

# Start Well:

Launching Projects and Teams for High Performance and Hyper-Productivity

## Agenda

Definitions

Starting Well

Agile Chartering

## A Few Definitions

High Performance Teams

Hyper-Productive Teams & Organizations

Successful, High Value Delivery

## High Performance

## We work as an Effective Team when we have...

- Common purpose & performance goals
- Complementary skills for interdependent work
- Shared approach to work
- Joint accountability
- Small number of people
- Mutual History

## High Performing Teams

- Deep commitment to the cause
- Interconnectedness
- Strong Identity
- Shared Leadership
- High Fun Factor
- Fast Team Learning
- Protection from Politics
- Belief in the “impossible”

## Characteristics of *Agile* Teams

- Motivated by Values
- Collaborative Synergy
- Self-organizing
- Customer-focused
- Flexible
- Reflective
- Adaptive

## Traits of Bellman & Ryan’s “Extraordinary Groups”:

- Compelling Purpose
- Shared Leadership
- Just-Enough-Structure
- Full Engagement
- Embracing Differences
- Unexpected Learning
- Strengthened Relationships
- Great Results

# Hyper Productive

Productivity: Efficiency and Effectiveness of a Team at turning inputs into outputs.

Hyper Productivity: Teams work at much higher levels of performance such as 2x, 3x, 4x more productive than their peers (or their own prior performance).

## Jeff Sutherland describes:

“A Scrum rollout at Systematic to reach CMMI-Level 5 resulted in a 100 percent increase in overall productivity in the first six months of implementation. Systematic reported the first doubling of velocity (productivity) resulted from getting software “done” at each Sprint’s end (including passing all acceptance tests and resulting in a potentially shippable product). They reported their second doubling of velocity when the Product and Sprint backlogs and user stories were in the “Ready” state at the start of the iteration. This included having the Backlogs prioritized and the acceptance criteria defined and reviewed in advance of the upcoming iteration.”

## Clinton Keith says:

“A hyper-productive team is a phrase often used...to identify teams that have achieved a state of ownership, commitment and collaboration that allows them to be far more productive in creating product value on a regular basis.

...a few [conditions] I feel are important:  
Independence and a sense of ownership  
Leadership  
Core competency  
Team collaboration”

## Setting the Conditions for Hyper Productivity

Constantly Improving

Good Preparation

No Dependencies

Have Fun

- Ralph van Roosmalen

## A Dozen Practices for Hyper Productivity

1. Self-Organization
2. Engineering Practices
3. Everyone Trained
4. Software “Done” at Iteration End
5. Backlog Ready at Iteration Start
6. Short Iteration (1-2 weeks)
7. Visible Progress
8. Frequent Communication and Collaboration
9. Pair Immediately
10. Few Disruptions
11. Everything is Prioritized
12. Servant Leadership

- Ryan Shriver: “Hyper Productive Agile.” ganttthead.com

## Successful, High Value Delivery

What the customer wants and values

That creates value for the business

That the customer will accept & exchange value for

In a timeframe that suits the customers’ needs

Easily maintainable and supportable after deployment

In a way that leaves team members ready and eager to work on the next deliverable

Who would want that?  
Why?

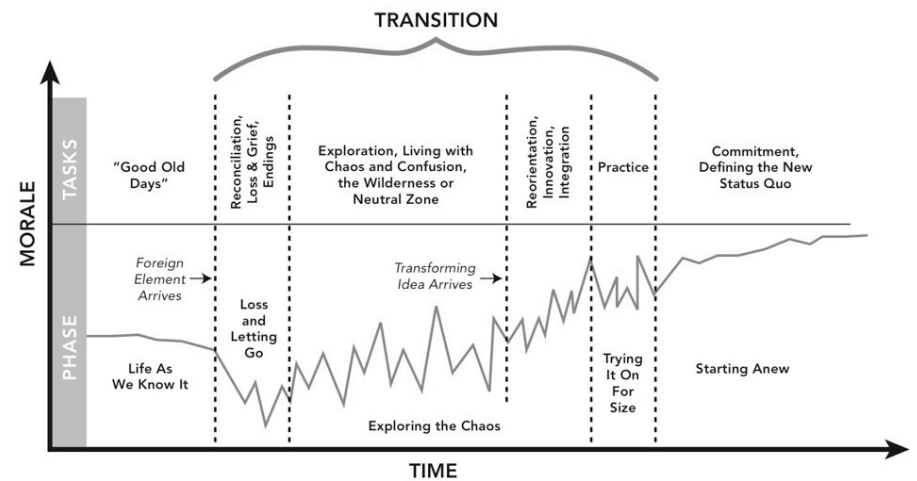
Starting Well

Follow Along

Change & Transition

Craft the Team

Attention to the Beginning



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# Craft the Team

Focus on

# Skills

## Collaborative Team Skills

### Interpersonal Interaction Skills

Listening; speaking up; self-disclosure; verbal and non-verbal communication

### Trust-Building Skills

Being trusting; being trustworthy; giving, seeking, and receiving feedback; making and meeting commitments

### Team Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills

Learning, thinking, and deciding as a group; problem definition and root-cause analysis; focus on planning and retrospectives

### Conflict Skills

Conflict management; influencing; negotiation; dialogue

### Team Meeting Skills

Setting agendas; facilitating; participating; action planning

### Shared Leadership Skills

Direction; guidance; evaluation; follower-ship

## WHOLE TEAM

### On-Site Customers

- › Product manager / product owner
- › Domain experts
- › Interaction designers
- › Business analysts

### Programmers

- › Designers & Architects
- › Coders
- › Database designers
- › Security experts
- › Network architects

### Non-Programmer Builders

- › Technical writers
- › Graphic designers

### Testers

- › Business-focused
- › Technically-focused

### Coaches

- › Programmer-coach
- › Project manager
- › Scrum Master

### Project Community

- › Executive sponsor
- › Product manager
- › Domain experts
- › Users
- › Purchasers
- › “Technical buyers”
- › Sales
- › Marketing
- › Training
- › Operations

Intact Team  
or  
Intact Team with a  
Few New Members  
or  
Newly Formed Team

## Accelerate Team Forming

- Provide structure
- Draft an Agile Charter
- Focus on the “do-able”
- Define “done”
- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Initiate iteration retrospectives
- Acknowledge feelings of newness or confusion
- Manage participation so everyone has a voice
- Set a tone of openness and trust

## Attention at the Beginning

## Project Kick-Off Workshop

“At PSE, the software development division of Siemens AG Austria, we have realized significant benefits by providing carefully designed facilitated rituals at the beginning and at the end of projects, called kick-off workshops and project retrospectives respectively. The high return-on-investment for the time spent is unchallenged and confirmed by the regular feedback of developers, project leaders, and managers. They attest a positive influence of these rituals on many subjects such as team cooperation, process effectiveness, quality assurance, know-how sharing, reliability of estimations, and so on. This helps to improve the development cycle and increases the financial success of our projects.”

Frowin Fatjak (PSE, Siemens AG Österreich),  
“Kick-off Workshops and Project Retrospectives:  
A Good Learning Software Organization Practice”  
Wissensmanagement (LNCS Volume) 2005

“The term kick-off designates an internal workshop at the beginning of a project or at the start of a project phase. A kick-off at PSE usually lasts for 1-2 days.”

Features:

Whole Team participates and contributes

Agenda includes: variety of activities, presentations by different people, & moderated discussions

Higher awareness of and attention to risks

Success Factors:

Facilitator/Leader contracting

Establishing Trust

Whole Team involvement

Recording Minutes (digital camera)

Offsite Location

## Project Launch Activities

Collaborative Chartering

Kick-Off Workshops

Iteration 0

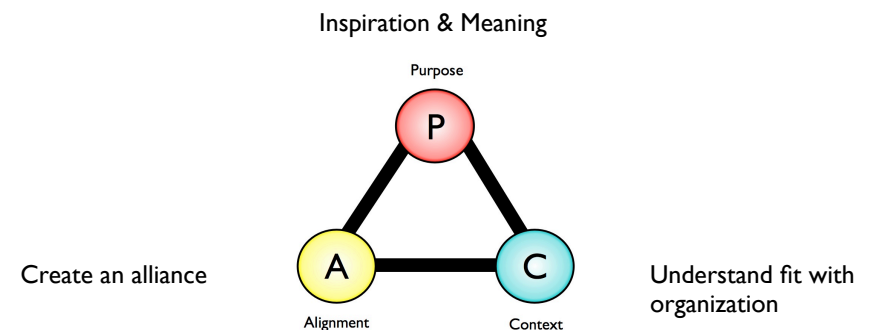
Boot Camps

Retrospective & FutureSpective

Open Space

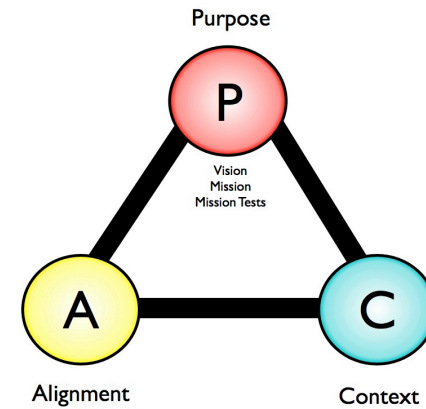
## Agile Chartering

## Chartering the Product Team





## Living Charter = Chartering



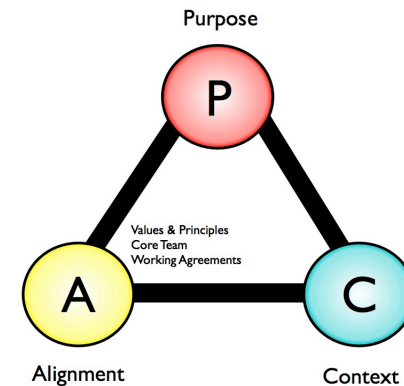
Vision - Value to Attain

Mission - Result to Accomplish

Mission Tests - Criteria for Success

## “TinCans” Purpose

- ★ **Vision** TinCans makes long distance collaboration easier by eliminating the bottlenecks of previous desktop sharing tools. TinCans is full of the small touches that customers find joy in using, and is known for collaboration, simplicity and high quality. With the creation of TinCans, we deliver our first entrepreneurial product. The successful launch of Tin Cans establishes us as a strong competitor in the collaboration tools marketplace.
- ★ **Mission** TinCans is a freeform sandbox that fulfills multiple purposes, such as: project management, working in pairs & subgroups, project tracking, distributed retrospectives, and more. TinCans helps teams collaborate over long distance, and enables the productive team dynamics that occur when teams gather around a table and use index cards to brainstorm, prioritize, and reflect. Collaboration, simplicity, and high quality take precedence over breadth of features, and we focus on polishing existing features to a high gloss before adding new ones.
- ★ **Mission Tests** We will deploy TinCans in multiple stages with increasing measures of success at each stage:
  - \* By Q2 2009, we will demonstrate a proof-of-concept at a major Agile event garnering a positive response from Agile experts for its simplicity and high quality.
  - \* By Q3 2009, we will make a TinCans beta available for free use and within 6 months at least 10 teams will use it on a regular basis for real-world projects.
  - \* By Q2 2010, TinCan will convert to SaaS and gross at least \$10K in the first 3 months.
  - \* By Q2 2011, we will rely on TinCans for our income and the revenues will meet our monthly minimum income requirements.



Values & Principles - Beliefs & Ideals about Work

Core Team - Cross-functional group with a common purpose.

Working Agreements - Operational Guidelines

## “Tin Cans” Alignment

### ★ Values & Principles -

**Openness:** Openness is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. We encourage everyone to speak up on topics that concern them or the team as a whole.

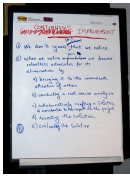
**Outcome-Focus:** We evaluate work products not the author.

**Feedback:** Because we want the highest quality working relationships, we encourage, welcome, and seek effective feedback. We give feedback with caring and respect.

**Innovation:** We encourage each other to try new ideas. We regard mistakes not as failure, but as experiments on the road to success.

★ **Core Team - Membership:** Oanh, Phil, Quincy, Ruth, Siraj, Ted, Erik, and Uma. Individual Contributions & Work Styles. Interdependent Skills. Cross-functional work. Each person's PWTP (project within the project). Later.

### ★ Working Agreements -



As a team, we believe we work best when:

We define “done” for our products as “ready to be accepted and user by our customer.

We hold planning meetings before and retrospectives after each iteration and release.

We value curiosity; therefore, we listen and we encourage each other to express ideas.

We seek opportunities for continuous learning and sharing knowledge.

We find ways to make our production work fun for the whole team.



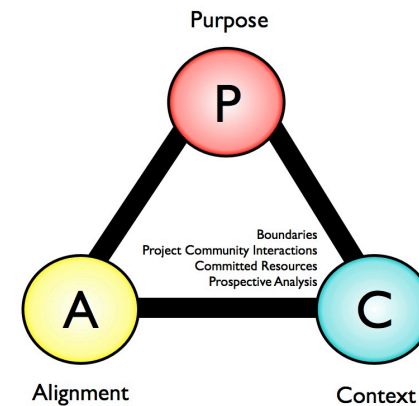
## Sample Working Agreements for Cultivating Trust

We agree to assume positive intent and give generous interpretations to actions or words we don't understand, then we seek clarity from one another.

We keep our agreements or, if we can't, we advise teammates of problems as soon as possible.

We cast no “silent vetos.” We speak up if we disagree.

We seek and offer feedback on the impact of our actions, inactions, and interactions.



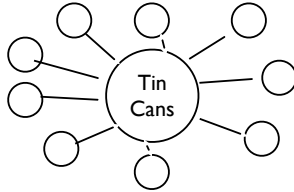
Boundaries & Interactions - Seeing the Systems

Committed Resources - Organization Support

Prospective Analysis - Initial Projections

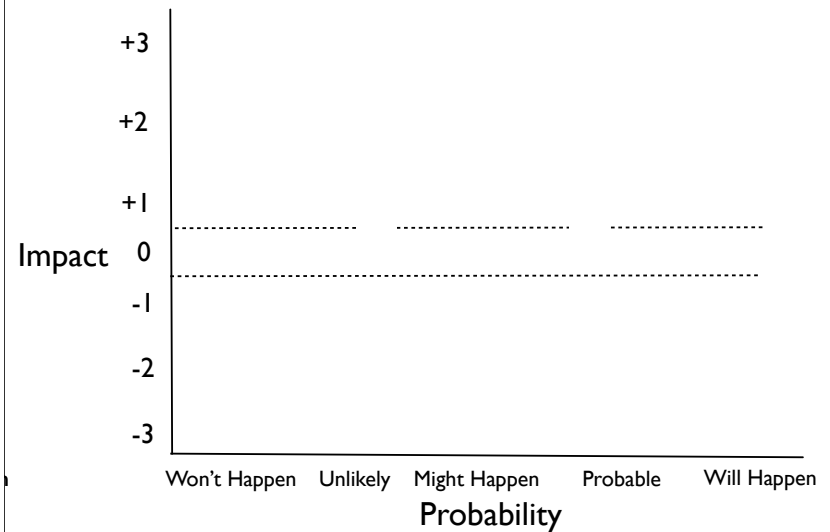
## “Tin Cans” Context

★ **Boundaries & Interactions** Tin Cans boundaries include scope, timeboxes (1 week iterations, 2 month releases to internal production), project boundary objects (see below) project community members’ relative responsibilities, and limits of authority (purchasing up to \$10K, recruit 1 additional programmer, all decisions about work hours within a 40-hour week, ).



★ **Committed Resources** Tin Cans sponsors agree to provide a facilities budget for creating an open work area, including two build servers, and access to industry analysts and reports for our market. Core Team members may schedule 4 hours per week to work on personal projects.

★ **Prospective Analysis** We’ve identified a moderate probability, high negative impact risk others may be building a similar product and beat us to the market. Mitigate by prioritizing “first to market” in feature and release decisions.



## Recap

Definitions: High Performance, Hyper Productivity, Successful Delivery

Starting Well: Change Dynamics, Craft the Team, Attention to the Beginning

Agile Chartering: Purpose, Alignment, Context

What one thing will you take back for your teams?

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