

2018
August

Team Building Agenda

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Assessment of Needs

Our technology team has recently begun an internal transformation of our approach to solution delivery by restructuring using agile software development methodologies based on the scrum techniques popularized by Jeff Sutherland. This transformation effort is significant for this small team and is intended to transition us from a mindset focused on the individual contributor to a focus on team contribution. The team oriented approach to problem-solving will set a foundation for the anticipated future growth of the I.T. team as our organization continues its growth trajectories.

Our team is generally well acquainted with each other and, while the average team member tenure is 6 years, this average is skewed heavily due to the longevity of three senior members. The newest team member, who is also the only member of the team to work remotely, has four months experience working with the team. The team transformation has also resulted in one significant personnel change and will require further refinement of the primary roles and responsibilities for several team members in the coming months. An agile team must be open to alternative design patterns, with each member being comfortable challenging the solution designs of others as well as being challenged themselves.

Plan

Activities will need to be designed to reinforce the benefits of a team approach vs an individual approach to problem solving and will focus on the forming and storming stages of team development. Opportunities will be provided throughout the day for team members to build upon their existing personal connections with their peers.

One team member is recovering from injury to a foot and ankle, with a few others being averse to significant physical activities including heights, long walks/hikes, etc. Therefore, the majority of the team activities will take place inside. Our office has a large conference room to support various indoor activities as well as a spectacular roof-top patio for some fresh air and perspective. One team member is remote and will need to be scheduled to be in the main office to facilitate the team building activities.

In order to facilitate some of the group conversations, the team members will need to complete evaluation worksheets ahead of the scheduled meeting time. The team assessment from Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* will be distributed to the team members to assess their own understanding of the current team dynamic. The personal style inventory worksheet will also be described to team members for self and peer evaluation. I will require results from the team's self-evaluation two weeks prior to the scheduled team building day to allow for sufficient planning should any modifications to the day's agenda be required based on the group's self-evaluation results.

Time	Activity Description	Goals / Team Development	Stage	Material Requirements / Notes
8:00 AM 8:30 AM	Individual prep for the day	Ensure no I.T. fires need extinguished so we can focus on the day.		**Could impact schedule if a serious issue occurs**
8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Two truths and a lie: Warm-up activity	Getting to know you better, no formal debrief needed.	Forming	Pens and note cards
9:00 AM 9:30 AM	Full value contract	Why is our team here? What are our goals and how do we intent to work together?	Forming, Norming	
9:30 AM 9:45 AM	Chair Activity: Chain of command communication exercise	Communication exercise, perils of assumptions and mental models w/ communication tendencies.		Activity instruction sheets, Post-It notes, pens, chairs
9:45 AM 10:00 AM	Chair activity debrief	Parallels to our organizational life, impacts on our communication needs.		
	Break	Break		
10:10 AM 10:40 AM	Social Styles Discussions: Compare/contrast with Personalysis	Team forming impacts in our organizational life: requirements gathering, project work, etc.		Social styles handout
10:40 AM 11:00 AM	Marshmallow challenge	Team problem solving, iterations and prototypes.	Storming, Norming	Spaghetti, string, tape, marshmallow, timer
11:00 AM 11:20 PM	Marshmallow challenge debrief	Review Tom Wujec TED talk and discuss tie-in to our development efforts. How do the social styles on our team impact our abilities?		
11:20 AM 11:45 AM	Crossing the river: Puzzle exercise	Team problem solving.	Storming, Norming	Alter as a tabletop game due to small team size.
11:45 AM 12:00 PM	Debrief crossing the river	Communication, social styles, iteration planning.		
12:00 PM 1:00 PM	Lunch	Group lunch	Forming	Catered lunch
1:00 PM 1:20 PM	Agile Name Game: Perils of multitasking in agile	Reinforce concepts of Scrum and task swarming.	Norming	
1:20 PM 1:30 PM	Debrief of agile name game	Tie-in with organizational life, varying stakeholder demands, backlog refinement.		
1:30 PM 2:00 PM	Gutterball: Move marble from point A to B	Team problem solving.	Storming, Norming	Marbles, crown molding
2:00 PM 2:10 PM	Debrief gutterball	Did the team integrate iteration planning and prototyping?		

2:10 PM 2:30 PM	Revisit full value contract, logistics for travel to escape room and dinner.			
2:30 PM 3:00 PM	Group travel to breakout room			
3:00 PM 4:00 PM	Escape Spokane (Break-Out Room)	Team problem solving activity.	Storming, Norming	Reservations for activity
4:00 PM 4:30 PM	Debrief	Full debrief: Review break-out experience & the day's activities. Revisit/reflect on our full value contract and the application to organizational life.		
5:00 PM 7:00 PM	Team Dinner	Unwind & closure for the day. Opportunity to develop personal connections	Forming, Adjourning (the initiative)	Reservations for dinning space

Backup Activities:

Warm-Up & Time fillers	Have You Ever: Get up and move introduction activity Coin Introductions: Getting to know you activity
Initiatives	Helium Stick: Tent pole lowering activity Dark-Fly: Blindfolder tent assembly activity Introduction to Continuous Integration w/ Legos

Prepare

Based on vacation and travel schedules for the team members, the team building day is scheduled for Tuesday August 21st. Working from this date backwards, the team evaluation worksheets will need to be delivered and returned prior to Friday, August 10th. Personal style inventory worksheets will be delivered the week prior to the team building day as well.

Reservations will need to be made for the following: inner office conference rooms, Escape Spokane and a dining venue. Activity materials such as carpet squares and tent poles, post-it notes, etc. need to be collected, however no significant challenges or concerns are associated with this. Weather will not play a significant role in the event as the majority of the activities are indoors.

Evaluations and debriefs will be very important to the learning objectives for the teamwork activities. To support these objectives, I will create a facilitator's reference for each activity to include not only the setup and teamplay instructions but also a list of debrief questions to act as a catalyst for conversation should the need arise.

Lead

As I facilitate the team building event, I will need to take precautions against my organizational leadership role overly influencing activities. The participants are my direct reports and I will need to be cognizant of this as we work through the day. During challenging activities, I intent to act as an observer to facilitate debrief, however the activities selected will allow me the flexibility to observe or engage as needed based on how the group appears to be reacting to my presence. I intent for the post activity learning to be a significant part of the day and primarily driven by the group members themselves. I will need to balance the group such that our team members predisposed to providing immediate feedback (including myself) don't overshadow the quieter members of the group.

Evaluate

As previously stated, the debriefs of each activity are critical to enhance the learning objectives of the day. This is also inclusive of my abilities in facilitating the event itself. The team members will be asked to evaluate the value of the day's activities and my facilitation of it. As the group participants are my direct reports, the evaluation of my facilitation has the potential to be difficult or superficial. I strongly believe in and support my team and anticipate that they will be capable of providing constructive feedback. Regardless of the outcome of the day, we should all be able to provide an event take-aways list highlighting individual learning events of the day.

Based on the execution and evaluation of the event, as well the team's progression towards performing, I will then set a time table to facilitate additional half-day team events focused on very specific operational objectives of continuous integration, continuous delivery and DevOps.

References

Lencioni, P. (2002). The five dysfunctions of a team. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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Rohnke, K. & Butler, S. (1995). Quicksilver: Adventure games, initiative problems, trust activities and a guide to effective leadership. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing

Sutherland, J & Sutherland, J.J. (2014). Scrum: The art of doing twice the work in half the time. New York, NY: Currency