5 PITFALLS

To Avoid when Prioritizing Work

Jacob R. Anderson - CSP

ABOUT US

Since 2012 AgileDad has been transforming companies to meet the needs of an increasingly rapidly changing Agile ecosystem.

- We provide high quality training and coaching to companies ranging in size from Startup to Fortune 100.
- We service both technical & non-tech organizations.
- We wrap the human side into everything we do.
- We design an Agile process that fits how you do business and gets you to a more frequent and regular delivery cadence.
- We don't just design a process and leave, we give you the tools to implement and sustain change.

AgileDad

Session Agenda

Topic

1 Prioritization Realities

2 Single Source of Prioritization

3 Emergency Based Techniques

4 What is Really Important?

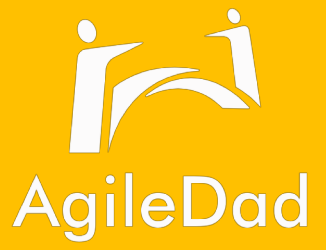
5 Revenue Generation and Prioritization

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

5 Pitfalls to Avoid when Prioritizing Work

Prioritization Realities



Prioritization Realities

Some Things will not be Worked on

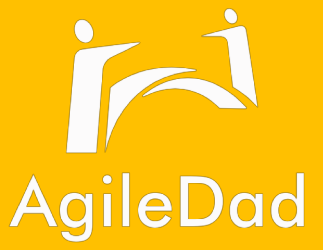
- **Who**
  - … is experiencing a problem that needs to be addressed
- **What**
  - … is the problem being experienced
- **Why**
  - … is solving this problem providing benefit
- **When**
  - … do we know it has been completed
- **How**
  - ... do we go about the solution

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

5 Pitfalls to Avoid when Prioritizing Work

Single Source of Prioritization



Single Source of Prioritization: Internal

Highest Paid Person's Opinion (HiPPO)

- **Why Does this Get Used?**
  - Thoughts… Concerns…
- **How Does this get Changed?**
  - Data should drive decisions
  - Data helps to validate learning
- **Opinions and Conventions**
  - Based on limited visibility
  - Based on "Gut" Feeling
  - We can't be 100% certain

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

Single Source of Prioritization: External

The Customer is Always Right

- **Why Does this Get Used?**
  - Thoughts… Concerns…
- **How Does this get Changed?**
  - Business objectives are important too
  - Always HIGH priority
- **Opinions and Conventions**
  - 15 minute wait time / hold time
  - One-click checkout
  - Single sign-on
  - Receipt required for product returns

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

Single Source of Prioritization: Ideal

Who is the Decision Maker?

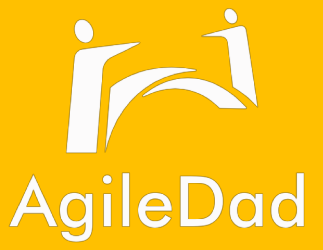
- **Role of the Product Owner (PO)**
  - Decision maker for the items in the Product Backlog
  - Who helps the Product Owner with prioritization
- **Who Helps Inform the Product Owner**
  - Additional Information oftentimes needs to be gathered from subject matter experts
  - PO-BA-FA-TA
    - Business Analyst
    - Functional Analyst
    - Technical Analyst

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

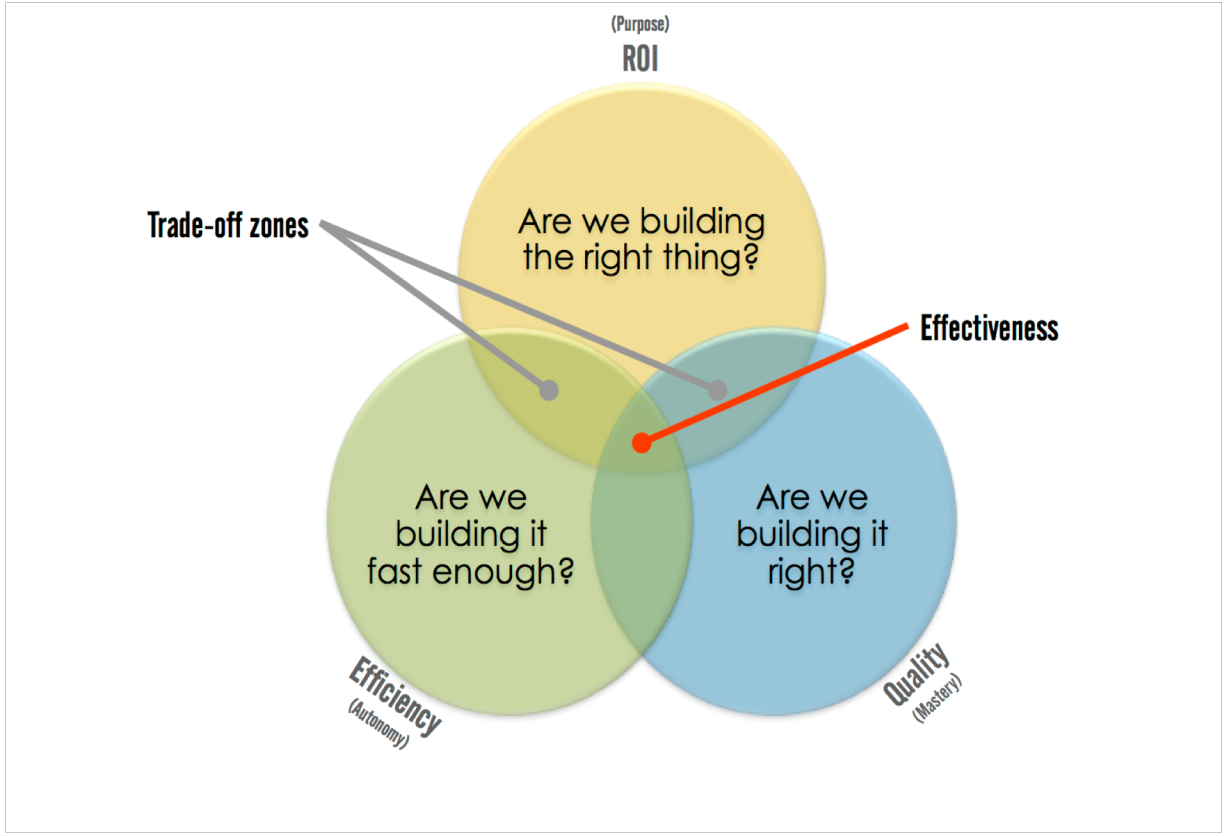
5 Pitfalls to Avoid when Prioritizing Work

Emergency Based Techniques



Emergency Based Techniques

Fire Alarm Model



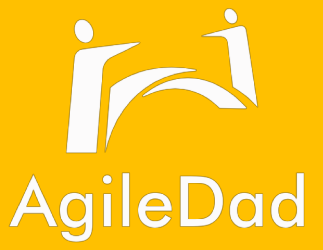
- **Reactive – FIRE ALARM MODEL**
  - Whoever yells the loudest or schedules the most ”working sessions”
  - Managing of escalations
- **Responsive – High - Medium - Low**
  - Understanding and catering to trends
  - Learning more by experience

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

5 Pitfalls to Avoid when Prioritizing Work

What is Really Important?



What is Really Important?

Map Your Morning

- **What activities did you do to get ready for today?**
  - 3 minutes to write down activities
- **Group together (4-5 people)**
  - Identify the common categories of your activities (3 minutes)
- **Identify the general flow**
  - 3 minutes to identify what a general flow looks like for the morning (backbone activities)

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

What is Really Important?

Map Your Morning - Urgency

- **You have 15 minutes to get ready to go out the door**
  - Discuss which activities stay and go (3 minutes)
- **What trends did you notice?**
  - Activities that had to stay
  - Activities that were flexible

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

What is Really Important?

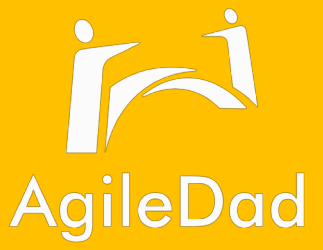
There is always more work requested than the time allotted to do it

- **What is important right now?**
  - Identify the impactful issues
- **What is important in the near future?**
  - Identify the strategic issues
- **How many #1 Priorities do you have?**
  - A's, B's and C's

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

5 Pitfalls to Avoid when Prioritizing Work

Revenue Generation and Prioritization



Revenue Generation and Prioritization

$$$ Equals Priority

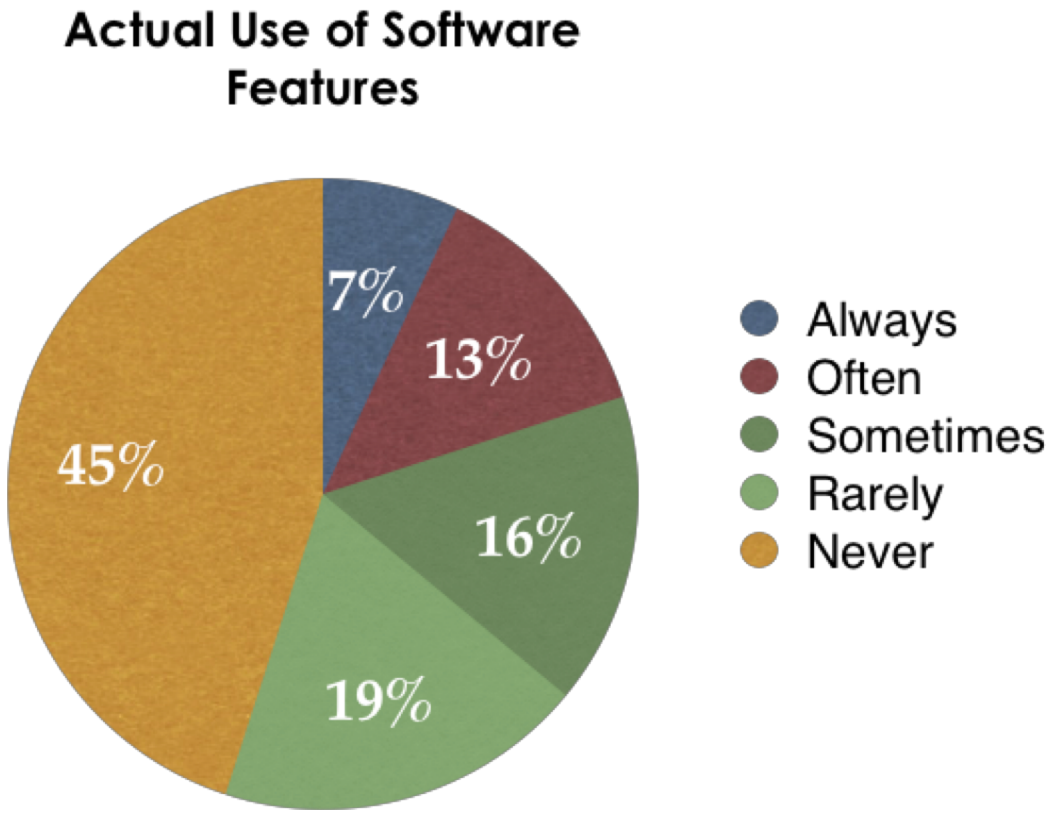
- **Short-term Vision / Custom Products**
  - If someone is willing to pay for it we should do it
  - Growth mode… FALLACY…
    - If someone is going to give you money you don't say NO.
- **Value Stream Mapping**
  - What activities are driving value
  - Sunrise, Sunset, Maintenance
- **Value Generation**
  - Revenue
  - Cost Savings
  - Customer Satisfaction

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

Revenue Generation and Prioritization

Are We Getting the Right Things?



- **What are you missing?**
  - Turn to someone you don't know and share
- **1, 2, 4… All**
  - Larger Group Sharing… Debrief
- **Making sure we get the 20%**
  - Hit the mark early and often
  - Usage increases likelihood of revenue generation

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

Revenue Generation and Prioritization

Blended Prioritization

Must Have	High Priority
Would Like	H-M-L
Must Have	Medium Priority
Must Have	Low Priority
Should Have	H-M-L
Could Have	H-M-L

- **Business Priority**
  - High, Medium, Low
  - Monetized - Function of Revenue
- **Customer Priority**
  - The Shiny Key Syndrome
  - The Customer is Always Right…
  - Must Have, Should Have, Could Have, Would Like (MoSCoW)
- **Complexity / Time**
  - Estimates in Time (Hrs, Days, Weeks)
  - Relative Estimates (Story Pts, T-Shirt Sizes, Etc)

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY

Session Conclusions:

1. There will always be some things that we do not work on. Identifying proper context helps focus on the right things early.

2. Using a single source for prioritization can lead to potential manipulation. Be weary of HiPPO and “The Customer is Always Right” mentality. Make sure the Product Owner is well informed to make the best possible decisions.

3. Work to be responsive instead of reactive. Using the Fire Alarm model is only intended for true fires. Finding the path of least resistance to be called a fire doesn’t make it a fire.

4. Multiple top priorities doesn’t ensure that they get done. There will always be more work than the time available to do the work. Consider impact and strategy when determining what to focus on.

5. Generation of revenue alone does not constitute a priority. Value comes in many fashions such as revenue generation, cost savings and customer satisfaction. Where is the value for what you are considering?

6. Visit AgileDad.com/conferences to download a copy of this presentation or email learnmore@agiledad.com to receive more information.

AgileDad

Copyright 2019 AgileDad – For Classroom Use ONLY