Distributed Agile

8 ways to get more from your distributed teams

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Presentation Structure

• Introductions
• What does ‘distributed’ mean?
• The 8 ways
• Further information
• Close and questions.

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Introductions

• Chief Executive of KRC
• KRC is a pioneering company at the forefront of agile thinking
• Specialising in all things agile (PRINCE2 Agile, Scrum, Kanban, Lean Startup, DSDM, AgilePM, everything!)
• Consultancy, training, coaching and mentoring
• Focusing on improving Agile capability for any organisation
• 20 years of (agile) experience
• Detailed knowledge of PRINCE2 with agile and the DSDM Framework
• IAF Accredited / APMG Certified Facilitator
• Author of ‘Agile Project Management’ (TSO)
• Voted ‘Most Valuable Agile Player’ UK Agile Awards.

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What does ‘distributed’ mean?

- Not everyone is in the same place!
- Different floor?
- Different office?
- Different city?
- Different country?
- Different continent?
- Different time-zone?

...offshore, nearshore, not sure?

...and guess what the No.1 problem is?
1: Invest in teamwork and collaboration

• Needs to work in several areas:
  – Within each team
    > Is it a collaborative culture?
    > What is the prevailing ‘way of working’?
  – Between the teams
    > Is it a collaborative culture?
    > What is the prevailing ‘way of working’?
  – At least 6 areas to look at! (a 3x2 grid)

• Level of trust?
  ‘Yes’ needs to mean YES
  ...otherwise say ‘not sure’.
2: Improve communication

- Commonly understood as a problem
- Needs to be attacked
- Use WebEx, Webcams/Skype etc., ...whatever it takes
- Face-to-face is the best way to interact
- Simulate this as best you can
- Avoid/reduce the written word
- Phone is better than documents and email
- Go visual
- Travel - create a bond.

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3: Get into ‘Ping-Pong’

- Avoid the coding factory model
- Interaction adds a lot of value \(-1 + 1 = 3\)
- The ‘techies’ hold the key to what is possible …but you need to avoid long rallies!
- Key expressions:
  - ‘I am not sure’
  - ‘what about this?’
  - ‘what are you trying to achieve?’
- It is a 2-way street.

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4: Create a cadence of frequent deliveries

- You can run but you can’t hide!
- Several little ‘moments of truth’
- This gives you control
- Timebox everything
  - Load in contingency
  - Hit your deadlines
  - …or learn from the failures
- Avoid the ‘big reveal’
- If you are going to fail - fail fast!

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5: Be aware that Agile has its limits

- User stories are fine but only if written well
  ...and backed up by other documentation
- Scrum is only useful for delivering ‘product’
  ...you cannot ‘manage’ a project with Scrum
- The Product Owner role is limited on complex projects
  ...you need to create a blended view of the business
  ...the detailed view and the wider view.

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6: Get off to a good start

- What is the big picture?
- Everyone needs to see this
- Get well written requirements
- Build in the flexibility (‘priorities’) that agile needs
- Go slow early on - to go fast later
- Don't panic into starting when this is not complete.

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7: Assess your tools and the environment

- Where is the code?
- How do we add to it?
- How much TDD and CI are we using with software?
- Away from the code...
- ...what other tools are we using to do the work?
  - for collaboration, communication
  - for requirements, modelling
  - for managing the project
- Importantly,
  never let tools drive the process!

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8: Always inspect and adapt

- Do this relentlessly
- Little by little, hone the process
- For every error or problem - what caused it?
  …but importantly what was the ‘root cause’
- Bi-weekly retrospectives are a very good start
  …but you can go further - ideally ‘real-time’!
- Is this at the heart of agile?
  …very probably!

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In summary - focus on these areas

1: Invest in teamwork and collaboration
2: Improve communication
3: Get into ‘Ping-Pong’
4: Create a cadence of frequent deliveries
5: Be aware that Agile has its limits
6: Get off to a good start
7: Assess your tools and the environment
8: Always inspect and adapt

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Further Information / Next Steps

- Krc run monthly webinars on a variety of agile topics:

- KRC help organisations with their transition to Agile
- KRC offers a variety of agile consultancy, training and support services
- Public courses in AgilePM, Scrum, SAFe, Kanban:
- Distributed Agile Fundamentals course (2 days, on-site)

- White paper is available (6000 words) plus today’s slides at:
  - [http://agilekrc.com/agile-downloads](http://agilekrc.com/agile-downloads)
- Join ‘The DSDM Group’ on LinkedIn
- Follow us on Twitter or look for us on YouTube @agilekrc
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Thank you!

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