Essay: Do Daily scrum meetings improve interpersonal relations within a game development team?

Intro:

There is limited research on the topic of Daily scrum meetings and whether they improve the interpersonal relations of the team, however there is a lot of theory around team effectiveness across many work disciplines which can be extrapolated into the topic under discussion.

In the following essay the author will outline ‘Daily Scrum meetings’ this will then be followed by the main discussion which will be based upon any relevant research and the authors own conclusions.

The author, by drawing parallels between research around team working and existing literature of ‘Daily scrum meetings’, hopes to demonstrate how scrum meetings can be used to achieve improved interpersonal relations.

The Author will compare research around possible positive effects of daily scrum meetings on the team and balance this with negative outcomes.

Main:

In the software development industry, daily scrums meetings have been practiced for many years. They commonly take the following format:

They occur once per day during a sprint (usually a four-week process).

They involve the team gathering for a stand up meeting within a time constraint of 15 minutes.

During the meetings each team member stands and informs the rest of the team what they have done that day, what they will do tomorrow and any barriers they foresee.

The aim of this being not only the resolutions of the barriers by the scrum master, but to keep the team informed on the general progress of the other members and the project as a whole.

According to various online guides [7,8] the role of the problem solver is left to the scrum master. In contrast to this, professionals in other fields describe an effective meeting to draw “upon each members' knowledge, skills, and perspectives to solve problems and to support one another” [9]. Research in relevant fields found that “Relationships in virtual teams are developed and strengthened through a proactive effort to solve problems” [3].

Researchers in Psychology have shown that teams perform better the greater team cooperation and helping behaviour. Teams composed of more altruistic individuals, do better than those composed of more selfish ones [1]. The same researcher feels that some “work team setting also provides opportunities for team members to behave egoistically and to promote self-interest” [1]. The author feels that properly conducted scrum meetings would reduce the negative impact of individual team members that lean towards self-interest. Other authors have noted that just one disagreeable member of the team can have a negative impact on the rest of the team” thereby destroy interpersonal relationships” [4].

Within the games industry, the range of skills needed to create any game is wildly diverse. From artists to game designers to engine programmers. With such a range, conflict will occur at some point. One type of conflict is Relationship conflict, this conflict “is interpersonally focused” [2] and research describes it to stem from “disagreements about personality differences, different values, or different norms” [2]. While this may mean relations within the team are suffering, the same author also argues that conflict may benefit a team as it could allow “teams to consider a broader range of solutions” and “reduces the likelihood of thought processing biases” [2]. The strict framework of a scrum meeting reduces the likely hood of such conflict arising as it reduces the influence of personalities to the reports. In contrast your more traditional meeting has much more flexibility, allowing the different values and personalities of the team to influence. While the strict framework of scrum meetings may reduce conflict, the author believes it also limits the interpersonal growth. This is due to the fact that the barriers are left for the scrum master to solve, meaning the team misses out on a potential bonding exercise and use of team expertise to fix potential problems.

When a scrum meeting is performed in the style as suggested by [7,8], the description of the barriers they will face is the greatest source of interpersonal growth. The author argues that knowing the process that an individual will do and knowing what they consider barriers the team is able to judge their peer’s strengths and weaknesses. This allows one to promote the strengths and support the weaknesses of their team members. The author argues that this is a deepening of interpersonal relations.

To promote good interpersonal relations there has to be effective communication within the team “The exchange of information is vital to the success of two or more individuals working as a team” [11]. Within a scrum meeting the scrum master should be a skilled communicator and coordinator. In addition, they can ensure an environment which allows members to “clarify misunderstandings and to acknowledge the receipt of information” [11] and that individuals feel confident to discuss the checklist (what you did today, what you will do tomorrow, and problems you will face). The author feels for interpersonal relations to improve good communication as described above is key.

Conclusion:

The author feels that a successful scrum meeting should provide the following; A definition of roles, team bonding, airing of conflicts/impediments, progress of each individual, progress of the project as a whole and ensuring the common goal on track to be achieved (sprint goal). The current strategy to scrum meetings does not advocate problem solving during the meeting. However, the addition of some methods suggested in [9] such as; collective problem solving, if not during the meeting then after could be hugely beneficial to improving the interpersonal relations within the team, research on effective team working supports the authors beliefs. Further research would have to be done to prove this.

Management and psychology scholars have consistently shown that teams perform better when they have greater team cooperation (Mathieu, Heffner, Goodwin, Salas, & CannonBowers, 2000; Mathieu et al., 2008) and helping behavior (Hackman, 2011). Similarly, and drawing on group selection theory, evolutionary biologists have found that teams composed of more altruistic individuals (i.e., cooperators) outperform those that are composed of less altruistic individuals (i.e., defectors; Wilson, 1987). In contrast to these more positive altruistic behaviors, however, a work team setting also provides opportunities for team members to behave egoistically and to promote self-interest (while sacrificing others’ interests), because interdependent teamwork potentially allows members to take advantage of others’ efforts, often while concealing their own selfish actions. This problem is salient in teams since there is a tendency for members to reason egocentrically, perceiving that they deserve more than their fair share of team resources or rewards (Epley, Caruso, & Bazerman, 2006). Indeed, past research has shown that, when working in teams, people might intentionally withhold their efforts or engage in social loafing (Albanese & Van Fleet, 1985; Kameda, Tsukasaki, Hastie, & Berg, 2011; Karau & Williams, 1993).

**TOWARD A MODEL OF WORK TEAM ALTRUISM NING LI University of Iowa BRADLEY L. KIRKMAN North Carolina State University CHRISTOPHER O. L. H. PORTER Indiana University**

**Academy of Management Review 2014, Vol. 39, No. 4, 541–565.** [**http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.0160**](http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.0160)

**Making Teamwork Work: Team Knowledge for Team Effectiveness**

**by Guchait, Priyanko; Lei, Puiwa; Tews, Michael J**

**The Journal of Psychology, 04/2016, Volume 150, Issue 3**

**This study examined the impact of two types of team knowledge on teameffectiveness...**

**Journal Article:**

**Full Text Online**

**Preview**

2)

**and another member believes that 30 days are needed, they may engage in a conflict about their task. Relationship conflict is interpersonally focused and has to do with disagreements about personality differences, different values, or different norms. In the same biology research team, if one member perceives another as being rude and disrespectful, this may lead to a relationship conflict.**

**However, in the long run, task conflict may lead to better performance outcomes. Engaging in task conflict allows teams to consider a broader range of solutions and courses of action and creates space for more critical evaluations of possibilities and reduces the likelihood of thought processing biases such as confirmatory biases**

**Direct and Contextual Influence of Team Conflict on Team Resources, Team Work Engagement, and Team Performance Patrıcia L. Costa,1 Ana M. Passos,1 and Arnold B. Bakker2 1 ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal 2 Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands** [**Negotiation & Conflict Management Research**](javascript:__doLinkPostBack('','mdb~~sih%7C%7Cjdb~~sihjnh%7C%7Css~~JN%20%22Negotiation%20%26%20Conflict%20Management%20Research%22%7C%7Csl~~jh','');)**. Nov2015, Vol. 8 Issue 4, p211-227. 17p. 2**

**3)**

Regular and effective communication is the necessary prerequisite for the functioning of virtual teams. The team leader must prepare the schedules and rules for regular meetings (Kayworth and Leidner 2000). Team members must take the time to get to know each other well, because this improves communication and increases the level of effectiveness. In strong personal relationships, communication is frequent but short. Strong relationship pairs were parsimonious in their communication. They exchanged shorter messages than weak relationship pairs, and the messages were simple and direct. Relationships in virtual teams are developed and strengthened through a proactive effort to solve problems (Hart and McLeod 2003).

Hart, R.K. and McLeod. PL.. Rethinking team building in geographically dispersed teams: one message at a time. Organizational Dynamics. 2003.31(4). 3.'i2-36l

4)

A single disagreeable member also may be enough to destroy the team's capability to work cooperatively, regardless of the level of agreeableness for other team members. A very disagreeable person may make team membership overly costly in terms of social rewards (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and thereby destroy interpersonal relationships within the team; the minimum score for agreeableness should thus correlate with team viability. The expected effects of agreeableness are summarized in Hypotheses 3a and 3b.

**Relating Member Ability and Personality to Work-Team Processes and Team Effectiveness Murray R. Barrick University of Iowa Greg L. Stewart Vanderbilt University Mitchell J. Neubert and Michael K. Mount University of Iowa**

**Journal of Applied Psychology Copyright 1998 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. 1998, Vol. 83, No. 3, 377-391**

5)

. The aim was to investigate the perceived effectiveness of communication media and communication problems encountered by construction participants. Face-to-face (interpersonal) communication was perceived to be the most effective communication medium. The results also identified that meetings, both formal and informal, were perceived to be beneficial to the successful completion of construction projects. Collecting data from informal (unstructured and unscheduled) meetings posed some methodological problems that were difficult to overcome. Prearranged meetings are, by their very nature, more amenable to systematic study, and so a decision was taken to collect data from site-based progress meetings. Previous research (Higgin and Jessop, 1965; Wallace, 1987) indicated that socio-emotional communication (interaction that affects the development and maintenance of relationships) and task-based communication (interaction necessary to complete tasks) between individuals from different organizations appeared to be a core problem. As well as developing relationships, socio-emotional communication is used to engage in and manage conflict. Failure to balance relational and task-based exchanges could prevent group conflict from being properly managed. An uncontrollable escalation of conflict will threaten the team’s ability to engage in the positive dialogue necessary for progression of the project. This led us to focus on task and relational interaction in live projects

**Construction Management and Economics (November 2007) 25, 1195–1211Communication behaviour during management and design team meetings: a comparison of group interaction CHRISTOPHER A. GORSE1 \* and STEPHEN EMMITT2 1Leeds Metropolitan University, UK 2Technical University of Denmark, Department of Civil Engineering, DK-2800 Kgs, Denmark Received 23 November 2006; accepted 11 July 2007**

6) Decentralized group interaction has a positive effect on group performance which can be achieved if groups structure their discussions in a way that integrates all members. This may be specified as a supervisor’s task to make sure that all group members contribute to the respective topic. In our research sample, all teams had a spokesperson. Still, team interaction centralization varied widely between the team meetings. Increasing the spokesperson’s responsibility to act as a

facilitator that moderates the discussion or increasing the team members’ attention to feeling responsible to keep all team members involved, may thus be other promising approaches.

**Communication Methods and Measures, 7:26–47, 2013 Copyright © Taylor & Francis Group, LLC ISSN: 1931-2458 print/1931-2466 online DOI: 10.1080/19312458.2012.760729 Meetings as Networks: Applying Social Network Analysis to Team Interaction Nils Christian Sauer and Simone Kauffeld Technische Universität Braunschweig**

References: https://irf.fhnw.ch/bitstream/handle/11654/17614/Masterarbeit\_Anne\_Maigatter.pdf?sequence=1

7)

<http://www.base36.com/2013/03/how-to-run-an-effective-scrum-meeting/>

8)

<https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/agile/scrum/daily-scrum>

9)

<https://www.aamc.org/members/gfa/faculty_vitae/148582/team_meetings.html>

10)

No mention of problem solving

<https://www.agilealliance.org/glossary/daily-meeting/>

11)

The exchange of information is vital to the success of two or more individuals working as a team (Dickinson & McIntyre, 1997). The purpose of communication is often to clarify misunderstandings and to acknowledge the receipt of information (e.g., grounding, the establishment that mutual understanding has occurred between listener and speaker; Clark & Brennan, 1991) and may not always be verbal (e.g., head nods; Reid, Reed, & Edworthy, 1999). Empirical support exists for the amount, quality, and sequencing of communication in determining team performance (Bowers, Jentsch, Salas, & Braun, 1998; Harris & Barnes-Farrell, 1997; Stout, Salas, & Carson, 1994). Communication, especially nonverbal communication, can be affected by proximity

http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.falmouth.ac.uk/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a668757a-6166-475c-b937-5fcda5331a99%40sessionmgr4009&vid=0&hid=4002&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=21839622&db=ufh