Out of the box Retrospectives

Using Future, Backwards

with Rowan Bunning, CST
Rowan Bunning

- Background in object oriented & web dev. with vendors, start-ups & consultancies
- Introduced to Agile over 10 years ago as: “the way good Smalltalkers develop software”
- Pioneer of Scrum in Australia
- Agile Coach / ScrumMaster at a leading agile consultancy in the U.K.

I teach
  - Certified ScrumMaster
  - Certified Scrum Product Owner
  - Effective User Stories
  - Agile Estimating and Planning
  - Scrum for Teams

Agile Coach in Australia
What’s in it for you?

- A new retrospective approach for your toolkit
- Something for team visioning, release retros.
- Familiarity with one of the Cognitive Edge methods
- Something from the Global Scrum Gathering free and without flying to Atlanta!
- Possibly some additional perspectives on the evolution of Agile
Our workshop

1. Make connections
2. Set the scene
3. Future, Backwards
4. Identify possible Action
5. Rotate and Share
6. Debrief and Discuss
7. Feedback on the workshop
How effective you think your Sprint/Iteration Retrospectives are?

10 = I can’t imagine them being any more effective
We fearlessly deal with the biggest issue with focused action items that really make a difference

1 = We do something very quick and superficial

0 = We don’t even have them
Is your team limited by pattern entrapment?

The entrained perspectives of people within an organisation give them a limited view of the present, and such entrained patterns of past perception can determine its future.
Are you making lots of tweaks but not achieving the breakthrough you need?
Do you know where you want to go as a team?
Do you have a shared Team Vision?
Future, backwards

We walk backwards into the future, our eyes fixed on the past.

- Maori proverb

- Helps you to widening the range of perspectives a group of people can take on understanding their past and the possibilities of their future

- “Backwards” safeguards against the causality fallacy that if event B happens after event A, we erroneously assume that event A caused event B
Where this fits into your Retrospective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Set the stage</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gather data</td>
<td>30-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Generate insights</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Decide what to do</td>
<td>15-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Close the retrospective</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shuffle time 10-15%

Origins of Future, Backwards

- ‘Future, Backwards’ is a Cognitive Edge method

- Cognitive Edge is a research and practitioner network focused on the development and practice of sense-making

- Helps you identify the context you are in and pick ‘the right tool for the job’

- The Cynefin framework helps managers determine the prevailing operative context, enabling appropriate choices and decisions

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Please Note

- There is no right or wrong answer
- We’re going to be working through some (significant) ambiguity
- The process requires you to go through a series of steps without knowing the outcome until the process is finished
- Please don’t look at what other groups are doing until the end
“The group should have diversity and a common or shared experience or background”
Example Themes

Imagine that 6 months from now we’re working extremely well as a team. How did we get to that point?

Imagine that the release has been deployed it is considered really successful. How did that happen?
How familiar are you with evolution in the Agile community over the last few years?

10 = I’ve been studying the evolution of agile methods and thinking in depth for several years

0 = I’m completely new to the Agile community and don’t know anything much about what has been going on
Theme

Consider...

What is the state of the Agile movement at this point?

This is your current state (CS).

Step 1: Identify 3 descriptions that summaries the current state of affairs.
Step 1: Current State
Step 2: Turning Points back from Current State
Step 4: Identify Heaven

‘Impossibly Good’ future state
Step 4: Identify Hell

‘Impossibly Bad’ future state
Step 5: TPs back from Heaven

Turning Point
Step 6: TPs back from Hell

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Identify Possible Action

What would help us to get on the path to Heaven?

- Identify a key Tipping Point
- What would make the difference between the Heaven and Hell paths at this point?
Further information: cognitive-edge.com/library/methods