

Deciding About Agile at Mighty Jaxx

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.

According to page 8, Jackson reorganized his team into three product-oriented "Sprint Teams" to focus on deliverables and related tasks over a one-month cycle. The implementation of scrum methodologies aimed to improve internal and external communications and help Mighty Jaxx achieve its growth and service quality goals. Therefore, it is likely that the product development function could benefit the most from implementing scrum/sprint methodologies.

For this function, scrum/sprint methodologies could operate by breaking down the product development process into smaller, manageable tasks that can be completed within a one-month cycle. The team would hold daily stand-up meetings to discuss progress, identify obstacles, and plan for the next day's work. At the end of each sprint, the team would review their progress and adjust their approach as needed.

The reason that kanban is not the best fit for this particular function is that it is more suited for continuous improvement rather than project-based work. Kanban focuses on visualizing workflow and limiting work in progress to improve efficiency. While this can be useful in some aspects, it may not provide enough structure for team members to develop complex products with many deliverables and deadlines.

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.

One of the critical lessons Jackson learned from the failure to meet delivery promises over the 2017 Christmas holiday season is the importance of having a visual guide to see the time required to complete each target. Implementing kanban methodologies could be beneficial since it focuses on visualizing workflow and limiting work in progress to improve efficiency. By using a kanban board with columns such as "Ready," "Design," "Prototype," "Build," and "Complete," each task would be visualized by a card that moves through the columns as it progresses through the workflow. The team would focus on completing tasks in progress before starting new ones to limit work in progress and improve efficiency.

Scrum/sprint may not be the best fit for functions requiring ongoing attention. The Art Director Mervin Ramos, one of the Scrum Masters, said, “the keys to Scrum implementation were ‘commitment and the willingness to explain the tasks to team members,’ not all of whom were happy to take on tasks outside their traditional duties.” This could be a serious problem for Mighty Jaxx teams. For instance, 3D designers and other “head-down workers” were reluctant to move out of their comfort zones and take on tasks that require communications. This situation could happen very often and thus result in having many leftover tasks. Hence, scrum/sprint is not the best fit for “heads-down” teams as the working progress may be less efficient.

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.

Dear Jackson,

As a consultant specializing in decision-making and cognitive biases, I wanted to caution you about the potential impact of confirmation bias on your decision-making about moving to agile in Might Jaxx. Confirmation bias is one of the most common cognitive biases. It is a tendency to seek out information that confirms our existing beliefs and ignore information that contradicts them.

In the context of your decision to move to agile methodologies, the confirmation bias could lead you only to seek out information that supports your preconceived notions about agile, while ignoring any potential drawbacks agile may have. For example, one of the biggest challenges that may occur is the possibility to work spilling over from one sprint to the next. This occurs when a team fails to complete all of the tasks planned for a sprint and simply carries undone work over into the next sprint. This can lead to delays in deadlines and thus cause a lack of progress.

To avoid falling into this trap, I recommend actively seeking out information that challenges your assumptions. At the same time, seeking advice from a diverse range of stakeholders with different perspectives. It is also important that you regularly monitor progress and adjust plans as needed. This will help ensure that you make a well-informed decision that takes into account all relevant factors.

Best,
Mengwei Song