

Can(Evelyn) Shen
Professor Larisa Leventon
ENGN 2125 Spring 2023
Assignment 10

Deciding About Agile at Mighty Jaxx

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.)

Scrum/Sprint is a simple and agile method to support collaboration among team members developing complex products with flexibility. Thus, of all the business functions that Mighty Jaxx has, marketing would benefit most from implementing the scrum/sprint methodologies. Since Mighty Jaxx's collectible toys products are consumer-facing, it is essential to collect customer feedback and improve marketing campaigns and materials based on that. Therefore, creating a feedback loop iteratively improving the marketing contents based on customer response can increase customer conversion for Mighty Jaxx.

Before, the marketing process for Mighty Jaxx works as this: first the team would update images and information with products of a newly launched product on the website, then send out announcements to collector fans on social media like Facebook or Instagram, while also sending out pre-order invitations via email to past customers. With Scrum/Sprint, the marketing team can collect customer response rate to their marketing material to evaluate whether the marketing campaign is successful, and iteratively improve the marketing materials. When operating under Scrum/Sprint framework, the process of works as the following:

- First, the product owner creates the product backlog of the marketing campaigns for each of Mighty Jaxx's collectible toy products
- Second, the scrum team meet together to do the sprint planning, including determining the timeframe of the sprint, the goal, what data to collect, metrics of success and so on.
- Third, do the sprint and send out the marketing materials and collect feedback.
- Fourth, at the end of each sprint, the team do a sprint review of the metrics of success and think about how they could improve marketing material for the next sprint.
- Fifth, a new round of sprint begins with the sprint planning, with insights and things to be improved collected from last sprint.

Kanban might not be the best fit for managing projects in the marketing business function, since Kanban is most suitable for projects with defined processes. Many projects carried out by marketing are subject to customer feedback with a high level of unpredictability of how they respond or when will the team change the marketing material, thus making it hard to establish a defined process.

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.)

Kanban is a great tool for visualizing project progress. It specifies different stages like “ready to go”, “in progress”, and “finished”. Therefore it’s useful for complicated, traditional, and linear projects. For Might Jaxx, the production business function could benefit the most implementing Kanban methodologies, since the production and manufacturing processes are usually streamlined. Kanban can help visualize and better organize complicated tasks for streamlined and traditional projects. It can also foster both in-team and cross-functional communications to better deliver the projects.

Kanban could operate as the following suggests for the production:

- First, determine the different stages of a specific production process. For example, like “negotiating with suppliers stage”, “ready for small-batch manufacture”, “ready for mass production” and so on.
- Second, determine the most number of work-in-progress(WIP) constraints for each stage to focus on the most prioritized tasks in a given stage.
- Third, execute the project and advancing different subtasks to next stages.

Scrum/Sprint might not be the best fit for production business function because of the highly defined processes and limited flexibility, which makes it hard to fit into the short cycles of sprint model. Also, manufacturing process does not really emphasize incremental improvements over iteration, which is what Scrum/Sprint focuses on.

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.**

I would like to mention one potential cognitive bias called confirmation biases that you should bear in mind when deciding whether to move from traditional to agile. Such biases arise when people tend to only see information that confirms their preexisted beliefs while discrediting or ignoring the facts that are not aligned with such beliefs. As you have been actively studying Agile, you might have developed some preliminary subjective beliefs on this method, and with confirmation bias, this could lead to bad judgement since in such way you would only see what you want to see, while ignoring the evidence and arguments that opposes your beliefs, limiting your scope of vision at evaluating the prospect of changing to agile. Possible problems like failing to acknowledge the difficulties when adapting to agile could arise if not consider confirmation bias in the first place.

Some actions that could help with reducing confirmation bias include: firstly, working in a team and learning from all different angles, this could really let you see the whole picture by learning from different viewpoints than your own. Secondly, you can also deliberately look for evidences that contradict your beliefs and appreciate its reasoning. Such way you would be conscious your own beliefs while also open to other possibilities.