Assignment #10

Writing Prompt 1：Which of these Mighty Jaxx business functions do you think could benefit the <u>most</u> 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.)

I think primary function #2 could benefit the most from implementing scrum/sprint methodologies. The case study stated that the overall process could take anywhere from a few months to over a year, where the most design considerations and iterations occur in the manufacturing stage. The manufacturing stage is also where Mighty Jaxx assesses the feasibility and complexity of the product. Although the case does outline that Mighty Jaxx's 3D designers are more heads-down workers who are reluctant to communication, I believe that in the long term and as the team gets more used to the scrum culture, implementing scrum/sprint at this stage will best help to increase communication between internal and external stakeholders. Below are some reasons how scrum/sprint could operate for this function:

- **1. MVP and Aligned Purpose.** After the 2D renderings are completed, the team must review, refine, and convert it into 3D technical rendering and drawings. Scrum/sprint can best be used to create the MVP of the 3D renderings and drawings, where the sculptor and other design members (such as the collaborating artist) will be able to build on it incrementally and tweak it as needed to produce the prototype and mold with increased efficiency. Furthermore, at a cultural standpoint, agile culture fosters the idea of continuous improvement where teams constantly look for ways to improve the design and feasibility.
- **2. Predictability and Management.** As the team has difficulty determining how complicated a given product will be, the scrum/sprint can help realize tangible results in the short team. It helps the team to recenter around the idea of responding to change rather than following a linear restrictive plan. During this business function, there can be a designated Product Owner/Scrum Master who outlines business value and goals, but the process will remain a team effort. The team can dictate decisions such as what tasks are needed, how much work to do in a sprint, etc. Therefore, as the MVP is created, iterated on, and finalized, the team would have a much better understanding of how much time it would take for production to increase predictability. Additionally, in terms of management, the product backlog and its PBIs [this including the sprint backlog], can help the team to stay focused and prioritize items that will bring the highest value to the project. During the sprint, the scrum master can help to visualize team progress using a burn-down chart which will likewise help external stakeholders understand progress.
- **9. Happier Customers.** A core idea of scrum/sprint is to incorporate the customer into the team and make decisions to enhance customer satisfaction early. Understanding what the customer wants and then having the ability to be flexible and change/alter the 3D renderings and molds as needed is exactly what the scrum/sprint agile methodology supports.

The Kanban method would not be a great fit because all of the tasks within the project might not make sense in isolation nor might there be a natural checkpoint at the end of each step with clear guidelines on how to move onto the next one. As Kanban relies on the use of the Kanban board with clear tasks all of similar size, this would not be the best for this particular function as workflow is often unpredictable and project-external issues to create new features constantly occurs which might overcomplicate the board.

Writing Prompt 2：Which of these Mighty Jaxx business functions do you think could benefit the <u>most</u> 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.)

I think function #5 would benefit the most from implementing Kanban methodologies. As the marketing efforts directly helps to create cash flow from the pre-orders, it is important that this business function is streamlined and as efficient as possible. The Kanban board helps to visualize ideas, work that is in progress, and limits the number of tasks (WiP) to improve overall efficiency and workflow. Within the marketing tasks, can all be broken down to items of similar size and has a set launch date which helps to create a clear timeline for the Kanban board. Marketing begins upon approval of the 2D renderings. I also think marketing can benefit from Kanban because the method itself also does not disrupt the status quo

and it is easy to implement. For marketing, the Kanban board will help delivery to stay focused while delivering business value (e.g. the revenue from the pre-orders). The columns can be as follows:

- ***Ideas** –* other tasks that the team might think about incorporating.
- ***To do** –* confirmed to-do tasks such as steps within developing the marketing campaign, designing the packaging, update website with 2D renderings, contact past customers, curate blog post announcements, etc.
- ***In progress** –* the work will move into the in-progress category, aligning with the chosen upon WiP, and assigned to individuals or a group.
- ***Final Review** –* tasks move into this category once completed for a final review by the team lead or group for a final check.
- ***Done** –* the completed tasks.

The scrum/sprint method might not be the best choice for the marketing because it might be difficult for the marketing team to clearly define sprint goals because the work in the product backlog is unrelated to each other. For example, outreach to the customers and curating blog posts are not dependent on each other and just need to be completed at some point. Likewise, there is no real increments or need to create an MVP for marketing.

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 Jackson,

As the lessons from Christmas 2017 have led you to completely reorganize your business to adopt agile project management techniques, I am here to offer advice around your decision-making process. This is not to say that you made the incorrect decision, but I wanted to ensure that you are aware of a form of cognitive bias that might be a problematic trap if not discussed: confirmation bias. If you are not previously familiar with the concept of confirmation bias, it deals with the tendency to search and only look for information that supports your own or original ideas rather than looking for all the potential information or facts. In other words, you look for information that you want to see to create conviction.

Because you have previously seen how scrum is now widely used in software and other complex product development tasks, this might have led you to only look for successful agile project management cases. As your 3D designers have been currently reluctant to this project management style, this could negatively impact the overall success of your projects if not properly addressed. As you know, a persistent unhappy culture or resistance could lead to project delays or attrition. During your decision-making process, confirmation bias might have also caused you to completely overlook another project management model that would be incrementally better suited for your company simply because you were not actively taking the time to search for and analyze all the facts. Not to worry! Here are two steps you can take to avoid falling into the trap of confirmation bias. First, you can hold individual or team meetings with your employees and directly hear their feedback and thought processes on agile project management or about other management styles. Second, as you are also getting more involved in the SME community, it would be advantageous to leverage trusted connections within that ecosystem to see what management styles they utilize and get their high-level perspectives on agile project management for a business similar to yours. The more you are open to receiving and genuinely hearing external voices and feedback will help you to combat confirmation bias.

Speak soon!

Best, Bailie