

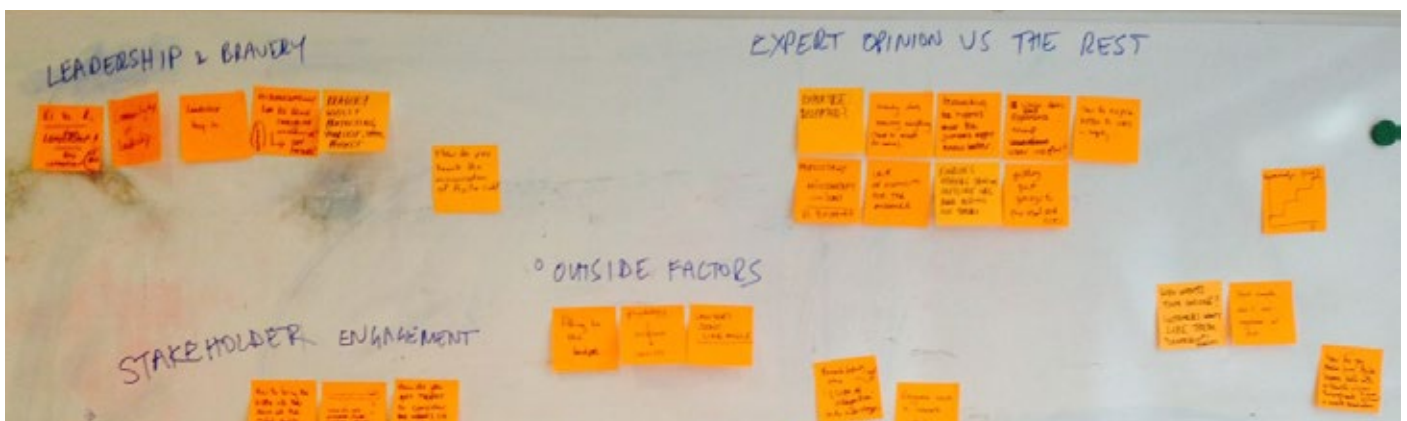
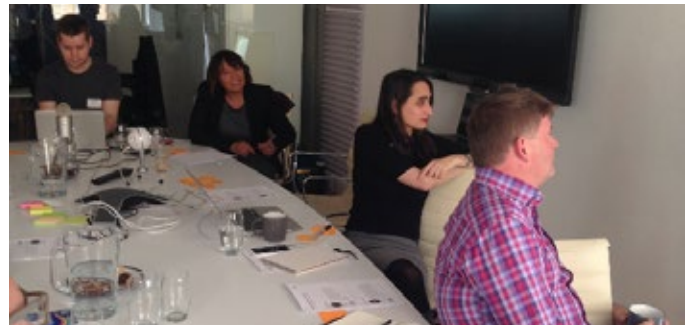
Media Roundtable Session

Wednesday 20th May 2015

Leading the transition to Agile in established media companies.

From publishers to TV and from music to education, traditional media companies have changed beyond recognition in the last decade in the shift to digital. Disaggregation of formats, new customer behaviours, new business models. Who is leading that transition truly well? What can we learn from them?

- How do the best-established media companies manage a complex portfolio of new digital products and services?
- How do you create new business models fast when old ones are falling away?
- How can digital deliver Agile into a Waterfall organisation?



Panel List



Dominic Mason
Client Partner
Unboxed Consulting



Jo Eggeman
Digital Learning Manager
Cambridge English



Jo Wickremasinghe
Head of Product
Which?



Luke Broadhurst
Head of Private Equity
Criticaleye



Marc Goodchild
Digital Media Consultant



Martyn Evans
Head of Product
Unboxed Consulting



Melissa Sabella
Director, Product
and Innovation
Reed Learning



Richard Atherton
Management Consultant,
Coach & Programme Manager



Richard Stobart
CEO
Unboxed Consulting



Tom Corfield
Director of Learning Products
The Student Room



Melissa Sabella,
Director,
Product and
Innovation



Melissa is Director of Product and Innovation at Reed Learning. Her passion is developing creative products and services for education by working with organisations and learners to define their challenges and then delivering innovative solutions. She works with technology teams, marketing teams, sales people and executives internally to ensure that the voice of the customer is in everything they build.

 @msabella

LIGHTNING TALK 1

'The Brain vs. Your Funding'

"It's not that people are intentionally holding back innovation. Every CEO wants to innovate but how do you actually get them to the point where they say yes?"

Building up rich-share knowledge structures

When you become an expert in something, you have extensive connections through a lot of different ideas and concepts. They're complex. The more you talk to people, the more you learn and the more they get born. When you're building a relationship with a team, you can make connections really quickly.

Cognitive load

The amount of information you can absorb in one time; overcome this by chunking the information – "first we'll do A, then we'll move onto B". So that when you get to business plan presentations, they're already prepared for it.

Rider vs. Elephant

Rider: Our rational side

Elephant: Our emotional side

You have to appeal to the rational and the emotional: the riders and the elephants. The emotional piece is the elephant; it's being ridden by the rational piece, the rider. But remember that the elephant is so much bigger than the rider. You have to:

- Motivate the elephant – this is the energy to get people to do things
- Appeal to the rider, get the rational side to say: "Yes, this makes sense"
- Shape a pathway, provide a frictionless way for someone to change their habit and behaviour, to get them to say 'yes'

- 1 Slowly build knowledge structures - strengthen important connections
- 2 Group concepts – deliver in doses
- 3 Be aware of misconceptions – patiently break them down
- 4 Offer an easy way to say 'yes'



Richard Stobart,
CEO

Unboxed Consulting

Richard founded and runs Unboxed Consulting, an Agile Enterprise Ruby on Rails System Integrator. He enjoys stimulating ideas, shaping the company and looking for ways to improve. He's also interested in Lean Startup and Startup Weekends.

 @RichardStobart

LIGHTNING TALK 2

'The Onion and the Orange'

The orange vs. the onion analogy

Orange: Building a component incrementally by segment – you don't have an orange until all the segments are complete.

Onion: Building an end-to-end solution iteratively by layer means that from the outset you have something that works as an onion; each layer makes a more complete onion.

We used to build systems by segment and when all components were ready, we had a full orange and we could go out and use it. Now, from day one, we start to build what will be an onion. This helps in identifying the big issues earlier in the product's development lifecycle.

Ignorance vs. time

Dan North's idea is to imagine a graph of your ignorance about a project over time. At the beginning of the project your ignorance is as high as it can possibly be. As you go through the project lifecycle, things happen to the project, which reduce your ignorance over time.

In order to drive down your ignorance, get your simplest thing into production to learn as fast as possible what your highest risks are. You want to drive down your ignorance as fast as you can by doing your biggest risk items first; try and reduce the risk – that's what Agile is about.

"Your ignorance bounces down over time"

Risk profile

The perceived risk of a traditional project approach starts low when there's plenty of time and money left - all RAG reports start green. At the end of the project, when time and money are spent and things aren't going to plan is when the wheels come off, RAG reports go red and risks skyrocket. Agile tries to address the riskiest items first so it appears that, early on, the project is running very high-risk profile. It is, but all that is doing is shining the spotlight on risks that exist anyway. Agile tries to put something small into production, it doesn't go well and that's perceived as high risk where the traditional approach of steadily doing the requirements, signing them off, building the solution, etc. seems much lower risk. This is why Agile seems the wrong approach at the beginning of a project and cautious people knee-jerk back to the perceived lower risk, preferring to ignore the unknowns until it's too late.



Richard Atherton,
Management
Consultant, Coach
& Programme
Manager

Richard is a consultant with 15 years' experience. He has led or helped to deliver complex programmes at ITV, BBC and Universal International. He has a big interest in the human condition and organisational culture. He's a fair-weather yogi and currently working on an Agile-meets-Yoga workshop concept ;)

 @RathertonRich

LIGHTNING TALK 3 'Change'

Change and how we can use Agile and Lean principles in our approach to leading and managing.

Resisting to change

Six factors have been identified:

- 1 Fear, insecurity and confusion
- 2 Time and resource – are we asked to be doing too much with too little?
- 3 Everyone's happy, they don't see the need for change
- 4 A lack of sponsorship
- 5 People are overloaded
- 6 People don't feel like they've got the skills

If we think of this from a Lean perspective and in terms of principles, many practices we apply in Agile software engineering apply to many of these factors. When we try to change a system or a culture, as we move out of resistance and start to see changes, we're moving into a high complexity environment.



"Much in the same way that software development is a highly complex environment so is human change."

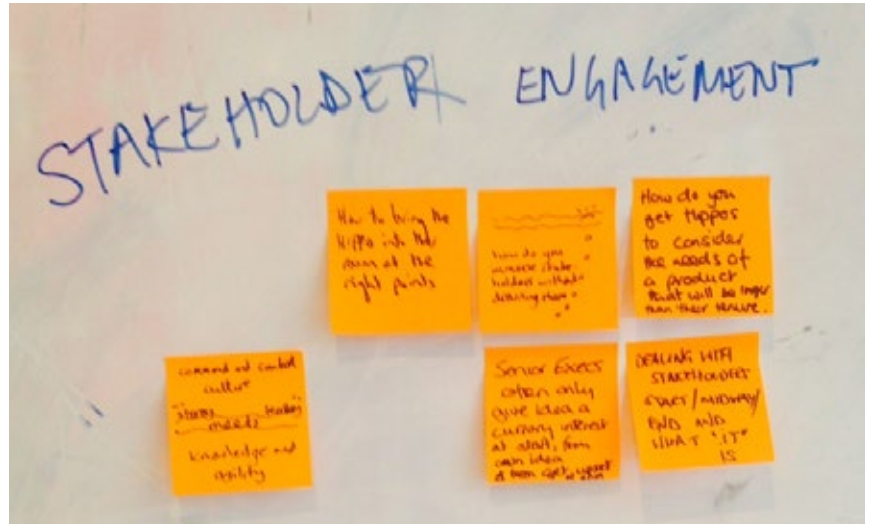
The same techniques and philosophies that have evolved to deal with highly complex software problems can equally be applied to a chaotic change of system.

DISCUSSION 1 ● ● ● ●

Stakeholder engagement

Try to engage stakeholders continuously

At the start of a project, use an inception workshop, getting as many of the senior stakeholders, the team and representatives of the end user all into a room for an extended period of time. This aligns the team around the vision for the project. It provides the basis of a continuous visualisation of progress, even when there is none.



Demos provide clarity for stakeholders, as well as the team

Regular demos and show-and-tells show what we've been doing, what we've found out and what we're going to do next. Stakeholders should attend for the team's sake, it's important they feel their work is cared about. "You can't keep moving demos around to suit stakeholders, there's always somebody who can't make it". Let people know they don't have to say something in a demo. Sometimes when you bring people in they feel like they must say something. If they don't say anything, they feel like they're not delivering.

*There's an emotional piece, which is the risk of:
"If I don't know that, then what am I doing here?"*

Stakeholders in media projects

Stakeholders are very rarely involved from the beginning. They just want to see a rough-cut in the last few weeks before going live, and expect everything else to be sorted out and taken away from them. It's extremely difficult to get them to the right meeting.

DISCUSSION 2 ● ● ● ●

Leadership and bravery

What does good leadership look like?

These people hold the money, they have big opinions, how will we lead them into unknown territory?

Language is important. You need to use a certain kind of language to make sure that it's delivered in a positive way. Over time, people develop a language that works.

Leadership in publishing

In the publishing industry, when moving from print into a digital space, a lot of senior leaders and managers don't have expertise in this area. Traditionally they might have come through and been publishers themselves and risen up the ranks, and that's very different for them doing if they've never been in the digital roles before. They might not truly understand what other people in the organisation do. It's really important to understand these roles, for leaders to take the effort and do the same type of interviewing and discovery that you do with your end users.



What are your objectives?

Use the initial meeting to get everyone on the same page about objectives, and then recap the objectives in every following meeting. Your approach is then supporting your objectives and not just judging "is it the best idea in the room?".

"You have a number of developers, you don't want to spend more money so you have to decide what are the most important features"

Not enough organisations use personal prioritisation in a way that leaders can understand.

Give leaders a forecast, do a rough backlog estimation exercise; tell them to decide what goes in, but it can't be everything - you can't keep adding more bricks into the wheelbarrow.

DISCUSSION 3 ● ● ● ●

Fitting to the budget

When are we going to hit milestone one, milestone two, etc.?

It works well when an account director knows their client very well and knows their hidden objectives, understand what their real objectives are.

Two ways to engage people:

- Show them things quickly that won't be finished but get their input – money not saved
- Go through the process as normal, set the budget then go about disproving something, and within a couple of weeks you have clear evidence that this is not what people want – money saved

How does a shift of mindset happen so that a product isn't just out there, finished and done?

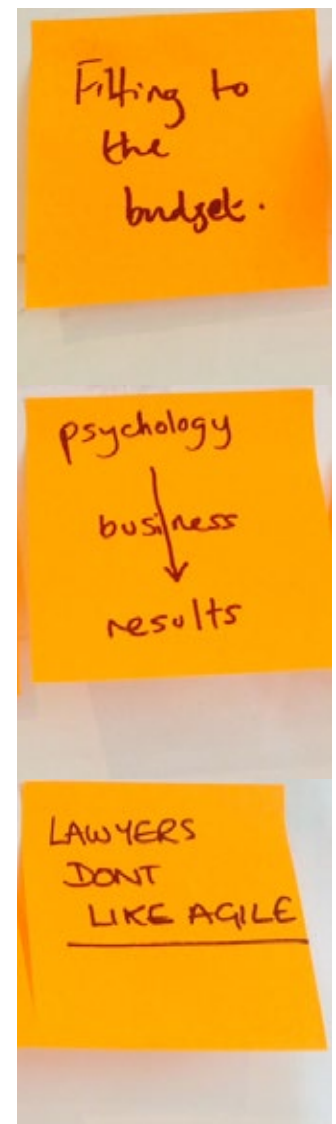
You've still got to put a significant amount of budget aside for product maintenance and for a market release. Digital is completely different. Change the mindset of those holding the purse strings and sitting on the board.

Internal resource vs. External resource

"Not everything is done in-house; the nature of freelancers is changing". When forming teams, somebody will be making intelligent decisions that will be used effectively. Stakeholders find it easier to hear you're shifting teams of people rather than writing a cheque – it's a big thing to sign that cheque and for them to ask "What am I going to get for it?". The stakeholders don't see the difference between an internal and external team. To de-risk, we can say we'll only commit to the agency for a certain set of sprints.

The great thing about Agile is that you can prove things very quickly; you pick the right things to work on and deliver quickly

Agile teams can be adapted and adjusted accordingly, keeping the team smaller to reduce cost and risk, and learn more. Opening up and being transparent about costs is quite important. When you work by time and materials with an agency, it's in their best interest to do great work very quickly. By measuring sprint-by-sprint, you're signing off stories as 'done' and seeing results. In Waterfall, a team could be going in the wrong direction for a couple of weeks and then go crazy trying to deliver something at the end.



DISCUSSION 4 ● ● ● ●

Expert opinion vs. the rest

PERSISTENT
MISCONCEPTIONS
VS EVIDENCE

Try to have a cross-functional team

Mix people across expertise with a cross-functional team. Building using Lean Startup principles is about making something as cheaply as possible, as development is seen as expensive, a team doesn't want to buy a new developer until they're in a position to build something. You want those people there, you want them flexible, you want them adaptable, you want them to be able to go out there and do user research with senior stakeholders.

LACK
OF HUMILITY
FOR THE
AUDIENCE

getting
past
proxies to
the real end
users

FINDING
OTHERS' OPINIONS
OUTSIDE OGS
AND ACTING
ON THEM



There's leadership in all areas

"Developers should lead development and designers should lead design," explains Martyn Evans, "but they've got to be the right candidate". Leadership is way of empowering and facilitating. The most senior person in a room is sometimes seen as the expert. You've got to unpick that.