

The Thought Works! Engagement

MY Internal Dev Coach Training Experience

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# Introduction

Thoughtworks, Being Agile those are words that was significant to me when i heard that we were having an Agile Training to transform our team into an Agile team. this was a very good sign and i was up for it, Because Who is Thoughtworks i always remember seeing this company in multiple books when i was in college and i know this will be a big and good change for the team with their help. but then they mentioned that i will be an internal dev coach i was reluctant at first due to the things the Mapper Team mentioned that it will really consume your time studying while still doing your daily work, we must read books, have a coding dojo, trainings and so much more. this was very overwhelming for me especially the reading part because i am not really a reader i am more on learning things on how i see them or how it was thought to me or explained, i was also in a lot of pressure because i wasn't sure if i don't take i will regret it. But with some encouragement of my PM and some of the coaches that will join and what are the thing i will get out of it.

What is Agile and how will it change our team? Since college I was always hearing about Agile and how it is used to enhance the process and the team’s efficiency on doing development. Agile describes an approach to software development under which requirements and solutions evolve through the collaborative effort of self-organizing and cross-functional teams and their customer(s)/end user(s). Ever since I joined GSP there was no approach on how the development is describe, we’ve always done just do development & support and deploy it to QA Environment let QA test it then once QA passed it wait for release plan of PM or BA or if dev lead sees it was very important. That has been the way we had ever since, but we’ve always try to enhance the process and maybe a year before ThoughtWorks came we we’re starting to try being agile but there were too many things that’s need to be focus on and we really aren’t familiar on how to start and where to start on being agile.

Internal Dev Coach I wasn’t sure what it meant, but I was chosen to be one. I learned from the mapper team being an Internal Dev Coach means being responsible for making the development team follow and adopt being agile while still being part of the development team. As I am not really an organized person I was not sure at first if I will accept it because handling GSP as a support and a developer was already too much for me then it was mentioned that there will be so much reading, studying, meetings and trainings that was a big pressure for me but with the encouragement of my PM and Colleagues and the things I would acquire and learn from ThoughtWorks. I became interested and decided to join this very big opportunity I risked it all even though I know it will be tiring and there will be too much pressure.

# Body

Let’s start with the first interview from ThoughtWorks, I was very scared because I was not sure if ThoughtWorks is very strict or very formal with their interview and I am weak with interviews, but I did not expect that it will be a chill interview just only a question and answer on what the status of our team is. I’ve explained on how GSP is not yet agile and is willing to adopt and merge with ITS to become an agile team. This interview determined the status of GSP in AMM report it was very poor and if ITS was not considered in the AMM report it will most likely be very low on how agile we are. So as a chosen dev coach I was determined to help my team and adopt the Agile way along with ITS team. So, after that we had our first IPM, ITS already had this agile practice and it was GSP’s first time to have that and it was very messy. Our TW Coach mentioned that we’ve mixed multiple Agile Practice in the IPM and it should not be that way. So, after a few more of incorrect Agile practices we’ve been always consulting our TW Coach before starting any of those practices.

Then there was the Coaching Kata, it was for the self-improvement of the dev coaches and we will be the one updating it and creating our own goals to complete within the 6 weeks. Before that started ITS-GSP’s Coaches had a conversation and had an idea to have a meeting first with the team on Everyone’s weakness and strength we had that meeting because we the coaches wanted to have a goal that would eliminate not just our weaknesses and help our team to conquer their own and leverage each and everyone’s strength so that will be our basis for the coaching kata. And thankfully our TW coach was very proud that the team started to define and have an action on what we wanted to improve on the team, because the training is for the whole team not just ourselves.

On my first week for the coaching kata I was very afraid on how the interview will turn out, and I was correct that it will have a pressure on how much work will have, this was mentioned by our coach that it is good to have a little pressure so that we may move out of our comfort zone and pursue our goal. As I was sharing what I want to learn and improve and how could I help the team, our coach mentioned some advice on what I should focus on and what topic I should pursue and here they are:

* Refactoring
* Coding Standards
* learn design patterns
* Git management
* Docker (was added at the 5th week)

The goal was very broad, but our coach mentioned this is are the long-term goals and can be continued even after the coaching kata ends. But there should a much more specific focus for the 6 weeks.

* Mostly used Transactions in GSP:

1. FindGeographyWithSimpleSerchCriteria
2. FindOrgnizationUnitWithSimpleSerchCriteria

* Create a coding standard for the team
* Create auto integration
* Learn 3 design pattern
* Learn what and how to use docker

Then we started to add the action for the first week and I already thought it was too much, but our coach mentioned I think that is okay the first week can be easy, so I smiled and thought “oh this is just enough for the week? On top of my own work”. As I started with the week. I proceeded with my action plans for that week first it was the Code Review and Coding Standard. I ask to advise from our coach what can I do for the coding standard he mentioned to apply the CheckStyle plugin for the team and then I started studying Coding Standard and how to apply the checkstyle to the team, after studying I presented it to the team and applied a daily code review for the team so that the standard can be created base on the reviews we are having. But it seems daily review is not effective as it consumes time and its not like we have commits every day, so we made it a Bi-Weekly Code review. After sharing about the Coding Standard to the team I asked some co-workers if they know any standard in the company we only found one that was 2004 and most of it was not really applied but some is being used. So, I tried to study that and apply most of what is already being used to the checkstyle plugin, so the team will have a plugin that will make it clear if they are not following the team’s standard. After the Code review and checkstyle, I started on my next goal for that week that is to study the Factory Pattern and share it to the team at first, I was struggling with this goal because it was more focused on reading. So, I asked our coach on what I can do to study this he mentioned a book “Head First Design Patterns” and this book was amazing it was much of more of technical they way it was written rather than pure explanation. So, I was able to absorb it very well with also some help of a little research and videos. After studying factory pattern, I was able to share it in a simple manner that my whole team would be able to understand and apply it on their own.

After the first weeks struggle I was able to little by little adopt to the pressure of the work load and I was advise to delegate some of my current support work load to my team mates to help me much focus more on doing my goal and focusing on the sprint items every week. Continuing with my weekly goals I was able to apply the checkstyle plugin to the team and a tweaked version of the default coding standard that came with the plugin I already added some of the discussed standard by the team. Then that was already more so completed as the Coding Standard is a progressive goal that will always change and adopt to what the team has decided, so I continued on finishing more of my goals there were some week that I had failed to complete all of my action and that is due to some sprint items that were much more priority and lost much of sleep just to try and catch up but still was not able to finish them but I tried my best to catch up and finish all those unfinish goals and continue with doing action. So the continuation of my goal was to learn more about git commands rather than use git extensions and i have studied the basics and also shared a cheat sheet to the team so that my learning is shared across the team. Then I started with the tool I plan to create for the team it is a Auto Pom Upgrade this is to help reduce the work load of the domain integrator and lessen mistakes on upgrading pom or forgetting to upgrade dependencies that has been affected by the change seen on the git. I was first struggling with this tool because I was not familiar with most of the libraries I will be using but I catch up on my tool and was able to finish it. As for the refactoring goal at first I made a mistake I started refactoring without even creating any test cases and my coach mentioned that was a bad idea and then stashed my changes and created the test cases as I finish those cases I learned testing habits from the Coach sharing and from another coach sharing about dealing with legacy code so I adjusted again my test cases to have more coverage then from what I learned in the sharing of dealing with legacy codes I reverted my stashed refactoring because I was amazed on how he did his refactoring and applied all I learned from him to my refactoring. Then I paired with my own coach and he was okay with most of my changes and also asked him to help me reduce a cyclomatic complexity in one of the new class I created due to refactoring because I was not sure on how will I change some of them but I already refactored on what I can and I was able to learn more again due to that pairing because my coach was very talented and very smart. After those goals I studied the docker to help with another of my colleagues own goal this is a collaborative goal and it was very fun to do because his project will be very helpful to the team so I was excited to study the docker and help him and we’ve already done the application of docker and moved his project to the container image we created. After that I applied Tech Debt grooming to the team this is to make the team find more code smell/duplication/bugs/defect we may find on our own time.