

## **DECIDING ABOUT AGILE AT MIGHTY JAXX**

### **Implementation of Scrum/Sprint Methodologies at Mighty Jaxx**

The biggest problem Mighty Jaxx has experienced to date was “the failure of his growing organization to meet delivery promises over the 2017 Christmas holiday season due to a combination of issues across the board stemming from lack of clear internal and external communication specifically around the prototyping and production cycle more than other departments simply thinking through how complex the operations have gotten lately as the product offerings have increased. “For example, every one of the 30 pieces in their limited-edition Mighty Jaxx Galligantus (Onslaught Marbled Edition) was unique, due to variances in the swirling purple and orange color scheme.” Therefore, optimizing the process of using 3D renderings and drawings as input to producing molds for manufacturing as well as the mass production are the stages that would see the most benefit from implementing scrum/sprint techniques. However, mold creation is a particularly tough area for scrum/sprint methodologies to find true success for the below reasons -

- The 3D and CAD designers are heads-down workers, and they’re not necessarily willing to be part of a team that is in constant communication through sprint meetings. While it is possible to train the team to embrace the level of communication needed under the scrum methodology, such types of mindset changes generally take a long time and sometimes might even have to result in the replacement of team members for the full-blown implementation.
- Part of the team that creates the 3D artwork for prototyping is based on China. This team in China sends the prototypes to the main studio/facility once the 3D prototypes are ready adding an additional level of complexity around the organization and effectiveness of sprint meetings due to time differences as well as locational challenges.

Because of the above stated reason, the mold creation process is better left off without scrum/sprint in favor of exploring other options to optimize the workflow of the department. However, the production process does not face such constraints thus is eligible for agile techniques to be applied.

At the highest level, the production stage also involves steps such as negotiating costs, delivery and payment schedules etc. on top of the actual process of making the product apt to mass manufacturing and the mass manufacturing operations themselves. And with the increasing complexity of product offerings and designs, the production stage proves to be an ever-changing point of the cycle and thus would highly benefit from the scrum approach by giving teams the ability to be more creative and innovative under the supervision of the scrum master and product owner. While Kanban could provide useful guidance via work in progress limits, it will ultimately not be able to address the complexity and sophistication of manufacturing 30+ product offerings. Yet, Mighty Jaxx could potentially look into Lean Six Sigma methodologies to accelerate the production process as an alternative resource.

### **Implementation of Kanban Methodologies at Mighty Jaxx**

Marketing would be the department that will see the most benefits from the implementation of Kanban methodologies. While marketing tends to have many moving parts and operations, these operations are rather not as complex as product development and can be considered complicated. For example, at Mighty Jaxx, marketing gets kicked off upon approval of the 2D renderings, then the website gets updated and Social media campaigns get launched as well as blog posts and email marketing initiatives get kicked off. Despite the many interdependent parts and functions, the marketing process is still a continuous flow that can be traced through stages of “ideation,” “work in progress,” and “completed.” Kanban will allow everyone in the marketing team to have visibility into the different parts of the campaign execution and ensure the WIP workload of each team member to stay at reasonable levels. Platforms such as Asana and Trello would benefit the marketing department greatly.

### **Cognitive Bias Recognition At Mighty Jaxx**

Moving to agile is a big step for any company as it changes the workflow of entire departments and forces employees to reconsider the way they go about their day to day operations. Therefore, it is incredibly important to thoroughly plan this implementation process and consider possible cognitive biases that might influence and be detrimental in this journey. One of such biases is the confirmation bias -

- **Confirmation bias** refers to the human tendency of interpreting, recalling, and favoring information that supports pre-conceived notions and values.

In the implementation of scrum, confirmation bias can lead the team that is selecting the departments to transition to agile, to select departments that could possibly be best managed under different methodologies vs. scrum. Or they could set the cadence at which sprint meetings and stand-ups are being held to not correctly align with the goals and objectives of the specific department based on their incorrect beliefs and prior information. Some ways of avoiding this type of bias are outlined below -

- The agile implementation team should interview/get the inputs of the people that are working in these departments prior to the implementation process to have a better understanding of their workflows and a good grasp of what is working and what is not working in their departments.
- The agile implementation team should run the implementation steps as well as the agile rules they're trying to implement by the employees working in these respective departments and make necessary tweaks to plans based on feedback.
- The agile implementation team can consider bringing in an outside advisor to objectively evaluate their deliberation processes to minimize all types of cognitive biases.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate cognitive biases from the equation, it is possible to minimize their effect with the above instructions. The most important thing to keep in mind in order not to fall prey to confirmation bias is to listen to the people who are working in these departments day in and out and trust their expertise when making decisions as they will have the best grasp on what would be helpful to their work set-up and processes.