

Holacracy & Scrum in Washington State

Modernizing Government: How
Agencies Became Awesome Places to
Work using Holacracy & Scrum

Xebia



"the consolidated technology services agency -RCW 43.105.006"



Introduction: Paul Takken



Agile Consultant @ Xebia

Current Roles: Agile Coach, Coach of Coaches,
Agile Trainer, Mindset Engineer, Agile Innovator

- ING BANK
- TOMTOM INTERNATIONAL
- WASHINGTON STATE
- DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
- PARTNERING: EDUSCRUM, WIKISPEED, SCRUM.INC
- PORT OF ROTTERDAM
- ROYAL DUTCH TELECOM

✉ ptakken@xebia.com

🐦 @jptakken

in www.linkedin.com/in/paultakken



The Netherlands – Washington State Connection



- ▶ Both Liberate States
- ▶ NL: Cradle of Sociocratie → Holacracy
- ▶ NL: Progressive Agility and Self Organization
- ▶ Holacracy sister cities Amsterdam & Olympia

BUURTZORG



The Netherlands – Washington State Connection

- From bulbs to bud...



1. Keukenhof in Lisse the Netherlands (March 20th – May 17th)

A beautiful tulip festival with 7 million bulbs planted annually during autumn. The 32 Ha spring flower park is situated just 30 minutes outside Amsterdam. A flower parade is held at Saturday 25th of April. More information about Keukenhof see their [website](#).



2. Tulip Time Festival in Holland, MI USA (May 2nd – May 9th)

Tulip Time festival is the largest tulip festival in the United States. Nearly 4.5 million tulips are planted in city parks, at public attractions and along the streets. It has three parades during the festival a Volksparade, Kinderparade and Muziekparade. More information about Tulip Time Festival in Holland, MI see their [website](#).

3. Skagit Tulip Festival in Mount Vernon, WA USA (April 1st – April 30th)

The tulip festival with the mountain as backdrop! You probably have seen beautiful photos of this. Every year many people travel to this tulip festival to see the millions of tulips. More information about Skagit Tulip Festival in Mount Vernon see their [website](#).



Introduction: Michael DeAngelo



Current Roles: Agile Advocate, Cloud Advocate, Employer of Choice Thinker, Holacracy Advocate, Business Strategy, Commerical Product Engineer, Space Ace, Pencil Whip...

- ◆ Washington Technology Solutions
- ◆ Office of the CIO
- ◆ Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ◆ Health Care Authority
- ◆ Walt Disney Internet Group
- ◆ US Department of the Interior



 <https://egov.watech.wa.gov>

 michael.deangelo@watech.wa.gov

 [@egovwatech](#), [@mikel_deangelo](#)

The story of today: WaTech



- ▶ Tech company
- ▶ ~600 employees
- ▶ Shared service
- ▶ Serve ~100 companies
- ▶ In multiple sectors
 - ▶ Healthcare
 - ▶ Public safety
 - ▶ Natural resources
 - ▶ Human services
 - ▶ Transportation

Why did we start this journey?



- ▶ \$40M projects



The heck with Kaizen, Kaikaku your Hierarchy!!



Many organizations spend a fortune on Lean programs to improve business operations for their customers. Although well-intentioned, the benefits of these efforts sometimes go unrealized because there's an unspoken reality: the way most organizations govern and make decisions is fundamentally anti-lean and undermines efforts to create ongoing, improved value for customers. Here, I'd like to discuss these forms of waste and how to reduce or even eliminate them in Holacracy.

[Read more](#)

► <https://egov.watech.wa.gov/blog>

Why did we start this Journey?

IT Turnover

30%

Higher than
statewide average

36%

Higher than
national average

**exit interview data and
BLS data*

Compensation

40%

Lower than our
competitors

**exit interview data of
declining*

DomainTools

Google

SURREAL
SOFTWARE

Zillow

Rhapsody

COSTCO
WHOLESALE

Expedia

DISNEY
INTERACTIVE MEDIA GROUP

Eddie Bauer

REI

real



STARBUCKS

amazon

e notes

Microsoft

APPTIO



ONVIA

VALVE

REDFIN

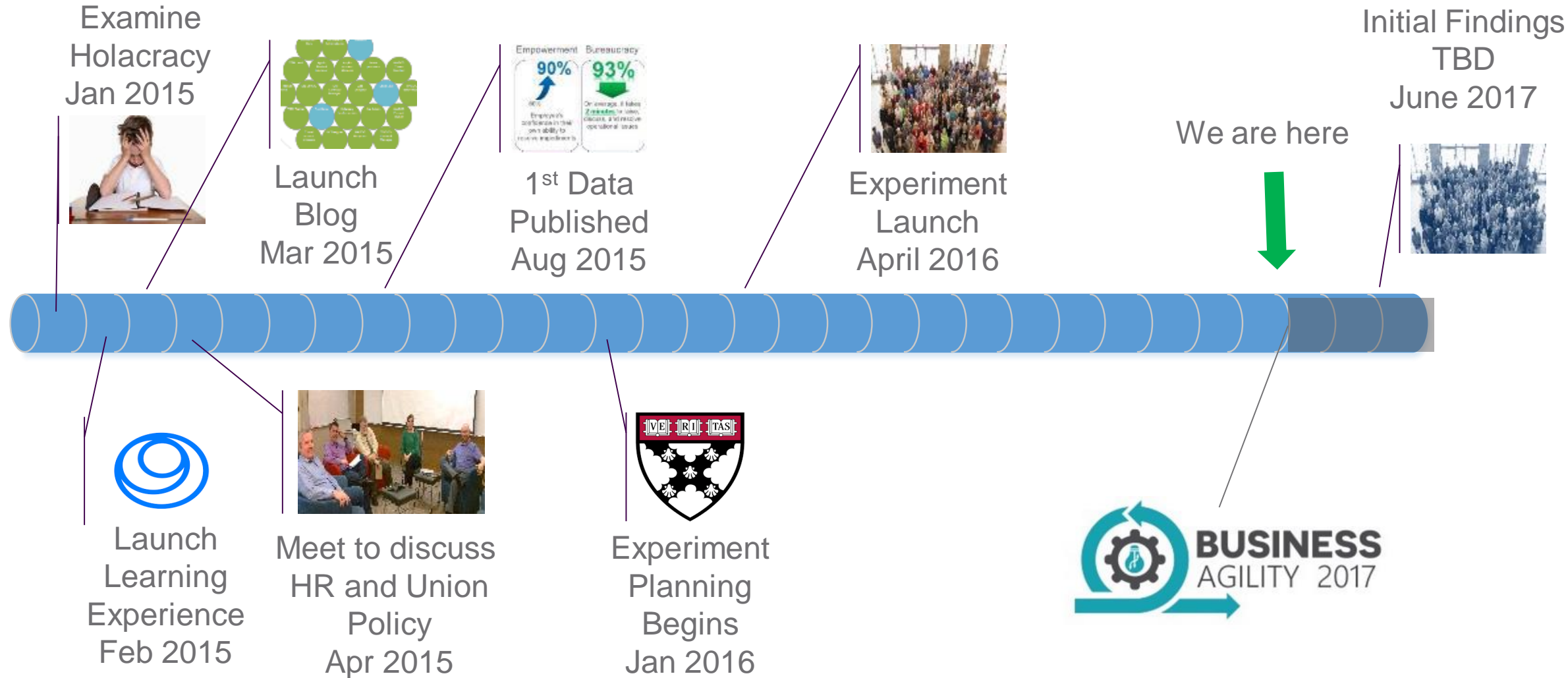


servicenow

tableau

Apple

The story of today: WaTech



Self-management is a natural increment

► 1000 years ago

Feudalism

Authority vested according to status, class, or wealth

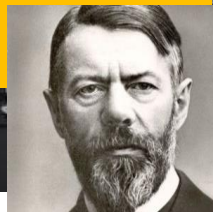
Intent: to increase status and wealth of lords

► 100 years ago

Bureaucracy

Authority vested in depersonalized rules and roles

Intent: create predictability, repeatability, and consistency



Max Weber

► Today

Bureaucracy 2.0

Authority vested in depersonalized rules and roles

Intent: responsive, adaptability, purpose driven employees, wholeness

...you could think of self-management systems as Bureaucracy 2.0.

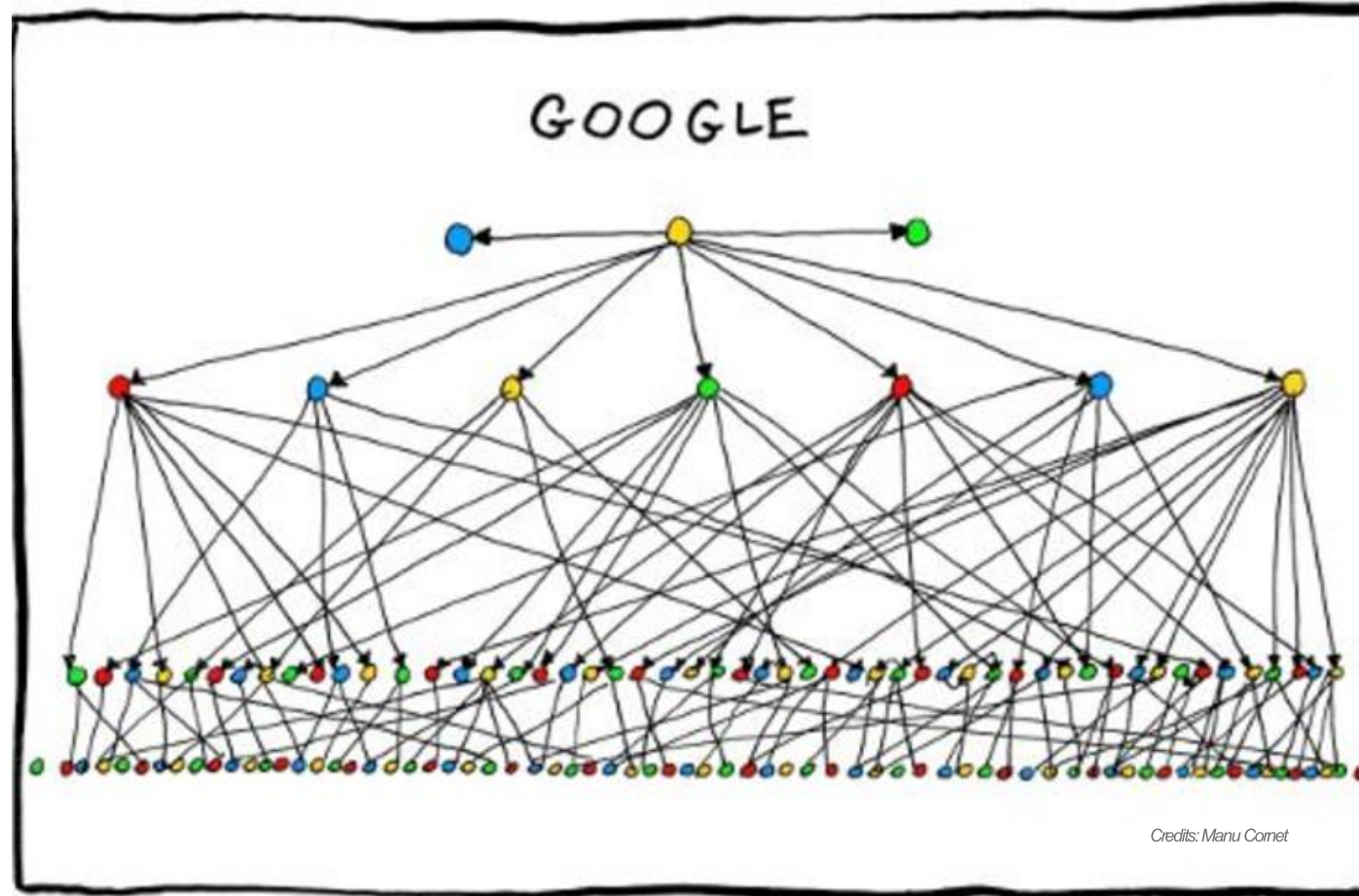
- HBR, *Beyond the Hype*, July 2016



To compete in our rapidly changing world, we need a new kind of organization.

- Salim Ismail, *"Exponential Organizations"*

And: Hierarchies are killing innovation and your purpose!



Is self-management improving things?



► Testimonials

"It gave me a place to create transparency on an issue that I needed resolved."

"Holacracy has improved our Scrum discipline."

"We are having project success because of Holacracy. There is now a system for addressing systemic issues."

Cycle Time

93%



On average, it takes **2 minutes** to raise, discuss, and resolve operational issues

Skill Utilization

80%



60%

Employee's confidence in their own ability to resolve impediments

► Recruitment

"I'm willing to take a \$10k-\$28k pay cut to work in this environment."

\$10M per year
value proposition to the State

Where to start? What we did

- ▶ Take an incremental approach
- ▶ Have the right leaders willing to fight
- ▶ Build the coalition of support
- ▶ Measure outcomes and change
- ▶ Find sweet spots for easy wins





@jptakken

- ▶ <https://egov.watech.wa.gov/blog>
- ▶ *"Reinventing organizations", Frederic Laloux*
- ▶ *"Exponential organizations", Salim Ismail*
- ▶ *"Holacracy", Brian Robertson*
- ▶ *"Team of Teams", General McChrystal*
- ▶ *"Beyond the hype", HBS*

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

—Plato



@mikel_deangelo

