



## **Software Development Governance Challenges of a Middle-sized Company in Agile Transition**

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## Agenda

- ❑ Introduction
- ❑ Case description and methodology
- ❑ Framework for agile development and planning
- ❑ Roles and responsibilities
- ❑ Challenges
- ❑ Summary
- ❑ Discussion



## Agile development in the large

- ❑ Focus of the study
  - ❖ From strategy to daily tasks (planning)
  - ❖ And back again (monitoring)
  
- ❑ What happens when a large or middle-sized company goes agile without too much planning?
  - ❖ The role of SDG?
    - Product Ownership?
    - Backlogs (special interest of mine)?
  - ❖ How to manage organizational and product legacy?



## Case company

- ❑ A Finnish software product company
- ❑ Middle-sized ~ 700 employees, 300 in R&D
- ❑ Typically about 20 concurrent projects
  - ❖ 4 sites in 3 countries



## Case study

- ❑ Focus on the case company's largest developer pool
  - ❖ 5 teams, each averaging around 9 members
  
- ❑ Participative action research
  - ❖ Observations and interviews
    - Feb 2008 – Aug 2008
      - Research ongoing
  - ❖ Monthly meetings to set and monitor short-term goals
  - ❖ Feedback
  
- ❑ Case diary



## The Agile planning and development framework

- ❑ The essentials of iterative and incremental software developement
- ❑ Mapping observations on different levels
  - ❖ Roles
  - ❖ Responsibilites
  - ❖ Communication (both ways, planning and monitoring)
- ❑ Four levels of planning and monitoring



**Product**

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**Release**

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**Iteration**

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**Heartbeat**



## Product

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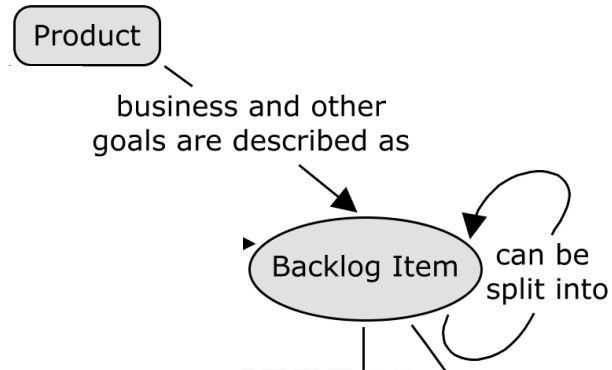
## Release

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## Iteration

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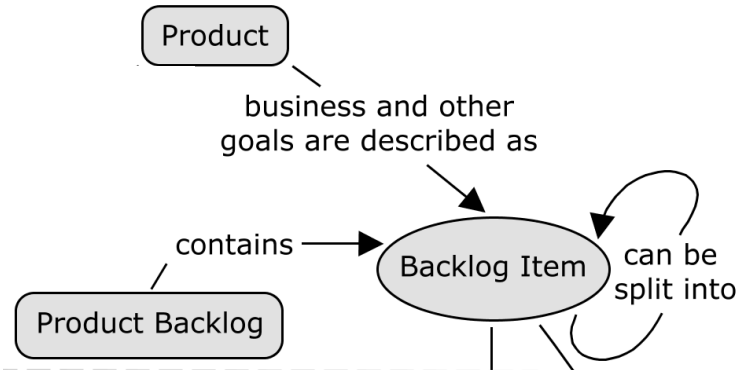
## Heartbeat







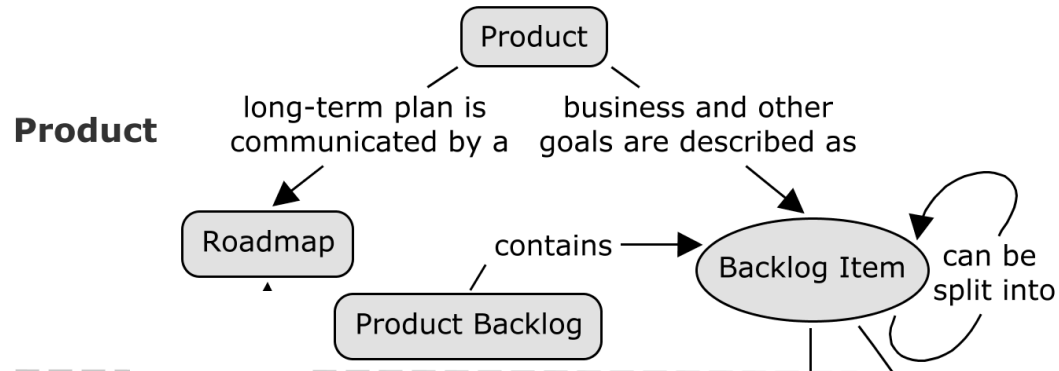
## Product



## Release

## Iteration

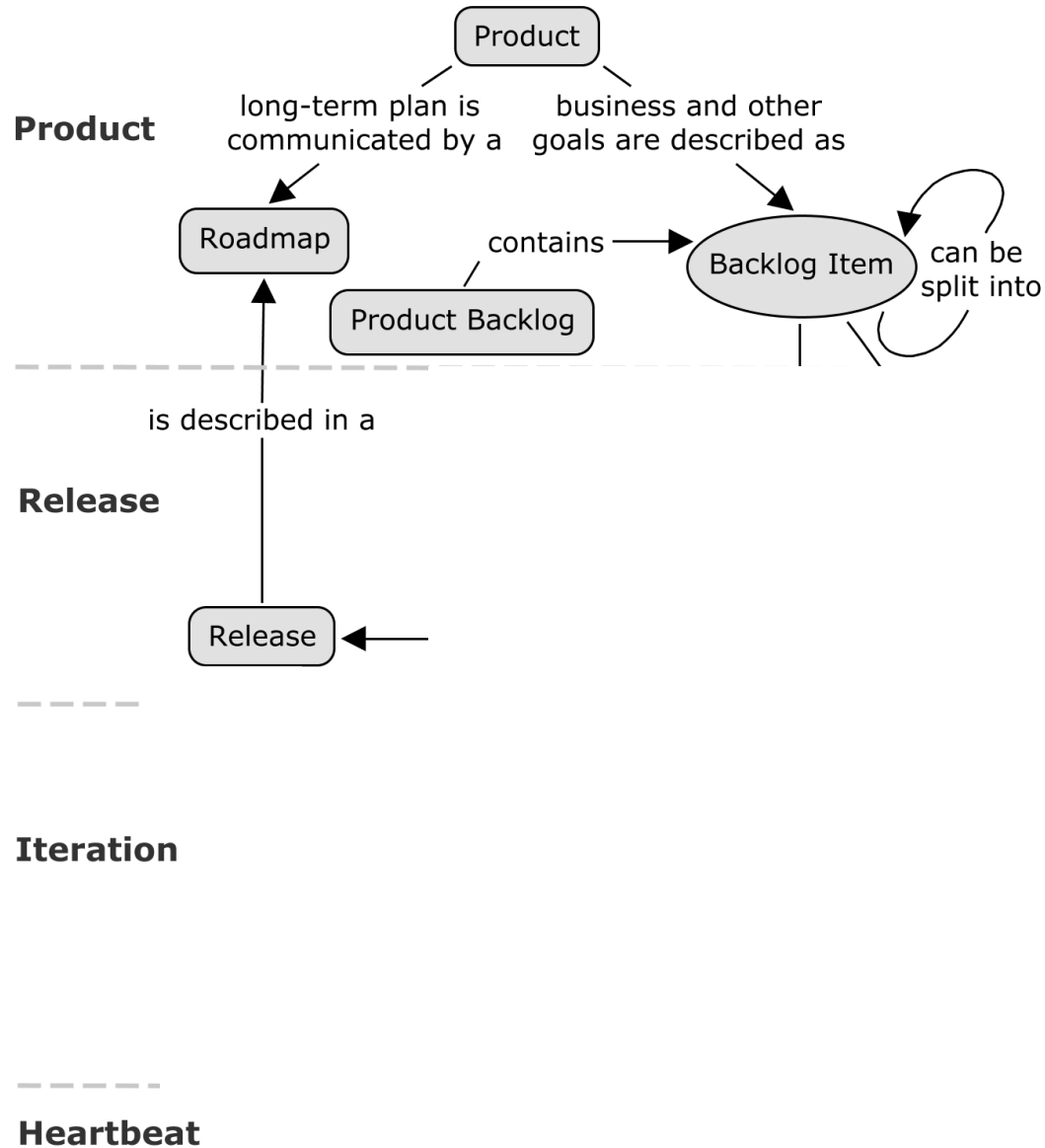
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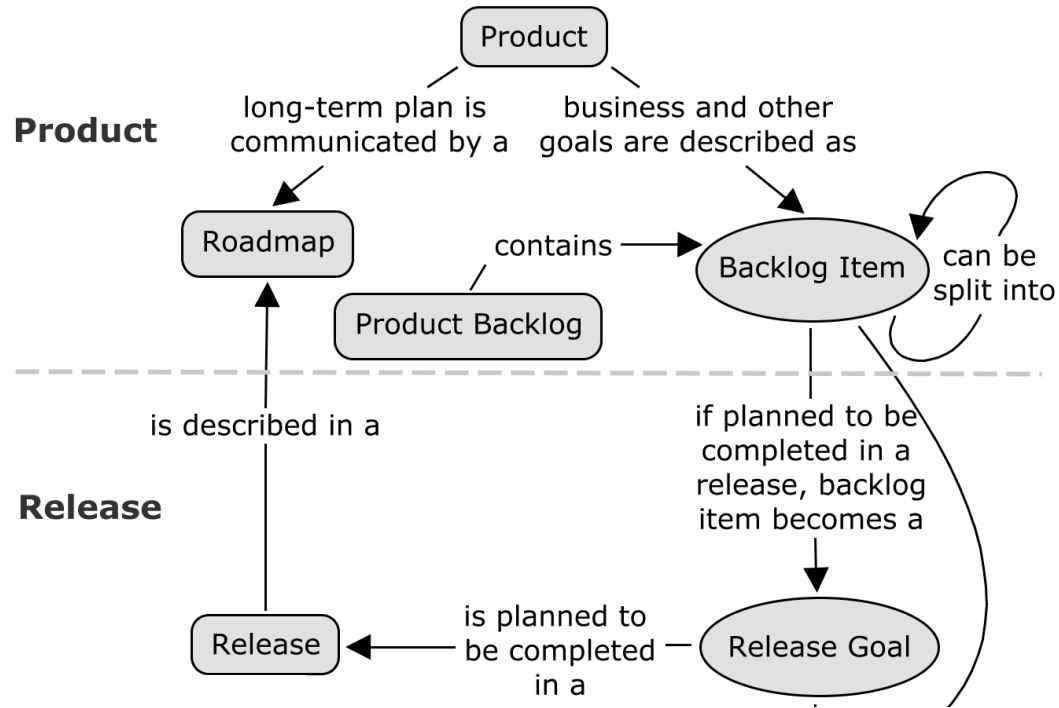


**Release**

**Iteration**

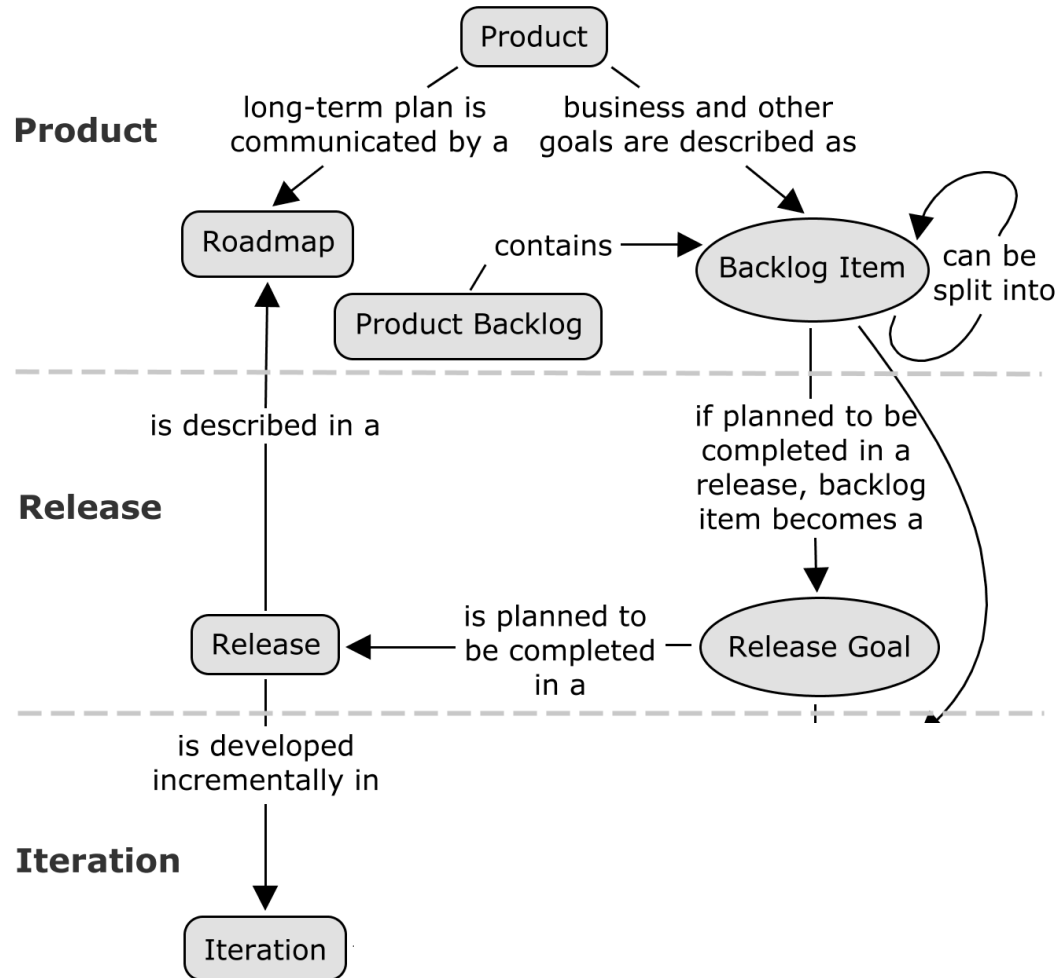
**Heartbeat**

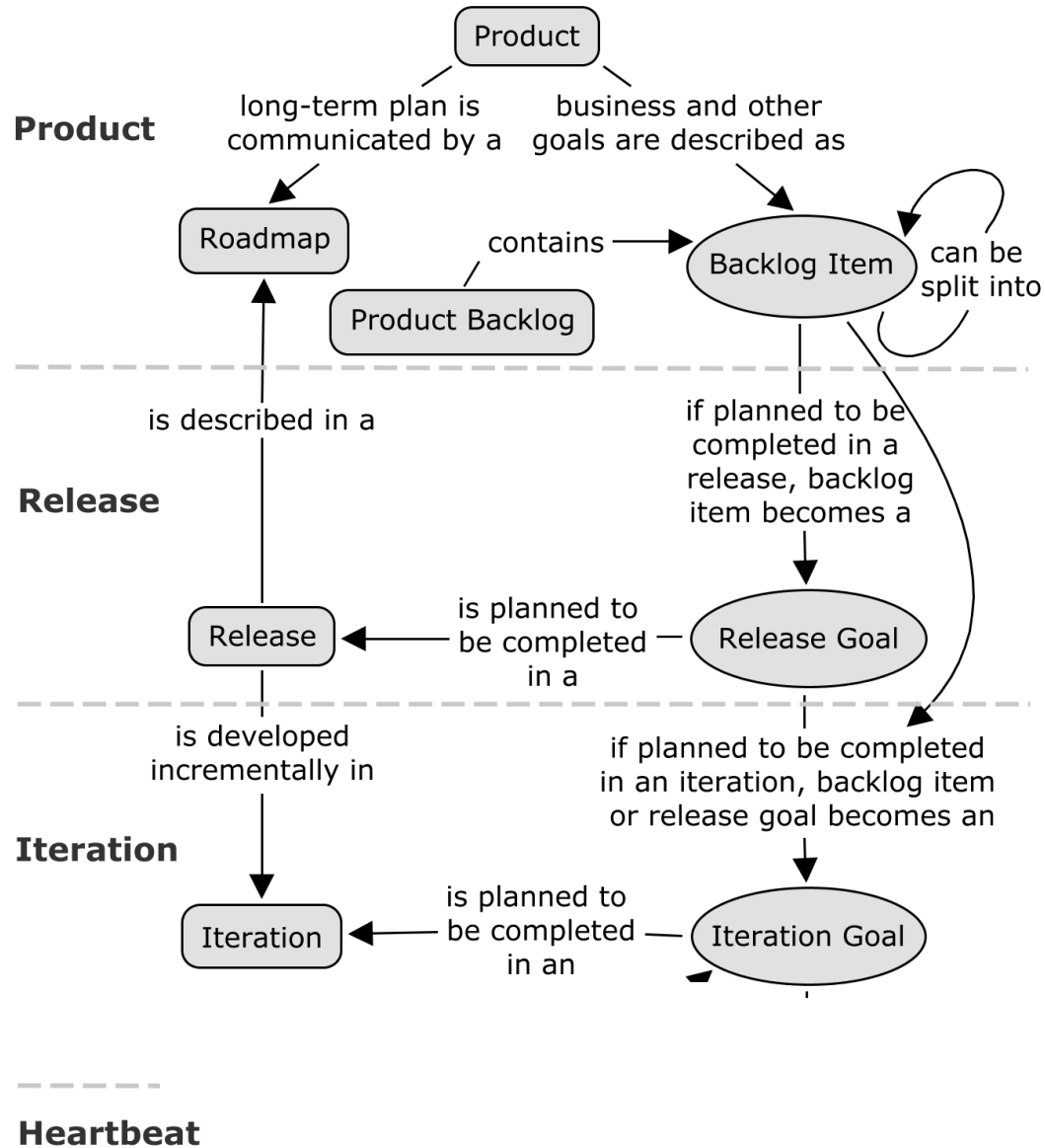


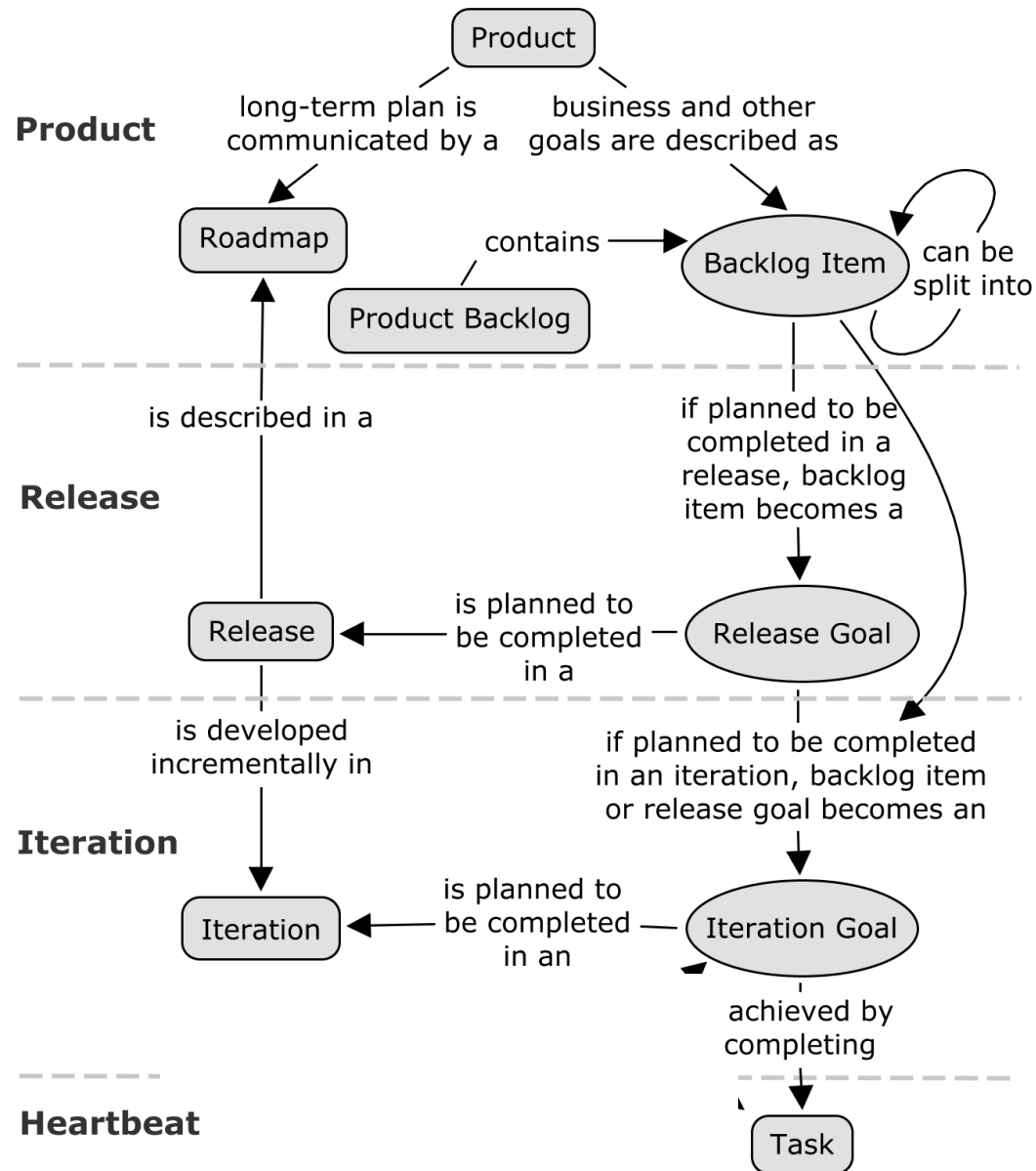


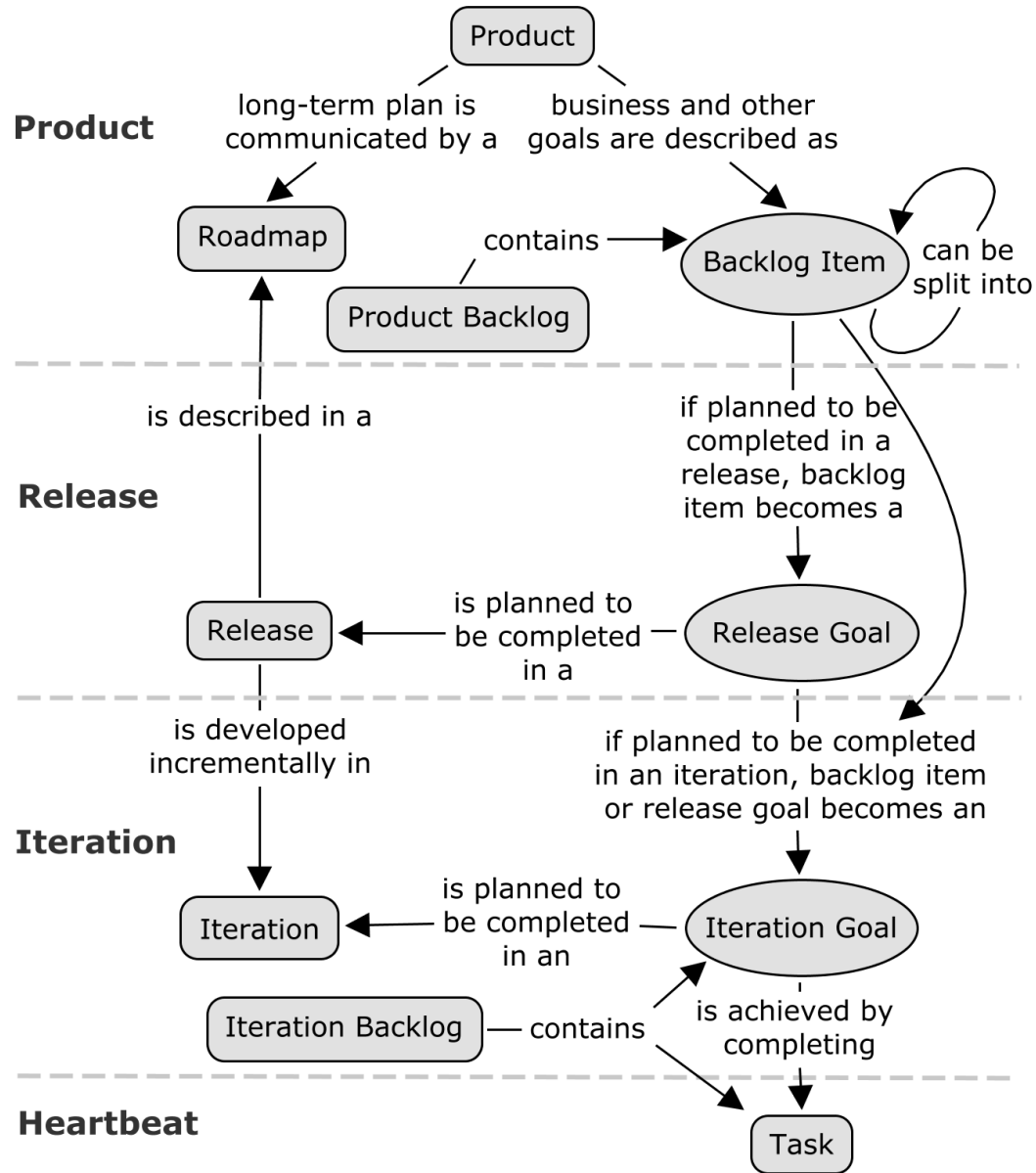
**Iteration**

**Heartbeat**













Executive team

Solution manager

Product council    Resource owner

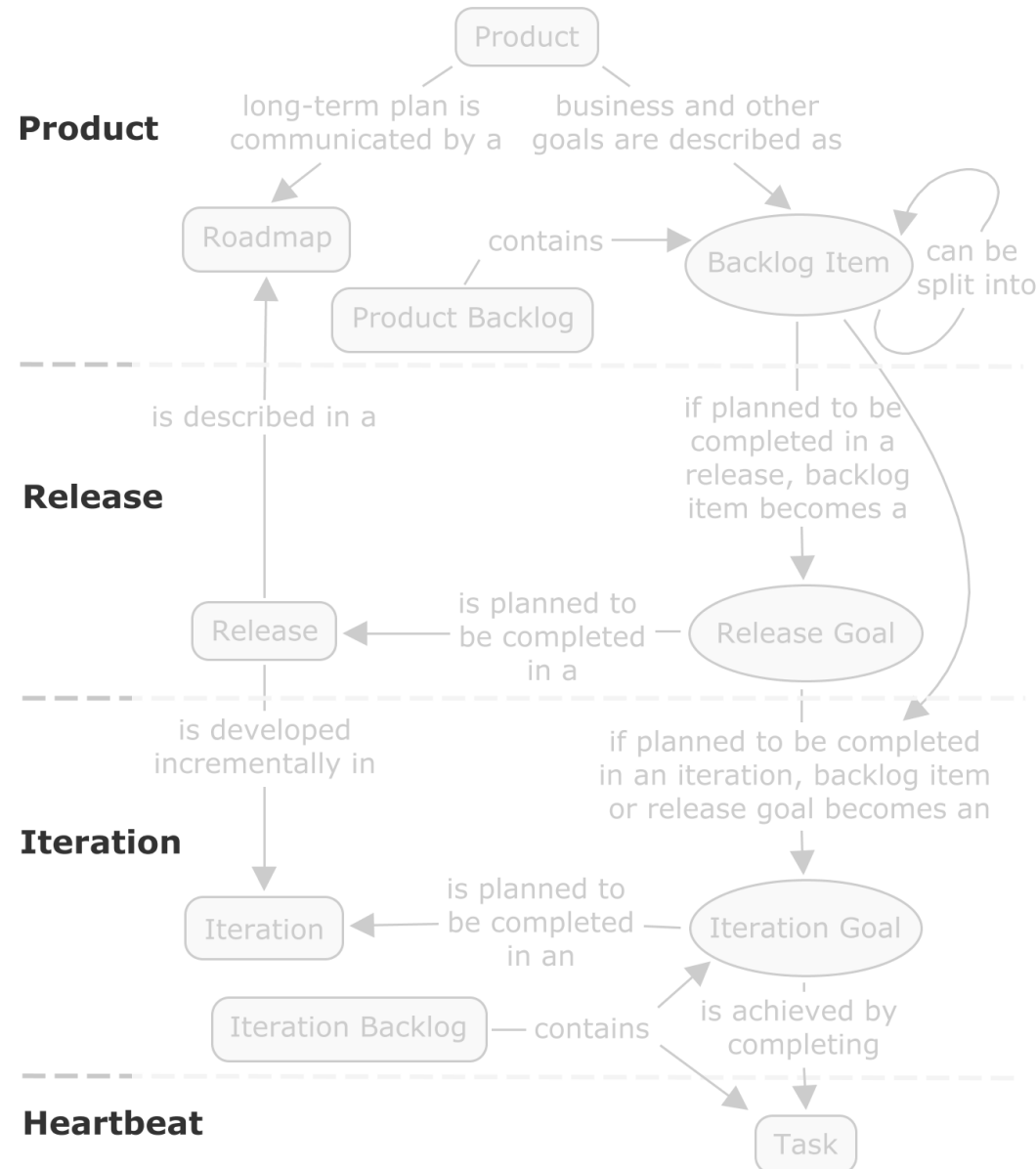
Product Owner

Project steering group

Project manager

Scrum master

Developer

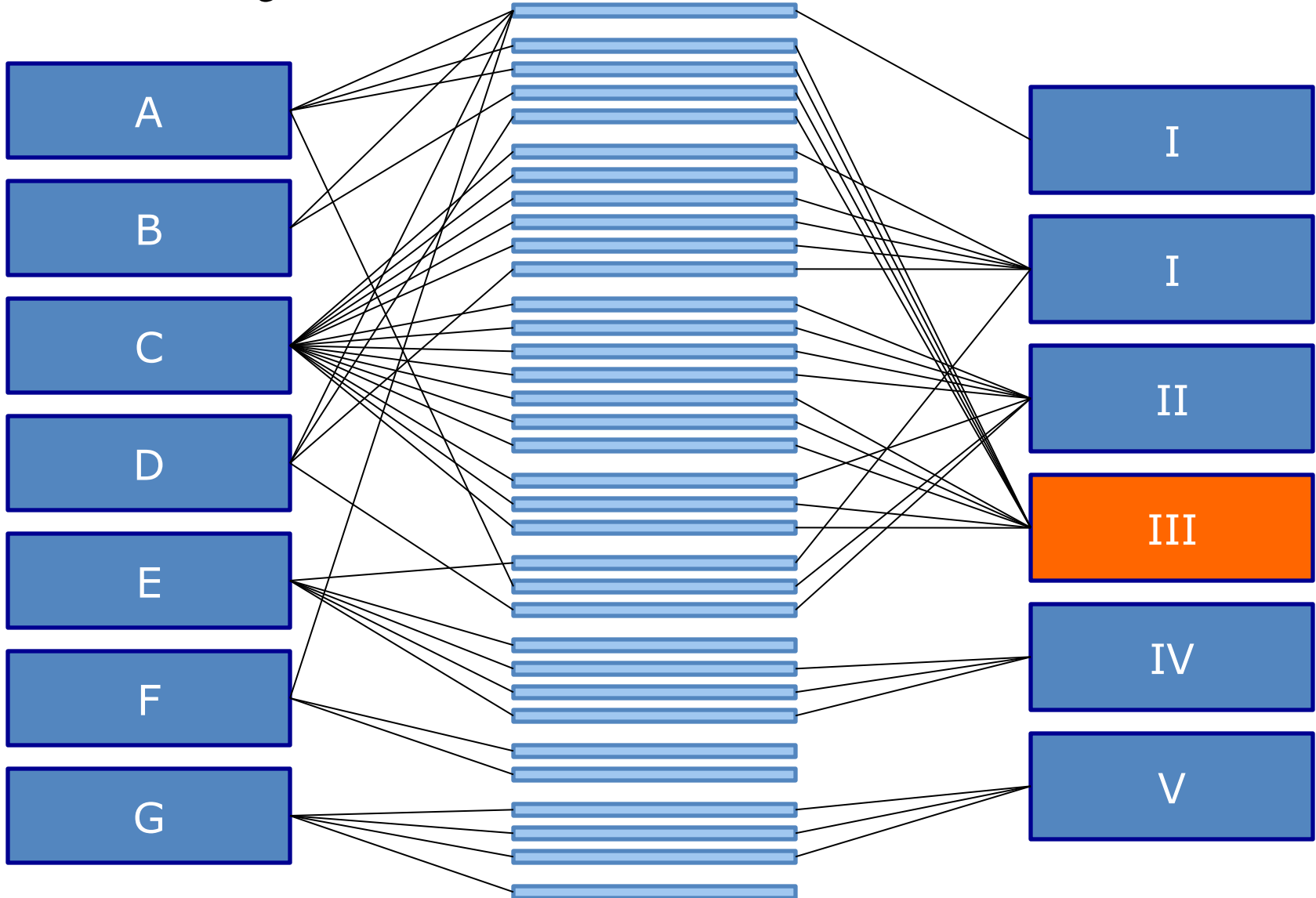




Business Areas and  
Solution Managers

Components and  
Product Owners

Developer "pools" and  
Resource Owners (I-V)





## Team challenges

- ❑ All five teams working on same component
  - Communication barrier: Inadequate PO presence
- ❑ Parallel release projects caused the opposite situation
  - too many product owners disrupting teams
- ❑ Teams had abandoned task planning
  - framework: tasks are the basis for status monitoring
    - ❖ Not working within an appropriate governance framework?
- ❑ No feature teams
  - ❖ Each team in a functional "silo"
  - ❖ Work was not done in priority order
  - ❖ Handovers and extra coordination!



## Backlog challenges

- ❑ Backlogs to tackle coordination challenges?
  - Solution backlog (solution manager)
    - Product backlog (product owner)
      - Platform backlog (resource owner)
        - Area backlog (team)
- ❑ Spreadsheets in backlog management
  - ❖ Every backlog was on a separate spreadsheet
  - ❖ No dynamic links between them
- ❑ Lack of highest level priorities
  - ❖ Why didn't solution managers see priorities valuable?
  - ❖ On the other hand teams did not see value in task estimates that would have provided base for progress monitoring!



## Summary

- ❑ What happens when a large or middle-sized company goes agile without too much planning?
- ❑ SDG challenges due to poor implementation of agile
  - ❖ Lack of feedback loops
    - No tasks, no dynamic links → no metrics
    - Coordination between managers
  - ❖ Lack of high-level goal prioritization
- ❑ Challenges caused by the company history?
  - ❖ No feature teams (violation against lean principles)
    - Feature teams introduced in October 2008
  - ❖ Cooperation of product owners and teams
    - Major organizational change in February 2009



## Thank you!



- ❑ How should the product owner role be organized?
  - ❖ How to divide the responsibilities?
  - ❖ Tool support?
- ❑ The role of governance before and during transition?
  - ❖ We have defined the “perfect” SDG... so what?