

HOW THE AGILE KATA IS BECOMING THE NEW STANDARD IN AGILE CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FOR THE STANDARD

CASE STUDY

GOALS

- Reducing cycle time by 25%.
- Increased forecasting capabilities.
- Improved visibility into company-wide goals and transparency.

ABOUT

- The Standard Insurance Company "The Standard".
- 3500+ employees.
- Industry: Finance.
- HQ in Portland, OR USA.



Jason is a Director of Agile Transformation at The Standard, where he is responsible for helping the organization move towards an agile delivery model. He has previously worked as a Senior Agile Coach for Cigna/Express Scripts as well as the Cigna Agile Transformation Office. Prior to that he has led a transformation for the Customer Care vertical inside of Barclaycard US. He teaches Agile Project Management at Drexel University and is also a founding Board Member of the Agile Uprising.

JASON HRCSKO

Director of Agile Transformation
The Standard

THEIR STORY

The Standard is a leading provider of financial products and services. In October 2022, the insurance company began using the Agile Kata to complement the agile transformation of teams in the technology-, product-, and business-units as an agile change management process. The Standard began their transformation utilizing SAFe, but has pivoted away from a prescriptive framework to a method encompassing many tools and protocols for success. What began in the technology teams has slowly spread out into the enterprise. Today, the Agile Kata serves as a new way of communicating across many units; business, product and technology alike. Jason Hrcsko says:

“It's a very simple and easy way to visualize what we want to get to and how we're going to try to get there.”

The goals set by *The Standard* aligned well with the mindset of Agile Kata. The primary goal was to identify the multitude of opportunities for improvement, starting in their Data program which is the largest delivery unit inside the enterprise. The program identified between 5 and 6 opportunities and used the Agile Kata to visualize the delta between the current and desired states, which was a precursor to designing experiments in an attempt to iterate towards progress. In a few short months collaboration, communication, and coordination vastly improved, which led to increased transparency and an appetite to push the tempo with bigger, bolder experiments.

Applying the Agile Kata provides a vocabulary that is easy to share across the entire organization, which confirmed to Jason and his team what they had learned in the Agile Kata Pro certification course.

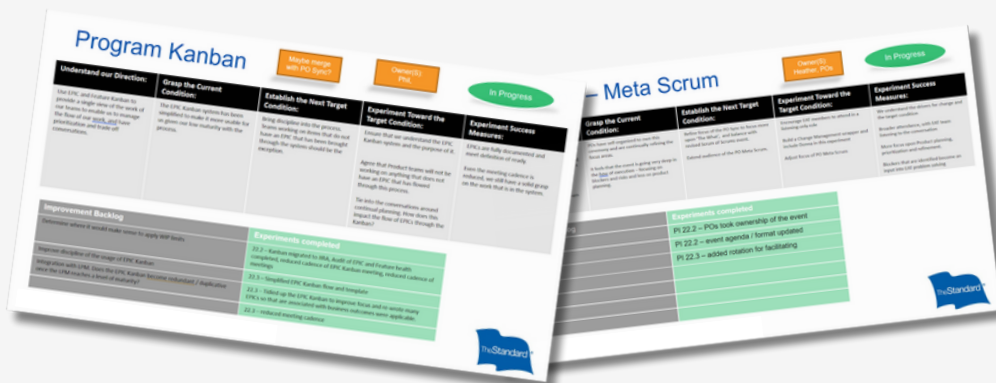
“THE ELEGANCE OF THE SIMPLICITY REALLY HELPS, AND THE TEAMS USING THE AGILE KATA REALLY LIKE IT.”

**JASON HRCSKO
DIRECTOR OF AGILE TRANSFORMATION
THE STANDARD**



But cycle time, business alignment and transparency were not the only goals of introducing the Agile Kata to The Standard. Reduced time spent in PI planning, more effective communication with the C-level executives, and improved forecasting capabilities, became clearer once the Agile Kata was applied.

The Standard is continuing with their agile transformation and will increase the radius and use of the Agile Kata into all corners of the organization. Jason is already contemplating with the idea of using the Agile Kata as an alternative to Scrum for some of their niche products. A major next step is also to share the Agile Kata approach with their vendors and suppliers to include them in the process and to achieve a higher level of business agility.




Agile Kata.pro

THE CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR AGILE KATA PROFESSIONALS

The Standard is a leading provider of financial products and services, including group and individual disability insurance, group life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance, group dental and vision insurance, group accident, critical illness and hospital indemnity insurance, paid family leave and absence management services, retirement plans services and individual annuities. The Standard’s purpose is to help people achieve financial well-being and peace of mind. To accomplish this, we put customers, employees and our communities at the heart of everything we do. Caring about people is a core value at The Standard. In our business, that means focusing on offering products and services to best meet the diverse needs of our customers. In our workplace, that means creating a welcoming environment where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work, reach their full potential and be there for those who rely on us. In our communities, that means donating time, money and expertise to organizations providing community-focused and culturally appropriate services.