Reorganizing your company the Agile way

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IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR TEAM
Rules of Hackysack Challenge

• Table teams of up to 8 people (smaller teams: play twice until 8; larger teams: have a scorer)
• The first player has the D (we’ll explain in a moment)
• Each player throws 1 sack per round
• If it touches the line, you score the lower of the two scores
• Record your scores on the card with 1, 2 or 3.
STOP!
Round 1

• Each player throws once.
• Record each player’s score on the target (R1)
• Add up the total
STOP!
Self Manage

• Spend 60 seconds brainstorming as a team about how you could improve your teams performance. (e.g. coach weak individuals, share tips about to get a better score, decide upon a strategy that yields a better score, etc.)
STOP!
Round 2

• Each player throws once
• Record each player’s score on the target (R2)
• Add up the total
STOP!
Round 3

• It’s time for the player with the D to be a decisive leader. After 30 seconds of silent contemplation, the D player will decide upon a change to our rules that will improve his or her team’s score.

• Non-D players, please silently record your emotions about how you feel (before you see the strategy in action).
STOP!
Round 3

• Each player throws once
• Record each player’s score on the target (R3)
• Add up the total score
Simon Galbraith
CEO & Co-Founder, Red Gate
Agile in the C-Level Suite: Applying Agile to our Executive Team
Why would an apparently successful company experiment with a weird approach designed for engineers?

Our team was dysfunctional.
Our problems

Leadership Team (2012)
- No visibility on delivering projects
- Lack of trust; people not aligned
- Hero to zero
- Being the boss of that team was a thankless task
- Death marches
- No clarified process

Dev Teams (2007)
- Big surprises around shipping software
- Developer is King
- Hero to zero
- Blame the team failures on the individual
- Death marches
- Project management process was left up to the PM
Red Gate & Agile

- **2007** - lots of scaling problems with our software development
- **2008** – brought in SCRUM and various other agile practices
- **2010** – appointed a Head of Software Engineering
- **2011** – mandated that agile process should be used on all projects
- **2012/13** – all projects are agile; no surprises in last 18 months
Our initial goals

• Team collaboration
• Trust
• Surface where we’re spending time and activities
• Share information

The ultimate goal:
Fix the dysfunction! I knew something was wrong, and this seemed like a good way to start solving it.
What benefits did we see?

- We got a lot better at keeping our promises
- We slowly became more careful about making promises
- We surfaced disagreements earlier
- We dealt with small crises very rapidly & effectively
- Everyone in the room knew what was going on
- Cross-divisional & cross-company issues were tackled much more effectively
How did we do, measured against our initial goals?

- Team collaboration  ✓
- Trust [improving]  ✓
- Surface where we’re spending time and activities  ✓
- Share information  ✓
Did it stick?

NO!
The Conundrum

We got a lot of value out of using agile processes, and we’ve tried to do something similar before, but we didn’t manage to make it stick either time
Our survey said...

“Red Gate will never deliver growth with the organisational design you have got now.”
IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR TEAM
There’s no such thing as the perfect organization structure.
YOU’LL WANT OUR NEW SERVER SOFTWARE AFTER YOUR REORGANIZATION.

REORGANIZATION?

NEXT WEEK YOU’RE HAVING MASSIVE LAYOFFS AND ELIMINATING THREE DIVISIONS.

YOUR “I HAVEN’T HEARD ANYTHING” FACE NEEDS WORK.
Don’t lie to the people you trust.
Don’t trust the people who lie to you.
“The company will grind to a halt... 
...we will unnecessarily scare and disturb people”
From: Simon Galbraith
Subject: Update on company structure
Date: 27 September 2013 14:15:20 BST
To: Red-Gate

Folks,

I've been spending the summer thinking about how Red Gate is structured. The company lacks momentum and direction (in spite of concerted efforts to drive these things), and we're struggling to make progress on the things we're increasingly certain we need to do in order to thrive as a company. It's my belief that this is because of the way we're organised.

The product managers have been working hard to prepare for next week's portfolio review, which will clarify our strategy and help us allocate people and money accordingly. The Leadership Team will be working in parallel to make sure that the company is organised in a way that will allow us to actually focus on making this strategy a reality.

No one's job is in jeopardy. On the contrary: the purpose of making these changes is to remove barriers, and to allow teams to fly. We hope to have a finalised plan for the company structure by mid-October, and to begin putting it into place at the beginning of November.

I'll be giving another update as soon as possible, and consulting with teams and individuals over the coming weeks about any direct changes in their areas. I'll then give a more comprehensive update at the company meeting on the 10th of October. If anyone has questions or concerns in the meantime, please speak to me, Gareth, Mark Wightman or your manager.

Simon
8 people getting 2nd choice
1 person getting 3rd choice?
4 people getting different - based on org need.

Monitor
Hosted

Opportunities
Azure

DB Delivery
From: Simon Galbraith  
Subject: Another update - who's running what  
Date: 9 October 2013 17:00:14 BST  
To: Red-Gate

From: Lucy Boyes  
Subject: A field guide to the new Red Gate  
Date: 24 October 2013 14:00:33 BST  
To: Red-Gate

From: Lucy Boyes  
Subject: Tuesday re-org digest  
Date: 29 October 2013 11:15:07 GM  
To: Red-Gate

From: Lucy Boyes  
Subject: Thursday re-org digest  
Date: 31 October 2013 13:15:57 GMT  
To: Red-Gate

From: Simon Galbraith  
Subject: Followup from Friday's speech  
Date: 5 November 2013 15:03:28 GMT  
To: Red-Gate

From: Lucy Boyes  
Subject: Tuesday re-org digest  
Date: 19 November 2013 12:41:50 GMT  
To: Red-Gate

From: Lucy Boyes  
Subject: The photoboard has been updated  
Date: 29 November 2013 08:51:50 GMT  
To: Red-Gate
Team Exercise 2:

ASSESS YOUR MOST RECENT RE-ORG
Assess your most recent reorg

- In groups by table
- Reflect on the last reorganisation your company (business unit, charity, etc.) had
- 2 minutes per person (maximum)
- Dot the worksheet against each category,
- In one (and only one) sentence per category, state to your group why you’re placing the dot where you are.
When is a re-org done?
• The H1 plans are committed to and being executed

• We have run the business for two full months on the new plans, with the new structure

• All change-related issues & risks are closed or being tracked via normal process

• Gut-feel check is passed
DON'T SINK THE SHIP
It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.
Simon Galbraith, CEO @galbraithsimon
Gareth Marlow, COO @garethmarlow
Red Gate Software @redgate
Team Exercise 3

IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO DO FUTURE REORGANIZATIONS.
Improve Red Gate future reorgs

• Quick fire questions for clarification ONLY! Short questions and short answers
• One suggestion each once the clarification phase is over