Introduction to Agile Leadership:
Recognizing and Removing Impediments
Defining Impediments
Some Impediments are Invisible!
Log Your Impediments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Impediments</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Kids/Wife sick</td>
<td>Missing resources</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare a packing list so that we can both help with packing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Family not packed</td>
<td>Incomplete work</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Flight overbooked</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Resolved itself by the time we got to the airport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Overcharged for children's seats on flight</td>
<td>Defects</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Not sure this was resolved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Children underfoot while packing</td>
<td>Interruption</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Lots of yelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Lost cell phone</td>
<td>Delay</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Went back to retrieve it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Long security lines</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Suffered through it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Needed cart for bags</td>
<td>Missing hardware</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Suffered through it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>no help in security</td>
<td>Undercapacity</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Have Andrea there to help next time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>no seats at gate</td>
<td>Missing hardware</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Founds seats at another gate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Flight delayed</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Not a significant delay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>No hertz sign in lot</td>
<td>Missing hardware</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Installing car seat</td>
<td>Missing hardware</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>CPAP Mask broke</td>
<td>Defects</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Ordered a new mask</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Can't get reliable wireless connection</td>
<td>Missing dependencies</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Crappy pen</td>
<td>Defects</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Got better pen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>no time for myself</td>
<td>Missing Information</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Get a better mask</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>nothing to do</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Made some plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Eating too much</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Get back on diet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>no time for myself</td>
<td>Not enough time</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Plan the day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Legs very sore</td>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Not enough time</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>No belts in gym</td>
<td>Missing component</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Missed Retrospective</td>
<td>Forgotten</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Eating too much</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Get back on diet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Leg pain kept me awake last night</td>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Clogged sinuses last night</td>
<td>Defects</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Slept on couch - couldn't deal with Genoa in bed</td>
<td>Interruption</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Not enough time</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Missed Retrospective</td>
<td>Forgotten</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Eating too much</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Get back on diet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>No Workout</td>
<td>Missing work</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Forgotten</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Unable to reach sledding hill</td>
<td>Missing hardware</td>
<td>Done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Sore legs</td>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Eating too much</td>
<td>Over Production</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Get back on diet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Risks
The Risk/Impediment Lifecycle
A Word of Caution...
Work ≠ Impediment
People ≠ Impediments
What Else Do We Know About Impediments?
Categorizing Impediments
Missing dependencies

A → B → ? → D → E
Defects
Delay/Interruption
Overwork/Over Commitment
Incomplete work
Miscommunication
Lack of control or discipline
Forgotten
Distractions
What are Your Categories?
Impediment Categories

- Missing Dependencies
- Defects
- Delay/Interruption
- Overwork/Over Commitment
- Incomplete Work
- Miscommunication
- Lack of Control or Discipline
- Forgotten
- Distractions
Impediment Patterns
Travel

• flight delays
• missing luggage
• missed connections
• forgotten personal items
• irate taxi drivers
Construction

- missing materials
- missing/late workers
- missing/broken tools
- shoddy workmanship
Event Planning

• site prep
• food allergies
• key attendees late/missing
• uncooperative guests
Rocket launch

- mechanical failure
- weather delay
- fueling issues
- software glitch
Software

- Missing/Delayed Test environments
- Missing/Unplanned dependencies
- Defects
- etc.
What Patterns do You See?
Impediment Patterns

- Travel
- Construction
- Event Planning
- Rocket Launch
- Software
Finding Impediments
Symptoms of Impedimentia

- Nothing comes up in a standup
- Unexplained or incomplete stories
- Brief or lackluster standup
- Slow velocity
The Cure!
Context
Perspective
Complacency
Scope
Pace
Impediment Mining
How Do You Find Impediments?
Finding Impediments

- Context
- Perspective
- Complacency
- Scope
- Pace
- Impediment Mining
Managing Impediments
Process

Incorporate Impediments throughout the process

Planning - What actions will we take this sprint to address impediments found last sprint?
Daily Standup - New impediments
Review - Share impediments with PO
Retrospective - Did we address our impediments this sprint? What remains? What actions should we take to resolve them next sprint?
Issues Snake

Capture the Story of the Impediments you have overcome

- Every time you take some action to deal with an impediment put a colored sticky note on the wall
- Arrange the additional notes end to end for each new impediment
- At the end of the sprint you will have a multi-colored snake of sticky notes that tells the story of all the things that you have done to try and resolve the impediment.
Agile Risk Board

This integrates the traditional risk management approach with an information radiator that is visible and tracked by the team. I found this on Jean Paul Grosjean’s blog⁴.

Create a board with different sections to capture different risk management strategies:

- Accepting
- Mitigating
- Containing
- Avoiding
- Open issues
Impediments Burn Down
Charts

Make progress on your impediments visible to the team on a day to day basis

For each impediment:
• Give it a size (in hours)
• Add up the total number of hours for the sprint
• Each day, track the time remaining on the impediments
Scaling

Escalate organizational Impediments to Scrum of Scrums

- The Scrum of Scrums is where teams get together to discuss cross team issues that are related to coordination and collaboration between teams.
- Some of the conversation is about status, and some of it is all about raising the kinds of issues that can’t be resolved by just one team.
- Usually there is a discussion and a working group of volunteers pulls together to address the issue across the teams.
How Do You Manage Impediments?
Managing Impediments

- Use Process
- Issues Snake
- Agile Risk Board
- Impediments Burn Down Charts
- Scaling
Removing Impediments
Who is Responsible for Removing Impediments?
Be Audacious!
Clearly State the Problem

Use the 5 W’s
I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.
-Rudyard Kipling

A good problem statement is:
- Focused on only one Problem.
- One or two sentences long.
- Does not suggest a Solution.
Use Root Cause Analysis

- Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagrams
- Dependency Diagrams
Brainstorming

- Unstructured Brainstorming
- Structured Methods
  - DeBono’s 6 Hats
Setup an Experiment

• More is better
• Collect data
Define a Measure of Success

• How will you know if the proposed experiment works?

• Time box your efforts

• Think small
Review Results

- What worked? What didn’t?
- What did you learn?
Modify Plans

• Incorporate what you learned and Keep Trying!
How Do You Remove Impediments?
Strategies for Removing Impediments

• Be Audacious
• Clearly State the Problem
• Use Brainstorming
• Setup an Experiment
• Define a Measure of Success
• Review Results
• Modify Your Plans
Summary
What Were We Talking About?

- Defining Impediments
- Categorizing Impediments
- Impediment Patterns
- Finding Impediments
- Managing Impediments
- Removing Impediments
Resources

Internet

- It's a Delivery Thing - Agile Risk Management http://itsadeliverything.com/management

Books

- The Little Book of Talent by Daniel Coyle
- Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling by Harold Kerzner
- Agile Software Development with Scrum by Ken Schwaber and Mike Beedle
- Agile Project Management with Scrum by Ken Schwaber
- Problem Solving 101: A Simple Book for Smart People by Ken Watanabe
- Fearless Change: Patterns for Introducing New Ideas by Mary Lynn Manns and Linda Rising
Contact

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