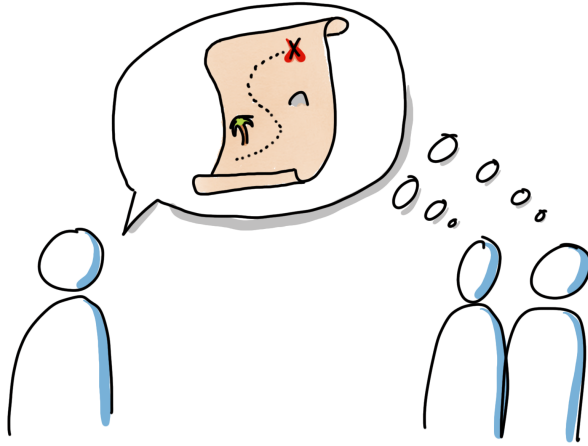# Product Goals for Teams

Time required

Typically, 30 min - 2 hours, depending on how unfamiliar/unclear the vision and goals are to the team

Materials Required

- Orange & green Posi-its
- Markers

Purpose

This is a team start/team development exercise. The purpose of it is for the team to get to know their purpose more in detail, for them to process it, discuss it, understand it, and internalize it.

Having a clear and compelling purpose is the most important factor when it comes to how a team performs. With no shared goal there will no team.

For a team we usually cover goals from several perspectives:

- Organization
- **Product ← covered in this guide**
- Team

- Individual

Preparations

Book some prep-sessions with some product manager/PO that is most relevant for the team. They need to present the vision/goals from product point of view. Expect at least 1+2 hours prep with some days in between to create attractive visions/a compelling direction from product point of view.

The purpose of the PO participating in this session is: - To present long term (and medium term) goals in a way so that the team understands context, actually knows what to do, what is important and why it is important. - The above is needed to enable the team to make good decentralized decisions.

- To energize and motivate the team by describing the purpose in a way that is attractive to them.

During this prep session, focus on how the goal/vision can be made attractive to the team.

Here are some suggestions on how to do that:

- Avoid PowerPoints. Human to human communication is most often best done without it.

- A personal story is one of the most effective ways of communicating a vision. This comes from 100 000 years of human history telling around campfires before we invented more elaborate writing, so it is a uniquely tested and effective way to convey information and motivate/energize others.

- The best ways in general to formulate a direction/goal is to focus on what good will we do in the world. Whose life will be better by our efforts. This could also be formulated using stories about current (bad) situations from a human point of view.

- The story is ideally end user/stakeholder/purpose centric but can be about "how come the PO wanted to work with this?" or "What makes him/her excited about the possibilities".

- Wording and expressions should be personal and use emotion. Words like proud, excited, sad etc are good to use. We do not want dry "professional" language.

- A story could also be imaginary, about the future. There is one example that I remember vividly, among other things the message included: "Think about next summer at the convention, I would like us to be called upon the stage to receive the reward for most innovative solution in the healthcare business". In this example I remember that the product manager also were very emotional speaking about the hard works spent on a bit boring stuff during the year and how they finally was time to focus forward and on innovation. I also remember that her story started out with her walking outside in the morning. Crispness of the air and other details was included in good storyteller fashion. It was hugely successful as a vision and people kept coming back to it to make sure they stayed on target: "Is this the best way for us to win that reward next year"

How

- *The purpose of the next session is for you to discuss the long goals and direction of the team with our PO/PM. And to create your own summary of it.*

- *Btw, let's do a quick pairwise discussion: "Why would it makes sense for you all to know about the goals on a higher level and not only get task by task in the sprint planning?" - 2 minutes pairwise discussion*

- Debrief by asking a few pairs. Make sure answers include that self-organized teams need to understand the context and purpose to make good everyday decisions.

- It is actually also not so uncommon for people/projects to actually not know the goal of projects and thereby waste a lot of time. I know one project that spent 6 months on porting a UI to Silverlight while the purpose of the project had nothing to do with that.

- *Our PO will now present his/her ideas. While talking you all will write some comments on orange and green Post-its. Green Post-its for clear goals/directions that you hear. Orange for items you feel could be more clear or that you would like to discuss.*

- Let the PO do the presentation. After, collect all clear/unclear Post-its on some flipcharts. Facilitate a summary of the green ones and a discussion/clarification of orange ones together with the PO/PM.

- Save the physical results for use in later retrospectives and other sessions.