

## Waterfall-Teamwork vs Agile-Teamwork: Part 3

By Mike Richardson, Team Agility Practice Leader



In an increasingly [VUCA world](#), waterfall teamwork doesn't work!

What's "waterfall"? Review parts 1 and 2 of this article:

In [Part 1](#) we looked at how the future of agile-teamwork is already here, in the field of agile-software-development. Yet many leaders, teams and organizations are still stuck in waterfall-teamwork.

In [Part 2](#) we looked at the major contrasts between waterfall and agile, as two fundamentally different modes of teamwork, and how we encounter waterfall thinking way too much in business.

**More and more leaders are realizing that waterfall-teamwork doesn't work in an increasingly VUCA world and are transitioning to the flow of agile-teamwork.** Here are a two:

- **Alan Mulally**: the recently retired ex CEO of Ford, who turned the company around when it was in worse shape than General Motors & Chrysler (both of whom took the government bailout and went bankrupt) - he immediately instigated a weekly BPR (Business Plan Review) meeting of his global team, every Thursday morning. A little while later he realized that weekly wasn't frequently enough and he moved to a daily SAR (Special Attention Review) meeting of as much of his global team he could muster within a reasonable time-zone. Prior to Ford, he had used exactly the same approach in turning around the commercial airplane division of Boeing post 9/11, which was on its knees. As reported in the book, "American Icon – Alan Mulally and the Fight to save Ford Motor Company" (Bryce Hoffman, 2012) weekly and daily meetings were the central algorithm of his whole turnaround approach. He created the real-time communication, coordination and collaboration to win, moving from waterfall-teamwork to agile-teamwork.
- **General Stanley McChrystal**: appointed commander of special-forces in the early 2000s war against AQI (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) which we were losing, he realized that our world-class maneuver-warfare machine was losing to an enemy that had moved on to a new paradigm, of network warfare. To win, we would have to beat the enemy at their own game of network warfare. But that required a shift of information-sharing paradigm

from the need-to-know secrecy of maneuver warfare to everybody-knows-everything-all-the-time for network warfare. He instigated a daily O&I (Operations & Intelligence) Meeting, initially in his command center and then increasingly technology enabled for a wider and wider network of operatives and intelligence parties to wire into, from Washington DC to the field. In his book, “Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World” (General Stanley McChrystal) he tells the story of how the meeting grew to more than 7000 people participating on a daily basis. It was the central cog in the wheel, tipping the balance to winning the war. It created the real-time communication, coordination and collaboration to win, moving from waterfall-teamwork to agile-teamwork.

Alan Mulally and General Stanley McChrystal understood the central role of meetings for the real-time communication, coordination and collaboration as an agile-team. An essential flow of conversation to be:

- **Anticipating Change**
- **Generating Confidence**
- **Initiating Action**
- **Liberating Thinking**
- **Evaluating Results**

**If you want to win, that is what is required.** Agile-meetings are at the heart of your enterprise-agility to move from waterfall-teamwork to agile-teamwork, whether you are in war-fighting business or the automotive business. So much so, we call it [“The C2C of AGILE Teamwork \(from Conversation-Flow 2 Cash-Flow\)”](#)

