SCRUM TEAMS ARE SELF-ORGANIZING.
GET OVER IT.
Quick Guidelines

• Your microphones will be muted throughout
• Please ask questions!
  • Type questions into the webinar questions box:
  • Type comments into the webinar comments box:
Who Is Scrum.org?

Training

Certification

Founded by Ken Schwaber Co-creator of Scrum
UTOPIAN TEAM

Diversity of Views & Unity of Action
Teams are Self-Organizing
I assert that this is objectively true.
What do I mean by “true”?

There are many ways to make truth claims.
Tautological
True in every possible interpretation.

- “Self-organizing teams choose how best to accomplish their work.”
- Similar to: “Pilots navigate their planes.”
- Similar to: “The sky is blue.”

Not my argument!
Dictum

A formal pronouncement from an authoritative source.

A statement of principle.

- Scrum teams are self-organizing because
  The Scrum Guide™ says so.
- Agile teams are self-organizing because the Agile Manifesto says it’s best.

Not my argument!
Axiomatic
A premise or starting point for reasoning.

- People have choice.

This is my argument!
People have choice.

Subject only to these constraints:

- People cannot choose options not in their experience/consciousness.
- Think of a city. A city name.
- Discard that city name.
- Think of a different city.
- Stop.
Your choices were limited...
People have choice.

Subject only to these constraints:

• People cannot choose options not in their experience/consciousness.

• People earn, not choose, an invitation to a team.
Choice Behaviours

What does choice look like?
Example

Navigation.
Example

Self-destruction.
Example

Commitment.
The Law of Two Feet

• Every individual has two feet and must be prepared to use them. Responsibility for a successful outcome resides with exactly one person – the team member. Individuals can make a difference and must make a difference. If that is not true in a given situation, they, and they alone, must take responsibility to use their two feet, and move to a new place where they can make a difference. This departure need not be made in anger or hostility, but only after honouring the people involved and the space they occupy. By word or gesture, indicate that you have nothing further to contribute, wish them well, and go and do something useful.
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The Law of Real Workplaces

- Every employee has two feet and must be prepared to use them. Responsibility for a successful outcome resides with employees – individually and collectively. Individuals can make a difference and must make a difference. If they cannot in a given situation, they use their two feet and move to where they can make a difference. To the extent the workplace can foster honourable relationships and interactions, their departure need not be made in anger or hostility, and employees can navigate to situations in which they can do something useful.

-- David Sabine
“To the extent the workplace can foster honourable relationships and interactions...” employees can self-organize their way into circumstances where each individual and the company can thrive.
But...

Please start submitting your questions.
In light of the fact teams are self-organizing, and given their diversity of views, how then can a team achieve unity of action?
What is the Opposite of Self-Organizing?

Conceptually? Actually?
Who assigns the work?

Conceptually? Actually?
Are ALL Agile teams self-organizing?
“But that will never work here...”

Self-organization is already at work here.

In desirable ways: team members stepping up to help each other.
In costly ways: team members not abiding team agreements.
“People can’t just leave their job...”
Maybe...

Myth
• ...this is true only in regions where unemployment rates are low?

Facts
• Low unemployment rates certainly improve employee mobility.
  • So, we observe higher attrition in those environments.
• High unemployment rates can have the perceived effect of limiting an employees options.
  • But, the Law of Two Feet is available to the employee, whether or not they choose to exercise it.
“Our company has strict hierarchies...how can teams self-organize?”
Maybe...

Myth
• ...this is true only in companies without strict hierarchies?

Fact
• Hierarchies of competency exist naturally.
• Hierarchies of authority are social constructions. (I think this is what’s meant in the question.)
  • We sometimes observe that a team will relinquish their choices to an authority – they do this by intermittently or selectively muting their self-organizing nature. If this condition persists long enough, we are led to believe an illusion that self-organization is not present.
Continue Your Learning – Learning Paths

• Scrum.org now has learning paths on our website for Scrum Master, Product Owner, Leadership and Development Team Members

• Provide structured guides to help you understand the roles of the Scrum Master/Product Owner with a way to continue learning on your journey

https://www.scrum.org/pathway/scrum-master
https://www.scrum.org/pathway/product-owner-learning-path
https://www.scrum.org/pathway/team-member-learning-path
https://www.scrum.org/pathway/agile-leader-learning-path
Thank you!