Webinar:
Staying Agile in a Global World:
Distributed Agile Software Development

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About IT communication

Jutta Eckstein has particular experience in applying agile processes within medium-sized to large mission-critical and often distributed projects.

By merging with her partner Nicolai Josuttis to “IT communication” the two of them belong to the few effectively independent experts for large IT systems. They regularly contribute to the success of mission-critical IT projects with their capability of combining technical aspects with the required organizational actions and processes.
About Computer Aid, Inc. (CAI)

- **CAI** is a global IT outsourcing firm currently managing active engagements with over 100 Fortune 1,000 companies and government agencies around the world.
- **CAI** is a leader in IT Best Practices for legacy support and new development application management.
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Effective Global Teams

“Creating an effective global team from multiple sites involves several key success factors:

building trust,
encouraging open communication,
building personal relationships,
and bridging cultural differences.”

Erran Carmel
(American Univ.)
Agile Principles

• Value system is based on the following principles:
  – Early and continuous delivery of valuable software
  – Welcome changing requirements
  – Deliver working software frequently
  – Business people and developers work together
  – Trust motivated individuals
  – Face-to-face conversation
  – Working software is the primary measure of progress
  – Promote sustainable development
  – Technical excellence and good design
  – Simplicity is essential
  – Self-organizing teams
  – Team reflection and adjustment
BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS VIA FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS
Trust Needs Touch

• Face-to-face should always be preferred
  – Frequency and duration depend on distance

• Meet face-to-face from time to time
  – More and longer at the beginning
    less frequent after a while
  – Couple of days every week
  – Regular for specific events
  – Rotating people over sites
Communication and Trust

- Trust is based on mutual respect

- Different meeting locations
  - Change who will be the host and who needs to travel

- Pay attention to the vocabulary
  - Nightly build
  - Morning roll call
  - Remote site
Trust Threshold

• If communication and mutual respect are ignored the trust threshold is within reach
  – Diverse in-person meetings prevent this
  – A trusted relationship typically lasts 8-12 weeks

• Threshold is close, if
  – People don’t take responsibility, but complain
  – Communication, i.e. emails are misunderstood

• Trust can be broken in an instant
  – It is harder to re-establish trust than to establish it the first time
SELF-ORGANIZING TEAMS SUPPORTED BY BUSINESS PEOPLE
Building Whole Teams

• Avoid the typical structure
  – According activities and know-how
    • Analysis in Germany, UI in India, middleware in Ireland...
    • Achievement of business value only at the end of the project

• Instead structure along domain areas
  – For ensuring the business value and the customer’s advantage
    • Feature team comprehends all necessary roles and know-how
  – User stories shouldn’t be split across teams
    • The user story defines the joint goal
Collocated versus Dispersed Feature Teams

- For dispersed teams:
  - Cross subteam communication is enabled by collocation
  - Eases conceptual integrity
  - Inner team communication is enforced by common goal
Supporting Whole Teams

• Product owner has to be collocated with his team
  – Might require travel effort to keep in contact with the real customer
  – Shadowing the product owner for spreading the knowledge

• One product owner might not be enough
  – Team of product owners with one lead product owner
BRIDGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BY FOCUSING ON SIMILARITIES
Cultural Differences

• “Expatriates“ and other face-to-face options create understanding

• Focus on similarities rather than on differences
  – Create a joint project culture

• A team needs
  – Common vision, rules, values
  – Mutual respect and trust
Social Connections

• Regular joint celebration of bigger deliveries

• Power of pictures
  – From each review and planning meeting
  – From each team member

• Sharing everyday’s life
  – Social information about each site

• Make traveling (more) enjoyable
  – How to get there
  – What to do there
Keep the Sites in Touch

• Ensure communication
  – Management / communication by flying around
  – Communication facilitator
    • Ombudsman
  – Different (key) people travel to different sites

• Ambassador at each site
  – Gain mutual respect
  – Ensure common culture
DELIVER WORKING SOFTWARE FREQUENTLY AND REFLECT ON HOW TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE
Development Cycles

• No need to prolong cycles
  – To steer in the right direction you need frequent feedback
  – Short cycles to reduce all risks

• Two-week iterations have been proven
  – Good balance between organizational overhead and risk reduction
  – Ensure delivery at the end of the iteration

• Same heartbeat across all sites
  – Holidays can require some adaptation
Iteration Review and Planning

• Each subteam individually plans the iteration
  – Guided by the coach and customer (product owner)
  – Outcomes are visible and accessible at prominent place

• For dispersed teams:
  – Get together in person from time to time
  – Use different communication media
    • Phone, webcam, NetMeeting (or the like), video, ...
  – Ensure review and planning is in the mid of the week
Retrospectives

- aka: Project experience workshops
  - At the end of a project
  - Regularly after every iteration
- Continuous learning
  - Learn from failure
  - Recognize and extract best practices
- Staged retrospectives
- Come together from time to time
- Use virtual facilities
Summary

• Communication is even more important in a global environment
• Only whole teams can take full responsibility
• Feature teams and product owner(s) ensure the business value
• Traveling is unavoidable
Many Thanks!

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  Distributed Agile Software Development

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- Continuous Real Time Visibility into
  - Projects
  - Key Performance Areas
- Ability to Create Custom Dashboards for Tracking/Visibility
- Ability to Conduct Periodic Risk Assessments
- Framework for Keeping Everyone:
  - Doing the Right Things
  - Making Right Decisions
Advanced Management Insight (AMI) is a Decision Support Tool

✓ Automated System:
  - FOR Decision makers
  - For Gathering / Analyzing Hard & Soft Data
  - Optimize Visibility & Control
  - Pro-Actively Manage Risk
The Value of Advanced Management Insight (AMI)

- Gather, Store & Leverage: Hard & Soft Data
  - Detailed Assessments & Questionnaires
  - Grounded in Best Practices
  - Each Developed by World Renowned Subject Matter Experts

- Variety of Different Applications; Apps Can Also Be Custom

- Simulates the Consultant Model
  - What questions to ask at what time (phase)
  - What data (information) to get from whom
  - What to do / What not to do
  - Within a framework of recommended practices or methods
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