

The Agilist

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Myth 8: The Scrum Master is a Junior Agile Coach

By Christiaan Verwijns & Barry Overeem. Visuals by Thea Schukken

bit.ly/scrum-myth-8

Scrum is intended as a simple, yet sufficient framework for complex product delivery. Scrum is not a one-size-fits-all solution, a silver bullet or a complete methodology. Instead, Scrum provides the minimal boundaries within which teams can self-organize to solve a complex problem using an empirical approach. This simplicity is its greatest strength, but also the source of many misinterpretations and myths surrounding Scrum. In this series of posts we will address the most common myths and misunderstandings.

Are you a Scrum Master and ready for the next step as Agile Coach? Do you need an Agile Coach to help facilitate organizational change while Scrum Masters focus on the Scrum Teams? Do you have experience as a Scrum Master and want to become Agile Coach with a 3-day course? Ever considered changing your job title to 'Agile Coach' because it nets you a higher salary?

These statements exemplify the myth that we intend to bust today; the idea that the Scrum Master is a Junior Agile Coach. Or more simply; that the Agile Coach tends to larger organisational issues while Scrum Masters focus on Scrum Teams. In a way, busting this myth has been our mission over the past years. And one that we'll continue to pursue, considering just how tenacious it is. We've written several articles, spoken at seminars, provided trainings and facilitated workshops; all related to explaining the purpose of the Scrum Master. In this blog post we'll share our view on this topic, and why this is a myth that requires very much to be busted.

This myth concerns us for a number of reasons:

- It is based on a very poor and **incomplete understanding** of what it is that a Scrum Master actually does and should do according to the Scrum Framework;
- It positions the Agile Coach as being higher in a traditional hierarchical structure. Especially within organisations that are used to **'vertical growth paths'**. The Scrum Master as the junior, Agile Coach as the medior and the Enterprise Coach as the senior;
- Consultancy firms and training agencies encourage this way of thinking because it's easy to match with their increasing hourly rates and expensive training programs. **Notice the contradiction** with the services these organisations provide: advising clients to think in 'horizontal structures' that promote the self-organizing

capabilities of the teams, yet promote a ‘vertical structure’ because it works well from a commercial- and marketing-perspective;

This myth leads to artificial boundaries between what Scrum Masters and Agile Coaches do. The Scrum Master is only “allowed” to act on team level. Therefore creating the necessary Scrum-friendly culture is far more difficult, causing the change for a successful Scrum adoption decrease. The Agile Coach is expected to “implement” the necessary organizational changes, but fails because of limited experiences “from the trenches” and not knowing how to deal with “outside in” change management.

Busting the Myth

Busting today’s myth is actually remarkably easy, and requires only a simple reading of the Scrum Guide¹. As has been the case with every myth we’ve addressed so far. The Scrum Guide offers a clear description of the services that a Scrum Master provides to the Development Team, the Product Owner and the entire organization². This includes coaching the Development Team in self-organization and cross-functionality, helping the Product Owner find techniques for effective Product Backlog management and supporting the organization in delivering high-value products through the empirical process established through Scrum. To make this happen, the Scrum Master works with other Scrum Masters, Product Owners and people within the organization.

¹ scrumguides.org

² scrumguides.org/scrum-guide.html#team-sm

The 8 Stances of a Scrum Master

Another useful perspective on the role of the Scrum Master is offered in the white paper “The 8 stances of a Scrum Master³”. It captures the various responsibilities of the Scrum Master in eight stances that are closely linked to the Scrum Guide. The Scrum Master is...

- An **Impediment Remover** that helps resolve issues that are blocking the team’s progress, taking into account the self-organising capabilities of the Development Team;
- A **Facilitator** that sets the stage and provides clear boundaries in which the team can collaborate. This includes facilitation of the Scrum events to ensure they’ll achieve the desired outcome and – most importantly – that the empirical process is optimized;
- A **Coach** that helps individuals and groups to continuously improve in how they deliver valuable outcomes as a team or as an organization;
- A **Teacher** that ensures that Scrum and relevant techniques are well-understood and enacted;
- A **Servant Leader** that creates environments where teams can work effectively with stakeholders to create valuable outcomes;
- A **Manager** that is responsible for managing (true) impediments, eliminating waste, managing the process, managing the team’s health, managing the boundaries of

³ scrum.org/resources/8-stances-scrum-master

self-organisation, and managing the culture;

- A **Change Agent** that helps to enable a culture in which Scrum Teams can flourish – on every level of the organization;
- A **Mentor** that transfers agile knowledge and experience to the team.

Scrum Masters should be aware of these stances and its diversity, knowing when and how to apply them, depending on situation and context. All with the purpose of helping people understand the spirit of Scrum.

Dealing with “senior” challenges

“A good Scrum Master helps a Scrum Team survive in an organisation’s culture. A great Scrum Master helps change the culture so Scrum Teams can thrive.” – Geoff Watts

Both the Scrum Guide and the ‘8 Stances of the Scrum Master’ inform us about the challenges of a Scrum Master:

- How to help people transition from plan-based approaches towards an empirical process that does more justice to the complexity of the work they do?
- How to facilitate transparency, inspection and adaptation in a traditional ‘closed’ organisation?
- How to coach organisations in truly collaborating with their Scrum Teams?

- How to manage the boundaries of self-organisation in control-driven organisations?
- How to offer a “safe to fail & learn” environment where experimentation?
- How to promote a culture where Scrum Teams can thrive?

Being a Scrum Master means dealing with these difficult challenges and influence the organisation’s culture in such a way that...

- Team success is valued over individual success;
- Continuous improvement and experimentation are promoted;
- “Agile contracts” are encouraged;
- Stable team composition is supported;
- Behaviour is rewards, not individual achievements;

It’s up to the Scrum Master to help create this Scrum-friendly culture. Thankfully, the Scrum Master is in a perfect position to do this, because (s)he can enable change from the inside out.

“The Scrum Master enables change from the inside out.”

Being part of a Scrum Team, the Scrum Master knows exactly what needs to be changed and why this change is necessary. They help teams uncover the impediments that are holding them back and the other ways by which the organization can deliver (even) more value with Scrum. This puts them in an excellent position to work with **HR-departments** to find practices that are better aligned with Scrum. Or to help a **Sales-departments** move from

‘fixed-price / fixed-scope’-contracts to contracts that are more Agile-friendly. Or to increase collaboration between Scrum Teams and **stakeholders**. Working with the **other Scrum Masters**, they ignite the necessary organisational changes by influencing the system from the inside out. From the perspective of the Scrum Team, the Scrum Master truly is a ‘Change Facilitator’.

“The chances of successful Scrum adoption will increase drastically when you consider your Scrum Master as the true “inside out” change facilitators!”

When organizations choose to implement an empirical process primarily through Scrum, there should be no need for Agile Coaches. Instead, Scrum Masters should be enabled and supported to promote the empirical process on all levels of the organisation. If they can, and if they do, no other roles are necessary to help organizations generate valuable outcomes with Scrum.

“When organizations choose to work with Scrum, there should be no need for Agile Coaches.”

Should we fire all Agile Coaches?

No, you shouldn’t. By busting the myth that Scrum Masters are Junior Agile Coaches, we do not mean to say that Agile Coaches are of no value. We do mean to say that the need for Agile Coaches diminishes greatly when Scrum Masters are allowed to perform their intended role. We also mean to say that the hierarchical differences that we often see between Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters is based on a (very) poor understanding of Scrum.

Where Scrum Masters use an “inside out” approach, Agile Coaches use an “outside in” approach. Obviously we prefer the “inside out” approach to drive organisational change. But both can add value to the organisation from an organisational change point of view. They only have a different perspective on how to create a Scrum-friendly environment (if that’s the goal of the Agile Coach).

Using an “outside in” approach can definitely work, but it’s incredibly difficult. It’s our experience that many (external) Agile Coaches offer little value in this regard. They are powerless to affect change and have a very superficial understanding of what goes on inside the Scrum Teams (where the value is being generated). They are not part of the team, lack the necessary support from management and don’t have the kind of extensive experience that is needed to drive change from “the outside in”. Furthermore, many Agile Coaches barely even have experience with Scrum or as a Scrum Master. Yet coaching Scrum Masters is frequently a part of their daily work.

“The reality is that most Agile Coaches are junior Scrum Masters.”

So our advice for organisations is:

- **Focus on enabling Scrum Masters** to facilitate change from “the inside out”. Support the Scrum Masters in creating great teams that build awesome products. Help them build the experience and the toolkit to do this, together.
- **Get rid of ‘Seagull Coaches’** that fly in, make a lot of noise, crap all over the place and fly on to a next

customer, leaving a big mess behind;

- If you really want to hire an Agile Coach in addition to the Scrum Masters already present within the organization, make sure that they have **real, proven experience in affecting change “outside-in”**. Make sure they focus their efforts on helping the teams and the Scrum Masters drive change themselves. Don't create the artificial distinction between “change on the management level” (by Agile Coaches) and “change on the team level” (by Scrum Masters);

What if we use Kanban/XP/DevOps?

Scrum is just one framework to improve organisational agility and to create engaging workplaces where people work with stakeholders to build awesome products. As Geoff Watts describes: *“Scrum aims to harness the power of self-organising, autonomous, engaged teams who take responsibility for delivery and collaborate directly with their customers.”*

Scrum is not a goal in itself. No matter what kind of framework or methodology you choose, it will involve organizational change to some degree. The people that are in the best position to effect this change are part of the teams that are doing the work. They may have titles like Scrum Master, Kanban God, XP Dude, DevOps Guru or no title at all: we don't really care.

“Organisational change should be driven from the inside-out by people that are truly part of the teams.”

Closing

In this blog post we've busted the myth that “The Scrum Master is a junior Agile Coach”. Effective change is driven from “the inside-out”. The Scrum Master – being part of the Scrum Team – is in a better position to facilitate this change than an (external) Agile Coach. This is also how the Scrum Guide intended the role of the Scrum Master.

When organizations choose to implement an empirical process primarily through Scrum, there should be almost no need for Agile Coaches. Instead, Scrum Masters should be enabled and supported to promote the empirical process on all levels of the organisation. If they can, and if they do, no other roles are necessary to help organizations generate valuable outcomes through Scrum.

What do you think about this myth? Do you agree? What are your lessons learned?

Christiaan Verwijs & Barry Overeem
The Liberators - Unleashing Organisational Superpowers

Want to separate Scrum from the myths? Join our Professional Scrum Master⁴ or Scrum Master Advanced⁵ courses (in Dutch or English). We guarantee a unique, eye-opening experience that is 100% free of PowerPoint, highly interactive and serious-but-fun. Check out our public courses (Dutch) or contact us for in-house or English courses.

⁴ barryovereem.com/psm-training

⁵ barryovereem.com/scrum-master-advanced

Mass Incompetency In Business: The Way We Promote People Is Dead Wrong

By *The Corporate Rebels*

corporate-rebels.com/peter-principle

In 1969, Laurence J. Peter described an interesting organizational phenomenon. The phenomenon came to be known as “The Peter Principle”. According to Peter himself the principle goes like this: “In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence”.

While the book Peter wrote in 1969 was a satire rather than solid evidence, a recent study published in Harvard Business Review⁶ showed that, sadly, in today’s workplaces the Peter Principle is very much alive.

The Peter Principle

Let’s first explain the Peter Principle in more detail. Imagine you work as a sales employee in an organization. You’re doing a really good job and you’re hitting all your targets. Your high performance is noticed. You are rewarded with a promotion to a senior sales role. In this role you do well again, so you get another promotion.

Now, you are a sales manager. Your new job is quite different. You’re not making sales—the thing you are so good at. Now you’re suddenly expected to manage salespeople. In this new job you figure out that managing people is quite a different ballgame, and not something you’re particularly good at.

All of a sudden your rapid climb up the corporate ladder grinds to a painful, stressful halt. If your current performance is not deserving of a promotion, you are stuck in a position that demands more than you can give. You’ve reached your “level of incompetence”.

Laurence J. Peter: “Look around you where you work, and pick out the people who have reached their level of incompetence. You will see that in every hierarchy the cream rises until it sours.”

You see what happens? The organization loses a good salesperson and gains a bad manager. A person is promoted to their level of incompetence: a clear lose-lose situation.

As painful as this might sound (for both the individual and the organization!), it happens all too often in today’s workplaces. What Peter vividly discussed in his 1969 book was recently researched⁷ by three professors from Yale, MIT, and the University of Minnesota.

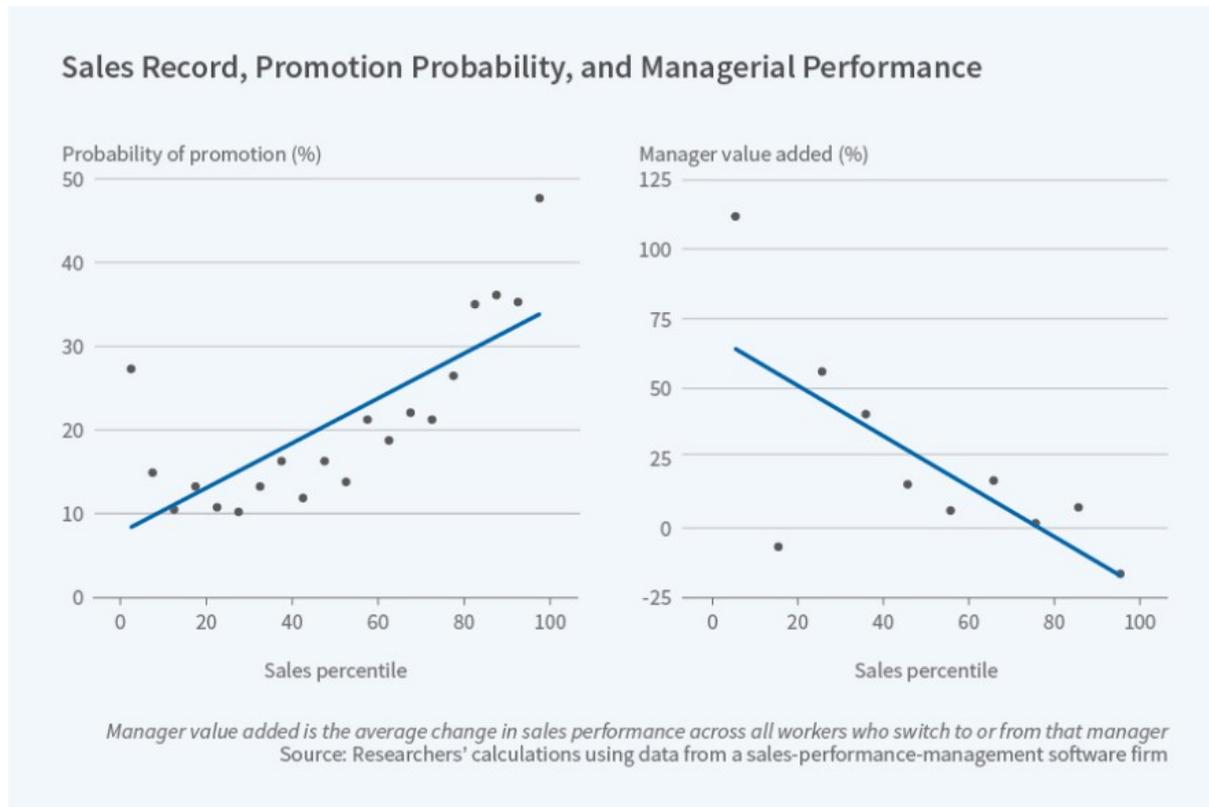
Study

Alan Benson, Danielle Li, and Kelly Shue studied 214 firms in the US and analyzed the performance of their sales forces from 2005 to 2011. In the study were a total of 6,515 managers, 53,035 subordinates. A total of 1,531 promotions were researched.

The image below shows the outcomes of the study.

⁶ bit.ly/research-incompetence

⁷ nber.org/papers/w24343



The image on the left clearly shows a correlation between sales performance and the chance to get promoted into a management function. At the same time the image on the right shows that sales performance is negatively correlated with the performance as a sales manager.

The conclusion from their study? A quote from the authors says it all: “In our data [...] better salespeople ended up being worse managers.” The study clearly indicates the Peter Principle is very much alive. The big question is: how to overcome it?

Defying the Peter Principle

Contrary to most traditional organizations, many progressive organizations we’ve visited over the past 2.5 years have found ways to defy the Peter Principle.

They have put in place radically different structures to make sure they

don’t end up with an organization filled with people at their level of incompetence. Here are some of these structures.

1. Change Promotion Criteria

The Peter Principle is alive because promotions are mostly based on an employee’s current performance. This doesn’t make any sense as the research clearly shows: there’s a negative correlation between current job performance and the added value of that person as a manager.

Progressive organizations therefore change the promotion criteria. They focus on assessing other characteristics of candidates that are better predictors of managerial success.

Characteristics such as collaboration experience, leadership traits, emotional intelligence and communication skills are much better predictors, and therefore much more valuable in

predicting who will add the most value as a manager.

2. Evaluate Your Manager

To fight the Peter Principle, it is important to understand where in the organization there's poor leadership. Strangely, many traditional organizations seem to think the best way to judge a manager's leadership is by asking the boss of that manager.

But wouldn't it make much more sense to ask the people who are led by the manager to assess leadership potential? Many progressive organizations certainly think so.

They abolish top-down performance evaluations and replace them with bottom-up evaluations. And let's be clear, we're not talking about those 360 feedback forms that you fill out and never hear of again.

We're talking about proper bottom-up evaluations of managers that are openly discussed within the team before taking necessary actions.

Bucket List company *UKTV*⁸ introduced bottom-up evaluations to ensure "zero tolerance for bad leadership". They even made all these performance evaluations transparent to the employees.

CEO Darren Childs: "In order to fight bad leadership, we need to know if and where there is bad leadership. Once we know it, we can do something about it. We can either train these people to become better leaders, or they can be put in a position that better fits their talents. This is how we work on our zero tolerance for bad leadership."

⁸ corporate-rebels.com/uktv

3. Select Your Manager

Some take it even further: they let employees select their managers. Swiss IT company *Haufe Umantis*⁹, for example, democratically elects all its leadership positions on a yearly basis (all the way up to the CEO).

But also manufacturing companies like *FAVI*¹⁰ and *Haier*¹¹ let employees select their own leaders to make sure they are good leaders, not just great specialists who were promoted from the top.

4. Multiple Career Paths

Another common sense, but little practiced, approach to defy the Peter Principle is to create multiple career paths. Where in traditional organizations the only way to get promoted is to move into a management position, in progressive organizations you can get promoted in other directions too.

For example, if you're a damn good IT Developer you don't necessarily have to move into a management position to "get a promotion". With multiple career paths, you can 'move up the ladder' on a technical track that allows you to develop your skills and talents.

Importantly, reward structures need to be aligned with this, allowing specialists to get the rewards and status they deserve without having to become a manager. Multiple career paths are offered by companies like *Spotify*¹² and *Happy Ltd*¹³ to prevent the rise of mass incompetency in their organizations.

⁹ corporate-rebels.com/haufe-umantis

¹⁰ corporate-rebels.com/zobrist

¹¹ corporate-rebels.com/haier

¹² corporate-rebels.com/spotify-1

¹³ corporate-rebels.com/happy-henry

Creativity an Innovation Economy

By the
Agile Business Consortium

We live in an innovation economy. Automation, artificial intelligence, digitalisation – this all means that the skills that matter now are those that differentiate us from machines, and that's our creativity. The seeds of success lie not so much around efficiency but where the next good idea is coming from.

One of the principles of business agility is that good ideas can come from anywhere in an organisation. It's often the people on the ground that have the best visibility of what can be improved, so someone working in the post room may come up with a more practical solution to an existing problem than someone in the design department for instance.

Encouraging a flow of ideas

If new ideas are the currency that keeps an organisation strong in today's fast changing world, what then can organisations do to feed that ideas flow and keep all their employees thinking creatively?

It turns out that, even though we spend most of our waking hours thinking with effort, over 40% of our creative ideas come when we give ourselves a break. We've all either experienced or known people who've had those eureka moments in the shower, the bath, or when mowing the lawn. In fact, our very own Agile Business Consortium is the result of founder Ed Holt's eureka moment in the shower!

However, studies have shown that this creativity results not from these moments themselves but what happened beforehand. Encouraging productive thinking and creativity is a bit like developing a muscle. If you take on too much, over exercise, or lift weights that are too heavy, you get exhausted and you may end up injuring yourself. Sustainable muscle strength only comes when you exercise in small bouts, gradually building up the strength needed to achieve your goal. The same logic can be applied to an Agile approach to problems and developments that may otherwise be overwhelming. By starting with small and manageable chunks, we build more understanding of the problem, and our own and our team's ability to develop solutions.

Our greatest moments of creativity come when we've been focusing hard on a problem, and then we take a rest. While we occupy ourselves in another way, it seems our brains continue to process and try and solve the problem without us! It could even be that the reflection and retrospective that follows an iteration causes enough pause to release creativity.

Supporting innovation and growth

In an innovation economy, organisations need to support employees to develop and grow. This means working in a sustainable and iterative way. Brad Stulberg, author of *Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout, and Thrive with the New Science of Success* writes, "Take on too much too soon, without allowing enough time to reflect and adapt, and the organization is likely to struggle—perhaps even fail. But if that same organization never takes on new

challenges nor consciously evolves, it will likely get beaten out by the competition, too.”

Encouraging innovation and creative thinking is now essential for organisational survival, and we need to find the best way to evolve our ideas and our developments. Could Agile businesses have the answer?

The Agile Business Consortium is the leading not-for-profit professional body for promoting and enabling business agility worldwide. We work with partners and alliances to promote Agile practices, and to develop, curate and share Agile resources with the wider world. The direct descendent of the DSDM Consortium, we encourage an agnostic and client-centred approach to the use of Agile methods and frameworks. For more information on the Agile Business Consortium, please visit agilebusiness.org

The Agile Business Consortium is the organiser behind the Agile Business Conference, a major two-day event which provides a single forum for everyone interested in the application of Agile or moving towards an Agile way of working. Now in its 16th year, our event is the longest running Agile Conference in the world. This unique gathering of influential Agile practitioners and leaders also brings together senior professionals predominantly from the UK and Europe, including C-suite executive, directors and managers.

This year our theme is **Creating Generation Agile** where we will be looking at how we can prepare a generation to be successful in an uncertain world. Looking at the principles of Agile, we will explore this

through the lenses of People, Strategy and Delivery

Come and join us in Central London on 26 & 27 September 2018. For tickets and for more information, visit agileconference.org

Agile Business Consortium
agilebusiness.org

Free Team Coaching in London

from
Tomasz Kropiewnicki

I'm starting my Organisation Relationship Systems Coaching certification (ORSC¹⁴) process with CCR global (ICF Accredited), and I'm quite excited about the journey ahead. I'm doing a lot of coaching work with the bank I'm with, but unfortunately, I'm unable to use it for supervision (feedback from my mentors) due to the strict information security guidelines.

If you and your team are interested in reflecting on how you work together or maybe you are in a partnership that's going through a change, and you would like to explore it with a professional coach (yes I'm taking personal partnerships too) don't hesitate to reach out. Drop me a line at coaching@starglider.consulting and I'll be happy to have a couple of sessions with you in exchange for letting me use them in supervision.

We can have our sessions in person in London or remotely over zoom.

¹⁴ crrglobal.com/orsc.html

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2 days exploring the Nexus framework to address the challenges of multiple Scrum teams on 1 product. bit.ly/2JWUfyX

Retrospective Format: Seeing the System With the WADE Matrix

By Zach Bonaker & Derek Wade

bit.ly/seeing-the-system

While attending an open space conference in St. Louis¹⁵ a few years back, I convened a session called “Visualize All the Things!” In the session, participants were invited to make use of a giant wall next to the marketplace -- and covered in whiteboard paint -- to draw, illustrate, and reveal all the ways we can visualize information. Each person took a turn to introduce the visualization technique, explain the purpose and utility, and answer questions.

Among the many interesting contributions was a retrospective format contributed by Derek Wade¹⁶. As he explained his design, how it incorporates elements of “gather data” and “generate insights” seamlessly, and tips for facilitating it, the session participants were quick to snap pictures. One person enthusiastically exclaimed, “Oh, I am SO using that at my next retrospective!”

Since learning the technique, Derek’s retrospective format has been my “go-to” method for introducing to new facilitators, teams, and people who have never experienced a truly effective inspect and adapt activity. **The design makes it simple to facilitate, enjoyable for participants, and opens people's eyes to the cause-effect relationship of the bigger system (beyond the team).**

¹⁵ stlagileopenspace.com

¹⁶ derekwwade.net/blog

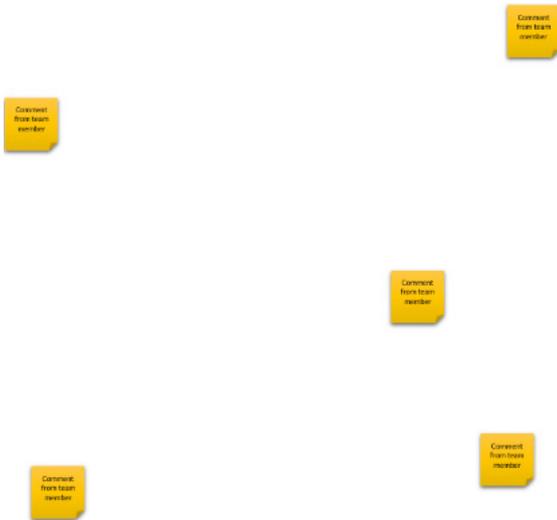
Have I fired up your curiosity? Great! Here's how it works, including insights and facilitation tips from Derek himself!

The Format

W)HAT -- Capture Events Without Judgement

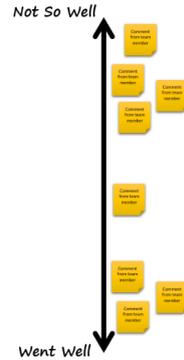
When the team is ready to begin (preferably after an exercise to set the stage or focus attention), ask the participants to write down “notable events” without introducing judgement.

When people have finished writing (or, if using a timebox, time has expired), ask everyone to place their stickies on the wall. Encourage the group to observe and read others' notes, but without comment.



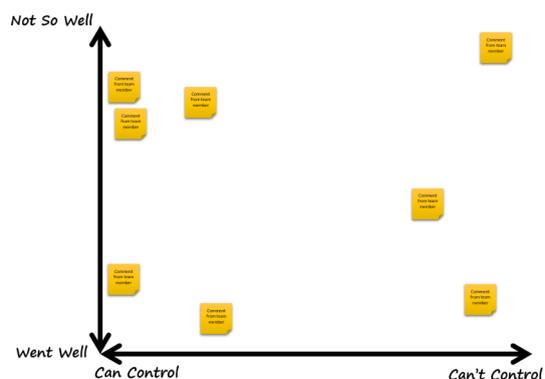
A)NALOG -- Introduce Evaluation & Relative Weighting

On the wall, create a vertical (y) axis. At the bottom, place the label, “went well.” At the top, the label, “not so well.” Instruct the participants to place their sticky notes along the vertical (y) axis according to the labels.



e.g., for something that went really well, a team member might place it all the way at the bottom of the axis. For something that was a minor inconvenience, she might place it more in the middle, or leaning towards the top, of the axis.

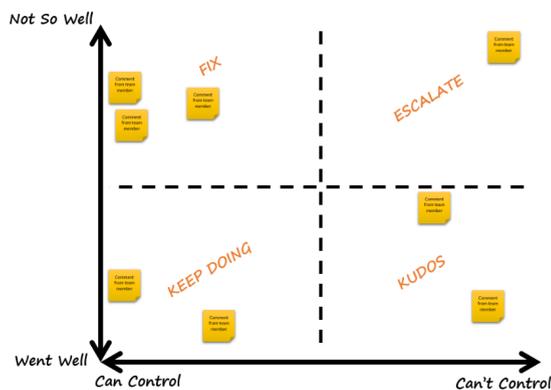
Once the team has an understanding of the content on the wall, add a second dimension to the picture. At the bottom of the vertical (y) axis, create a horizontal (x) axis. On the left side of the axis, place the label “can control.” At the right end of the axis, place the label “can't control.” Introduce the new dimension to the team and instructions: for our experiences together this sprint, some things may be fully in our control. For others, we may feel helpless. Without changing the vertical position, move the sticky along the horizontal (x) axis to indicate whether the team believes they can control, or cannot control, the item.



D)IGITAL -- Convert the Relative Classifications Into Categories

When the team is satisfied, create a new layer for the team in the form of a 2x2 grid. Using your available materials, divide the picture into equal horizontal and vertical parts. Label the 2x2 grid:

- Top Left - “Fix”
- Bottom Left - “Keep Doing”
- Top Right - “Escalate”
- Bottom Right - “Thank the Org” or “Kudos”



Facilitate the new picture with the team and invite them to discuss further.

E)XECUTE -- Take the Right Action

At this point, the team has reached a place where they have collected important data about their experience working together, discussed the impacts, and generated insights about their work environment. Here, the team is in a good place to begin exploring what they want to do. Perhaps they want to share ideas for fixing a problem in their control? Maybe they feel strongly for escalating and influencing an issue beyond their control?

You may find it's simple and intuitive to have teams dot vote¹⁷ or, if a decider protocol¹⁸ exists, simply ask the team to act on what they have the most energy for. Once a team has identified what they want to experiment with or adapt, a force-field analysis¹⁹ is a great way to elicit actions.

And sometimes, this method resonates with people so well, ideas for improvement are simply evoked naturally in the discussion. For more ideas to assist people with action after using this technique, including helpful tips from Derek, see the full article available online: bit.ly/seeing-the-system

Zach Bonaker

Agile Coach based in California

Don't hire a coach if you need a consultant

By Raghavendra (Raghav) Mithare

bit.ly/dont-hire-coach

Smith: "Well, you have a good experience of coaching and working with big brands. Will you be interested in coming on board and coaching our development team and management?"

Anna: "Sure, can you please share some more detail about the role?"

Smith: "I'm creating a community of practice for Business Excellence, formed by a team of coaches, You will be training and coaching the people on the floor on best practices, processes and

¹⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dot-voting

¹⁸ mccarthyshow.com/online

¹⁹ bit.ly/force-field-analysis

tools. Especially, I want you bring your expertise and solve the efficiency issues raised by the senior leadership. By the way, do you have experience of coaching senior leadership ?”

Anna: “Yes, Thanks for giving the background about the role but I think you need a good consultant not a coach”

These days many companies are busy hiring coaches for various requirements though there is a real requirements for coaches, many companies are not clear about the role. There is a need to build awareness about coaching and its benefits.

“ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential.”

The focus of professional coaching is on

- setting goals
- creating outcomes and
- managing personal change

The skills required for coaching have significant overlap with skills required for other personal or organisational support professions like mentoring, therapy and consulting.

Mentoring

A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counselling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counselling, and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and reaching their own objectives.

Models like *People Capability Maturity Model*²⁰ have given frameworks to implement organisational level mentoring programs.

Therapy

Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual’s emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways.

In contrast to coaching, therapy focuses on the past whereas coaching is focused towards future, based on self initiated change process.

Consulting

Individuals or organisations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will diagnose problems and prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions.

Peter Block²¹ mentions in his book *Flawless Consulting*²² the definition of consultant as

“a consultant is person in a position to have some influence over an individual, a group, or an organisation, but who has no direct power to make changes or implement programs.”

The credit for starting consulting as a profession goes to Marvin Bower, founder of *McKinsey & Company*, who

²⁰ bit.ly/p-cmm

²¹ peterblock.com

²² bit.ly/flawless-consulting

is considered as father of Management Consulting. He insisted on impeccable professional standards in substance, ethics, and style; that gave the credibility and an identity to the profession of consulting.

Organisations like *International Coach Federation (ICF)*²³ are doing their best to make the profession of coaching to maintain its credibility and value in the industry through developing and enforcing code of ethics and *Standards of Ethical Conduct*²⁴ for the community of professional coaches.

In the HBR research report on coaching, "What Can Coaches Do for You?"²⁵ by Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman.

The management guru Ram Charan says

"The industry badly needs a leader who can define the profession, the way Marvin Bower did for management consulting."

References

- [International Coach Federation - coachfederation.org](http://coachfederation.org)
- *Flawless Consulting* - Peter Block
- *What Coaches can do?* - Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman

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²³ coachfederation.org

²⁴ coachfederation.org/code-of-ethics

²⁵ bit.ly/coaches-do

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