



AEGON Ireland: Introducing Agile

John Abbott – Change and Development Manager

Karl Heery – IT Development Manager & Lead Architect

Mairead Mulligan – QA Senior Lead

Aisling Ni Cheallaigh – BA Senior Lead

Agenda

1. Company overview
2. Key challenges
3. Systems overview
4. Why we moved to Agile
5. Our scrum structure
6. The initial launch – January 2012
7. Current view
8. What would we have done differently?
9. Summary

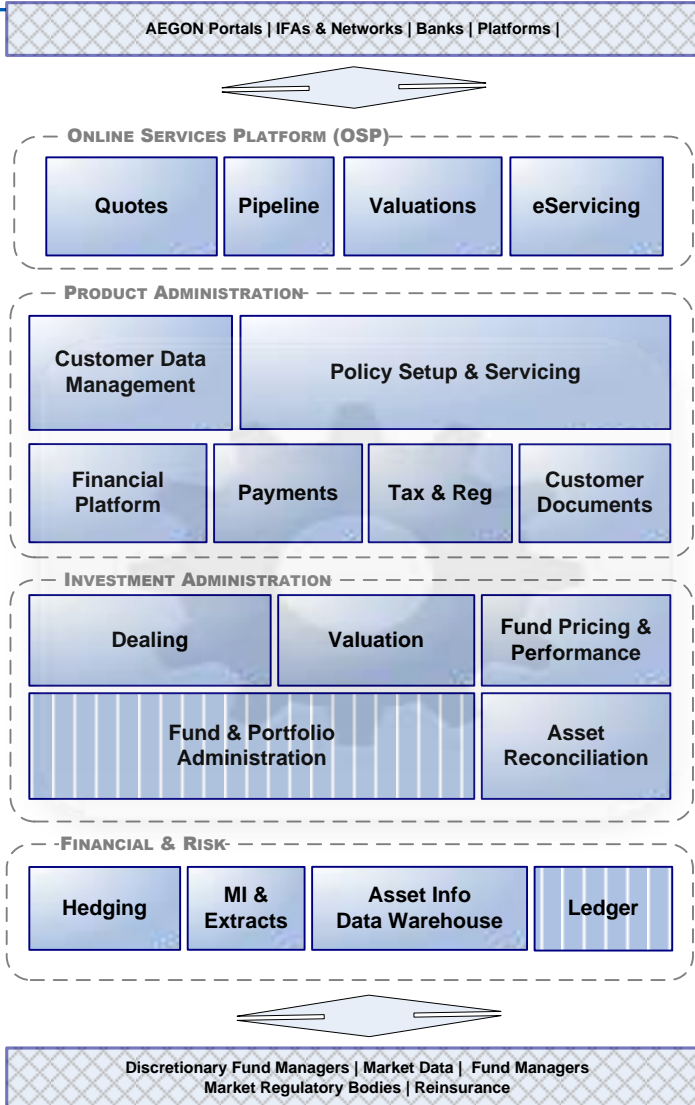
- Aegon Ireland is an international life company and part of the Aegon group headquartered in Den Haag. The company was established in 2002.
- Aegon Ireland provides offshore bond products to the UK market and Variable Annuity products to a number of European countries
- The company has ~€5 billion of assets under management
- The offshore bond product is “open architecture” and involves management of over 3000 different lines of stock
- The variable annuity products have a simple fund set but a constant flow of new product development (online services, new business processes, product features)
- Project stakeholders include all ranges of business disciplines: Sales & Proposition, Client Services (incl. Contact centre), Investment admin, Finance & Actuarial, Legal etc. ...not to mention our end customers and financial advisers

Key challenges

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



Systems overview



Technology stack:

- Front-end: Java Swing for back-office UIs; C# ASP .Net for web
 - Background: workflow manager, daily batch, print manager, financial processing platform etc.
 - Middleware: OO domain in Hibernate & Spring; custom business logic / hibernate layers; Spring JDBC; ADO, LINQ etc.
 - Database: complex data model (much pre-existing) in Informix & SQL Server
 - Integration: from messaging (strong) to shared database (weak)
- ➔ Not a green-field development site for Agile, but ours to reshape!

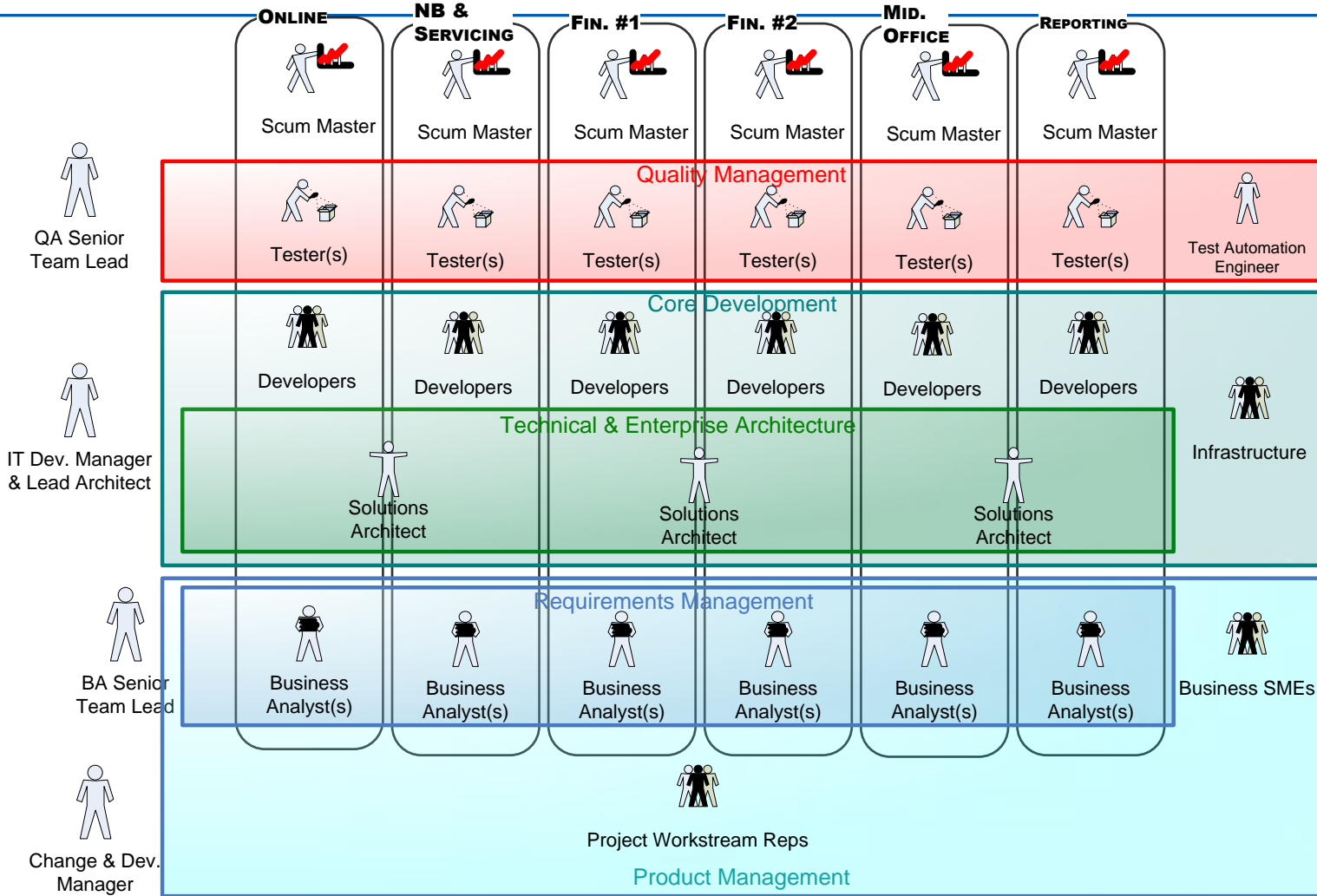
Why we moved to Agile

Teams formed and assigned to deliver business projects, potentially spanning many areas of platform...

Project & Customer	Process & Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterfall projects dealing with emerging requirements• Requirements didn't come in the right/good order<ul style="list-style-type: none">• vague guidelines on RDR from the FSA• high proposition demand - result of unclear market in 2013• Scope overload - lack of belief in a phase 2• Lack of business engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over-reliance on manual testing• Insufficient completion of tasks before Dev handoff to QA• Increased risk caused by test blocks at end of project• Some quality issues caught late or post-live: knowledge of system & standards suggested as cause
Technical	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few functional boundaries within platform – lack of contracts and service-oriented development• No standards / drive to test functionality in isolation• Limits to growth (infra) on test environments• Significant time & diligence on branch, merge & release	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context-switching across different systems: subject-matter expertise hard to nurture• No vision held for systems outside of leadership/architecture team• Team set to scale by 50-100% in 2012• De-motivation & frustration setting in

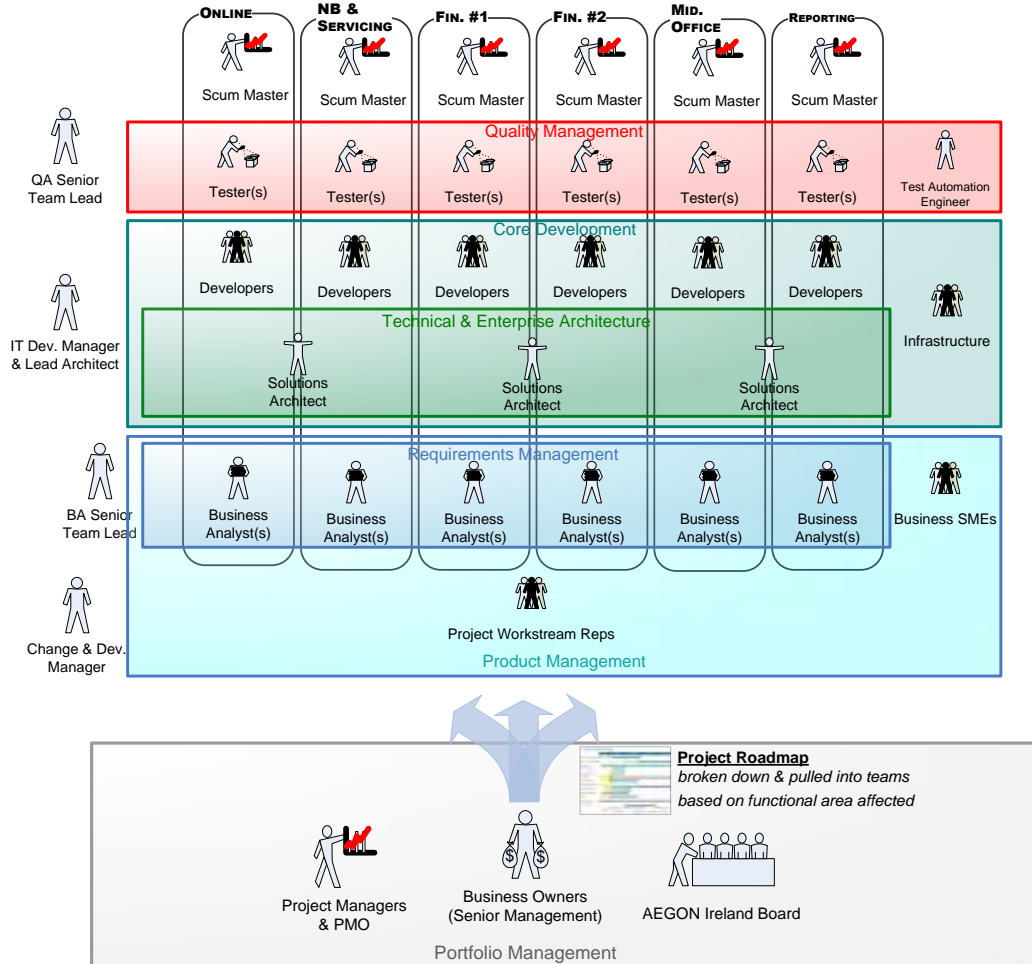
Some Agile practices had been adopted (they just made sense!) and had started to show promise...

Our scrum structure



- “ideal-sized” teams of 7-9
- BA/QA:Dev ratio of 1:4
- Monthly ‘Portfolio Planning’
- Independent stories & backlogs per team
- 4 week (synchronised) sprints
- Continuous integration
- ‘in-sprint’ testing – aim to ship software

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Team views

Can only improve things, right!? Let's Do This!

IT

What do you mean no Functional Spec? How do we track requirements?

BA

We don't have automated testing yet – let's wait!

QA

Business

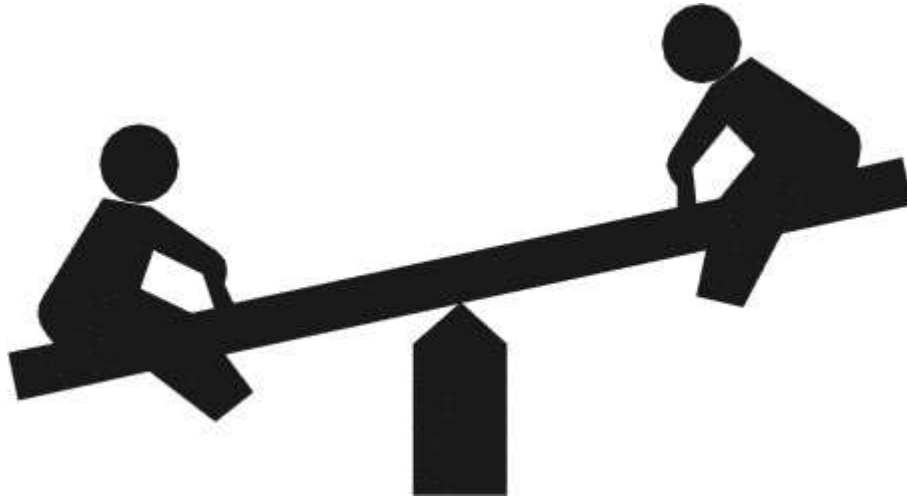
Here come the brown paper brigade!

PM

“Agile doesn't need PM's??. We are not ready!

Early training focused on

- providing a base understanding across all teams
- allaying key concerns about user story approach and testing
- tipping the balance of knowledge





Sprint #1 Day 1 – Head-first into Agile!

A full day offsite planning at Wynn's hotel

- **What went well:**
 - Good team spirit
 - High levels of energy & enthusiasm
 - Co-location
 - Sharing of knowledge
 - Priorities clearly visible

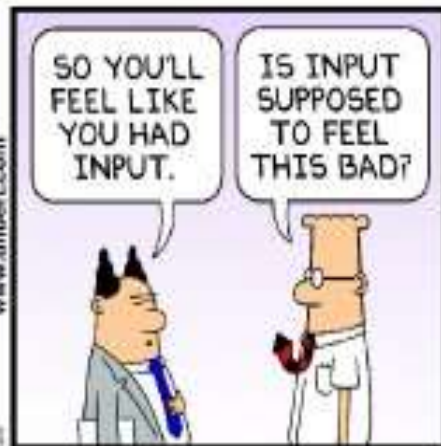
- **What needed improvement:**
 - Failure to bring stakeholders with us on our journey
 - Sprint planning without sufficient grooming
 - QA approach – too ambitious at the start
 - Prioritisation meeting across projects took 3 months to be properly efficient
 - Sufficient grooming of user stories in advance was an issue – teams were starved of work

What's Improved:

- Quality
- Test Design
- Test Automation
- Grooming & Planning
- Specialism
- Issues & Cracks more Visible
- Control on Priorities

What still needs improving:

- Tracking Progress and Recording Velocity
- Estimate Accuracy
- Stakeholder Buy In
- Management of Expectations
- Overall programme delivery was not Agile – many other work streams involved (compliance, legal, marketing, tax)
- Teams need to time to settle after significant recruitment



What would we have done differently – look back on the year

Current position

- Delivered by far the most complicated project ever encountered in the company
- A very high quality end product
- Highly motivated Scrum teams
- Deep knowledge within teams despite relatively new to organisation
- A powerful delivery engine

Ongoing

- Development of a project approach that can provide a clear narrative on progress
- Scaling of agile
- Improve management buy-in as next set of projects commence