

Cross-Team Collaboration

A communication and collaboration charter

The Problem

VALT is experiencing issues with communication and collaboration. Internal and external working relationships feel strained.

The Purpose

This deck outlines a beginning framework for improving our team's ability to communicate and collaborate with each other and with other teams.

Mission & Objectives

The goal of this effort is to build strong working relationships with both internal and external teams by focusing on respectful communication and professional collaboration.

Objective

- Identify app issues and present them strategically.
 - Structure: State the issue. Write a hypothesis. Write next steps to move forward or provide 2-3 “solutions”, label them as long-term or short-term/patches. Document.
 - **Example – “Issue Structure”**
 - **Issue:** There is 2 second delay when answering a call from softphone.
 - **Hypothesis:** ***We think** the **root issue might be** [state the issue without blame].*
 - **Next Steps:** Ask other teams to test/check notifications from broadsoft, mercury, and SDK to confirm where the root of the problem lives.
 - **Document Outcome (POs):** *Document the short-term solution and the long-term solutions in Trello/Rally, assign to the appropriate teams.*

3 Guidelines

We should agree to do our best to practice better communication and encourage others to do the same.

Try to:

- Agree to hold each other **accountable**.
 - Identify when someone could be communicating better and ask if they're open to feedback.
- Avoid partaking in '**blame culture**'.
 - Blame culture is the act of calling out individuals or teams in a negative way. Instead, identify the negative issue objectively and ask the team to help fix it (ie. Issue Structure).
- Be **honest** and **transparent**.
 - If you don't know the answer, say something and share info whenever you can.

Focus Group Roles

In order to have the greatest chance at success, members of the focus group will need to actively participate on a regular basis:



POs & Scrum Master - Blaine Jespersen | Lisa DeMuis | Liz Caffrey

- Lead by example: Don't participate in blame culture, encourage design sessions and swarming when appropriate.
- Surface communication/collaboration challenges to stakeholders and/or managers when necessary.
- Document identified tasks in Trello after consulting other development teams (POs only).
- Create constructive retros that help support and foster improved team communication (Scrum Master only).



Engineers – Ben Janos | Chris Tupps

- Lead by example: Don't participate in blame culture, stay looped in to what the other teams are working on.
- Support team members on structuring issues before sending to other development teams.
- Surface communication challenges to POs or Scrum Master. *Could be within our teams or related to other teams being non-responsive or providing responses that are not satisfactory.*

Hopes & Expectations

Efforts to improve cross-team communication and collaboration are difficult and require influencing behavioral changes. Everyone should be flexible and open to trying new things and doing their best to be accountable.

If we're not actively putting in effort, nothing will change. **Let's try to improve.**

Blame shaming creates an environment of stress and discourages accountability. **Let's stop pointing fingers.**

Lack of transparency and info sharing creates working relationships without trust and respect. **Be upfront about what you know/don't know, and be empathetic towards other teams and people.**

Acknowledging achievements and work improves everyone's experience. **When a team/person does well here or on another team, celebrate it.** 🎉

Kickoff Activity

Team Challenges (Process, Technology, People)

- X

Mitigation Ideas

- X

Tentative Future Plans

In order to touch base, surface new/existing issues, and assess how things are going, we'll meet officially every 2-3 weeks. Since this is an experiment scheduling will be managed flexibly.

Next Meeting – TBD

- Have we tried to utilize the issue structure yet?
 - If so, how did it go? How can we improve it?
- Review the Challenges list we created during the Kickoff.
 - Select 1-2 issues and create frameworks to address them.
- Discuss honest feedback/ideas on this initiative thus far.

Thoughts & Discussion