Introduction to Agile with Distributed Teams: Working with Remote Team Members

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Agile Principles from http://agilemanifesto.org

- Early and continuous delivery of valuable software
- Welcome changing requirements
- Deliver working software frequently
- Business people and developers work together
- Trust motivated individuals
- Face-to-face conversation
- Working software is the primary measure of progress
- Promote sustainable development
- Technical excellence and good design
- Simplicity is essential
- Self-organizing teams
- Team reflection and adjustment
Agenda

- Building Teams
- Creating Personal Relationships
- Encourage Open Communication
- Developing Trust
- Overcoming Cultural Differences

Building Teams
Building Whole Teams

- Avoid the typical structure according activities and know-how
- Instead structure along domain areas

Self-Responsible Feature Team

- Comprehends (or gains) all necessary roles & know-how
- Ensures to complete valuable stories in an iteration
Distributed and Dispersed Teams

Supporting Whole Teams

- Every feature team needs the product owner's support
- One product owner might not be enough
Creating Personal Relationships

Trust needs Touch

- Face-to-face should always be preferred
- Expatriates and other face-to-face options create understanding
- And yes, face-to-face has a price…

“You will pay the costs of a face-to-face meeting, regardless of whether you have one or not.”

—Ken Pugh
Keep the Sites in Touch

- Ensure communication by traveling
- Ambassador at each site

Social Connections

- Regular joint celebration of deliveries
- Sharing everyday's life
- Make traveling (more) enjoyable
Encourage Open Communication

Dispersed Daily Scrum

- Ensure mutual respect
Communication Channels

- Different sensory modalities require different channels
- Different needs
- Balance media

Communication Channels

- Direct connections
- Synchronous ↔ Asynchronous
- Video ↔ Audio
Tools

- Instant messaging
- Email
- Collaboration platforms
- Common repository

Developing Trust
Trust Motivated Individuals

Trust always goes ahead: By giving trust you’re gaining trust

- Trust is based on:
  - Communication
  - Transparency
  - Honesty

- People often try to fix lack of trust with formalism

Trust is based on Mutual Respect

- Different meeting locations
- Pay attention to the vocabulary
Trust Threshold

- Trust threshold by ignoring necessary proximity
- Trust can be broken in an instant

Creating a Community via Retrospectives

- Regularly
- Different kinds of retrospectives
- Virtual retrospectives
  - A new example tool:
    - http://retrium.com
Overcoming Cultural Differences

What defines Culture?

- Geography
- Language
- Strategies
- Politics
- Values
- History
Some Cultures are Closer than Others...

- **Geert Hofstede six cultural dimensions**
  - Power Distance Index
  - Individualism vs. Collectivism
  - Masculinity vs. Femininity
  - Uncertainty Avoidance Index
  - Long Term vs. Short Term Orientation (aka pragmatism)
  - Indulgence vs. Restraint

Comparing Cultures:

- **Source:** [http://www.geert-hofstede.com/](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/)
Who defines Culture?

- You have to deal with different cultures everywhere
  - Nation
  - Company
  - Divisions in company
  - Groups
  - Family
  - Personal

Focus on Cultural Similarities...

- … allows creating joint culture in terms of
  - Language
  - Strategies
  - Politics
  - Values
  - History
Effective Global Teams

“Creating an effective global team from multiple sites involves several key success factors: building trust, encouraging open communication, building personal relationships, and bridging cultural differences.”

Erran Carmel
(American Univ.)

In Summary

- Tools should support – not substitute – communication
- Communication is even more important in a global environment
- Only whole teams can take full responsibility
- Traveling is unavoidable
- Focus on cultural similarities
Many Thanks!

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