



Running Agile Retrospectives

Take the next step in your Agile journey...

November 2018

simply brilliant thinkers
making software brilliantly simple



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What do ***you*** want to
get out of today?

Continual learning

“Learning and motivation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.”

- William Pollard

“Treat failure as a lesson on how not to approach achieving a goal, and then use that learning to improve your chances of success when you try again. Failure is only the end if you decide to stop.”

- Richard Branson

1973 NCAA Champions



Making mistakes

“If you’re not making mistakes, then you’re not doing anything. I’m positive that a doer makes mistakes”

“A mistake is valuable if you do four things with it: recognise it, admit it, learn from it, forget it”

- John Wooden

Traf-O-Data

PROCESORS OF TAPE DATA

These materials were part of a marketing package sent to potential customers to show the services provided by Traf-O-Data.

TRAF-O-DATA COMPUTER

PROCESORS OF TAPE DATA

address run

data

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 la ex dp e/w s: in

per

MODEL 88-311 PAPER TAPE READER

DEC & STERLING, INC.

Association: Paper 8100 U.S.A.

Traf-O-Data

DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Bill Gates
Steve Jobs
Paul Allen

A joint business card for all the owners of the business

Traf-O-Data Business Card, c. 1974
From the Paul G. Allen Collection

Even though Traf-O-Data wasn't a roaring success, it was seminal in preparing us to make Microsoft's first product a couple of years later. We taught ourselves to simulate how microprocessors work using DEC computers, so we could develop software even before our machine was built.

—Paul Allen

Traf-O-Data 8088 Computer, c. 1974, built by Paul Gilhart, and Kenneth & Steven Paper Tape Reader Model 88-311C1, c. 1974
From the Paul G. Allen Collection



There are also some phrases that
discourage continual
improvement...



“Tried and tested”



“Tried and tested”



*“We’ve
always
worked this
way”*

“Tried and tested”

“We’ve always worked this way”

“This must never happen again!”

So, you want to *improve* your
corporate learning *in order to*
drive success...



Henrik Kniberg

So, what is a retrospective?

“Looking back with a better perspective on what we have already done”

Celebrating success & identifying strengths

+

Understanding where improvement is needed

+

A shared understanding of what to do and why



Actions for learning and continual improvement
(within your existing framework)

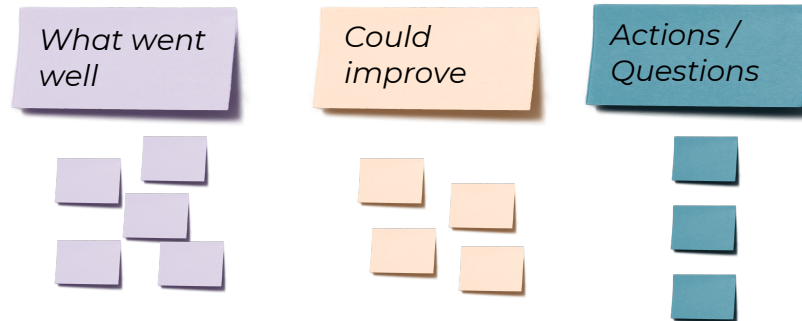
Why?

- Common and powerful agile technique that **boosts continual learning**
- Very **versatile** technique that can be used **almost anywhere**
- **Non-blame environment** that supports constructive observation and develops a **desire to improve**
- Iterative activity, conducted regularly to **build on outputs**



How?

1. Within a set timeframe, individuals first identify what works/has worked well and writes each idea on a single post-it
2. Each individual talks through their post-its and puts them on the board
3. Post-its are then grouped into themes for group discussion
4. Steps 1 to 3 are repeated, this time focused on weaknesses to improve
5. Finally, actions (and ownership of these actions) are captured



Roles in a retrospective



Team members



Facilitator

Exercise #1

Perform a retrospective of your current practices for organisational learning. Examine what works well, what needs improvement, and identify themes that come out of each.

Key takeaways

- Celebrate success!
- Be honest but constructive when discussing improvements
- Make sure you action the actions
- Facilitation - don't exclude, don't take sides
- Everyone can own this process and its findings

Troubleshooting common questions and challenges...





Retrospectives are *not about blame*

Optimism



Retrospectives as an *investment*

- “This is taking the whole team out of action, for how many hours?”
- Supporting **team learning**, identifying strengths to build on and weaknesses to address
- Drives **improved performance** by
 - Collective improvements
 - Better team understanding
 - Promoting teamwork



Making your retros count

- Ensure you draw out the **most valuable feedback**
- Create **actions** - and see them through!
- Remember it's about **evolution**, not revolution



Root Cause Analysis (a useful add-on!)

- Objective critical analysis
- Zoom in on particular issues raised in a retrospective
 - To get past assumptions
 - To get past superficial conclusions
 - Look for the real causes of an issue
- Apply the “5 Whys”



**How do you keep
people engaged?**



Keeping people engaged during the retrospective

- It's all about **engagement!**
- Practise **good facilitation**, bringing disengaged or excluded individuals back in as needed
- **Keep to time**, taking details offline if needed
- Accepting **team responsibility** is fine, but blaming individuals /finger-pointing is not



Keeping people engaged during the retrospective

- Keep **energy levels up** - snacks can prove useful here
- Encourage **movement** by getting people to put their own post-its on the board, for example
- Make it **fun!**
- Above all: make sure that you are talking about the **right things**, and that the team can see **how to progress**



Keeping people engaged over many retrospectives

- Make sure you **keep doing them!**
- Demonstrate **value** by referencing **actions and improvements** from last time (avoiding “lessons filed”)
- **Mix it up** - vary the format from time to time...



Alternative retrospective approaches



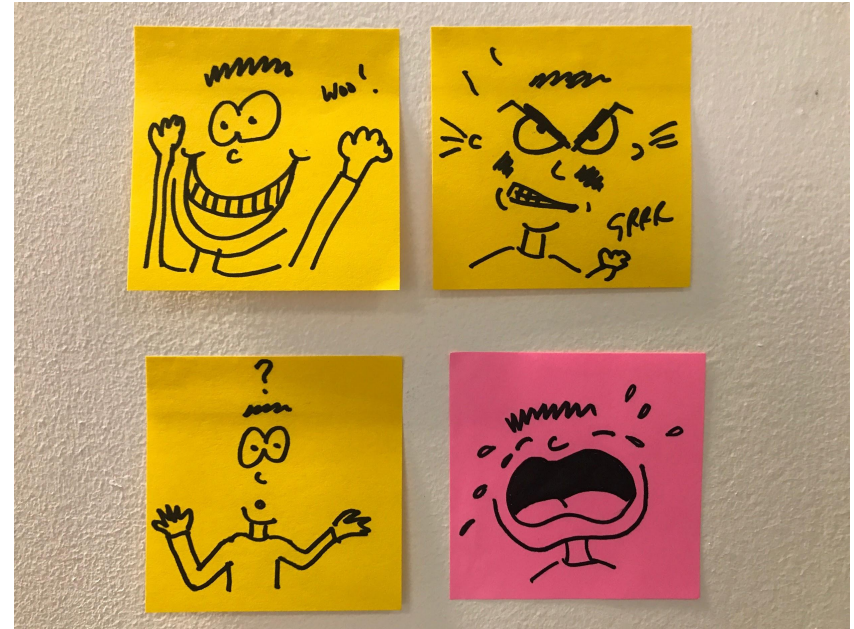
More of, less of, same of

- Vary the question
- Ask the team what they would like to do (or see):
 - More of...
 - Less of...
 - The same of...



Emotions: mad, sad, glad

- Ask the team how they have felt during this piece of work
- What made them:
 - Mad?
 - Sad?
 - Glad?
 - Confused?



The weather game

- Ask the team to name aspects of this piece of work
- Describe how it made them feel using weather as an analogy
 - Sunny
 - Rainy
 - Foggy
 - Thunder etc.
- Other descriptors can be used...



The headlines game

- Split the team into groups
- Ask them to design a newspaper front page that describes the main points of the last piece of work
- Show and tell of front pages

THE OTHER STUFF

We can see more NUMBERS!

36

Contract cards are showing more stuff

Now you won't be lost over Guidelines!

Now you have to get '95 turned out to begin nicely!

LOADING SCREEN

the whole DS.

Address

BURN

THE DAILY REWARD

75 XP for THE OTHER STUFF

ALL STAFF

Disturbance

"Well done guys"

Box UK deploy NOTIFICATIONS in just 6 sprints

DAILY REWARD IS BEING RESUBMITTED IN 2018

XP beats Bitcoin in stock exchange

See more rewards on page 3:)

De-vine-speak 2

Vive la France
been you!

116 done

10/10 QA

a good nice rate of p/s

Re(tra)dit

Final new things

↑ 1st Rewards - almost done!
14 comments 13 done

2333

↑ 1st interesting
XMAS theme demo has snow!!
0 comments 13 done

100

↓ 1st
NSFU - Address support ofgs

↑ 5
↑ 1st
Overrun on baby delivery

↓ 20

↑ 1st
Competitors open on Box UK retro

THE RS HERALD

ALERTS NOTIFICATIONS

REWARDS

FEATURE FLAGS

MINILOAD OF BADGES

ADVERT HERE

DESIGNERSTAGRAM

DESIGNERSTAGRAM

CONTRIBUTE

Plan on Solar tonight

LEATHER BEAT EXPERTISE

See how

Notifications Addressed to QA

Sumo

Personal Rewards

Internal Explains!

really fast!

The secret to a
good sprint they
don't want you
to know about is
_____.

Retros Against Humanity

More beautiful
than a double
rainbow; when
_____ just works.

Retros Against Humanity | Good cards

The tenth circle
of hell is made up
of _____.

Retros Against Humanity

Ain't nobody got
time for _____.

Retros Against Humanity | Bad cards

Retros Against Humanity

Exercise #2

Run the previous retrospective (current practices for organisational learning), using the Retros Against Humanity cards. See what new insights are gathered.

Playback



Key takeaways

- Team and organisational learning is a key to becoming, and then staying, successful
- Retrospectives can help start your organisational learning journey
- They are powerful in a range of situations, including project start-up - to help establish what you need to do

Key takeaways

To make your retros effective you must:

- Celebrate success
- Take a no-blame, constructive, objective look at improvements
- Follow through on high priority actions
- Keep doing them!

Key takeaways

Using games in retrospectives:

- Encourages team participation and involvement
- Helps keep things informal but focused
- Can take many different styles - helping to keep retros fresh in the face of repetition

Join us next time...

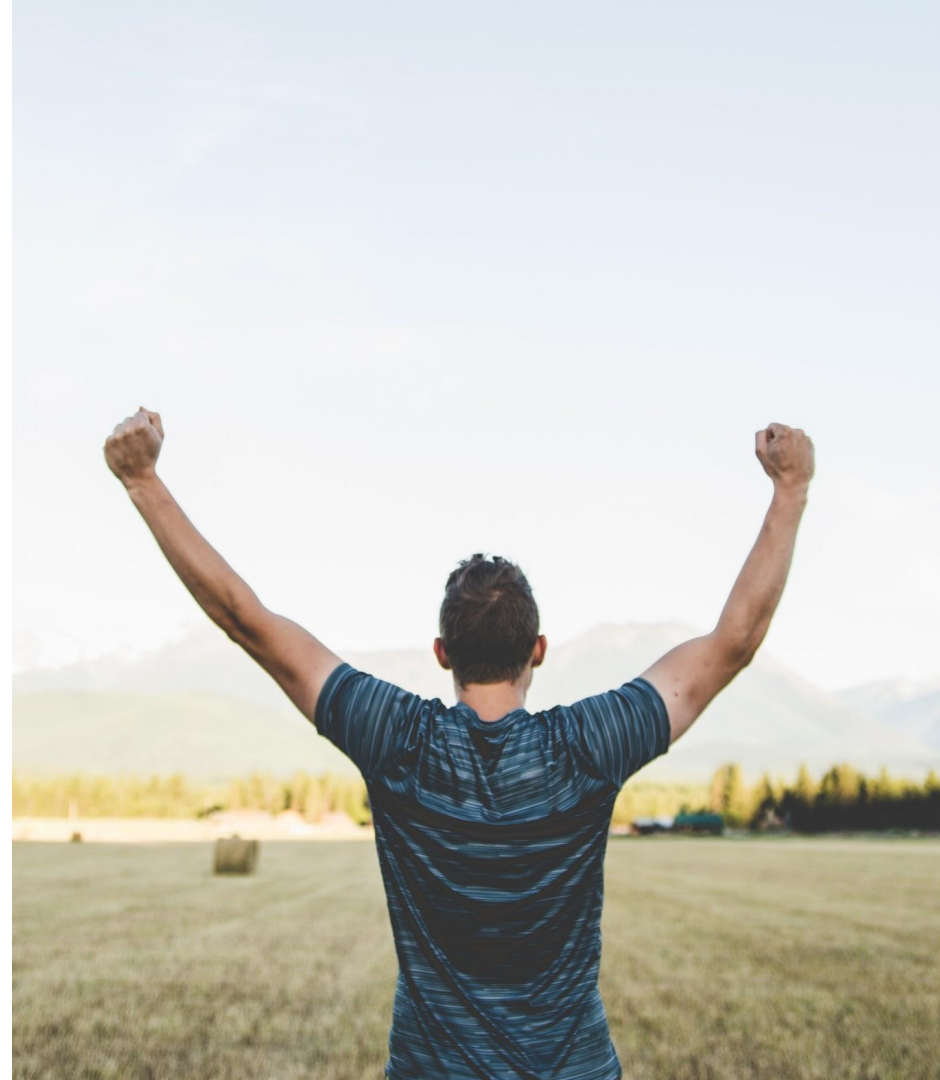
“Making Kanban Work”

Thursday 17th January, 5:00 - 7:30pm

In this next session in our Agile workshop series we'll explore ways to **minimise disruption** and **maximise delivery** across your projects, by **increasing visibility** of upcoming tasks and requirements.

In particular, you'll learn how this can be achieved through the proper implementation of **Kanban** - an effective visual tool that helps reduce the risk of misunderstandings that can easily snowball into major blockers...

www.boxuk.com/making-kanban-work





Meanwhile... over to you!

- Try a retrospective with your own team
- Tweet us a pic using the hashtags [#boxukagile](#) [#retrosagainsthumanity](#)
- [£50 Amazon voucher](#) up for grabs!



Thank you!

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