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## High-Performance Teams Game

Your team is working on the World's Smallest Online Bookstore, a site that provides the best results (just a few) for every search, not every result on earth. We're a vulture capital funded company, so if we don't deliver, our funding will be cut.

My goal is to help you see the effects of choices/tradeoffs on productivity and team cohesion. While some of the benefits of Agile happen at the individual level, there are many things that affect the relationships between team members, and therefore the overall cohesion and productivity of the team.

### Ground Rules

- *Rounds represent 6 weeks or three 2 week sprints*
- *Our goal is to play 6 rounds == 36 weeks*
- *Each table will have 5 to 9 team members*
- *In each round you have budget for the amount of work/stuff you can do based on your team's capacity. Some of that budget must be spent on delivering features, otherwise the business will threaten to let you go. Some of it should be spent on growing the team and their engineering skills, otherwise you don't get more budget capacity.*
- *There is a risk of failure, and not all teams make it.*
- *There is a sense of risk and randomness. Every round, you roll two dice to see what gremlins will affect you. Human interactions are imperfect and the gremlins will simulate that.*
- *Once all the actions are committed for a round, I will tell teams of their effect and then you will roll to discover the number of stories you completed.*
- *In each subsequent round, all prior actions are still available.*

*Initial Capacity – 10*

### Rounds

*Rounds are 12-15 minutes total:*

- *Discuss and Commit to Actions 5 minutes*
- *Science behind 1-2 items*
- *Results for actions revealed*
- *Roll Die for Stories*
- *Roll Die for Gremlins*
- *Determine the outcomes – number of Stories completed this round; Capacity for future rounds*



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Title	Action Description	Cost	Round First Available
	Commit to Stories	1 per Story	1
Same Floor	Get all Team members on the same floor (can't be used with Team Room)	2	1
Team Room	Set up a team room with walls	5	1
Protected from Outside Distraction	ScrumMaster protects the team from outside distraction	1	1
Build Server	Setup build server and Continuous Integration	3	1
Working Agreements	Create Team Working Agreements	1	1
Social Time	Promote some social time, i.e. common coffee breaks, team lunch, etc.	1	2
Firefighter award	Offer an Firefighter award to any team member who solves ....	1	2
Unit Testing	Introduce Unit Testing (can only be used if you set up a Build Server/CI system)	2	2
Observe People + Relationships	ScrumMaster spends time observing people, how they interact, and the quality of their relationships.	1	2
One on One's	ScrumMaster meets with all team members for a regular one on one.	1 (once for establishing the habit, free in the long run)	2
Move Water Cooler	Move the water cooler/coffee near the team space.	1	2
Personal Productivity Bonus	The company will offer anyone who exceeds their performance goals an extra \$5,000.	3	3
New Specialist	Hire a new specialist for the team. This person will fill in missing pieces.	4	3

Informal Cross-Training	Informal cross-training for existing team members in an area the team is weak. (Testing anyone?)	1	3
Overtime	Overtime for the whole team.	2	3
Formal Cross-Training	Formal cross-training for existing team members in an area the team is weak. (Testing anyone?)	3	3
Collaborate on Goal Meaning	Spend two to three hours as a team collaborating on what the CES goal means and what is important.	1	3
Pre-Allocate Capacity for fires	Set aside some of your team's capacity to deal with the fires as they come up.	2	4
Sacrifice One Team Member	One team member deals with all the fires as they come up, allowing the others to stay focused on delivering new value.	2 (used with the pre-allocating capacity – combined cost is 3)	4
Ignore Fires	Refuse to deal with fires until the next sprint.	2	4
Accept new Stories mid-sprint	<b>Either:</b> Accept New Stories Mid-Sprint	0	5
Refuse new stories mid-sprint	<b>Or:</b> ScrumMaster and Product Owner work together to refuse new stories mid-sprint	2	5

## Our Story

At the start, we're a brand new team who have never worked together before. We have no established relationships or history. We were hired by the company because our resumes say we're the best in the field.

### Round I – Sprint 1:

"Team, welcome to the World's Smallest Online Bookstore. We hired you because you're the best individuals in your respective areas. Please remember that we're Vulture Capital funded and we have only a few months runway, so you must deliver. This first Sprint, the company really needs you to prove that you can deliver a working ....".

**Initial Capacity: 10**

### Round II – Sprint 4

"None of you met our expectations that you would complete 10 stories in the last round. Our vulture capitalists are becoming concerned and ask if you can really deliver."

### Round III – Sprint 7

"We must go live with an early version of the product this round, for CES. Due to your limited productivity in past rounds, management are prepared to offer some options to help you out. We will pay an extra '4' points for anything that helps. Another team member? Overtime?"

### Round IV – Sprint 10

"We're live, congratulations. In addition, if we're unlucky some teams will have to deal with a fire."

### Round V – Sprint 13

"Wahooo, we're making money. We're starting to get great customer feedback with all sorts of new ideas. Even though it's mid-sprint and you've already committed, the company needs some changes."



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### Gremlins or Chance Events

These can happen in any round. At the end of every round, roll 2 dice.

Event	Effect	Die Roll
Team Member/Management Relationship	The team perceives their peer is being treated differently than they are and feel this is unfair. Capacity reduced by 2 points until something changes. If nothing is done in the next, reduce capacity by 1 more point.	2
Management yells at a team member in public for not pulling their weight	The team member who was yelled at feels their personal status was reduced. The whole team fears they will be next.  Capacity -2	3
We've had an emergency on another team, we need your best tester for a while.	Capacity reduced by 3 for three rounds.	4
One of the people on your team isn't pulling their weight - not even close. However, nothing seems to get done about it.	The rest of the team is pulling together and taking this person's work on, but it's harming morale and productivity. Productivity reduced by 2.	5
One team member is consistently late or misses Daily Scrum. In addition, they do most of their work on their own.	Other team members are annoyed that this person feels that they're more important than the team. Reduce productivity by 1 point until something changes.	8

***To do – Build a list of actions to take every round: assess effects of new actions, recheck effects of previous actions, roll die for stories, roll die for gremlins. Compile a list of what counts as an engineering or social effect when mitigating bad stuff.***