Stop “Going Agile”!
The three conversations you need to have before you start.

Heather Fleming
@hfleming
What we’re going to talk about...

- A Little Bit about Me
- Agile’s Biggest Hurdle
- The Three Conversations
  - Deadlines
  - Engagement
  - Process
- Cultivating Trust: A Winning Experiment
Hello!

Heather Fleming, Sr. Director, PMO

- Not a consultant! :)
- Started out in front-end development, management and design in 1996
- PMP Certified, Myers-Briggs (MBTI®) Certified
- Heading up PMOs since 2006 for XO Group and Gilt
- I love working with people and teams to help them reach their full potential.
Gilt (www.gilt.com) is an e-commerce company focused on flash sales. We provide insider access to top designers at up to 60% off, in sales typically lasting 72 hours.
Agile’s Biggest Hurdle

It’s all about Trust.
The Symptoms of Mistrust

- Deadlines & Roadmaps
- “Throw it over the Wall”
- “Not My Job”
- “Commitments in front of Peers”
Throw it over the wall!
Not my job, not my problem.

- I’m not setting up the next meeting, taking notes, ordering lunch, etc...
- I’m not testing my code, QA will catch it if there’s a problem.
- I don’t care what we work on, just tell me what to do.
- The deadline is tomorrow, just release whatever you have.
Commitments in front of peers...

It’s the difference between needing visibility and communication... VS

Holding people up to commitments because you don’t trust them...

Which side are you on?
The Three Conversations

- The Conversation About Deadlines
- The Conversation About Engagement
- The Conversation About Process
“But when will you be done?”

The Conversation about Deadlines
We’re “Going Agile” but...

- I need to see a roadmap of when you’ll be delivering projects for the next year.
- That project I just told you about has to be completed by April 1st!
- I need to add some additional scope to your project, but that deadline can’t move and no money for additional people. Make it happen!
Let’s talk about ideals...

- No Deadlines.
- No Scope Creep.
- No lists of projects.
- No Roadmap!

You can be the voice of the customer rather than the voice of a list.
Simply tell the truth!

- Set Targets & Goals
- Always Be Estimating
- Define “Done”

Don’t be afraid to change!

Image from agilenutshell.com
Change the way you talk about time.
“This is my top priority, but I can’t meet about it until next week.”
We’re “Going Agile” but...

- I can only be on the team part-time.
- I’ll just send you an email of what I want and you can just get it done without me.
- I’d prefer it if you didn’t talk to our customers directly. Just have everything go through me.
Let’s talk about ideals...

- Co-located, Dedicated, Self-Sufficient Teams

- Engaged Product Owners & Business Partners

Establish a clear understanding of who is doing what (regardless of titles)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Product Managers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Program Managers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Business Systems Managers</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We represent the customer’s needs.</td>
<td>We connect teams &amp; departments to get things done.</td>
<td>We make working at Gilt easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Works to determine what we should work on, and justifies why.</td>
<td>● Works across teams &amp; departments to plan and execute projects.</td>
<td>● Understands existing business processes and identifies ways to streamline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Understands the competitive landscape</td>
<td>● Partners with stakeholders to provide visibility into how we are prioritizing work.</td>
<td>● Works directly with our business to find ways to be more efficient and effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Translates data into customer needs</td>
<td>● Leads work organization and communication across teams and departments.</td>
<td>● Identifies ways in which tech can help improve our business processes and proposes solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change the way you engage your team.
“I just want to code. Why do I have to be in all these meetings?”

The Conversation about Process
We’re “Going Agile” but...

- I’m going to insist that we follow Scrum. Everyone get certified!

- We’ll have to spend hours in Sprint Planning, have Daily Stand-Ups, Meet for Sprint Retrospectives and conduct Sprint Demos where you have to present your own work!

- We’re going to change all of your job titles! You over there -- you’re now the “ScrumMaster”!

And then I said...

"Yes, I’ll commit to not making any changes during the sprint"
Let’s talk about ideals...

- Respect for Individual Talents
- Respect for people’s time
- Experimenting with Process

It only works if everyone understands WHY we are working this way.
You are more than your job title!

**Domain Guru**
Has had a career developing similar technical products in the domain. Recognized externally as an expert in the field.

**Initiative Visionary**
Drives a comprehensive initiative strategy taking into account company strategy, the market and competitive landscape to drive financial benefit to the organization (increase revenue, decrease cost, operational efficiency).

**Marketer**
Determines product/feature positioning for the customer by defining and articulating the messaging and positioning for product so the customer clearly understands the benefit.

**Ideator**
Formulates and executes backlog development. Drives the scoping, planning and scheduling of work. Drives KPI thinking and can easily size multiple opportunities and prioritize based on impact. Is able to forecast and review revenue/cost actuals and budget impact of products developed.

**External Relationship Manager**
Provides regular updates on status and team achievements. Develops relationships with external stakeholders. Leads productive meetings. Creates and delivers excellent presentations for the team.

**Cruise Director**
Makes things fun. Creates a sense of team spirit. Sets up team events, lunches, happy hours, etc. Decorates team area. Helps with stickers, team swag.

**Motivator**
Excites and motivates through an understanding of individual and team dynamics. Clearly articulates why the work the team is doing is important. Develops an environment of highly engaged individuals by demonstrating passion and enthusiasm. Inspires the team to achieve their goals.

**Organizer**
Keeps the team focused on execution. Shields the team from distraction. Creates a sense of urgency while ensuring a sustainable pace for the team. Helps the team execute Sprints using estimation either with issue count, story points, or days. Understands and actively tracks team progress.

**Business Process Thinker**
Understands business process flows across multiple departments and how each department is impacted by our tech systems. Identifies gaps and proposes efficiency gains. Trains business users on new technical systems.
Cruise Director:
Makes things fun. Creates a sense of team spirit. Sets up team events, lunches, happy hours, etc. Decorates team area. Helps with stickers, team swag.
Motivator:
Excites and motivates through an understanding of individual and team dynamics. Clearly articulates why the work the team is doing is important. Develops an environment of highly engaged individuals by demonstrating passion and enthusiasm. Inspires the team to achieve their goals.
Cultivating Trust: A Winning Experiment

- Set yourself up to win!
- Start small.
- Communicate broadly about your wins.
- Change the things that aren’t working.
- Keep experimenting!
## How we have adapted...

### What works for us...
- Co-located, “Pizza-Size” Teams
- Dedicated Business Partners
- Working in Sprints, Sprint Planning
- Epic -> Task Organization
- Estimating with Issue Count
- Tracking Committed vs. Completed

### What doesn’t work right now...
- The “Scrummaster” Role
- The “Product Owner” Role
- Formal User Stories
- Acceptance Criteria
- Estimating with Story Points
- Long-Term Roadmapping
Our Model...

- **Big Areas of Focus**
- **What are we doing / not doing?**
- **Answering WHY**
- **Who do we need?**
- **Qualities, Not Titles**
- **Get Working!**
Make Your Work Meaningful!

- Strategy
- Initiatives
- Epics
- Tasks
**FOCUS: What’s Now? What’s Next?**

### Filter Results: PMO In Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Business Partner</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Created</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Brief</th>
<th>Last Comment</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design, test, and rollout a new personalized Homepage for members</td>
<td>Heather Fleming</td>
<td>New homepage design to encourage cross shopping and leverage personalization data</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/homepage">https://docs.google.com/document/homepage</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Starting A/B test to 50% of members next week. [2015-07-14 12:34:55]</td>
<td>😮</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign and re-implement the Gift Tech Blog</td>
<td>Heather Fleming</td>
<td>Remove reliance on 3rd party hosting and move to existing code deployment tools.</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/techblog">https://docs.google.com/document/techblog</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Development started, expected to be complete this sprint. [2015-07-14 12:36:47]</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize all pages for Search</td>
<td>Justin Riservato</td>
<td>Starting with product pages, look at ways to increase search rank and increase traffic.</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/seo">https://docs.google.com/document/seo</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Team is making good progress but questioning the approach due to limited results. Considering on-boarding external expertise. [2015-07-14 12:41:34]</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a new tool for creating and managing Purchase Orders</td>
<td>Susan Thomas</td>
<td>Address employee pain points and re-engineer the business process around PO management to be more efficient.</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/PO">https://docs.google.com/document/PO</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: PO Process is more complex and has more dependencies than we had anticipated. May have to move back to In Discovery and re-assess scope. [2015-07-14 12:33:11]</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Filter Results: PMO In Discovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Business Partner</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Brief</th>
<th>Last Comment</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rollout a new distribution center to handle volume for Holiday</td>
<td>Fidan Kasra</td>
<td>Increase capacity and redundancy with a 2nd physical location</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN DISCOVERY</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/DCC">https://docs.google.com/document/DCC</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Projections for Volume are complete, investigating locations. [2015-07-14 12:42:31]</td>
<td>😮</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow members to buy Gift branded gift cards and send them to friends</td>
<td>Eric Fishman</td>
<td>Support purchase of physical gift cards on site for an alternative gift giving option for members</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>IN DISCOVERY</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/giftcards">https://docs.google.com/document/giftcards</a></td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Scope has been expanded to address fraud concerns, need to re-assess feasibility. [2015-07-14 12:46:11]</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Filter Results: PMO Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Business Partner</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Created</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Last Comment</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build a new tool for managing photoshoots</td>
<td>Patrick Richardson</td>
<td>Re-engineer the process and tooling for photoshoots to make them more efficient.</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>Justin Riservato: Being considered as next in the queue for Discovery [2015-07-14 13:02:47]</td>
<td>😌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Gift Wrapping for members</td>
<td>Fidan Kasra</td>
<td>Allow members to choose to have orders gift wrapped at the DC</td>
<td>14Jul15</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>Justin Riservato: New request for Holiday, not prioritized. [2015-07-14 13:03:56]</td>
<td>😌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change the way you talk about process.
Change the way you “go agile”!
GILT  Thank You!

Heather Fleming  @hfleming