Our Pipeline is Broken!

Salah Elleithy (@selleithy) / George Dinwiddie (@gdinwiddie)
What is the Business Pipeline?
Business Delivery - limited view

Request → Development → Operations

Requirements → Delivery Pipeline
A system is never the sum of its parts, it’s the product of their interactions.

-Dr. Russell Ackoff
Business Delivery - holistic view

Business Pipeline
Theory of Constraints & Drum / Buffer / Rope
Where is the Bottleneck?
The Constraint Set the Drumbeat
Buffer the Inputs to the Constraint

- Pull based on need
- Don’t starve the constraint
- Adjust just-in-time to maintain flow
Challenges with the Business Pipeline
Where do requests come from?
## Request Source Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Work</th>
<th>Unplanned Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Department</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Department</td>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Managers</td>
<td>Security Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Research</td>
<td>Dependency changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVP Tests</td>
<td>Analysis of log files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breadth of inputs

- Dept. Manager
- Test
- Development
- Legal Dept.
- President
- End User
- Help Desk
- Software Architect
Long Chains

End User → Help Desk → Triage → Future Story
Calls
Reports
Decides
Bug Fix
Discard


“Big Picture” Not Visible

- Information lost or modified in the pipeline
- Information trickles out a little at a time
Old Backlog

★ Obsolete information
★ Stale & fuzzy understanding
★ Doesn’t reflect recent learning and decisions

Jenna Workman (jmawork)
Complicated Environments

- Multiple sources of requirements
- Product management team structure
- Conflict between stakeholders with no consensus or resolution
- Poorly communicated shifting priorities
Value Stream Mapping

Where is your constraint?
Ideas on Fixing the Business Pipeline

John Vachon, U.S. Farm Security Administration
Common Pitfalls

● Multiple input queues to development
  o Pushes the priority decisions from business to development

● Top Executives bypass process
  o Prioritizes by HIPPO
Agree on a process that works

Single input to development
Common Pitfalls

- Business changes their mind about **selection of stories** after development has started
- Business changes the **acceptance criteria** of stories after selection for iteration
- Both of these pull the rug out from under the feet of delivery team
Remedies

- Decide priority order before development
- Define scenarios to illustrate acceptance criteria prior to development
- Manage interruptions and impediments
Progressive Elaboration

- Plan at different time horizons
- Just-in-time story refinement
- Avoid large, stale backlog of small stories
- Split stories as needed
- “Boulders to Rocks to Pebbles”
Collaborate Across Handoffs

Three Amigos

- Business people
- Programmers
- Testers
- ... and other viewpoints as needed

working together to produce the best possible outcome
Explicitly Plumb Your Pipeline

- Business Initiative
- Enhancement Request
- Defects
- Emergency Changes
- Steering Committee
- Requirements Analysis
- Backlog
- Product Owner
- 3 Amigos
- Develop
- User Test
- Deploy

Flowchart:
1. Business Initiative -> Requirements Analysis
2. Enhancement Request -> Steering Committee
3. Defects -> Steering Committee
4. Emergency Changes -> Steering Committee
5. Steering Committee -> Backlog
6. Backlog -> Product Owner
7. Product Owner -> 3 Amigos
8. 3 Amigos -> Develop
9. Develop -> User Test
10. User Test -> Deploy
11. Steering Committee (as a placeholder)
Tweet This!

Plumb your business pipeline, remove clogs, repeat! #businesspipeline #agile2015

-- @selleithy @gdinwiddie