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Journal - Team Communication

In order to complete a project on time and with accuracy to the specified guidelines, effective communication is key. Not just communication between Scrum Master and developers, but within the development team itself, as well as further up the chain to Product Manager and Stakeholders. To help facilitate this communication, various practices and Agile tools exist, and taking advantage of them can make all the difference in the success of a team.

In my opinion, the most effective communication practice is the information radiator, a message board (physical or electronic) that essentially “radiates” information out to all members of the team automatically. This technique is the best because it allows every team member to see the most up to date information about the project’s flow without having to interrupt their work cycle with emails or meetings. The information is posted regularly, with the most recent changes and accomplishments, ensuring all team members are on the same page and that the information is for sure readily available for them to see (no “I didn’t see that email” or “I missed that meeting”). This does, however, require that an organized scrum master keep the board updated regularly for the team.

A close second in effectiveness would be face-to-face communication between team members, as this old fashioned form cannot be beat. Reading facial expressions, detecting tone, and being able to be open and honest but also professional is the number one way to keep team members engaged with one another and reduce passive aggressive actions when things aren’t going perfectly. So many social cues get lost in email and text communication; many problems are easily solved with a simple conversation.

For our project at SNHU Travel, given the circumstances and the remoteness of the team, email communication was the most effective. For future projects, video calls may be a better way to go in order to get that pseudo-face-to-face interaction, but this time around emails got the job done. The information needed was obtained quickly, allowing the project to stay on track through the sprint.

Agile tools give the ability to update progress in real-time for the team. Agile projects move quickly, and it’s important to ensure everyone stays on the same page at all times so that no productivity gets lost. The tools available to the scrum team are more focused on managing the flow of the project, moving the team forward while keeping them informed about the status of the project.