

Deciding About Agile at Mighty Jaxx

Background

Mighty Jaxx operations can be broken into these primary functions, roughly in this order:

1. Produce 2D renderings of new product ideas
2. Use 3D renderings and drawings as input to producing molds for manufacturing
3. Production
4. Distribution
5. Marketing

Writing Prompt 1

Which of these Mighty Jaxx business functions do you think could benefit the most from implementing scrum/sprint methodologies? Explain specifically how scrum/sprint could operate for this function. Comment briefly on why kanban is not the best fit for this particular function. (You don't have to agree with the decisions described in the case.)

Because each product is designed by an independent creator or artist, who retains full creative control over the project, implementing scrum/sprint methodologies could benefit the “Produce 2D renderings of new product ideas” the most. Because each creator may have different creative processes or styles, and by using scrum/sprint, the product design processes can be broken into smaller and more flexible tasks that are best tailored to each creator’s preferences. In addition, the design process also requires the most amount of cross-functional collaboration, scrum/sprint methodology is known for promoting collaboration and transparency between teams, which will certainly make the design process more streamlined. Kanban, on the other hand, may not be the best fit because it is more focused on visualizing and managing workflow, rather than generating new ideas. Kanban will work better when there is a clear and well-defined process. But for processes that focus more on the creative side of things, I’m not seeing enough benefits to justify kanban.

Writing Prompt 2

Which of these Mighty Jaxx business functions do you think could benefit the most from implementing kanban methodologies? Explain specifically how kanban could operate for this function with a list of the possible columns in the kanban board. Comment briefly on why scrum/sprint is not the best fit for this particular function. (You don't have to agree with the decisions described in the case.)

The “Distribution function” could benefit the most from implementing kanban. A kanban board is very beneficial to visualize the flow of products through the distribution process, from the warehouse to the end customer. Possible columns in the kanban board could include “Waiting for Shipping” “In Transit” and “Delivered” Kanban board can be used to track the status of each

product and identify any bottlenecks or delays in the distribution channel. Scrum/sprint may not be the best fit for this function because distribution is best to be kept as a continuous process rather than small sub-tasks or iterations that scrum/sprint tends to work with.

Writing Prompt 3

Mighty Jaxx CEO Jackson Aw has hired you as a consultant to advise him on his decision making about a move to agile in his organization. One of the specializations in your consultancy is the impact that cognitive biases can have on effective business decisions. Based on your knowledge of the many types of cognitive biases, select one that you think could be a problematic trap for Jackson's thinking. In 1–2 short paragraphs that you could email to him,

- Define in general terms the bias that you want to caution him about. (He may not have heard of it before.)
- Describe a possible substantive error/problem that could occur in this particular decision if no attention is paid to this type of bias.
- Suggest a step or action he could take to avoid falling into the trap of this bias.

Dear Mr. Aw,

As your consultant, I want to caution you about the potential impact of confirmation bias on your decision-making. Confirmation bias is the tendency to acknowledge information that supports one's existing beliefs and ignore information that contradicts them. In the context of your decision-making, this bias could lead you to overlook important data that challenges your current assumptions, leading to decisions based on incomplete or biased views. To avoid falling victims to this bias, I suggest you actively seek out outside intelligence for alternative viewpoints since your own management team may share common blind spots with you and is less likely to challenge your decisions, which could turn your meeting room into an echoing chamber that confirms your biased decisions. You are already seeking advice from outside consultants which is an excellent first step. I want to also encourage you to take a more open-minded approach to team building and assign a potential devil's advocate role to promote diverse perspectives, and to consider conducting "pre-mortem" exercises to identify potential blind spots or risks in your decision-making.

I'd be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Best,
Winter