Dear All My Employees,

I just want to reiterate how proud I am of the high-quality work all of you have completed during my time as your technical leader. However, there will be changes in our lifecycle procedures starting next month that I have to tell all of you about. For the longest time we have worked in a Spiral/Iterative model to complete our work, but that is just no longer cutting the mustard. Starting next month, we will switch to what’s now being called a “SCRUM” sprint style approach.

For years here at ~~Apple Inc~~ we’ve utilized the spiral/iterative model for software development. However, management has chosen to take another path. One key difference to know between our previous Spiral model and our new Scrum model is that in Scrum a scrum “master” is appointed in place of a self-organized and internally chosen team leader. Where a team leader previously would’ve guided each area of development (requirements, design, coding, and testing) to its satisfactory conclusion, our new “master” will be more a gatekeeper, protecting self-organized teams from outside interference by acting as the speaker for the team to management and the press, while also leading team meetings and promoting synergy between members.

Speaking of meetings, this is another crucial difference to understand between Spiral and Scrum. Because our iteration period is sped up, we will have more frequent meetings than in Spiral, about once every day. The meetings will be short (usually not exceeding 15 minutes; less than ¼ as long as our regular hour long, weekly meetings we currently have) during which every team member is made to stand and quickly explain their progress. You are required to stand so as to incentivize faster communication. This is all to accommodate the new sprint schedule, which requires new iterations every two weeks for our project as opposed to the old monthly or biyearly iterations in Spiral. These sprints will require both frequent experimentation and planning for the next series of sprints, which will allow for more experience iterating and refining our project.

You’ll also be responsible for explaining this new, faster cycle to our non-software staff. Because of the fast cycle, some jobs such as requirements designing and coding, will have to occur simultaneously. Because of that, you’ll need to closely communicate with your requirements team during the development cycle, continually implementing requirements made by our requirements team, and alerting our requirements team to when something is not working and must be changed at the coding stage. This goes for every area of development, as all 5 stages (requirements, design, coding, testing, and maintenance) may occur simultaneously, requiring constant recursions backwards if something goes wrong in a later stage of development. Sometimes it might be hard to explain to non-software employees why backtracking is essential for success, or why a certain problem is occurring. It’s at a time like this that your communication skills as a software engineer should come into play, and you should be able to simplify your complex work so that a layman can understand what mistakes are being corrected and connect those corrections to the non-software employee’s area of specialty.

I understand engineers used to a more traditional agile or waterfall development cycle might be skeptical of a new system, but please give this system the benefit of the doubt and dedicate yourself to the increased iterations, teamwork, and development cycle speed that it necessitates. I promise you; our product will be all the more polished, and possible innovative that you’ll have expected as a consequence of this new model.

Thank You so much for reading, and I hope to continue seeing great work from all of you!

Your supervisor,

~~Jeremy Adler Bernstein~~