

Alain Vanderbeke

Agile Coach

Change Facilitator

Mediator in complex situations

Belgium

French native · English C1 · Dutch A2

Profile

I am rarely called in when everything is going well. Over 20 years, I have worked in dysfunctional teams, between parties that do not trust each other, and alongside managers whose teams had stopped following them. My role is not always clearly labelled: sometimes Scrum Master, sometimes Change Facilitator, sometimes simply the person who makes sure people can still work together. I tend to take on an informal mediation role, even without the title. I also wrote a book on workplace motivation and developed a diagnostic model based on it (the M@W Systemic Motivation Model).

Professional Experience

Change Facilitator / Agile Coach / Scrum Master — 2022 – 2025

Elia — Belgian TSO — Agile chapter of 40+ Scrum Masters

GPS — clarifying what Scrum Masters are actually there for

- Several Product Owners did not see the point of having a Scrum Master: expensive and unproductive. I co-designed the GPS tool (Goal & Proofs of Success) with a few chapter members. The goal was simple: by the end of 2025, each of the 40+ SMs would have a clear objective and measurable success indicators.

noREwork — 7 months to cut rework by 30 to 40%

- Too many tickets came back for modification at the end of development. I put together a mini-programme for one team: more interaction with the business during the sprint, more regular testing, and less big-bang validation at the end.
- The hardest part was finding the right metrics, since almost every case was unique. After 7 months of monitoring, rework dropped by 30-40%.

Data Finance — 10 months without a Product Owner

- The acting PO was a developer who had taken the role because no one else was available. He was done with it, but a replacement was 10 months away. Rather than leave the team without direction, I set up a Triumvirate: the departing PO, a senior Business Analyst, and myself sharing the role between us.
- When the new PO arrived, I organised a team-building day using equine-assisted coaching. It was a way to quickly build trust with someone the team did not yet know.

European deployment — keeping 5 people focused when 17 were involved

- A coordinated release across roughly 10 European countries for electricity purchasing systems. My team had 17 people, but I isolated a sub-group of 5 to focus exclusively on the critical applications. The rest of the team continued with other work.
- The tricky part: bugs only appeared several hours after deployment. I set up a Hypercare period lasting several days to ensure the right people remained available and reachable.

Agile Coach / Scrum Master — 2022

GSK — International Data team — SAFe — short mission

- I was the fourth Scrum Master in a short period. The previous three had left or been let go. The team resulted from a recent merger between a mostly Belgian European team and an American team. The working cultures were opposite: the Belgians fast and directive, the Americans agreeable but slow. On top of that, the N+2 wanted to control everything; the manager had already mentally left, even though he was still technically in post; one team member was travelling through Central and South America with almost no participation, and no one had challenged him on it.
- In that SAFe context, the Scrum Master role was mostly administrative; a relay for information up to the train level. I tried to work on actual collaboration instead. That created a conflict with a long-standing employee who knew how to make things difficult. He succeeded in making the agency that hired me nervous enough to end the mission.

Founder / Author — 2020 – present

MotivAtWork

- Published "La Motivation au Cœur de l'Entreprise" — a book on workplace motivation written for practitioners, not academics.
- Developed the M@W Systemic Motivation Model as a diagnostic framework for teams and organisations.
- Runs a YouTube channel (@MotivAtWork) on motivation and agile leadership.

Trainer / Agile Coach — 2019

onepointBE

- Delivered MotivAtWork workshops internally and with clients.
- Coached a manager based in Belgium, dealing with communication and cultural friction with teams in Paris.

Project Manager — 2018 – 2019

Efficacy CRM — ~10 client accounts in parallel

- Two types of problems: accounts where the analysis had been done badly at the sales stage (so what was built did not match what was expected), and accounts where turnover was so high that nobody remembered how the application worked anymore. For the second type, I proposed a video-on-demand training system — I had the equipment from my freelance years. The company refused to invest in the right tools.
- The team itself was split into clans: the old guard and the newer arrivals, who had to figure things out on their own. We even had to log rest breaks against client accounts. I finished that mission with a burnout. It gave me a very concrete understanding of what ignoring team dynamics actually costs.

Project Manager — 2017

Thalys — Migration of thalys.com to Drupal 8 — Cap Gemini as contractor

- Three parties in tension: Cap Gemini (imposed by IT management for political reasons), Thalys IT, and Thalys Business, which had never wanted Cap Gemini and made no secret of it. The project was labelled agile, but it was a classic waterfall migration: the content was defined, the improvements were minor, and the scope was fixed.
- My job was to make sure Cap Gemini was telling the truth about progress, that all Thalys teams were properly involved, and that the budget was held. I also ran regular sessions between IT and Business: less-formal review meetings, more structured conversations to prevent conflict from blocking work.

Lecturer — 2017

IHECS Academy — IT Marketing

- Designed and delivered a module to give future digital marketing professionals a realistic understanding of how technology projects actually work.

BA Team Lead / Agile Project Manager — 2014 – 2015

VOO — myVOO self-care platform — team of 15, BA team of 3

- Introduced agile delivery for the myVOO project in a team with no agile experience. The decision to prioritise a working front-end over a fully automated back-office meant we could start user testing earlier. We brought in a UX firm to use eye-tracking and ECG to validate designs (honestly, part of that was to show the company we were doing serious work).
- The N+1 manager had studied rhetoric and communicated almost entirely through metaphor. His team could never quite tell what he actually wanted, and the gap between his vision and their understanding was a constant source of frustration. I became the translator between his language and what the team needed to hear to move forward.

Earlier Career

Digital & Audiovisual Production Background

- IDweaver (2013): Project Manager for multiple simultaneous agency projects
- VideonWeb (2007-2012): Audiovisual Producer managing complex media productions
- Produit Blanc (2004): AV Producer
- eMedia (2000-2003): Digital Project Manager in the early digital transformation era

Core Competencies

Agile Coaching & Scrum

- Scrum Master in multi-team SAFe environments
- Agile introduction in waterfall organisations
- OKR facilitation and agile programme management
- Iterative delivery planning and sprint coordination

Change Facilitation & Informal Mediation

- Intervening in conflict or dysfunctional team situations
- Cross-cultural integration (Belgian / American, Dutch / French)
- Communication bridging between management and teams
- APMG Change Management v3 & ULB Change Management

Coaching & Human Dynamics

- ICF professional coaching
- NeuroCognitive and Behavioural Coaching (INC-IME)
- Equine-assisted coaching for team onboarding
- NLP, Transactional Analysis, Sociocracy
- Systemic motivation (M@W Model / own framework)

Project & Delivery Management

- End-to-end PM: scope, budget, vendor accountability
- Agile (APMG Agile PM)
- Waterfall and hybrid delivery (PRINCE2)
- Multi-country release coordination and Hypercare
- BPMN process modelling and business analysis