WAGO GmbH & Co. KG

Six Scrum Teams, One Shared Rhythm

THE SITUATION

Six Teams, No Shared Planning Rhythm

WAGO's software development department had the foundations of Agile delivery in place. Teams were already running Scrum: sprints were active, Product Backlogs were maintained, and teams worked independently to deliver their commitments. What was missing was the coordination layer above the teams.

Product Managers, stakeholders, and project managers each worked from their own priorities. There was no shared roadmap, no shared planning cadence, and no agreed way to decide what mattered most. Teams could see their own backlog and nothing else, so cross-team dependencies went unnoticed until they turned into problems.

Product Owners sat through multiple status meetings a week, giving the same update to different audiences. Urgent requests arrived outside any agreed prioritisation process and were absorbed without anyone weighing the cost to teams already committed.

External partners and clients were part of delivery but had no seat at any shared planning table. Coordination happened through one-on-one conversations, which stopped working once delivery became more interconnected.

THE APPROACH

Designing a Model That Fit the Organisation

Preparing the Ground

Before running the first planning event, I spent several weeks with WAGO's management team designing an operating model that would fit their organisation, built from elements they would feel comfortable starting with. Taking the Essential level of the SAFe framework as a starting point, we worked through what needed to be introduced, what needed to be done, and what could wait for a later stage.

The objective was not to introduce another Agile framework, but to establish a practical planning and governance model connecting the Scrum teams, business stakeholders, and external partners through a shared planning cadence. Existing practices, organisational structures, and decision-making processes were evaluated to identify what should be retained, what needed to change, and how the new planning model could be introduced with minimal disruption.

As part of this design phase, the terminology was intentionally adapted to fit the organisation. Rather than using SAFe-specific language, familiar business terminology such as

Quarterly Planning was adopted to encourage acceptance and keep the focus on improving collaboration rather than introducing another methodology.

Once the operating model had been defined, it was presented first to the Product Owners to gather feedback, discuss open questions, and validate the proposed approach. It was then introduced to the Scrum teams and business stakeholders, creating a shared understanding of the objectives, planning process, and expected ways of working before the first Quarterly Planning event took place.

With the first planning date agreed, the department heads and I began preparation by working backwards from the event itself, including the roadmap, agenda, planning boards, objectives, and supporting artefacts. The first planning cycle was never meant to be perfect. It was meant to be a foundation to build on.

The Quarterly Planning Event

A structured one-day Quarterly Planning event brought together all Scrum teams, Product Managers, department leadership, key business stakeholders, and external partners to establish a shared delivery plan for the upcoming quarter.

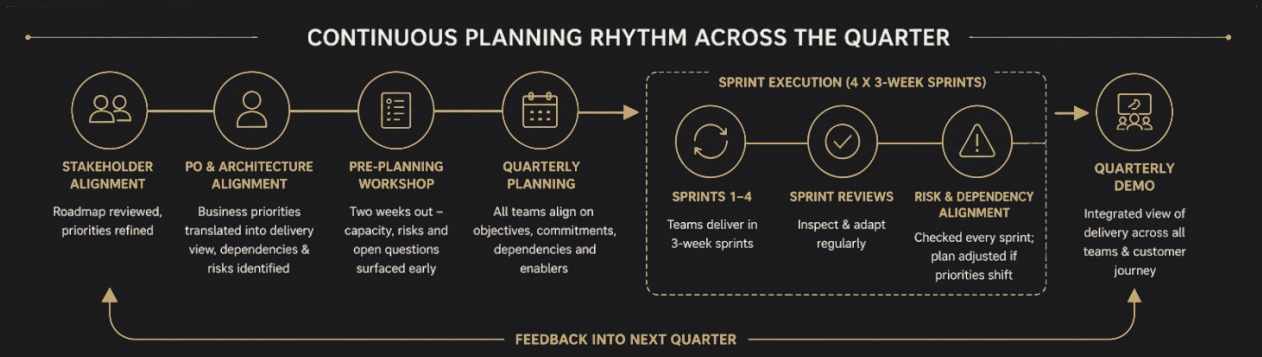
The event followed a consistent planning sequence:

- Department leadership and Product Management presented the quarterly objectives, business priorities, and roadmap progressively refined during the preparation phase
- Teams worked in dedicated breakout sessions to review the proposed objectives, break them down into deliverable work packages, distribute work across the upcoming sprints, and identify dependencies, resource constraints, and delivery risks
- A dedicated cross-team alignment session consolidated dependencies and risks, clarified ownership, and enabled decisions to be taken collaboratively while all relevant stakeholders were present
- The day concluded with team commitment presentations, where each team shared its quarterly objectives, planned commitments, identified dependencies, and key risks with the wider organisation

Bringing delivery teams, Product Managers, stakeholders, and external partners together in one structured planning event replaced fragmented coordination with a shared planning process. Priorities, dependencies, risks, and delivery commitments were discussed collaboratively, creating a common understanding of the quarter before execution began.

BUILDING A CONTINUOUS CYCLE

A Rhythm That Never Really Stopped



The Quarterly Planning event became one milestone within a continuous planning and alignment cycle rather than a standalone event. Preparation for the next quarter began immediately after the current planning event concluded. A shared roadmap maintained in Miro provided visibility of planned releases, strategic initiatives, and quarterly objectives across multiple planning horizons. Rather than aligning only once before planning, stakeholders, Product Owners, architects, and delivery teams continuously refined objectives, priorities, and delivery plans throughout the quarter.
Regular stakeholder alignment sessions reviewed the roadmap, planned releases, and proposed quarterly objectives, allowing strategic priorities to be refined well before the planning event.

Dedicated Product Owner and Architecture sessions translated the agreed business priorities into a delivery perspective by reviewing technical dependencies, implementation considerations, delivery risks, and additional work required within the quarter. Output from these sessions fed back into the following stakeholder alignment, creating an iterative planning cycle in which business priorities and delivery realities continuously informed one another.

About two weeks before each Quarterly Planning event, Product Owners met for a Pre-Planning workshop to pull together everything from the alignment sessions and build a first integrated view of the quarter: capacity, dependencies, risks, and what was explicitly out of scope. Open or unclear questions were flagged here, not on planning day.

That same day, the draft plan went to business stakeholders — not for sign-off, but for conversation, to test assumptions and surface concerns early. The two weeks between the Pre-Planning workshop and the Quarterly Planning event gave everyone time to resolve open points and negotiate priorities.
Once per sprint, Product Owners, leadership, stakeholders, and key delivery people met for a Risk and Dependency Alignment session to check progress against the quarter's objectives,

catch new risks, watch dependencies, and decide whether shifting priorities meant changing the plan.

Each quarter ended with a Quarterly Demo, showing what all the teams had delivered together. Stakeholders could still join individual Sprint Reviews every three weeks, but the Quarterly Demo gave them one consolidated view of the department's work. Over time these stopped being separate team presentations and became customer journeys, showing how work from multiple teams connected. Participation steadily increased, with business stakeholders and other departments actively attending, asking questions, and providing feedback.

BUILDING SOMETHING THAT LASTS

A Model That Kept Maturing

The planning model continued to evolve throughout the transformation based on practical experience and regular feedback from Product Owners, Scrum teams, stakeholders, and department leadership. Rather than treating the initial implementation as a fixed process, planning activities, governance routines, preparation practices, and collaboration formats were continuously refined to better support the organisation's evolving needs.

Quarterly Planning, the preparation cycle, Risk and Dependency Alignment sessions, and Quarterly Demos were regularly reviewed and adjusted as the organisation gained experience with the new operating model. Dedicated retrospectives following planning events and Quarterly Demos provided structured opportunities to gather feedback, identify improvement areas, and incorporate practical lessons into subsequent planning cycles.

As the operating model matured, improvements extended beyond the planning events themselves. Preparation activities became more collaborative, stakeholder engagement shifted earlier into the planning process, and Quarterly Demos evolved into integrated business-focused presentations that connected contributions across multiple teams rather than showcasing individual team results in isolation.

WHAT CHANGED

From Fragmented Coordination to Shared Rhythm

BEFORE	AFTER
Teams planned independently	Six Scrum teams planned together against shared quarterly objectives
Separate project status meetings	A shared planning cadence replaced fragmented project reporting
Priorities arrived from multiple directions	Business priorities were aligned through structured planning and transparent trade-off discussions
Dependencies surfaced late	Dependencies and delivery risks were identified and managed throughout the quarter
External partners coordinated separately	Internal teams, stakeholders, and external partners planned within a common operating rhythm
Limited visibility across delivery	A shared roadmap and regular review cadence improved transparency across teams and stakeholders
Teams absorbed additional scope	New requests became part of structured prioritisation and planning discussions before entering delivery

CONCLUSION

A Planning Model That Created Continuous Alignment

Within a relatively short period, WAGO established a shared planning and governance model connecting six Scrum teams, business stakeholders, department leadership, and external partners through a common operating rhythm.

Rather than introducing a single planning event, the transformation established a continuous planning cycle that linked roadmap planning, stakeholder alignment, Quarterly Planning, delivery execution, and regular governance throughout each quarter. Business priorities became more transparent, dependencies were managed proactively, and teams gained greater visibility into both organisational objectives and each other's work.

By replacing fragmented coordination with a structured operating model, planning became a continuous organisational capability rather than a series of isolated activities, supporting more predictable delivery while maintaining the flexibility to respond to changing business priorities.

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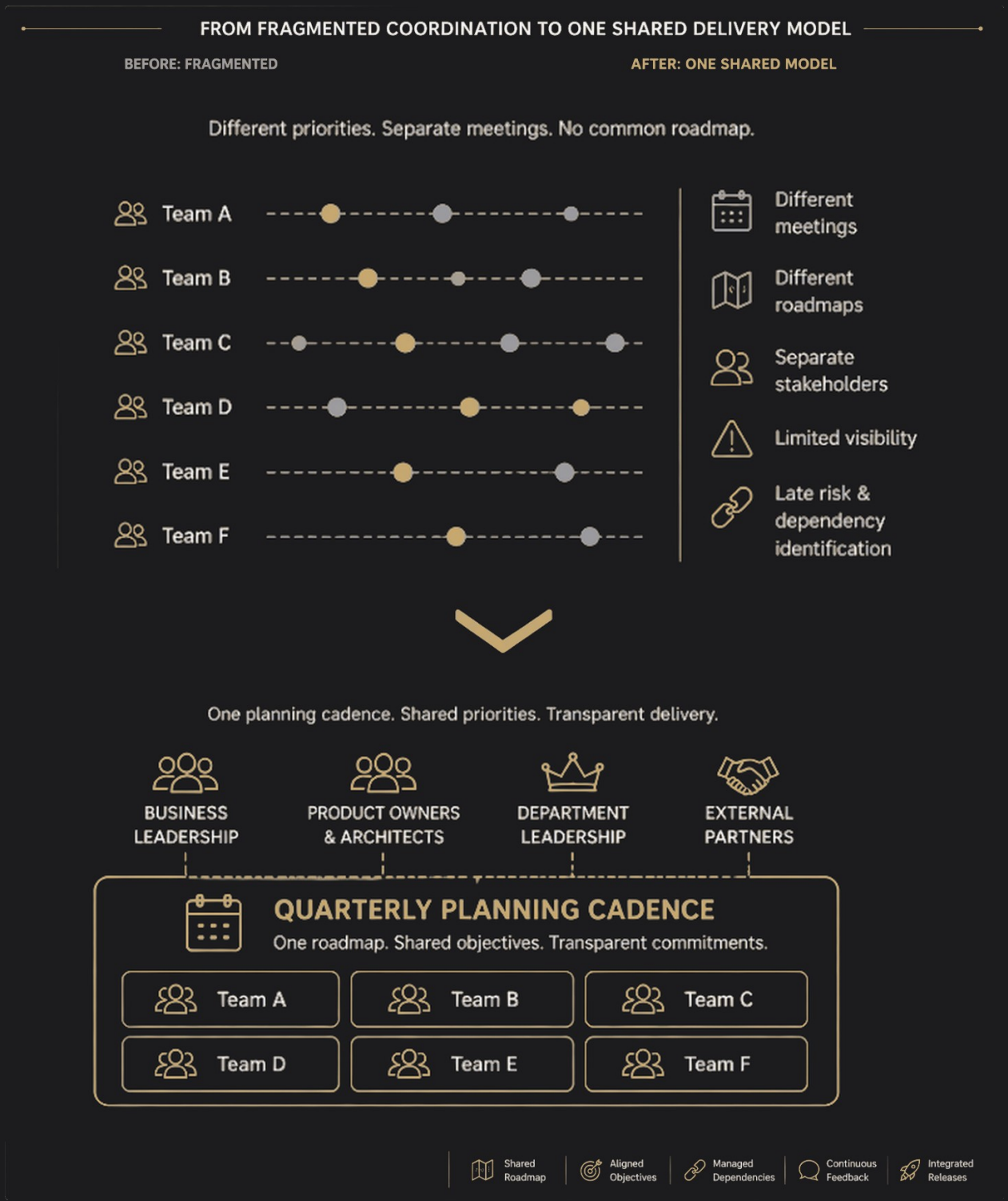
KEY TAKEAWAY

Successful multi-team delivery is enabled by a continuous planning and governance model that keeps strategy, business priorities, delivery teams, stakeholders, and external partners aligned throughout the delivery cycle.