Can Marketing Go Agile?

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VP MKT

Prod Mgt

MarComs

Tech Mkt

[California map]

[United Kingdom map]
Agile Engineering

- Adopted in 2008
- Scrum, Kanban, and everything in between
- Iterations: weekly to monthly
- Task boards, wikis, GreenHopper
- Popular and successful
Agile Marketing?

- Communication gaps
  - In marketing
  - Between departments
- Management visibility
- Schedule chaos
- Be proactive, not reactive
Round One: Scrum!

- Hire a coach
- Put up a white board
- Buy lots of sticky notes
- Schedule a daily meeting
- Go!
How did that work?

- The good
  - Better communication and visibility on the team
  - Daily meetings: you’re doing what?

- The bad
  - Didn’t help inter-department communication
  - UK not included
  - Tough for remote workers

- The ugly
  - Sprints with “flexible” ending dates
  - White boards inspire workspace violence
Round Two: Better Scrum!

- Spreadsheets and Basecamp (and an intern)
- Better (honest) estimation
- Adapt! Improvise! Overcome!
Round Two Results

• The good
  • More organized
  • More visibility outside marketing

• The bad
  • Inter-department gaps
  • Keeping tools in sync
    • Basecamp
    • Spreadsheets
    • Wikis
What’s still wrong?

- Recognize that marketing is schedule driven
  - MarCom: events and publication dates
  - Tech Mkt: engineering deadlines
- Marketing doesn’t control those schedules: difficult to control and prioritize backlog
- MarCom events are planned months in advance
What’s still wrong?

- We are not one team
- We work on different projects at different paces
Projects not Departments

• We are one company working on a common goal: shipping a successful software product
• Siloed Agile teams don’t make sense
  • Cross functional teams from every department
  • Engineering using more traditional Scrum or Kanban
  • Other departments usually only contribute one or two team members, so tend to use informal Kanban
  • Weekly “Scrum of Scrum-ban” coordination
• This was valuable information to learn!
We are a global company

- Virtual presence is critical for collaboration
- Throw out the white boards
- Track all communication

What’s Still Wrong?
Conclusions

• Agile improved communication and exposed some deeper collaboration problems
• A long road ahead of us (the company)
• Global teams need collaboration tools with global visibility