Creating Highly Productive Cross Functional Teams within Agile

Mark Shurtleff

Challenges

- More features More Graphics More Interactions More complexity More Competition
- Shorter product lifecycles
- Constant improvement to stay competitive
- Demand high quality products usable & Bug-free
- Demand innovative WOW products
- Desire to exceed customer expectations
- Team members distributed globally

Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Cisco Network Management Technology Group

Next generation Network Management Applications

Oracle CRM OnDemand

Product Manager Languages Manager

PeopleSoft

Strategic User Experience CRM

Big Machines

Product Manager Commerce RFQ

FileMaker (Apple)

Senior Interaction Designer

Texas Instruments
Product Manager Senior Developer Interaction Designer

MARK SHURTLEFF

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The Team

- Marketing Manager
- Product Manager
- Engineering Manager
- Engineering Architect
- UI Designer[interaction, Visual, User Research]
- QA Manager
- Documentation Manager
- Localization/Translation Manager
- Customer Support Manager

My job is to not be easy on people. My job is to make them better. My job is to pull things together from different parts of the company and clear the ways and get the resources for the key projects.

And to take these great people we have and to push them and make them even better, coming up with more aggressive visions of how it could be.

STEVE JOBS

Communication

- Key to success is efficient process & communication
- Documents & Artifacts Key to Communication
  - Produced at the right time
  - By the right people
  - With the right amount of information
  - Reviewed
    - By the right people
    - At the right time
  - Revised
    - By the right people
    - In a timely way

The Obvious isn't always apparent

VARIOUS

Key Documents

- MRD Why?
    - Mission
    - Pain points
    - Value Proposition
- PRD What?
    - Release Themes
    - Use Cases
    - Stories & UI Mockups
- Spec How?
    - Functions technical/code details
    - Screens technical/code details
- Test Cases Break Me
- User Documentation Tell Me

Everyone has a plan 'till they get punched in the mouth.

MIKE TYSON

Key Documents & Owners

- MRD
  - Marketing Manager, UI Designer
    - Powerpoint,
    - Vision Prototype – interactive hi-fi
- PRD
  - Product Manager, UI Designer
    - Use Cases – Product Manager
    - Hi-Fi UI mockups – Interaction & Visual Design
    - Wire Frame UI mockups – Interaction Design
    - Stories – Product Manager
      - Story & UI & Acceptance Criteria
- Spec
  - Engineering Manager, Engineering Arch

Not having a process is a process

MARK SHURTLEFF

Key Documents Process

- Create initial drafts with owners
- One to Two month time frame
  - Iterate documents & visuals
- Expand audience "downstream"
  - Meet to review
  - Get written comments
- Iterate every few days
- Go to next artifact when done or Restart process

Characteristic of Key docs

- Use active voice
- Write less use bullets not paragraphs
- Use images to show
- Use text to clarify
- Use doc tools enable fast logged changes
  - Wikis
  - Wire frames – UI screens and flows
- Change docs based on thoughtful feedback
- Embrace Kaizen "continuous improvement of processes"

Documents New vs Existing App

- New Application
  - MRD
    - Mission, Value Proposition Pain Points
    - Vision Prototype
  - PRD
    - Use Cases, Stories
    - Hi-Fi Mockups
  - Specs
  - Test Cases
  - Docs
- New Version of Existing Application
  - MRD
    - Themes
  - PRD
    - Use Cases, Stories
    - Wireframes, UI Patterns
  - Specs
  - Test Cases
  - Docs

MRD

- Marketing Manager Owner
  - Mission
  - Value Propositions
  - Pain Points
  - Customer Profiles
  - Vision User Experience Prototype (Optional)

PRD

- Theme (optional)
- Use Cases
  - Text descriptions of feature sets/tasks
- Stories with Mockup
  - Low Fidelity Mockups
  - Hi-Fi Mockups
- Acceptance Criteria All Stories

It's a Barnum & Bailey world just as phony as it can be but it wouldn't be make believe if you believed in me.

PAPER MOON LYRIC
NAT KING COLE

User Design Artifacts

- Screen Designs & Flows – Interaction Design Owner
  - Consume Use Cases
  - Create "wire frames" or "hi-fi" screens
  - Create screen flows, menu structures
  - Create UI Patterns – common widget set interactions
- Visual Assets – Visual Designer Owner
  - Application Theme
  - Widget skins & styles
  - Icons

User Research Documents

- Summary Powerpoint or Wiki pages – User Researcher Owner
  - Present Mockups, vision prototypes for User Evaluation
  - Present to Produce Mangers & UI Designers
  - Present to Engineering Manager & Architect & QA
    - Help sell challenging UI widgets & interaction designs
- Refine Personas
  - Roles & Responsibilities identified via User Testing
- Refine Use Cases
  - Validate Pain Points
  - Refine workflows, task flows
  - Discover new Pain Points
  - Document poor performing designs
- Prioritize Current Story features
  - Must have Features
  - "Nice to have" Features

Test Cases

- QA Manager Owner
  - Involve in Use Cases later reviews
  - Involve in User Story later reviews
  - Story Pointing Meetings – Observation Role
  - Story Completion Reviews – Observation Role
- Document
  - Normal Paths
  - Exception Paths
  - Stress testing
- Product Managers should review test cases
  - Gain insights to product
  - Check for completeness
  - Check for exceptions
  - Provide feedback to QA Manager
    - Specific comments pont area more testing needed
    - Acknowledge & Praise complete set even if no improvements needed

User Documentation

- Documentation Manager Owner
  - Involve in Use Cases later reviews
  - Involve in User Story later reviews
  - Story Pointing Meetings – Observation Role
  - Story Completion Reviews – Observation Role
- Documentation Manager Owner
- Document
  - Quick Start Guide
  - Task based guidance
  - Active Voice

Scrum Preparation

- Create stories for a release or part of release
  - Product Manager, UI Design
    - Meet an iterate screens & text to "done" draft
  - Review with interested parties
    - Docs, QA, Support, Eng Manager, Eng Arch
    - Be Proactive with "trolls"
  - Meet 1 to 2 times
    - Record issues
    - Give 1-2 days for formal comments
  - Address Relevant
    - Proactive Editing essential – remove non-essential issues
    - "done-done" when addressed all essential issues

Agile encourages cross-functional teams and everyone involved in the project should be participating in the stand up meetings – developers, project managers, technical writers, QA,

… Successful projects are those where the whole team takes responsibility for successful delivery. If a task needs doing, the team figures out how to get that task done regardless of official roles.

JAMES KOVACS

Initial Story Review Meeting

- Product Manager meets with Eng team
  - Walk through UI

- Invite – Observer Role
  - QA
  - Docs
  - Limit real time Comments/Questions from interested parties i.e., Observer Role

Scrum Meeting

- Product Manager meets with Eng team
  - Review story includes
  - UI screens & flows (if UI story)
  - Acceptance criteria in bulleted list
- Invite – Observer Role
  - QA
  - Docs
  - Limit real time Comments/Questions from interested parties i.e., Observer Role

Scrum Complete Review Meeting

- Product Manager meets with Eng team
  - Review story includes
  - UI screens & flows (if UI story)
  - Acceptance criteria in bulleted list
- Invite – Observer Role
  - QA
  - Docs
  - Limit real time Comments/Questions from interested parties i.e., Observer Role

Write Right Docs Keep Agile Agile

- Active voice

- Bulleted lists

- No long paragraphs

- Visuals
  - Flow charts (simple 1 page)
  - UI wireframes
  - UI hi-fi mockups
  - Screen flow

Constant Refinement

- Owners create and iterate at least 2x
- Invite interested parties
  - Give a clear concise explanation
  - Get specific feedback - listen
  - Respond to feedback & iterate
  - Be proactive with "trolls"
  - Dismiss tangential comments
  - Be Open to change
  - Don't defend the indefensible

Use the Right Tools

- Power Point
- Wikis
- Baslamiq mockups
- Visio
- Photoshop
- Dreamweaver
- Flex

Hire the Right Team

- Positive people
- Curious people
- Task oriented people
- Action oriented people
- Self-Starters
- Self-Learners
- Team Players

Useful References

- How to Write Effective Use Cases
- Understanding Comics
- The Design of Everyday Things
- Who Says Elephants Can't Dance
- Non-Designers Design Book
- The Inmates are Running the Asylum
- Purple Cow
- First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently
- Don't Make Me Think
- Inspired: How to Create Products Customers Love
- The Elements of Style (active voice writing)

Product Manager drives the Team

Communication via Meetings & Documents is Essential

Meet small teams 1st then expand

Iterate & Embrace Improvement

Summarize your Successes and Challenges each day and evaluate

Practice Writing Less
Enjoy the journey & have fun

KEY TAKE AWAYS