Start Well:
Launching Projects and Teams for High Performance and Hyper-Productivity

A Few Definitions
High Performance Teams
Hyper-Productive Teams & Organizations
Successful, High Value Delivery

Agenda
Definitions
Starting Well
Agile Chartering

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.” gantthead.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
Craft the Team

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

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

Whole Team

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.”

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

Agile Chartering

Project Launch Activities

Collaborative Chartering
Kick-Off Workshops
Iteration 0
Boot Camps
Retrospective & FutureSpective
Open Space

Chartering the Product Team

Inspiration & Meaning
Create an alliance
Understand fit with organization

Purpose
Alignment
Context

A
P
C
Living Charter = Chartering

“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 TinCans 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.


* 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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