NODE Technical Book Club

Shape Up

Stop Running in Circles and Ship Work that Matters

Part 2 - Betting

Ryan Singer

Bets, Not Backlogs

- Backlogs are a big weight we don't need to carry.

- Instead, they have a few potential bets.

- They either choose to bet on the pitch or ignore it entirely.

- **Claim**: Important ideas will come back.

The Betting Table

- Six week cycles instead of 2-week sprints.

- 2-week cooldown period between cycles.

- **Team:** 1 designer, 1-2 programmers, 1 QA
- The betting table is a meeting held during cool-down.

- **Betting Table:** CEO, CTO, 1 Senior Programmer, 1 Product Strategist

  - **Output:** A cycle plan

- Betting is different than planning.
- Do not allow the team to be interrupted.
- Six weeks is the hard deaadline.

Bug Handling

- All software has bugs. The question is: how severe are they?
- Their ways to deal:
  - Use cooldown period.
  - Bring it to the betting table.
  - Bug Smash!

Place Your Bets

- For existing products, follow the standard Shape Up process: Shape, bet and build.
- New products require more work. Three phases:
  - R&D mode
  - Production mode
  - Cleanup mode

R&D Mode

- Instead of betting on a well-shaped pitch, they bet the time on some key pieces of the new product idea.
- Only-senior team
- The aim is to spike, not to ship.

  - Commit one cycle at a time.

Production Mode

- After some R&D cycles, key architectural decisions are settled.
- Ready for the standard process.
- But nothing will be shipped to the customers yet.

Cleanup Mode

- No shaping
- No teams
- Everyone works on the final details.

Questions to ask

- Does the problem matter?
- Is the appetite right?
- Is the solution attractive?
- Is this the right time?
- Are the right people available?

Post the kick-off message

Sill: The last cycle of 2017

✨ FYI by Jason Fried
Nov 17, 2017 · Notified 53 people

It's next cycle time!

First, this is a short cycle. We've got a few major holidays this cycle, plus the end of the year. People are busy with life, travel, snow (!), and all the other stuff that goes with ramping down one year and starting another.

So with that in mind, we're going to do something a bit different this cycle. We're only going to schedule a few core projects focused on making Basecamp feel simpler, a couple of *experimental* projects, and no dedicated small batch projects.