

A Contrarian's Guide to Agile Transformation

Take-home edition

Glen Ford

ProductTank Austin, April 2019

Glen Ford

Director of Product Management, Alegion

glen@austinproduct.pro

Blog and more: <https://austinproduct.pro>

LI: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/glenford>

Issue #1:

“We need to be more agile.”

Issue #1:

“We need to be more agile.”

This is not a problem statement.

Possible problem statements

- Of our last 9 major features released, only 2 have seen significant usage.
- In 2H 2018, we lost \$200K in recurring revenue because we couldn't respond to customer needs quickly enough.

Possible problem statements, cont'd

- Given our throughput, it will take us three quarters to ship the features we've already market-validated.
- Our #1 competitor ships something big before every trade show, and we don't.

Suggestion #1:

Need organizational change?

**Treat it like a product and
product manage it.**

Treat transformation as a product.

- Build a case.
- Back it up with empirical evidence.
- Put relevant numbers on it if possible.
- Cite thought leaders.
- Pitch it passionately.
- Sell it as an opportunity.

Issue #2:

“We should switch to scrum.”

Issue #2:

“We should switch to scrum.”

**This is not product
management.**

It's a “d” not a “j”.

- The traits of a great project manager are harmful to a product manager.
- Starting from the standpoint of resource availability, velocity, calendar constraints, etc.—these all seriously detract from discovering the right thing to build.

Suggestion #2:

Be a great product manager.

**Let others step up to the
delivery plate.**

Decouple yourself from engineering.

- Get in the field. (There are no facts inside the building!)
- Find underserved market needs.
- Quantify opportunities.
- Discover solutions that fit.
- Prototype, prototype, prototype.
- Define success.

Thank you!

You can reach me at:

glen@austinproduct.pro

LI: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/glenford>