Coaching Smells

How do you spot an agile coach? Are you an agile coach? How do you know? How do others view you? Some of your answers to these questions may be coaching smells. Agile coaching necessitates humility, curiosity, courage, and an open mind to learning. It demands discipline in servant leadership. In this session, we will share what coaching smells are and how to identify them. We invite you to join your peers in a self-reflective conversation about coaching smells using a fish bowl and park bench setting. After the conversation, participants will develop and commit to an action plan for how they will eliminate their coaching smells.

Process and Mechanics

Audience
This session is targeted towards practicing/experienced professionals. The format of the session accommodates a small to large venue.

Presentation Format
Workshop with no PowerPoint; flipcharts for radiating information; use of park bench and fish bowl techniques

Introduction (15 mins)
- We will set the stage for smells by telling the story of Steve and Jeff. They are two scrummasters that view coaching as a separate job and title. This view had consequences for how their team viewed them and how others have viewed them since.

What is agile coaching? (20 mins)
- Lecture + audience participation: Introduce/show the mindset/characteristics of a coach
  - How is this different than other roles?
- Lecture: Show a comparison of coaching vs. teaching and mentoring
- Exercise: Use a quadrant of coaching vs. teaching and mentoring and ask participants:
  - Where do you find yourself in this quadrant?

Park Bench or Fish Bowl: When do you become an agile coach? Who can coach? (15 mins)
- Possible Discussions:
  - Talk about coach from where you sit – title is not what defines a coach
  - Talk about how other see you with this new information

How do you know you are coaching? (15 mins)
- Lecture: Talk about being curious as a coach vs. fixing and being “right”
• Participants will do a conversation and listening exercise focusing on listening beyond what is said
  o Debrief: Pulling vs. pushing: developing coaching relationships

**What is the reward of agile coaching? (20 mins)**
• Participants will work at their tables and answer:
  o Why do you want to be called a coach?
• Debrief includes:
  o Does the reward match the characteristics and curiosity of being an agile coach?
• Lecture: Journey vs. a 5 year plan

**How will you coach from where you sit? (5 mins)**
• Art of possible: participants will share one thing they will take away and do to eliminate their coach smells

*Presentation History*
We have not presented this content as stated in this session proposal. We have talked with our peers about how this seems to becoming an emerging pattern in the agile community.

*References to Our Speaking Ability*
Brent Barton, Tom Perry, David Hussman, Michael Tardiff, Bryan Stallings, Chris Sterling, Diana Larsen can provide references to our speaking ability.

*Learning Objectives*
**Novice/Beginners to Agile**
• Understanding of coaching smells
• Ways to identify coaching smells – in yourself and others
• Gain insights from practicing/experienced professionals about coaching smells
• Understanding of how to use the facilitation techniques in this session

**Practicing/Experienced in Agile**
• Understanding of coaching smells
• Ways to identify coaching smells – in yourself and others
• Gain insights from novice/beginners about how they view coaching in relation to experience
• Understanding of how to use the facilitation techniques in this session

*Room and Logistics*
We will need clusters of tables so that people can work in pairs and groups for the mentioned exercises. We will need an open space to conduct park bench and fish bowl exercises. Because we are not using PowerPoint, we will want 3 flip charts and a whiteboard in the room.
Agile coaching necessitates humility, curiosity, courage, and an open mind to learning.