The Human Side of Agile Management: What It Takes to Grow Great Teams

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If You Missed This Talk at Agile2014

I gave this talk as a webinar just before the conference.

Get its 60-minute recording along with a detailed handout from:

http://bit.ly/1wqlNhM
The World Hasn’t Received the Memo

Manifesto for Agile Software Development

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.
4 Necessary Attributes of Agile Teams

- Having the sole purpose of delivering value to their customers and the business
- Being cross-functional and having all necessary skills represented (value definition + delivery)
- Having autonomy to meet their objectives
- Manifesting the Agile principles and values
Thinking of Successful Agile Teams You’ve Encountered…

A. What do you observe about them?
B. How do they act? What can they do?
C. What do they believe?
D. What is important to them?
E. What motivates them?
F. What are the keys to their success?
The Tuckman Model

Phase transition

Not a stable state!

forming

storming

norming

performing

performance

time
More Than Three Roles

Community
- Stakeholders
- Managers
- Sponsors

Agile Team
- Product Owner and Customers
- Agile Team Leader (ATL)
- Delivery Team
From the human perspective, how do you support your team?

What can you do to help them grow strong, stay strong, and deliver?
Good Old Management Practice

- Energize the team
- Demonstrate responsibility
- Motivate the members
- Articulate the vision and keep it alive
- Recognize and evangelize success
- Break down the silos and barriers
- Give feedback
- Set a high performance bar
- Coach for growth and change
- Keep people informed
- Optimize communication
- Grow people
- Be pressure valve for individual members
And Particularly in Agile…

- Empower the team / protect their autonomy
- Hold the team accountable
- Define team success
- Draw out team wisdom
- Facilitate consensus
- Manage behaviours that derail teams
- Support self-organization
- Lead change
- Maximize collaboration
- Allow focus
- Involve the team in determining their makeup
- Reframe failure as a learning opportunity
- Shield the team
What should you avoid doing?

What might achieve short term results, but hurt long term?
Bad Old Management Malpractice

- Micromanage
- Ignore / filter the team’s messages
- Abdicate responsibility
- Perpetuate silos ("job security")
- Treat normal setbacks as failures
- Expect greater performance than the team’s current evolutionary state allows
- Appear to have favourites
And Particularly in Agile…

- Resist change due to personal discomfort
- Decide unilaterally on the “right” course of action
- Make estimates, promises, and commitments on the team’s behalf
- Hire into the team without their involvement
- Undermine team commitments (e.g. iteration goals)
- Mistrust or second-guess the team
- Solve team problems that they could solve on their own
- Reward individual prowess
## Agile Managers & Leads: Skills & Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Curiosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being present</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change leadership</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social sensitivity</td>
<td>Community building</td>
<td>Fearlessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charisma</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
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Communication
Keys to Effective Communication

In each interaction, have clear:

1. Purpose
2. Presence
3. Rapport
4. Empathy

Example: If you’re heading into a 1-on-1 with a team member, how will you prepare for the conversation?
Coaching
Coaching is...

- offering options with support
- facilitating growth and change
- improving performance through awareness
### Possible Stances of Helpfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counsellor</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You do it; I will be your sounding board.”</td>
<td>“You did well; you can add <em>this</em> next time.”</td>
<td>“We will do it together and learn from each other.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Teacher/Mentor</th>
<th>Modeler</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You do it; I will attend to the process.”</td>
<td>“Here are some principles you can use to solve problems of this type.”</td>
<td>“I will do it; you watch and learn from me.”</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reflective Observer</th>
<th>Technical Adviser</th>
<th>Hands-on Expert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You do it; I will watch, and tell you what I see and hear.”</td>
<td>“I will answer your questions as you go along.”</td>
<td>“I will do it for you; I will tell you what to do.”</td>
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Based on “Choosing a Consulting Role” by Douglas Champion, David Kiel, and Jean McLendon

Responsibility for client’s growth

Responsibility for client’s results

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What do you need to have in order to coach well?
Facilitation

As a meeting’s facilitator, what are the critical factors you must identify clearly, or the meeting would likely fail?
Facilitation

As a meeting’s facilitator, you’re responsible for clarity of:

1. Purpose
2. Product (deliverable)
3. Agenda and Process
4. Decision-making rule
5. Participation guidelines / expectations / rules
6. Safety (as needed)
Learn This More Deeply


2. “Grow A Solid Agile Team”, 2-day experiential workshop with me on practical servant leadership in Agile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ Your role, responsibilities, and mind-set</th>
<th>✓ Coaching individuals and teams to grow</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Supporting the team’s successful evolution</td>
<td>✓ Facilitating team conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Powerful communication</td>
<td>✓ Agile for the long haul</td>
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November in San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Vancouver

GrowASolidAgileTeam.info