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Credits:

• Has Your Team Been Personally Touched?

V. Lee Henson CST

<http://agiledad.blogspot.com>

• Free Resources

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• Agile Q&A:

V. Lee Henson CST

<http://agiledad.blogspot.com>

Agile Mentor June 2009

Agile Dad

14643 South River Chase Road
Herriman, UT 84096
<http://agiledad.blogspot.com>

June 2009

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About the Author:

V. LEE HENSON CST

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.

lee@agiledad.com

Has your team been personally touched?

One common disconnect I have seen lately, especially in larger organizations is that the team feels like they do not own the demo and often feel like they receive no direct feedback on their work from key stakeholders involved in the project.

Without diving too far down a political path, the most common complaint I hear about people who take office in any level of government is that they are just so out of touch with the real world and how things really happen.

How difficult must it be for a developer to code to specifications, check in code, and never hear a peep about the code again. Now I do realize that developers are paid to code and testers are paid to test, etc. Indeed, I am aware that they are typically paid very well, above industry standards in many cases to retain high quality performers.

Yet when it comes to feedback, we try as hard as we can to shield them from criticism sometimes not even allowing them to hear positive feedback about the product or project they are helping to build. I would argue that this creates an instant barrier between the teams and key stakeholders.

The only question that remains is how do we get stakeholders to give us feedback when the team needs it most without feeling like they have a free ticket to talk anytime?

The team needs to rely on a solid Project Manager or ScrumMaster to make certain that the team has ample opportunity to show their game face and receive credit for the work they perform whether the outcome be good or bad. The team needs to work together to best understand how to take the feedback they have longed for and turn it into a constructive way to inspect and adapt their process or the product / project itself.

This feedback cycle is indeed part of our human nature. We were programmed by our parents when we were very young to look for positive reinforcement for the things we did well and be ready for the backlash when we made a poor choice.

Teams are made up of professional adults who still expect some level of feedback from peers, leaders, managers, and key stakeholders. Just because we grow up does not mean we have a free pass to ignore the team because they are responsible enough to get this all figured out.

So the only question that remains is how do I get my team to feel like they are getting the recognition they desire and deserve for that matter? How do I get my team to feel that personal touch?

Agile Dad



Innovation Games

These interactive techniques let your customers and prospects help you create the products they want. Understand customer needs, identify product functionality, learn how customers interact with your products, and shape your products' future.

Luke Hohmann has devoted his professional career to creating environments where everyone can work to their fullest creative and intellectual abilities. He is a committed coach, working with every individual and the organization as a whole to achieve greater levels of performance.

There are at least 12 unique innovation games (and any number of new games derived by combining elements of these 12 games).

More information about these Innovative Games and how they can help you and your organization achieve success, please visit:

<http://innovationgames.com>



Cont: Has Your Team Been Personally Touched?

"When the team 'gets it', they exceed expectations and perform! "

- V. Lee Henson CST

The first step is making certain teams realize the importance of continuous upward transparency. When stakeholders feel like they are in the loop, they are generally more receptive to providing positive feedback to the team.

Likewise, if the team is not transparent in all they do, the stakeholders are almost more than willing to share their opinion with anyone wearing ears! We need to be aware of what the current level of transparency is and work to tear down the walls between 'us and them'.

Next on the agenda is to teach management the importance of projecting both a strategy and a vision. It is only with both being made perfectly clear that we can help the team best understand the why behind the what. Teams almost always perform better when they understand the vision and how their piece of the puzzle fits into the greater picture. When the team 'gets is' they exceed expectations and truly perform.

The third key it to make certain the team is fully invested. The team should not expect Love unless they are in turn showing a clear reason for them to be loved. A team that works half fast is often treated half fast. Managers will know without question when the team is truly invested.

One note to point out is that teams can easily tell the difference between a manager who is working hard to make a difference and remove impediments and a manager who is just playing the game.

The sooner we decide to work together as a team, the sooner we will realize that no one individual is going to make or break the success of an Agile Team.

The team will be fully invested and engage as soon as they are certain they have a manager to believe in. The team will soon realize that this is a joint commitment and will respond in the form of performance.

A fourth key is to acknowledge the things that went well and reply to the team with ongoing and consistent communication.

The first line of the Agile Manifesto outlines Individuals and Interactions over processes and tools. Yet, we often try to rely on tools as a check on performance often disregarding the output of the team.

"Teams should be judged on output."

- V. Lee Henson CST

Regular and consistent communication is the key to assuring success on Agile projects of ANY size or scope.

The fifth key is all about the metrics. Just how are you measuring the success of the team? Are you focusing on the short term pieces and not looking at what the team is delivering? Are you still in the mode where time is a critical metric? How far along are you on the Agile Evolution Lifecycle? In order for teams to feel like they can make a difference, they need to feel that it is possible.



Reports and metrics should be used for the purpose they were intended for, to provide metrics to key stakeholders which allow them to make educated decisions regarding the future of a specific or future product or project delivery.

Reports should never be used to engage in time related battles. Teams who consistently deliver do so without the axe of time looming over their neck. Less pressure tends to always yield more positive results. The team is counting on you to help remove impediments, not add additional ones.

Finally, the team needs to see that you will assist them in the removal of impediments. This all sounds fine and well until the team realizes that you have ears and no brain to take action on the items they have set before you. Ears with no teeth or bark with no bite is something that quickly dismisses the ability of a leader.

Help the teams achieve success without standing in their way. Work to be a 'Builder' and not a 'wrecker'.

A wrecker works hard to destroy the things we love the most. They often point out that the changes are what was in our best interest yet they produce nothing but pain for all involved.

Builders find a way to involve everyone in the success they achieve. They work hard to produce the highest quality product they can and truly thrive being part of a highly productive team.

This is your chance to be a builder and make a real difference.

EYE ON IT Upcoming AgileDad Engagements:

July 2nd Agile Roundtable SLC

August 6th Agile Roundtable SLC

August 3rd - 7th VersionOne
Quarterly Service Sessions

August 24th - 28th Agile 2009
Chicago, IL
[Http://agile2009.com](http://agile2009.com)

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Agile For Executives
Agile Boot Camp
Agile Business Requirements
Agile Meeting Facilitation
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:

Lee Henson - 801-898-0295
lee@agiledad.com
Steve Davis - 801-361-2643
davisbase@mac.com

This Month's Agile Q&A

Q: How do I get AgileDad to come to my business?

A: Contact us at Lee@agiledad.com or contact Steve Davis directly at Davisbase:

801-361-2643

Mention you saw him here in the Agile Mentor Newsletter for a significant discount!

Q: Can I receive the Agile Mentor Newsletter Internationally?

A: Yes, in the upcoming months we will be collecting email addresses for electronic automatic distribution of this newsletter. Send us over a quick email if you are interested.

