

Anti-Pattern Assessment Tool

Identify and Address Agility Anti-Patterns

Overview

This assessment helps teams identify which anti-patterns pose the greatest risk to their agility. Use it to:

- Establish a baseline of your current state
- Identify your highest-priority improvement areas
- Track progress over time as you address anti-patterns
- Create actionable improvement plans

Time Required: 5-10 minutes for assessment, 15-30 minutes for action planning

Frequency: Recommended quarterly for teams tracking improvement

How to Use This Assessment

For Individual Reflection

- Complete privately, then share with the team
- Focus on patterns, not blame

For Team Assessment

- Complete together during a retrospective or dedicated session
- Discuss different perspectives on scores
- Agree on the top priority for improvement

The Assessment

Rate each statement: 1 (Never/Low Risk) to 5 (Always/High Risk)

Feature Factory Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Planning focuses on feature quantity over customer impact	_____
Customer research is minimal or sporadic	_____
Teams resist removing backlog items	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Heavy Process Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Teams follow identical processes regardless of context	_____
Process compliance prioritized over team effectiveness	_____
Teams complain about process overload	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Fake Empowerment Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Teams seek approval for decisions they should own	_____
Leadership reacts negatively to team mistakes	_____
Multiple approval layers slow decision-making	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Autonomy Without Alignment Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Teams work isolated from organizational goals	_____
Duplication of effort across teams is common	_____
Business outcomes don't improve despite high team activity	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Zombie Agile Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Agile ceremonies performed but don't drive change	_____

Statement	Score (1-5)
Teams use agile terms but ignore values	_____
Retrospectives happen but improvements don't follow	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Innovation Theater Risk

Statement	Score (1-5)
Innovation events happen but ideas aren't implemented	_____
Innovation treated as special occasion, not daily practice	_____
Creative team members frustrated with lack of follow-through	_____

Total Score: _____ (10-15 indicates risk)

Interpreting Your Scores

Score	Risk Level	Recommended Action
3-6	Low risk	Monitor occasionally
7-9	Moderate risk	Include in team discussions
10-12	High risk	Priority improvement area
13-15	Critical risk	Immediate action needed

Key Points:

- If multiple anti-patterns score high (10+), start with the highest score
- Anti-patterns often reinforce each other - addressing one may improve others
- The goal isn't zero risk - it's awareness and intentional improvement
- Progress isn't always linear - some quarters may show regression before improvement

Action Planning Template

Use this template to turn assessment results into concrete actions:

Highest Risk Anti-Pattern

Pattern: _____ Score: _____

Root Cause Analysis

Why is this happening?

What's driving this behavior?

This Week's Experiment

Small change to try:

Success indicator:

This Month's Goal

Larger improvement target:

How we'll measure progress:

Tracking Information

Assessment Date: _____ Review Date: _____

Owner: _____

Related Chapter: Chapter 2 - Why Agile Fails (for detailed solutions)

Team Discussion Notes

Additional Resources

Quick Reference: Anti-Pattern Descriptions

Feature Factory Syndrome: Organizations measure success by volume of features shipped rather than customer value delivered. Teams become feature-producing machines without understanding impact.

Heavy Process Syndrome: Agile maturity is equated with rigid adherence to frameworks and standardized procedures. Teams are burdened by compliance requirements that restrict adaptation.

Fake Empowerment: Teams are told they're empowered but still require multiple approvals. Decision-making authority doesn't match responsibility levels.

Autonomy Without Alignment: Teams operate independently without connection to organizational strategy. Freedom without direction leads to wasted effort and duplicated work.

Zombie Agile: Organizations go through agile motions without embracing agile values. Ceremonies happen but don't drive meaningful change or improvement.

Innovation Theater: Organizations create the appearance of innovation through visible events without commitment to implementing ideas. Innovation becomes performance rather than practice.

Tips for Successful Improvement

- **Start small:** Pick one anti-pattern and one small experiment
- **Make it visible:** Share results and progress transparently
- **Involve leadership:** Many anti-patterns require systemic change
- **Be patient:** Cultural change takes time - celebrate small wins
- **Review regularly:** Quarterly assessments help track progress and prevent regression

From 'Agile Meets AI: A Pragmatic Guide for Modern Teams' by Sheila Eckert
For more resources, visit www.thesheilaverse.com