Interview guide

Introduction and Background

We are students from Chalmers and Göteborg University working on our Master's thesis with Ericsson. The goal of our research is to look into the communication patterns inside the large-scale organization using SCRUM and identify problematic areas that might be hindering the possibility of reaping the benefits of agile adoption. As a part of this work we are conducting interviews with several employees to get the perspective of those actually involved in the various aspects of the development process and create a broad picture of existing context. We will interview representatives of various roles within the organization and thus aim to cover as more aspects of the existing environment as possible.

The purpose of this interview is to gain more insight on the current situation from you as a member of XFT [XFT-NAME] and possibly discover any discrepancies or obstacles of the communication flow.
Your response will be treated anonymously in any publications (internal or external) of this study.
We will start the interview with a set of questions regarding your background in the organization and continue on with more open-ended questions related to the transformation of the development process in Ericsson and sequentially arising issues related to the organizational structure and information flow inside it.
The interview will take around [NNN] minutes.
Do you have any questions at this stage?
To be able to come back to the contents of this interview and extract as much information as possible we would like to record this session. Is this alright by you?

Background information

1. What is your role in the team? (Closed question)
2. What are your key responsibilities? (Open question)
3. Have you been working here before the transition towards agile?
    a. What was your role during that time?
4. Could you describe the interpretation of Scrum you follow inside the team?

Agile Transformation & Ways of Working

5. **What is your view on company's transition towards agile?**

    Probing Questions

    a. What is the vision for the transformation?
    b. Are the expectations fulfilled?
    c. Is the organization more responsive to change and more reactive?
    d. Do you feel that all levels of the organization are supportive towards agile?

6. **Are there any aspects regarding the organisational structure which tend to stand in the way of working in an agile manner?**
   a. How different are various parts of the organization in their agility?
   b. How compatible are the elements of the old structure with the new way of working?

Context Information

7. **How do you relate to other roles (inside and outside your XFT)?**

   <u>Probing Questions</u>
   A. How often do you communicate with other roles?
   B. What are the issues you communicate about with each role?

Information flow

8. **What do you think about your communication with the parties outside the team in terms of its sufficiency and efficiency?**
   <u>Probing Questions</u>
   A. (If positive) Can you describe how this is achieved?
   B. (If negative) What are the problems in such communications?
      a. Do you feel like there is sufficient communication with every role you need to interact with about your work?
         i. (If no) In what way does it differ between various roles?
      b. How can it be improved?

9. **What do you think about information sharing within the organisation both ways: top to bottom as well as bottom up?**
   <u>Probing Questions</u>
   A. (If positive) Can you describe how the information sharing is achieved?
      a. How do you decide on what information to share?
      b. What kind of knowledge do you share upwards?
      c. How does this sharing happen?
      d. In what form is this information transmitted?
   B. (If negative) In what direction is communication insufficient or inefficient?
      a. How does this information sharing happen?
      b. What is problematic with this knowledge transfer?
      c. What can be a reason of problem areas?
      d. How can this information sharing be improved?

Work flow

10. **How can the normal workflow during the sprint be interrupted from it's planned direction?**
    <u>Probing Questions</u>
    A. (If not interrupted) How is this achieved?
    B. (If interrupted) How often does it deviate from the plan?

  a. What do you feel is the biggest cause interrupting your work or flow?
    i. What are different types of recurring interruptions?
  b. How are these interruptions addressed during sprint planning?
    i. (If no) Why is anticipation not possible?
    ii. (If yes) Which parts of unexpected change can be anticipated?
      1. What is the influence of parties outside the XFT on such changes and interruptions?
  c. Which parties are normally involved in addressing and mitigating unexpected change and interruptions?
  d. Which roles have more responsibilities than other in such a case?

C. Are there problematic areas of communication about these interruptions significantly blocking the sprint's progress?
  a. (If yes) Which are these? Can you elaborate?
D. What else can block the sprint's backlog?

11. How volatile is your team's sprint backlog during the sprint?
<u>Probing Questions</u>

E. (If changes) Where do the changes come from?
  a. Does it happen regularly?
  b. When you discuss the change and possible resolutions, who do you discuss it with?
  c. In such discussions, are there any blockages in the communication line that slow down or hinder its resolution?
  d. How do you integrate such changes with the ongoing tasks?
  e. How does it affect the existing items in the backlog?

12. Your XFT has no team coach at the moment, how does it relate to your workflow?
<u>Probing Questions</u>

A. What parts of your regular workflow are affected by this absence?
B. What challenges does it bring?
C. How are responsibilities of a coach implemented in practice?
  i. How are the responsibilities of a team coach shared?
  ii. Are all the responsibilities of a team coach implemented?

Closing

Thank you for your response. To summarize, [SUMMARIZE KEY ANSWERS AND OPINIONS], is this correct?

We will transcribe this interview and provide you with the transcript so you can point out and correct any misinterpretations.

Was there anything in the interview you found not appropriate to the context? Would you like to add anything/change your response?

If you want to get in contact with us regarding this interview, you can find us [LOCATION].

We would like to ask you not to discuss the contents of this interview with your colleagues to avoid the learning effect.
Thank you for your time, your input is very valuable to our research.