

# Dynamic Reteaming

## The Art and Wisdom of Changing Teams

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### Dynamic Reteaming a.k.a. Team Change

People will **join** your team  
Others will **leave**

#### Natural occurrence



When you **change** your team's composition, it:

- Creates a **new** team **social dynamic**
- Impacts the collective intelligence present on the team
- Brings **new learning** potential to the team as a whole
- Helps teams learn together and expand their skills

“ In essence, team change is **inevitable**, so we might as well get good at it. ”

#### Team



- At least two people working together
- Build something valuable for their customers
  - Shared work
  - Joint ownership of the outcome



Collections of people assigned across different teams

Ex: Community Of Practice To spread similar ways of working

### The Social Dynamic of a Team

Own unique social dynamic / "feel"

Changes over time



**High energy** -----> chemistry / **high performance**

**Low energy** -----> lacks chemistry / **low performance**

#### How To ?

like Kanban recommendations



- Start **where you are**
- **Visualize** your team structures
- **Observe** and get to know them
- **Incremental** reflection / adjustment
- **Experiment** and learn

### Politics of Team Assignment and Change



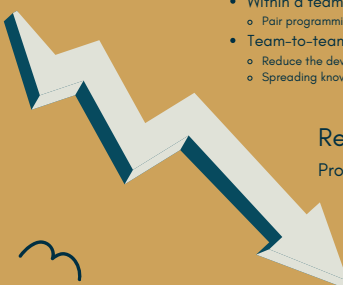
#### Less Freedom

- Someone "at the top" **put** them on the team
- Manager **put** them on the team without their input
- Manager **included** their input when assigning team
- Managers / leadership **arranged self selection events**
- Team members **trade** places / tell managers
- Team members **form** their own teams

#### More Freedom



Reduces Risk and Encourage Sustainability  
Decreases the Development of Knowledge Silos



- Within a team
  - Pair programming / TDD
- Team-to-team level
  - Reduce the development of knowledge silos by reteaming
  - Spreading knowledge out from one team to another



Reduces Team Member Attrition  
Providing Career Growth Opportunities

Decreases Inter-Team Competition  
Fostering a Whole Team Mentality

“ When People Leave You Have a **New Team...** ”

### Dynamic Reteaming Patterns

#### For company growth

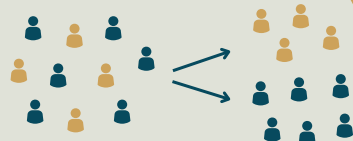
##### Onboard New Team Members

- Make it **Known** That You are **Hiring** in New Team Members
- Plan and **Communicate** about the Arrival of the New Team Member
- **Get Things Together** for the New Person Before They Arrive
- Assign a specific **mentor** within their team (Pair Program)



#### Grow & Split

! teams growing "too big"



"Too many" people : can become inefficient

- Can also apply it to **spread "best practices"** across your organization by
- Conservatively adding in people to a stellar team
  - Then splitting the team later
  - When you feel all team members mastered the techniques you want to spread

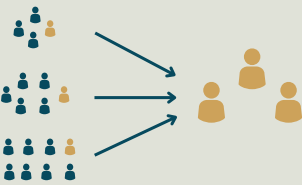
#### Guidelines

1. **Why** are you splitting the team?
2. The **membership** on each of the resulting teams after the split should be made clear to everyone.
3. Try to **avoid sharing** team members between the two teams.
4. Let people **choose** which team they will move into.
5. The work of each of the split teams should be **separate**.
6. Don't let the team split **drag on forever** : choose a date on the calendar for "doing the split."
7. Consider coming up with new team names for each of the teams or engage the "new" teams.
8. Make sure any of your **tooling** is updated in advance of your team split event.
9. Determine the **facilities implications** for your team split.
10. Consider having "Team Liftoffs" or "**Startups**": discuss how you want to work together as a new team.
11. Get the team itself to "**own the split**", if possible".

#### Isolation

! emergency situations

Falling product  
Prior to sunrise  
Performance crisis  
Outage



Creates beneficial silos by design  
You form a team "off to the side" and give them process freedom

#### For the work

The **new work** is the inspiration for the team change

- **Isolation Pattern** for Pivoting & Innovation
  - Form Teams and Reteam Around the Work
    - Ex : TRIAD (Product Manager, Engineering representative, UX)
- or when "**Overloaded**" with work
- If prioritization of work is not clear, people can suffer...

#### For the code

- **Spike**: research story that comes up from time to time in teams
- **Refactor**
- Share **Production Support**

“ When you switch pairs, or teams for that matter, you are exposed to new people and new ideas. You just learn more. That feels good to us as humans. ”

### For Learning, Fulfillment, and Sustainability

- When you switch within a team or across teams
  - We switch to share knowledge with each other
  - The aim is to **spread out the knowledge** for learning and sustainability
  - We Want to be with other people and learn from them
- To **Support** a Feature
- Switching for Personal **Growth & Learning**
- Empower People to **Re-Role**
  - It can make your organization stickier and help you retain people

Enables the Continuous Integration of Ideas



Brings Consistency & Facilitates Reteaming

#### Mob Programming

Engagement at work can happen when you are intellectually stimulated and are able to **continually learn** in your job.

#### Switching

! "tower of knowledge"

"low bus count" problem -> members working a lot on their own

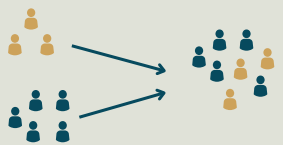


Incorporate reteaming to spread knowledge within or around your teams

#### Merging

! teams that are **too small**

need more people to have collaboration opportunities like pair programming



Teams might merge as a strategy to combat dependencies across two or more teams

#### Other Reteaming Reasons

**For Short-Term Events**  
Daily Learning Sessions  
1 hour of mob-style learning each day

To Find a Better Fit



To Liberate

Silenced People Could Be a Sign for a Reteam  
Prisoners in meetings...



**Create Opportunities**

to Get To Know Key Leaders  
in Different Departments: "coffee chats" with VPs, key POs, ...



**Reflect**

on Team Compositions and How to Shift



**Design Events**

to Build Relationships Across the Organization



**Retrospectives**

Systemic Retrospectives  
Retrospectives with Groups of Related Teams



**Give Teams Budgets**

to Create their Own Social Events

