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Mob Programming and Leadership

Enabling the Self-Organizing Team

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Twitter: @WoodyZuill

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The byline for the leadership stage:

Leadership is “the process of creating an environment in which people become empowered.”

Gerald Weinberg

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What is a Leader?

What is Leadership?

Awesome People
Will do Awesome Things
When they have an
Opportunity to Be Awesome.

If we believe that, what
should be the “job” of
leadership?

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What is a Manager?

A Manager is someone who serves and supports an environment where everyone can excel at their work and at their life.

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What is Management?

Management is the Act of Serving and Supporting Everyone's Natural Awesomeness.

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Here’s the Catch

We must all be Leaders

We must all be Managers

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How Does This Relate to Agile Software Development?

Manifesto for Agile Software Development

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

The Manifesto (Values and Principles) are a set of guidelines for us.

Principles behind the Agile Manifesto

We follow these principles:

- Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.
- Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.
- Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
- Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.
- Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
Build projects around motivated individuals.

Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.

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The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from Self-Organizing Teams.
Mob Programming

All the brilliant minds working on the same thing... at the same time... in the same space... on the same computer...
This is what it looks like from the front
What it looks like from the back.
A Day in the Life...

http://mobprogramming.org/mob-programming-time-lapse-video-a-day-of-mob-programming/
Why would we work this way?
Because the team decided to.
How we “discovered” Mob Programming

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How can we work this way?

Individuals and interactions
Kindness, Consideration, Respect
Driver/Navigator

Navigator
Driver
Navigator
Navigator
Driver/Navigator

Rotate
Every 15 minutes

Driver

Navigators
Jason please sit at the keyboard.

We wrote our own timer – it blocks out the screens when the time runs out, and makes it easy to remember whose next when we change drivers.

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Productivity
How can we be productive with 5 people at one computer?

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What are the things that destroy productivity?

Communication Problems
Decision Making Problems
Doing more than barely sufficient
Technical Debt, and etc.
Thrashing
Politics
Meetings
Many, many others
We noticed many problems simply faded away when we all worked together, all day!
For example, Communication Problems

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One type of Communication Problem: Question Queue Time

The amount of time we must wait to get an answer to a question that is blocking us
Question Queue Time

The Value Stream Map:
Green = Adding Value, Red = Blocked, no value

Adding Value
No value - blocked

Ideal: Zero Queue Time

For an example:
For each hour we work, we get one “blocking question”

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Question Queue Time

Zero Queue Time

Two Minute Queue Time

Ten Minute Queue Time

One Hour Queue Time

One Day Queue Time
Question Queue Time

Zero Queue Time

Two Minute Queue Time – **16 minutes waste**

Ten Minute Queue Time – **70 minutes waste**

One Hour Queue Time – **4 hours waste**

One Day Queue Time – **8 hours waste**

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How do we typically solve this?

Work on many tasks to keep us busy

One task we are working on

Another task we could work on to keep busy

This addresses the symptom, but not the problem!
It Faded Away!

Within the team: Zero Queue Time

With Product Owner, Max 2-minute Queue Time

“Automatic” One-Piece Flow

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Decision Making Problems

Reluctance to commit

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Decision Making Problems

Need to Defend

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Take Action!
Doing more than “Bare Necessities”
Technical Debt
We Remove Thrashing or make it irrelevant
Politics
Meetings
Continuous Learning

We found that we have a continuous learning environment – almost everyone is learning or sharing all the time.

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Warning: All your shortcomings will be exposed. Not everyone can work this way. Be kind to others, and trust them to be kind to you.
Ergonomics, Health, and Sanity

Let’s take care of ourselves

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What is the Ideal Number of Team Members?

We typically work with 5 or 6, and have had as many as 12 "in the Mob". Our heuristic: If you don’t feel you are contributing or leaning, perhaps this is a good time to split off and work alone, or with a pair.
If You Adopt But One Practice, Let It Be Retrospectives!!!
Do you recommend Mob Programming?

We are merely sharing our experiences. It might be something that will work for you.
We invite you to explore, innovate, pay attention to what works, listen, see, observe, reflect, tune, and adjust.
The object isn’t to make art, it’s to be in that wonderful state which makes art inevitable.

Robert Henri