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# less less LeSS

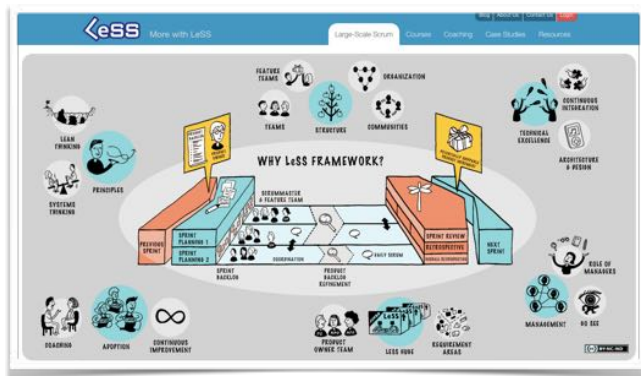
Craig Larman  
[craiglarman.com](http://craiglarman.com) & [less.works](http://less.works)

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# Scaling?

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first, a caution...

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One of the directors of SAGE was discussing why the programming had gotten out of hand. He was then asked, **“If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently?” ...**

7

His answer:  
**“Find the ten best people and write the entire thing themselves.”**

[Horowitz74]

8

after years working in  
**large**  
**multisite**  
**offshore**  
development,  
our **key advice?** ...

9

**large - don't**  
**multisite - don't**  
**offshore - don't**

10

but groups still 'scale',  
for reasons...

**compelling**  
("create LTE")

questionable  
("low-cost sites")

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so is LeSS for **scaling?**

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# Descaling & Simplifying

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“How can we apply agile at scale in our big complex organization?”

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is this the right question? ...

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traditional large groups are complicated — though not because they need to be, but because **their organizational designs create an illusion of unnecessary complexity**

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**This** is an Important Question...

“How can we **simplify**  
the unnecessarily big and  
complex organizational  
design, and **be agile**  
rather than **do agile**?”

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LeSS **descales**

organizational complexity,  
dissolving unnecessary  
complex organizational  
solutions, and solving in  
simpler ways.

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LeSS  
More with LeSS

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Learning  
Resources

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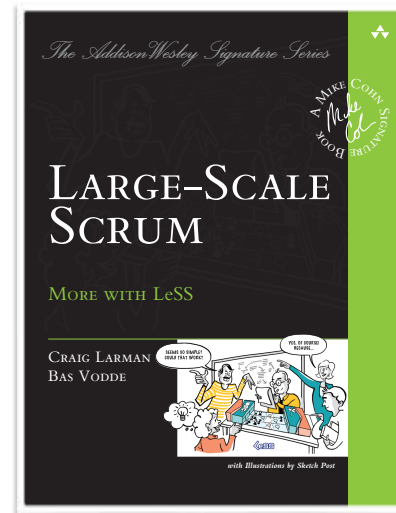
Craig Larman

co-creator of LeSS (with Bas Vodde)

large + multisite + 'offshore'  
large-scale embedded systems  
large-scale financial systems  
large-scale telecom systems

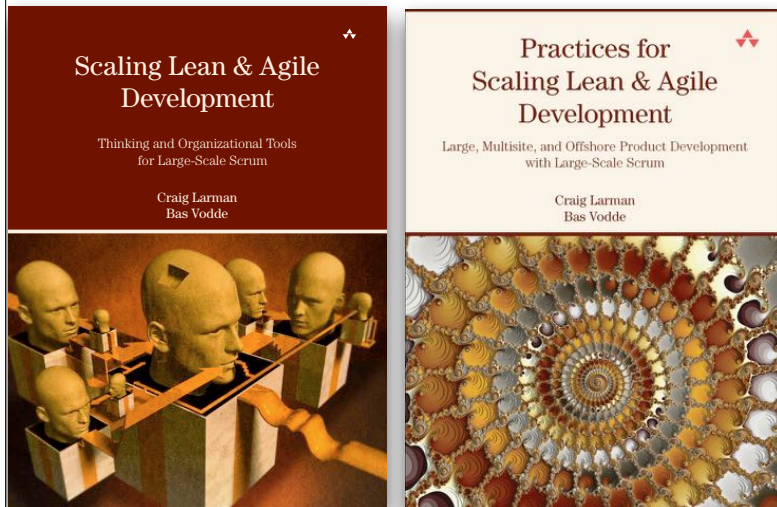
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3rd LeSS book...



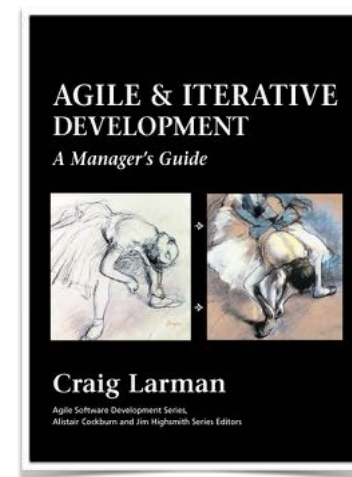
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First Two LeSS books...



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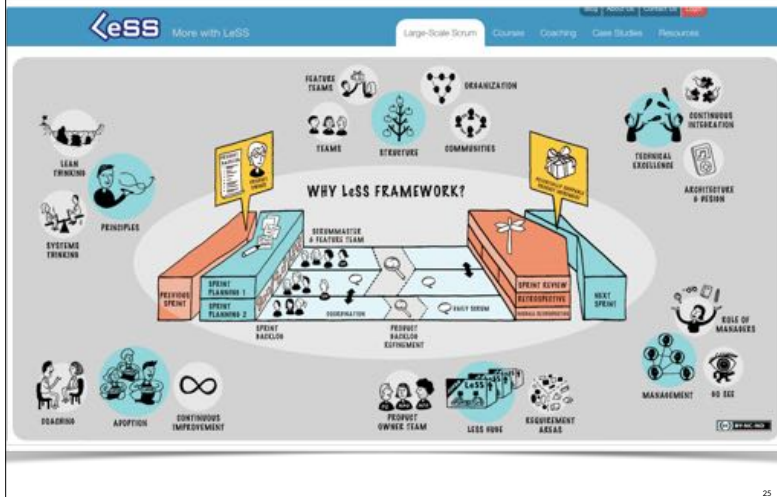
Early Agile Book



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# Local Optimization

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in traditional large-scale  
organizational design, the  
*overarching & repeating* theme

**local optimization**

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examples of  
local optimization...

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# System Optimization

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using the analogies, how to  
advise system optimization?

32

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## Systems Optimization

“watch the **ball**,  
not the players”

“deliver the **dish**,  
not the onions”

33

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the **One True**  
system optimizing goal?

34

34



## **BIG** Idea

leadership needs to  
agree on the system  
optimizing goal

35

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## the **LeSS** System Goals

- > company-level system  
optimization for
  - > **deliver highest customer  
value first**
  - > **agility driven by learning**  
("turn on a dime, for a dime")

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# Why LeSS?

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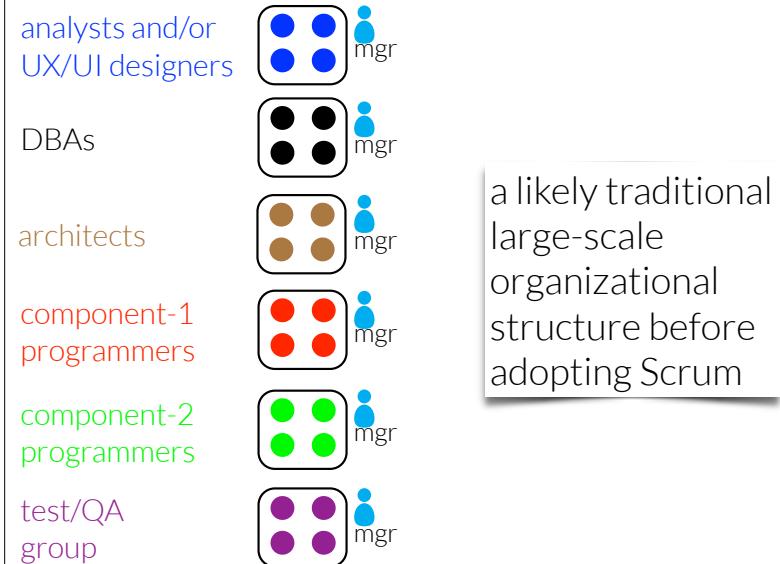
# Organize by Customer Value: Feature Teams

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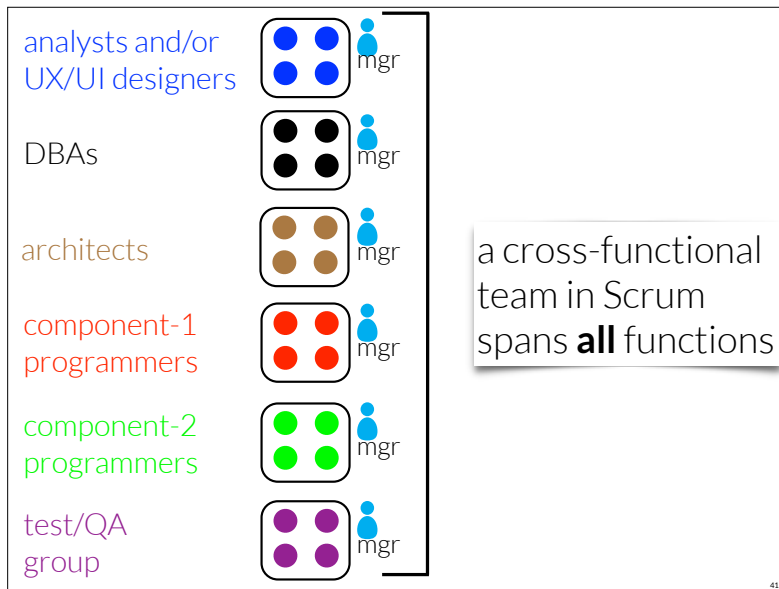
Descaling with LeSS

replace  
**local optimizations** of  
**single-specialist groups**  
with a *majority* of  
**feature teams**

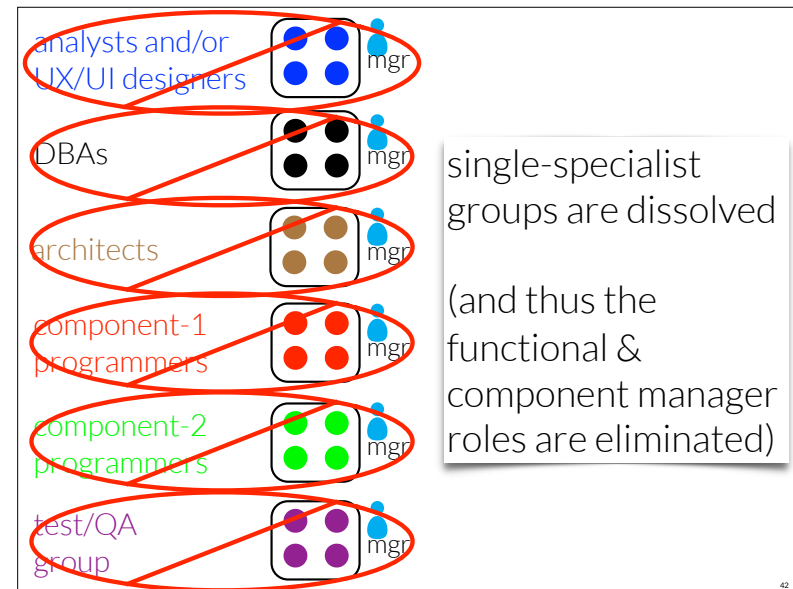
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"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his job depends on not understanding it."

— Upton Sinclair

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**Guide:** Job Safety, but not Role Safety

Job safety  
& salary safety  
but not  
role safety

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# Larman's Laws of Organizational Behavior

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why so much?...  
**Lean-but**  
**Scrum-but**  
**Kanban-but**  
**DevOps-but**  
**AnyChangeIdea-but**

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## Larman's 4 Laws of Organizational Behavior

1. Organizations are implicitly optimized to avoid changing the status quo middle- and first-level manager and "specialist" positions & power structures.
2. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be reduced to overloading or redefining the new terminology to mean basically the same as status quo.
3. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be derided as "purist", "theoretical", "religious", and "needing pragmatic customization for local concerns" – which deflects from addressing weaknesses and manager/specialist status quo.
4. Culture follows structure  
(or behavior/mindset follows system)

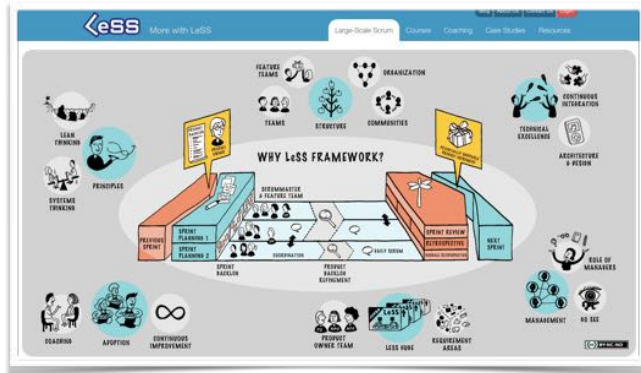
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