WHAT MAKES YOUR TEAM SELF-ORGANIZING?

DR RASHINA HODA
SENIOR LECTURER OF SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

AGILE, SELF-ORGANIZATION, AND ME

- PhD on “Self-Organizing Agile Teams: A Grounded Theory”
- Researching Agile 12+ years
- 70+ papers (download from www.rashina.com)
- Teaching Agile 7+ years
ORIGINS OF SELF-ORGANIZATION


C. Anderson and E. McMillan, Of Ants and Men: Self-Organized Teams in Human and Insect Organizations, 2003

Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.

Simplicity—the art of maximizing the amount of work not done—is essential.

The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.

At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

* http://agilemanifesto.org/principles.html
LETS BREAK THIS DOWN

• A team, not simply a group…
• Actively practicing Agile values, principles, methods…
• Able to organize and reorganize…
• Its self…

SELF-ORGANIZING AGILE TEAM
A SELF-ORGANIZING AGILE TEAM IS...

- Responsibly Autonomous
- Cross-functional
- Balanced
- Continuously improving

BUT...

Waterfall teams have developers, testers, BAs too, why aren’t they self-organizing?
INFORMAL ROLES – SECRET TO SELF-ORGANIZATION


Hoda, R. et al., Organizing Self-Organizing Teams, IEEE/ACM International Conference on Software Engineering, Cape Town, 2010

MENTOR

Guides and supports the team initially, helps them become confident in their use of Agile methods, ensures continued adherence to Agile practices, and encourages autonomy in the team.

- In new teams: Agile Coach
- In mature teams: All members

Most important in initial stages
COORDINATOR

Acts as a **representative** of the team to manage customer expectations and **coordinate customer collaboration** with the team.

- **In new teams:** Senior Developers & Business Analysts
- **In mature teams:** All members

TRANSLATOR

**Understands and translates** between the business language used by customers and the technical terminology used by the team to **improve communication** between the two.

- **In new teams:** Business Analysts
- **In mature teams:** All members
CHAMPION

**Champions** the Agile cause with the senior management within their organization in order to **gain support** for the self-organizing Agile team.

*In new teams:* Agile Coach & Senior Developers  
*In mature teams:* Not needed or by anyone

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PROMOTER

**Promotes** Agile with **customers** and attempts to **secure their involvement and collaboration** to support the efficient functioning of the self-organizing Agile team.

*In new teams:* Agile Coach  
*In mature teams:* Not needed or by anyone
**TERMINATOR**

Identifies team members threatening the proper functioning and productivity of the self-organizing Agile team and engages senior management support to remove such members from the team.

In new teams: Agile Coaches  
In mature teams: Whole team input

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**TRANSITIONS OVER TIME**

[Image of transition from manager to team member]

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BOTH TEAM AND MANAGERS MUST MOVE TOWARD SELF-ORGANIZATION

Hoda, R., & Noble, J., Becoming Agile: A Grounded Theory of Agile Transitions in Practice, IEEE International Conference on Software Engineering (ICSE), Buenos Aires, 2017 - Distinguished Paper Award
A team, not simply a group…**can SO happen beyond teams?**

Actively practicing **Agile** values, principles, methods…**can SO happen beyond Agile?**

Able to **organize** and reorganize…**when? how? why?**

**Its self**…as in, the individuals? team? networks? organization? all of the above?
THANK YOU

@agileRashina
www.rashina.com