Facilitating Distributed Teams

Mark Kilby – Agile2019
my distributed agile background
Our new book

- combined 50 years experience with distributed teams
- we wrote the book using distributed pairing
What about you?

- Extensive distributed team experience? 3.9
- Extensive agile experience? 3.5
- Extensive facilitation experience? 3.6
- Want a few good ideas? 4.6
- Want to ease the pain of distributed meetings? 4.6
- Want to hear anything about distributed agile teams? 4.4
Facilitating Distributed Teams

- What is "good" facilitation?
- Challenge 3: How do we make distributed meetings effective?
What is good facilitation?

communication
participation
engagement
trust
inclusive
collaboration
listening
flow
inclusion
outcomes
agenda
safe
outcomes
effective
teamwork
forward movement
unopposed
move along
encouraging engagement
effective participation
deliverables
open-minded
thought-provoking
all voices heard
full engagement
good outcome
good facilitation
What do we do in facilitation?

- Set a direction (Goal)
- Align on where we are (share context)
- Collaborate on steps to reach the goal
- Facilitator "reads the room" and "holds the space"
Thanks to Ellen Grove @eegrove for sketch note
Learnings from Open Space

- facilitator creates & holds space
- participants own and run the collaboration
- Invitation is key
Translating Open Space to Virtual Space

- Model collaboration and facilitation
- Invite teams to own their collaboration
- Meetings are fluid – Connection – Collaboration
- Visitors always welcome, but respect the team
CHALLENGE 1: When can we meet?
Based on work preference

Hours of Overlap

>8 hours/day - should indicate socialization or mastery focus; not more output

4-5 hours/day minimum to support collaboration, adaptability and resilience

Hours of overlap trumps timezones
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<td>83%</td>
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<td>83%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</table>

Find acceptable hours of overlap
How many hours of overlap do your teams have?

- 6-8 hours: 19
- 4-6 hours: 38
- Less than 4 hours: 38

Total responses: 95
Satellite
one or a few remote from team

Nebula
whole team dispersed

Clusters
team in a few locations

3 distributed team types
Distributed and Cross-functional Satellite:
Bulk of Team in One Location:
One or Two Remote from Team

Team Manager

Satellite
one or a few remote from team

Location 1
Person 1
Person 5
Person 4
Person 3
Person 2
Location 2
Location 3

Persons 1, 4, 5 are collocated in Location 1, less than 30m apart.
Persons 2 & 6 are in different locations.
The entire team has maximal hours of overlap.
Distributed & Cross-Functional (Cluster)
Subgroups collocated in various locations.

Clusters
Team in a few locations

Some team members share physical spaces.
Primary affiliation is with team.
Maximum hours of overlap

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Ideal Cross-Functional Dispersed Team (Nebula)
- Primary affiliation is with Team
- Maximal hours of overlap

Team Manager

Person 1

Person 2

Person 3

Person 4

Person 5

Person 6

Nebula: whole team dispersed

@mkilby

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Which type of distributed team do you have now?

- Satellite team(s): 23
- Cluster team(s): 28
- Nebula team(s): 10
- Hybrid team(s): 32
How can we support them?

- Backchannel
- Buddy System
- Copilots
Backchannels

- Dedicated chat channel where team can always communicate
- Always monitor
- Example: Can anyone ask questions or share info if they can’t get attention on audio/video?
Problems with built-in meeting chat
Better Backchannels

• Use the teams regular chat channel (tool)
• Saves meeting conversations – easier to find
• In meeting, let others know if you drop. Easier to troubleshoot later
• Provides persistent history for the team collaborations
Buddy System

- Each remote person has a buddy in the main location.
- Buddy connects the remote person to the rest of the colocated team.
- Remote person is like a "satellite."
Buddy pairs
(facilitation mobbing)
Buddies can agree to:

- best ways to connect (SMS, chat)
- help Remote Buddy hear or join conversation
- represent Remote Buddy in any in-room activity
- share pictures with either buddy in exercise activities
Copilots

- Someone at another location that can help you facilitate the whole team meeting
- there are variations ...
- Facilitation (equal) pairing
- Host & Producer (handles logistics)
- Main Facilitator & Site-Cluster Facilitators
Copilot prep

- Consider
- Co-develop an agenda
- Practice any transitions from one facilitator to another
- Practice with all collaboration tools
- Prep any “pilot/facilitator” to
CHALLENGE 3: How do we make distributed meetings effective?
A) OPENING
B) WHY AGILE?
C) WHAT ARE THE AGILE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES THAT GUIDE TEAMS?
D) WHAT ARE THE ROLES ON AN AGILE TEAM?
E) HOW DO TEAMS APPLY AGILE PLANNING PRACTICES?
   1) UNDERSTANDING THE PRODUCT VISION
   2) PRODUCT BACKLOG + ESTIMATES
   3) ITERATION PLANNING
   4) RUNNING TESTED FEATURES (DURING ITERATION/START)
   5) SPRINT DEMO/REVIEW/RETRO
F) HOW DO WE PLAN LONG TERM?
G) WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?
H) CLOSING

PURPOSE

To learn how our team can apply agile software development principles, roles, practices, so that we can iteratively deliver quality working software.

Still need good facilitation...
2 Major Outcomes for Any Meeting

- a human connection
- a work product
- from J. Elise Keith's book "Where the Action Is: The Meetings That Make or Break Your Organization"
Facilitators Dojo
April 19, 2018

Invite to learn
Have Plan B (and maybe C)

- Goal or process not right?
- Technical issues?
- You as facilitator have an unexpected event?
How to read the room?

- Find different way to check-in
- Account for different styles (introvert, extrovert)
- Build your own cockpit - Multiple Open Channels Always (MOCA)
Multiple Open Channels Always (MOCA)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retrospective</th>
<th>To learn from our experiences this sprint and make a plan to improve for the next sprint.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>Purpose, Agenda, Working Agreements</td>
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<td>AGENDA</td>
<td>Review Sprint 2 Retro outcomes and Assessment Spreadsheet</td>
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<td>Opening/Set the Stage</td>
<td>Agree-Disagree</td>
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<td>Gather Data</td>
<td>Control-Influence-Respond</td>
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<td>Generate Insights</td>
<td>Assign Action Items</td>
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<td>Prioritize &amp; Plan</td>
<td>Close Parking Lot</td>
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<td>Closing</td>
<td>Retro the Retro</td>
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Leverage your distributed environment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
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<tr>
<td>Team Hours Overlap Chart</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backchannel</td>
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<td>Buddy System (facilitation mobbing)</td>
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<td>Facilitation Copilots (pairing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved Facilitation</td>
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<td>Have Plan B</td>
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<td>Build a facilitation cockpit (MOCA)</td>
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<td>Use Asynchronous and Synchronous communication</td>
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</table>
Thanks! Q&A? Need more?

- Blog & newsletter at https://www.markkilby.com
- Twitter: @mkilby
- http://www.linkedin.com/in/mkilby
- Follow me to hear about ONLINE CLASSES
- Want to try a Nebula team? We are hiring! https://www.sonatype.com/careers
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- Buddy System for -6 PLSS, Apollo 14 press kit. [https://www.hq.nasa.gov/alsj/a14/a14pk_buddy_system_en.jpg - Public Domain].

- Gemini astronauts. [https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/images/253507main_e66-44601_full.jpg - Public Domain].


- Falcon heavy coming in hot. [https://www.flickr.com/photos/justinrock/10529639934 (CC BY 2.0)].


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