From Kanban to ShapeUP...ish
Simone Sciarrati

@meltwatereng   @dezmodue   Meltwater

WHO?

Foundation Mission

WHAT?

We provide products for development teams

Kanban (2016-2017)

- Born as an offspring of Operations

- No PO

- No Agile Coach

Scrum (2017-2019)

Why?

- Define clear time and work boundaries and regain a feeling of accomplishment

- Regain focus and continuity

We also get a PO and AC

Scrum (2017-2019)

- We have products and quarterly objectives

- Grooming

- Sprint review

- Retro & experiments

- Customer discovery (PO)

- Roadmap

Retros

- Sprint commitment not completed again

- Have we really had 2 full weeks of uninterrupted sprint time (from last retro). Is this working?

- Sprint Review doesn't give complete picture of Sprint to PO

- Lots of incidents

- Took in tech debt, due to lower priority, left uncompleted

- Lots of disappointment floating around in the team. Ourselves, each other, work we do

- Roadmap: It was very weird. It was more of a presentation. We didn't have a lot of say in it. It was off in many ways.

- Pairing: We didn't do it. It would be great if we did

- Missing link from the roadmap into the tickets that exist in Jira

- Grooming takes too long, where is the value

Scrum (2017-2019)

- Still difficult to tackle tech debt

- Still too many meetings

- PO is still somehow "outside" of the team

- Not aligned / in sync with product

- Still difficult to get in the zone

OKRs (2019)

- Focus on outcome rather than output

- Long term objectives (increase XYZ adoption to 80% by Q4)

- Short term key results aligned to the objectives

- Empower the team

  - The team is given a small number of significant problems to solve (the *objectives*). The team considers the problems and proposes clear measures of success (the *key results*)

OKRs (2019)

- Good concept

- First iteration didn't work great

- Some Objectives "unexpected"

- Some large chunk of work "invisible"

- Still feeling the disconnect between Product & Engineering

- As a result, we agreed the Q3 objectives mid August….

Meanwhile…

- Some of us came across the book "ShapeUp" from basecamp

  - "For one, we're not into waterfall or agile or scrum. For two, we don't line walls with Post-it notes. For three, we don't do daily stand ups, design sprints, development sprints, or anything remotely tied to a metaphor that includes being tired and worn out at the end. No backlogs, no Kanban, no velocity tracking, none of that.
    We have an entirely different approach. One developed in isolation over nearly 15 years of constant trial and error, taking note, iterating, honing in, and polishing up. We've shaped our own way."

Meanwhile…

- And "[Inspired: How to Create Tech Products Customers Love](#)"

    - "*Product teams*. Specifically, they are cross-functional (product, design and engineering); they are focused on and measured by *outcomes* (rather than output); and they are *empowered* to figure out the best way to solve the problems they've been asked to solve."

    - In an *empowered product team*, the product manager is explicitly responsible for ensuring *value* and *viability*; the designer is responsible for ensuring *usability*; and the tech lead is responsible for ensuring *feasibility*. The team does this *by truly collaborating* in an intense, give and take, in order to *discover* a solution that work for all of us.

Our Takeaways

- Find your own way

- There should be no boundaries between Product, Engineering, UX, Testers etc

- Build a team of missionaries not mercenaries

How

- Deeper collaboration between P & E, discovery, objectives, key results
  - E.g. Product work goes on the board and is discussed as part of standup
- Define and commit to key results as a team, allow a long enough time to build something meaningful and short enough that everyone uses the time wisely
- Product discovery for next iteration happens during current iteration
  - This is a team effort, driven by the PO with the participation of the engineers
- Longer iterations to allow focus
- 6 weeks cycle, time is fixed, scope can be adjusted
- Schedule for "downtime", non feature development iteration (2 weeks)
  - This a dedicated time for learning or experimenting or fixing that thing that really annoys you...

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YMMV

- We changed our definition of success, from a "perfect technical solution" to an "imperfect product that makes our colleagues happy"

- Open communication inside and outside the team is the best way to build trust in our products and in each other

- We embraced a flat and inclusive hierarchy, no matter what your title is every opinion counts the same

Thank you

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