

# Memo 10 – Chapter 09: Create Technical Excellence

Many people of the gaming industry often see it as fun where employees are friendly, eccentric, have nerf gun fights with each other using cubicles as cover and that's how the industry like to promote itself as: people with a passion for game development have fun and play. However it couldn't be further from the truth at best it's a passionate people collaborate to create something new and at its worst it's the industry has hours of a sweat shops, the maturity level of a preschool, and the fiscal responsibility of a subprime mortgage trader.

Take for example the story of "Team Bondi" the studio that made the game "L.A Noire". Over the span of eight years they were only able to produce one game after blowing through over a hundred million dollars. They went through almost constant crunch time, with twelve hours days, seven days a week often considered the "norm". This studio management could have learned a lot from Lean principles; for, the studio's management would circumvent his leads and shouted at individual employees in the middle of the office at the slightest provocation. In the end when their one product, L.A Noire, was forced out to be shipped, with the help of Game Studio Rockstar, most of the people who worked on it were maliciously left off the credits because the studio heads didn't want to give credit to anyone who didn't endure the whole way through.

Company A in the article, Crunch Time: The Reasons and Effects of Unpaid Overtime in the Games Industry by Henrik Edholm, Mikaela Lidström and Jan-Philipp Steghöfer, mirrors much like the story of Team Bondi. It calls to attention to the long hours in the game development industry management. Where employees, programmers, and artist alike, are intimidated into going above and beyond all to compensate for bad business practices or incompetence from above. These artist, via code or art, are regularly told "you'll never find another job in this industry if you quit". As awful as that is artist would very often choose to make sacrifices for their art, but sacrifice must come with a purpose.

In chapter 9 of Create Your Successful Agile Project it goes into creating "Technical Excellence"; for example, "how much quality does your product need". As Agile practices would have it we are all restricted to the inevitable trade-off:

- Good (Quality)
- Fast (Time to Market)
- Cheap (Cost Effectiveness)
- Done

The trade off is that you can have any three, but never the fourth. Because of this, managers can adjust the control knobs of project management:

- Schedule
- Staff
- Quality
- Scope