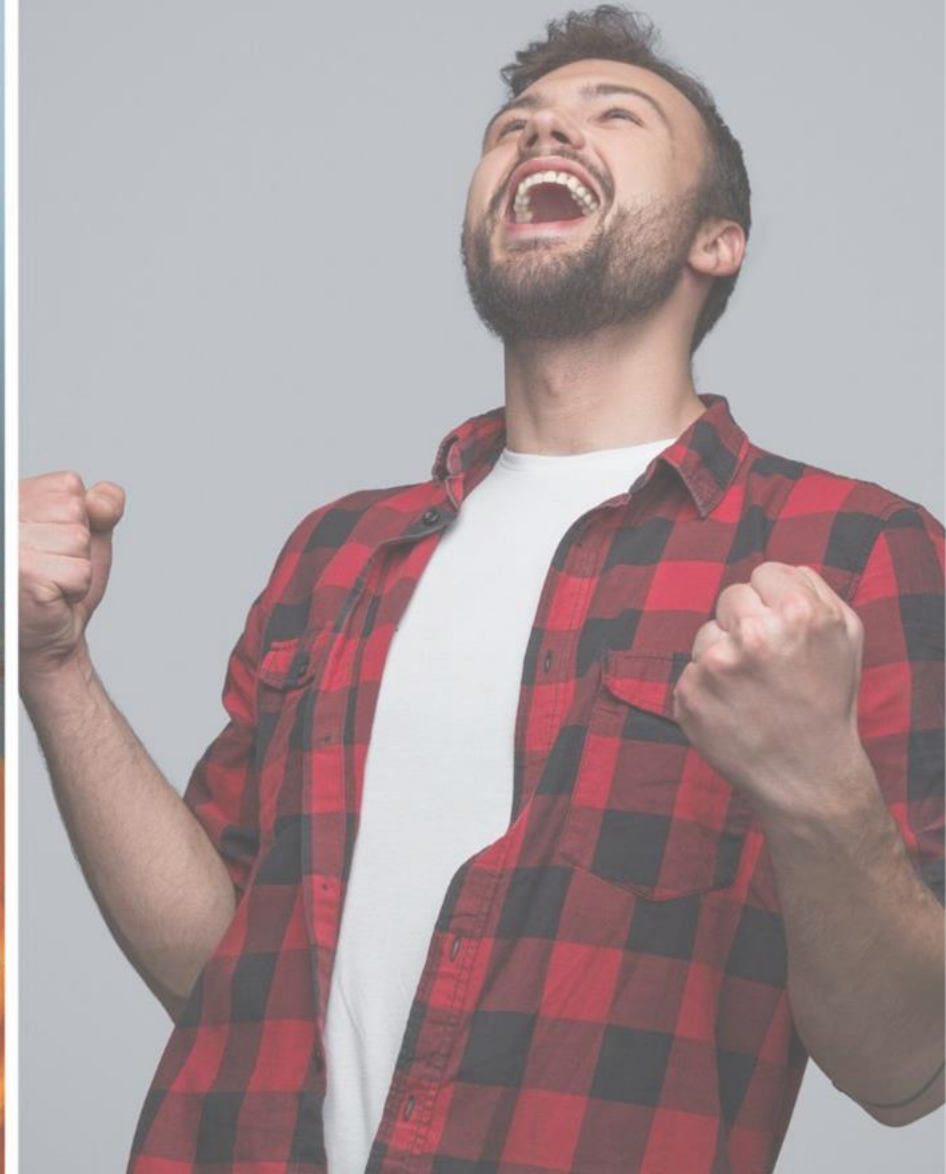
"How do we get sh*t done – and done better – when everyone is under pressure?"



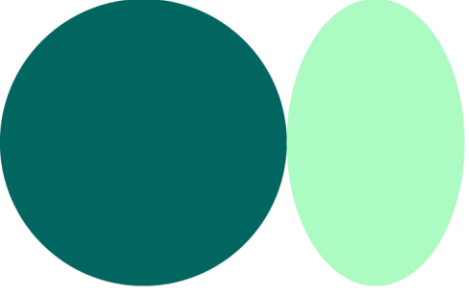
STRESS



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TRADITIONAL WAYS OF WORKING

Long Journey

Plan & Process Driven

Documentation

Volume

Step Change

Urgent

Communication



NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Short Trips

Supporter Driven

Delivery

Value

Incremental Change

Important

Collaboration

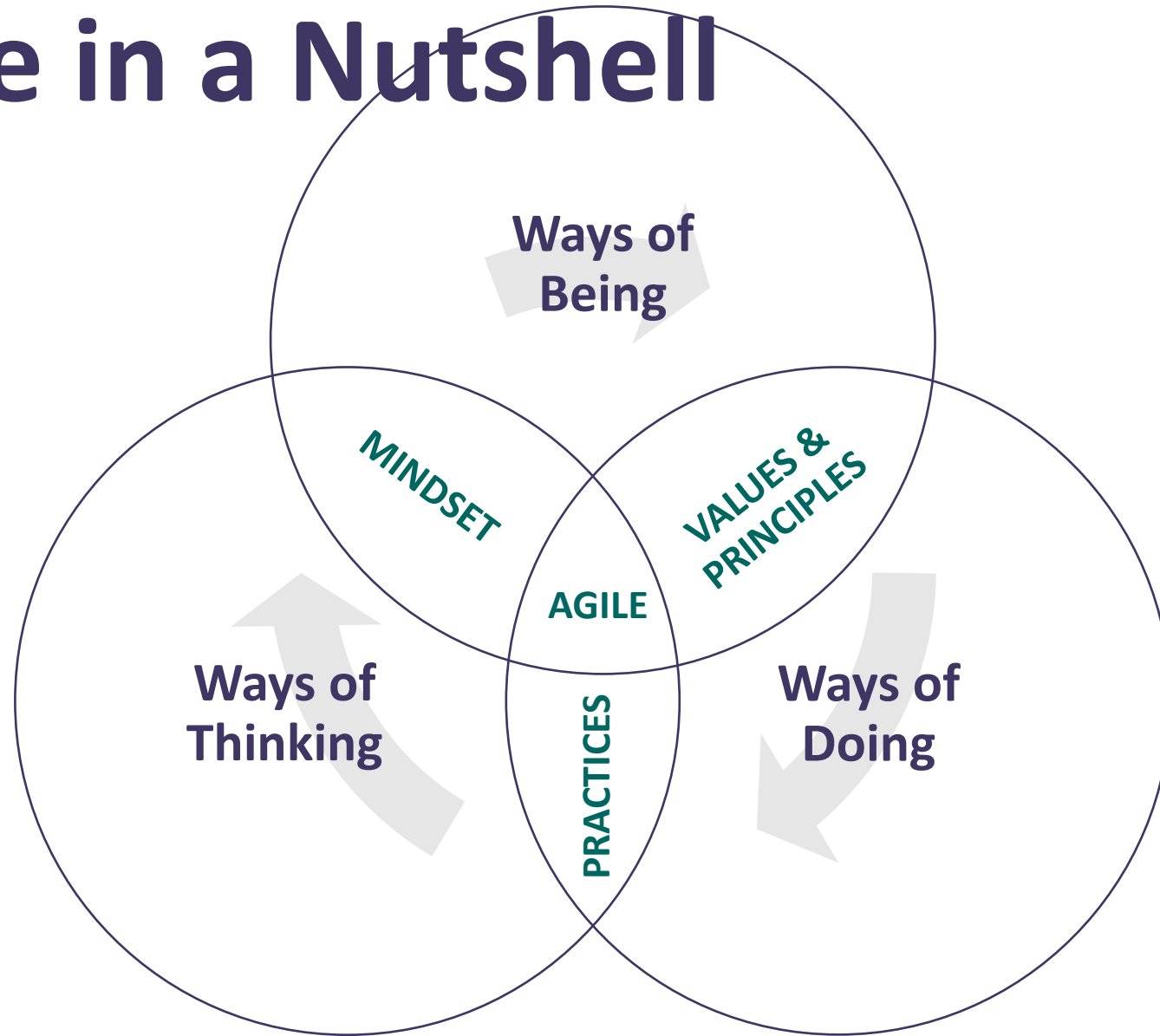


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Agile in a Nutshell





Our Agile Journey

- Initiated by Chief Fundraising & Marketing Officer
- Brief and discovery iscovery
- Agreed values and principles
- Explored different ways of working and different agile practices
- Agreed our new way of working (Scrum)
- Nominated people into the key roles required for Scrum
- All staff education and training
- Scrum role specific training
- Ongoing leadership and team coaching

Key Scrum Roles



PRODUCT OWNER

Key business decision maker, prioritiser, and communicator



DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Cross-functional, self-organising team that delivers the prioritised work



SCRUM MASTER

Coach, trainer, roadblock remover, servant leader

Agile (Scrum) in Action

Strategy &
Annual Plan

Goals & KPI's



Ideas & Insights

All Staff



Quarterly Big
Room Planning

1-day/quarter - All staff



Feedback & Continuous Improvement

Sprint
Retrospective

45 minutes/fortnight



Backlog



Sprint
Backlog



Sprint Planning

2hrs/fortnight



Daily Standup

15mins/day



Sprint Review

2hrs/fortnight

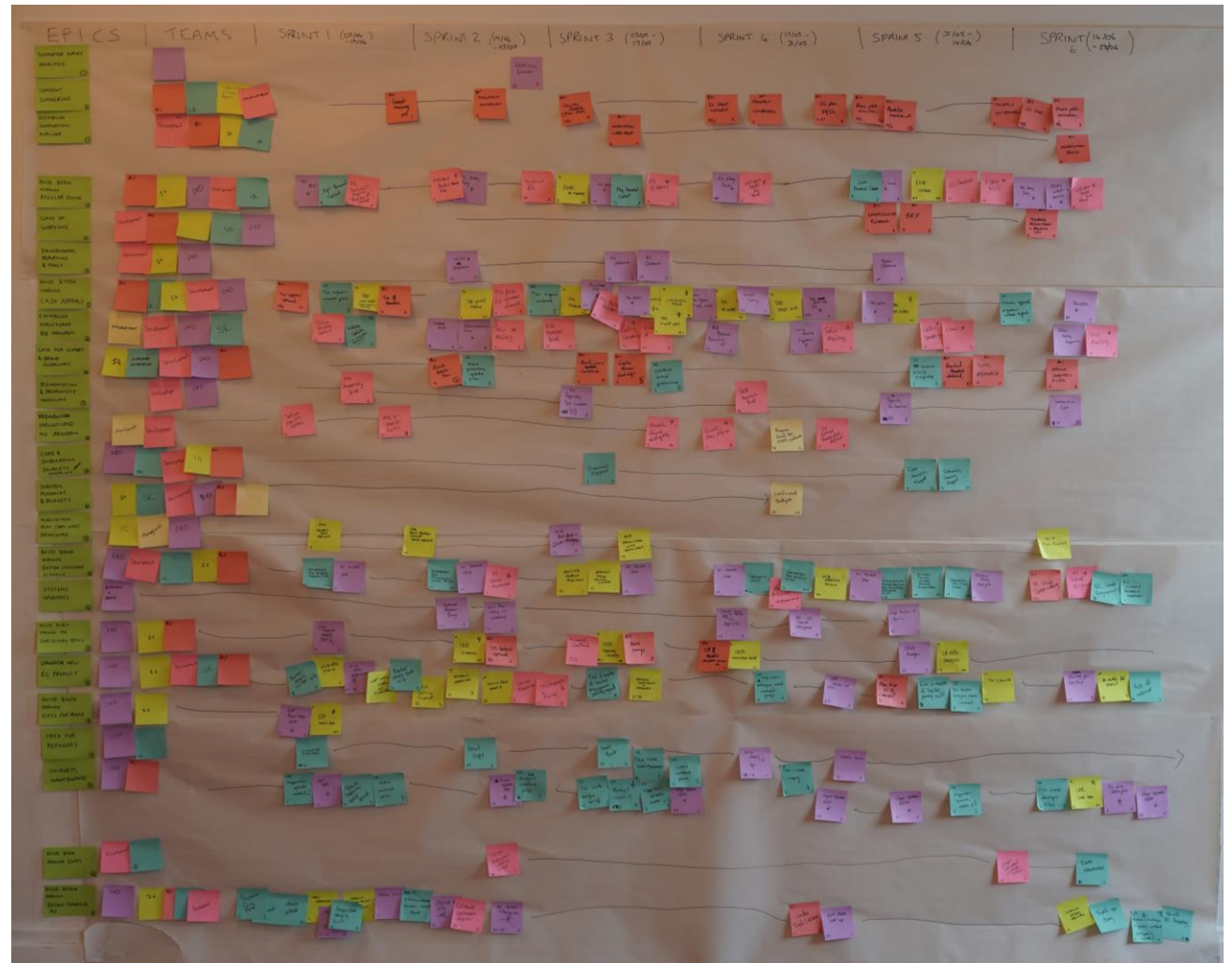
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Agile at Act for Peace

Quarterly Big Room Planning:

- Once per quarter, all day, all in
- Insights and Learnings
- Planning



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Fortnightly Sprint Cycle:

- Fortnightly Sprint Planning
- Daily stand-up (15 min)
- Fortnightly Sprint Review and Retrospective

Agile Example

Manage your backlog and sprints here, add updates as part of your daily stand-up and tag tea... [See More](#)

[Main Tab...](#) | [Current Sprint Kanb...](#) | [Assigned to M...](#) | [FAM Dashba...](#) | [Team/Sprint Dashb...](#) | [Sprint Review Agen...](#) | [Stand U...](#) | [New Backlog Item](#) | [New in Current Spr...](#) | +

[New item](#) Search Person Filter Sort / 1 Hide ...

Q3 Sprint 2 - 15 Feb 24 - 28 Feb 24

<input type="checkbox"/>	Item		Epic	Tags	Assigned To	Importance	Status	Story Points	Required By	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Christmas Appeal - Analysis		Christmas Appeal			Medium	Working On It	5 SP	28 Mar	
<input type="checkbox"/>	February Peacemail		Regular Giving			Low	Ready	3 SP	28 Feb	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tax Appeal - Strategy		Tax Appeal			High	Working On It	8 SP	26 Feb	
<input type="checkbox"/>	March Social Media Content Plan		MarComs			Medium	Ready	2 SP	23 Feb	
<input type="checkbox"/>	RC Schools Calling		Ration Challenge			Low	Working On It	2 SP	23 Feb	
<input type="checkbox"/>	RCGM Proposal Creative Brief		Philanthropy			Medium	Done	3 SP	20 Feb	
<input type="checkbox"/>	+ Add item									
									23 SP sum	

Backlog

<input type="checkbox"/>	Item		Epic	Tags	Assigned To	Importance	Status	Story Points	Required By
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brand Strategy Messaging Guide		MarComs			High	Ready	5 SP	15 Mar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tax Appeal - Copy Brief		Tax Appeal			Medium	Ready	5 SP	7 Mar
<input type="checkbox"/>	FY25 Budget Templates		Management			High	New	8 SP	6 Mar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tax Appeal - Data Brief		Tax Appeal			Medium	Ready	3 SP	12 Feb
<input type="checkbox"/>	+ Add item								

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So...

**"Has it helped us to get sh*t done –
and done better – when everyone is
under pressure?"**



Agile at Act for Peace

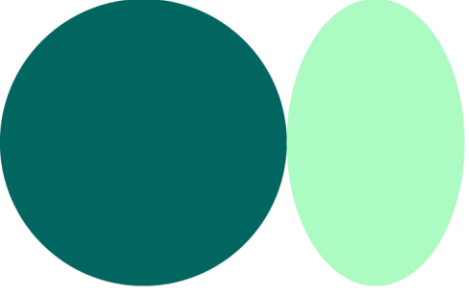
- **Improvement in how we work together as a team**
- **Increased collaboration**
- **All in planning and alignment of quarterly goals**
- **Visible workload with clear roles and responsibilities**
- **Better accountability**
- **Prepared us to respond to really challenging situations**



Feedback from Staff

"Our planning has become much more efficient. Most of the time with Big Room Planning, it's clear what the outcomes are, it's practical and you always come away with a clear direction of what to do next. And while we now have a daily meeting, they always stick to the 15 minutes. And I think that meeting every day is important for a team like ours who are mostly remote."

"Agile encourages us all to come together and plan at least 3 months ahead which allows us to identify busy periods and adjust accordingly. The daily stand ups give us an opportunity to check in with others and see where things are up to."



"I like that Agile creates a sense of teamwork through daily stand ups/squads. It's helpful to know where projects are at without needing to reach out to people constantly, so it saves time."

"I like the structure, discipline and practice of collaborating daily. This has given the team the opportunity to flag issues, be aware of each team member's priorities for that day and therefore work more effectively. It has also helped to clearly determine the priority level of work items, positively impacting where time is prioritised."

"I feel like Agile has given us the framework to make difficult choices about what work is achievable, and what work isn't. It's meant we are all more realistic about what we are able to accomplish in a set period of time. "

But... It's a Journey

Since the start of our agile journey, we have continued to adapt and improve our way of working.

Currently on our third squad structure, which probably won't be our last!

We continue to listen, learn and optimise how we work together as a team.

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Key Challenges

- **There is still too much work!**
- **Prioritisation continues to be a struggle and we have more to do to ensure we are focusing on the work that delivers the most value**
- **Still spending too much time on how things are progressing rather than what is/isn't progressing.**



What the team say

"It's been a real challenge to move out of the work in progress mentality. I think many of us are using the Monday board as our to-do list, and I'm not sure it is meant to be used that way."

"Some pieces of work are ongoing and not project specific, they are never marked as done and therefore less satisfying to see on the board."

"Because I don't have as many items on the board as some people, I worry that they don't think I'm actually doing anything. And I really miss the feeling of accomplishment that comes from 'ticking something off' on the board."

Where to from here



GROWTH MINDSET

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Key Takeaways

- Agile is NOT a silver bullet, but it has helped us identify what we need to do to be better as a team.
- A clear strategy and alignment on goals is vital.
- Success is as much about our mindset and behaviours as it is about tools and processes



Top Tips

- How we work is changing, be willing to explore and experiment.
- Don't try and design a perfect solution upfront (spoiler alert: there isn't one!). Agree where you want to start, get going, and learn on the way BUT...
- Buy into the journey, processes and tools are easy to implement, mindset and behaviour change takes time.
- Invest in training and if you can, external advice or coaching. Home truths can be hard to spot if you're too close to them.

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2024

Thank you



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