TRIBES, SQUADS, CHAPTERS & GUILDS

Agile at scale at Spotify

Agile Tour Vienna Nov 12 2016

Spotify®

Joakim Sundén

Agile Coach in a tribe called Quest, Boston

Spotify®

Spotify's mission is simple: give people access to all the music they want all the time - in a completely legal and accessible way

Spotify 2016

- 10 years old
- 100M users
- 40M subscribers
- 2 billion playlists
- 60 markets
- 5 dev offices
- 2000+ employees
- 120+ squads

Spotify®

“The Spotify Model”

Scaling Agile @ Spotify
with Tribes, Squads, Chapters & Guilds

Henrik Kniberg & Anders Ivarsson
Oct 2012

Dealing with multiple teams in a product development organization is always a challenge!

One of the most impressive examples we've seen so far is Spotify, which has kept an agile mindset despite having scaled to over 30 teams across 3 cities.

Spotify is a fascinating company that is transforming the music industry. The company has only existed 6 years and already has over 15 million active users and over 4 million paying. The product itself can be likened to “a magical music player in which you can instantly find and play every song in the world”.

Alistair Cockburn (one of the founding fathers of agile software development) visited Spotify and said “Nice - I've been looking for someone to implement this matrix format since 1992 :) so it is really welcome to see.”

So how is this managed?

We have both presented at conferences and been caught in engaging discussions around how we work at Spotify and how the company handles agile with hundreds of developers. Many people are fascinated by this, so we decided to write an article about it.

Disclaimer: We didn't invent this model. Spotify is (like any good agile company) evolving fast. This article is only a snapshot of our current way of working - a journey in progress, not a journey completed. By the time you read this, things have already changed.

Model *(noun)*

- a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original
- a thing used as an example to follow or imitate
- a simplified description, especially a mathematical one, of a system or process, to assist calculations and predictions
- a person employed to display clothes by wearing them
- a particular design or version of a product

Oxford Dictionary of English

Model *(noun)*

- a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original
- **a thing used as an example to follow or imitate**
- a simplified description, especially a mathematical one, of a system or process, to assist calculations and predictions
- a person employed to display clothes by wearing them
- a particular design or version of a product

Model *(noun)*

- a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original
- a thing used as an example to follow or imitate
- a <u>simplified</u> description, especially a mathematical one, of a system or process, to assist calculations and predictions
- a person employed to display clothes by wearing them
- a particular design or version of a product

ABBA
THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL · ELAINE

Daniel Ek
16
“We aim to make mistakes faster than anyone else”

Schein culture model

Autonomy

Awesome People
Will do Awesome Things
When they have an
Opportunity to Be Awesome.

The autonomous squad

- “Feel like a mini-startup”
- Self-organizing
- Cross-functional

The IT Spot
Self-Service
Tech Gear
Feel free to take any
item you need for
work purposes.
Please recycle used batteries in
the nearest printer room.
AA
AAA
USB
STICKS

Featured in the Financial Times
March 2016
499 SEK
Apple
Keyboard
US-English
INT
399 SEK
Apple
Keyboard SE
BATTERIES AA
BATTERIES AAA
steelseries

“Decentralising control requires decentralising both authority to make decisions and the information to make them correctly”

Don Reinertsen

Celebrate failure

Internal blog:

How we shot ourselves in the foot

Asdf asdf asdf ddhffdd asdfsdfasdf s dfs ei lkjsdfkjh dkd ie kkd kdsflk sdi elk sdfkjh sdfkjhasdflkj dk dj wi dm ehsdfjh wlkjsdm

WTF?

Slkdfoi clk sdil wkdkdk dk dkiwlslkj dlkh slkj sdflkj dpijslkjdlldk slkdflk sdflk sdlk kjsdf Sdflk sdfsdfasdf

Internal blog:

Celebrate failure!

Asdf asdf asdf ddhffdd asdfsdfasdf s dfs ei lkjsdfkjh dkd ie kkd kdsflk sdi elk sdfkjh sdfkjhasdflkj dk dj wi dm ehsdfjh wlkjsdm

dfkj dfjh slkkd dj dflkj sdfkjh sdf

Slkdfoi clk sdil wkdkdk dk dkiwlslkj dlkh slkj sdflkj dpijslkjdlldk slkdflk sdflk sdlk kjsdf Sdflk sdfsdfasdf

Chapter

Tribe

Music Player Tribe

Guilds

Chapter
Chapter
Squad
Squad
Squad
Squad
Chapter
Chapter
Guild
Squad
Squad
Squad
Squad

Alliance
Alliance leads
Tribe
Tribe

Org Overview

TPD is lead by *Oskar Stål* CTO, *Gustav Söderström* CPO & *Rochelle King* VP Design

TPD as of Sept 30, 2016

TPD is led by Gustav Söderström

Contributor

Manager

Spotify®

Spotify®

Alignment & Autonomy

Aligned Autonomy
We need to cross the river
Build a bridge!
We need to cross the river
Figure out how!
High Alignment
Low Alignment
Authoritative organization
Conformist culture
Innovative organization
Collaborative culture
Micromanaging organization
Indifferent culture
Entrepreneurial organization
Chaotic culture
Hope someone is working on the river problem...
Low Autonomy
High Autonomy

HISTORY

Our previous alignment model was **OKRs** (abandoned 2014)

OKR = "**O**bjectives" and "**K**ey **R**esults"

... but this type of quarterly batching didn't fit us.

Our new approach is a combination of two models: Spotify Rhythm and Priorities/Achievements

Details: See Spotify meeting rhythm

With "Bets" at the company/Tribe level

And "Priorities" at the Squad level

OKR
2009-2014
Objectives & Key Results
P&A
2014-2015
Priorities & Achievements
Spotify
Rhythm

Spotify Rhythm

Data Insights Beliefs Bets (DIBB)

Data: Qualitative or quantitative information that informs a perspective. This should not be interpretation.

Insights: What is your interpretation of the data? What have you learned?

Beliefs: Based on that interpretation, which beliefs have you formed about the problem space you are working in?

Bets: Based on your beliefs, what are the bets you believe we should make?

XYZ

Metric: What does success look like?

COMPANY BETS BOARD

Last Strategy Team meeting: January 19
Next Strategy Team meeting: March 21

NOW (Bets currently being productized)				NEXT (Bets that are in solution exploration and preparing to move to NOW)				LATER (Bets that are in problem exploration)	
Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM	Rank	Company Bet	Sponsor	RM	Company Bet	Sponsor

Data	Insights	Beliefs	Bets
Underlying qualitative or quantitative information that fuels your Bet	What is your interpretation (or learning, theory, or conclusion drawn from one or more data points) of the data related to your Bet and what insights have you gained?	A Belief is a hypothesis built on one or more insights that offers direction to a team or teams. Based on that interpretation, which Beliefs have you formed about the problem space you are working in?	A Bet is a decision to test a Belief or set of related Beliefs in practice by establishing it as a goal and dedicating resources to it. Based on your Beliefs, describe the Bet(s)

What does success look like for this Bet?

Express this in terms of:

- Potential metric and targets for this Bet (use table below)
- Cost of Delay of not doing it
- Direct revenue or cost-saving opportunities
- Brand positioning, etc.

Tribe & Squad ”bets”

Tactic to reach strategy
TAP: Tactic2strategic
alignment

CATBERT: EVIL DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
WE'RE JUMPING ON THE FAD OF GIVING EMPLOYEES UNLIMITED VACATION DAYS.
Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com
THE ONLY GATING FACTOR WILL BE THE KNOWLEDGE THAT TAKING ANY TIME OFF WHATSOEVER WILL TORPEDO YOUR CAREER.
10-22-13 ©2013 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by Universal Uclick
SO . . . NOW OUR VACATIONS WILL BE A SOURCE OF STRESS?
ONLY AS MUCH AS YOU WANT. IT'S TOTALLY UP TO YOU.

“Stop trying to borrow wisdom and think for yourself. Face your difficulties and think and think and think and solve your problems yourself.”
Taiichi Ohno

Thank you!

Joakim Sundén
Agile Coach at Spotify

Questions? @joakimsunden

Spotify®

Onboarding

How new people learn the culture

Spotify®

On-boarding - 6 months

- Squad and tribe
- IT orientation
- Bootcamp
- New Employee Orientation
- Introduction Days

Bootcamp

BOOTCAMP-53 CALENDAR
monday 6/6
tuesday 7/6
wednesday 8/6
thursday 9/6
friday 10/6
9.30 STANDUP
9.30 STANDUP
BOOTCAMP has NOT YET STARTED
INTRO TO BOOTCAMP, TDD AND AGILE
TEAM LUNCH
PROJECT INFO
FROM CLICK TO PLAY
MOB PROGR SESSION
SPRINT PLANNING
QUALITY LUNCH'N LEARN
monday 13/6
tuesday 14/6
wednesday 15/6
thursday 16/6
friday 17/6
9.30 STAND UP
9.30 STANDUP
9.30 STANDUP
9.30 STANDUP
9.30 STANDUP
MID-BOOTCAMP RETRO
PREPARE DEMO
DEMO!
BOOTCAMP RETRO

Bootcamp

TO DO
IN PROGRESS
TEST/REVIEW
DONE
CREATE GHE ORG
GET A SERVER
DEPLOY SCRIPT
SET UP VIDEO PLAYER
APERTURE
@saraqritzon
BETAMAX
@wader
JAWS
Tobias Aspenberg