



Free Resources

Are you looking for another great resource to learn more about Agile? 3Back has just introduced a brand new blog with MANY interesting posts already! Doug Shimp is a great friend and you can visit the blog at: <http://www.3back.com/blog>

Credits:

• Empowering the Agile Team:

V. Lee Henson CST
<http://agiledad.blogspot.com>

• 3Back:

Doug Shimp CST
<http://www.3back.com/blog>

• Agile Q&A:

V. Lee Henson CST
<http://agiledad.blogspot.com>

Agile Mentor November 2008

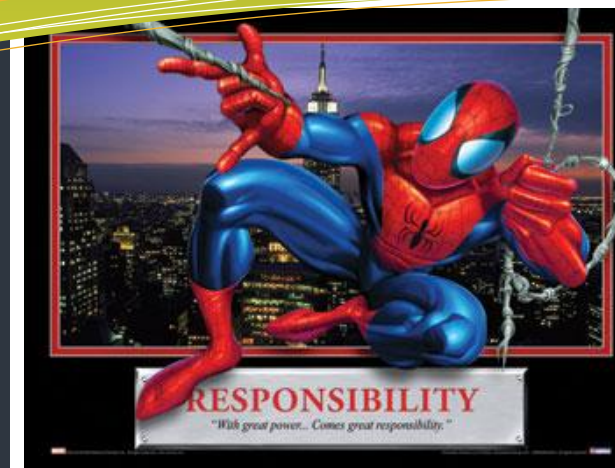
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November 2008

Agile Mentor
Agile World

Agile Mentor



About the Author:

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This Certified Scrum Trainer's experience spans a broad array of technical software production roles and responsibilities. Lee has worked hands on as a GUI web developer, quality assurance analyst, automated test engineer, senior product manager, senior project manager, ScrumMaster, agile coach, consultant, and ADDIE training professional. He has worked with hundreds of teams to assist them in successful implementation of thousands of projects. His client list includes Fortune 500 companies, Government sector projects, small and large software production facilities, and multiple successful large scale e-commerce implementations.

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Empowering the Agile Team

I recently had an opportunity to present at the SQE Agile Development Conference in Orlando. The topic I selected was 'Empowering the Agile Team – With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility'. The class was well attended and my review reflected a score of 8.8 out of a possible score of 10.

The audience was so happy with the material presented, that I decided to make the slide deck and all information surrounding the presentation completely public and available. I am even planning to record an interactive session which I will publish very soon.

Until the interactive session is published, I wanted to share with you in this newsletter the basis for the presentation and the content in review. I encourage you to take complete excerpts from this newsletter or print the entire November edition and present it to your team as a guide for receiving empowerment and all that goes along with the power.

It was my thought that we start off by reviewing the framework that made Agile what it is today. The Agile Manifesto teaches us to value individuals and interactions over processes and tools. I maintained that this would be the focus of our session.

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We begin by focusing on the What if's. It all started a few years ago in an interaction with my daughter. She was and still is a very inquisitive bright young lady. Agile teams can be just as inquisitive. We need to be mindful of the things we say and make certain what they actually hear is the message we were indeed trying to convey.

Often times by disregarding a comment, suggestion, or recommendation from a team member we are sending the message that what they have to say and why they feel that way has little or no significant value. We need to work hard to establish a relationship of trust. The long and short of it is we need to say what we will really do and follow through on what we say. The team is counting on management for the stability they need to handle everything else in their lives in an Agile manner.

When you think about it, Agile development is surrounded by what if's. My challenge was to propose what if we could stop worrying just about time and focus on the end deliverables? How could we let the team know that they could be empowered if they accepted all that went along with the responsibility?

Agile Dad



Seven Traits of a Highly Effective Manager:

- 1) Ability to manage and deal with risk
- 2) Results oriented
- 3) High energy
- 4) Team player
- 5) Multitasking ability
- 6) Improvement Oriented
- 7) Listens first, Speaks second

Ten Keys to Team Effectiveness:

- 1) The team embraces the truth
- 2) The team works in a culture that supports learning
- 3) The team has the authority to make decisions
- 4) The product owner is available and the team takes advantage of it
- 5) The team has a great ScrumMaster
- 6) The team meets daily and is aware of upcoming projects
- 7) Everyone required attends regular Agile meetings
- 8) The team effectively uses the retrospective
- 9) The team sets the rules and understands done
- 10) The team takes commitment seriously



Empowering the Agile Team Continued

“People like the idea of accountability until the blame game begins.”
– V. Lee Henson CST

The biggest part of the issue is brought into light when the team decides they want to be empowered and embraces the reward that comes with it without realizing that they would be the primary target once the finger pointing begins.

We need to stop for a moment and take the needed step back and ask ourselves, how does this apply to what I do and what adaptations do I need to make in order for the new plan to make sense to everyone.

As managers we need to recognize that letting go of the reigns does not mean shear chaos will ensue. We need to identify through inspection what we can do differently to help the team understand what they need to do to be successful so that we can in turn focus on the more important matters that have been placed on our management plate.

As team members, we need to recognize that now that we are in control of our destiny, that makes us even more accountable and lessens the number of people left to point the finger at.

We need to do all we can to remain focused on the project and sprint goals and do whatever it takes to rally the team to success.

The next key is to eliminate the blame game all together. If we are all playing in the right part of the process, the name game will become non-existent and the finger pointing will stop.

Establishing a clear understanding of the levels of Agile planning and relating who should play where combined with a robust training and coaching plan to put the wheels in motion most often results in team and project / product success.

The executive team needs to focus on the vision and strategy. They need to teach the team to sail well with direction and maintain constant visibility with the shore.

Product and project managers likewise need to focus on driving the strategy into meaningful releases and a well defined product backlog.

Team leads and other managers need to ask themselves what they can do to help bolster team confidence and remove any obstacles that could potentially prevent a team from being successful.

Managers need to learn to operate from the outside in. The managers should be facilitators. They should focus on removing impediments and providing a workspace that people long to be in.

“Teams need to constantly inspect and adapt.”
– V. Lee Henson CST

The team can now focus on the work at hand which they have committed to and adapt based on the expectations

set for them. Teams need to continuously inspect and adapt in order to maintain balance and be successful.

Team empowerment happens in moments. It feels like the light switch flipping on and looks like the team made the connection. The stakes will instantly become higher and the value the team provides will greatly increase. We can all win when with great power comes great responsibility.



The Empowered Team:

Is your team empowered? Take a look at the list below and see how your team measures up to a truly performing empowered team.

Efficient: Performing at our BEST!
Motivated: Moving to action.
Productive: Being Generative
Organized: Mental competence
Well Managed: Successful
Engaged: Busy & Occupied
Responsible: Accountable
Energized: Rousing activity
Dedicated: Wholly committed

Does your team meet the requirements?

AgileDad Course Offerings – What others are saying:

- Awesome! Very hands on.
- I thoroughly enjoyed Lee and his presentation. He was incredibly passionate and knowledgeable with outstanding classroom skills.
- This was a great course that helped me understand what Scrum really is and what my role includes. I felt comfortable asking any question and knew I would get answers.
- Lee is VERY good at coaching and leading the class.
- The training was well organized and kept on a great pace.

From the SQE Conference in Orlando:

- Excellent Message and Presentation!
- Great Presenter and Presentation! Lee helped to facilitate in such a way that I did not feel his delivery was over my head. The stories were great and integration perfect.
- Excellent Energy and Content!

People looking for more of where these comments came from can call now and register for a AgileDad class or presentation in their workplace. The rates are reasonable and the presentation is guaranteed to please! Call now for more information!

This Month's Agile Q&A

Q: Where can I find a free Agile Tool?

A:VersionOne offers a great Agile tool solution for free! The team edition allows you to keep track of a single project or release from inception to completion. The solution is not fixed time and is worth a look.

The toned down solution does not present all of the really cool features that makes VersionOne one of the industry leaders, but it does give you enough functionality to lead a team to success. Visit VersionOne.com for more details and the free download.



Q: Does AgileDad have a website outside of the blog space?

A:Great question! And the answer is... Yes! We are in the process of building out AgileDad.com to be a one stop resource for all of your agile coaching, training, and consulting needs.

The best part about this is even if you do not have an immediate need for any of what's listed above, the website will be filled with loads of white papers, slide decks, presentations, and book previews that make the site a viable stop for anyone looking to learn more about Agile.

The launch of AgileDad.Com is coming in early 2009! Previews will begin soon.

EYE ON IT Upcoming AgileDad Engagements:

Certified ScrumMaster Offerings:

Late Jan/Early Feb – Salt Lake City, UT Date to be announced in December.

Orlando Scrum Gathering – March 16-18 Orlando, FL

Better Software Conference - June 8-12 Las Vegas, NV

AgileDad Course Private Course Offerings:

Private course offerings are available including:

- Agile For Executives
- Agile Boot Camp
- Agile Business Requirements
- ScrumMaster Certification
- Scrum Product Owner Certification
- Managing & Grooming The Product Backlog

On-Site Agile Coaching and Consulting are also available.

For more information or to book a course today, please contact:

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