

Project Status: Writing on the Walls

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Summary: how is your project doing ? How long does it take to find out what's going on? Where is the essential information? Is it hidden, squirreled away inside thousand-line code files, spreadsheets and Word documents ? Or is it “in your face”, shown where you can't help but see it every day ? A successful project isn't successful because the team makes no mistakes, or suffers no setbacks. Whether your project sinks or swims is determined not by circumstance but by the speed and quality of your team's response. This tutorial presents simple techniques to make project status visible early and continuously, so a team can respond effectively. The techniques can be implemented with simple office tools: flipcharts, markers and yellow stickies.

Audience

Project managers, team leaders, developers, consultants and coaches

Duration: 90 minutes

Benefits

Participants will learn and practice simple techniques they can use as soon as the Monday following the conference, gain insights in the relation between choice of information media and project success, and have fun.

Logistics

The room where the session is held should be equipped with at least 4 flipcharts, walls that can be used for sticking up further display surfaces, and a beamer. No tables.

Content and process

A simple project simulation is used as a backdrop for presenting and using the different tools introduced in the session. Participants are divided into groups aiming for the best project result. (Competition *and* cooperation are encouraged !)

The session schedule is as follows:

09:00-09:15 Introduction, simulation set-up
09:15-09:30 Iteration & Tool One: Project Progress Poster
09:30-09:45 Iteration & Tool Two: Pair Chart
09:45-10:00 Iteration & Tool Three: Red/Green Trend Spotter
10:00-10:15 Iteration & Tool Four: Improvement Chart
10:15-10:30 Session retrospective

History

Ran once at Agile2006, with very positive feedback (mean scores above 4, “Agree”, in all feedback categories, 23 respondents out of approx. 50 attendees).

Presenters

Laurent Bossavit is a developer with over 20 years of coding experience, 10+ of which on a professional basis. Laurent's focus as an external consultant is on working with teams and keeping them supplied with the raw materials of change and effectiveness - clarity of purpose and a constant infusion of fresh ideas. Laurent stewards (but does not by any stretch manage) several communities in both real and virtual space.

Emmanuel Gaillot is a software engineer and an experienced designer for theatre and dance. He has adapted XP practices and principles to the theatrical production process, and he currently works on instilling theatre practices back into the field of software making. Emmanuel's areas of expertise and interests include self-organizing teams, software making and Extreme Programming. He is involved in the conduct of the Coders' Dojo Experiment in Paris, France, where he also works for Octo Technology as an XP coach.