



Learning to Become Agile, with Retrospectives

QCon London, March 5, 2015

On the agenda today ...

- “What” and “why” of Retrospectives
- Business Value and Benefits
- Environment for Retrospectives
- Retrospective Exercises

With agile retrospectives teams drive their own actions!
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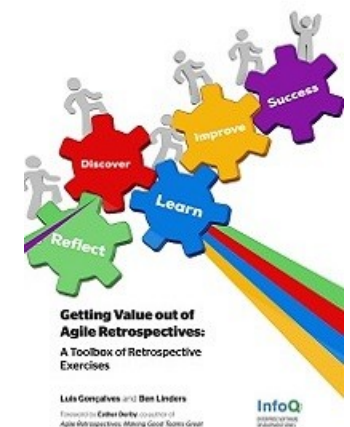


Co-Author **Getting Value out of Agile Retrospectives**
Dutch French Japanese Spanish Italian Chinese

Author: **What Drives Quality**

eBook: Download from [Amazon](#), [InfoQ](#) or [Leanpub](#)

Print: Buy on [Amazon](#) or [Lulu](#)



State of Practice

Doing them?

Like doing them?

Valuable?



Agile Retrospectives

Practice for teams to reflect on their way of working and to continuously become better in what they do.

Focus upon

- Team
- Self organizing
- Collaboration
- Direct Improvement

What is an Agile Retrospectives



Prime Directive

“Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand.”

Norm Kerth <http://www.retrospectives.com/>

Create an **Open Culture**
where team member **Speak Up**
with **Respect** for each other
to **Learn and Improve**



Soft Skills Matter

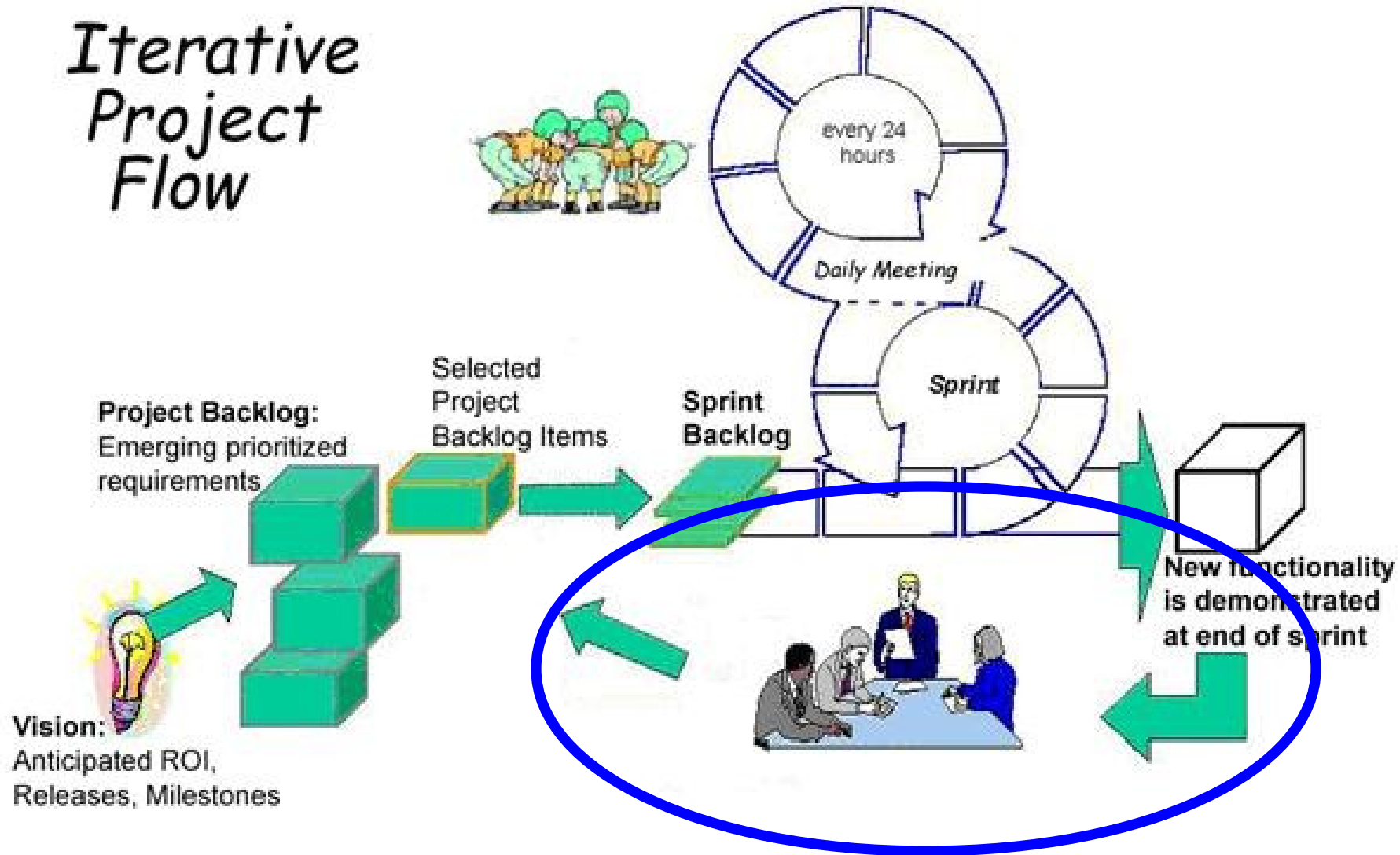
Why Retrospectives?

To help teams to solve problems and improve themselves!

- Becoming Agile and Lean
- Make existing processes more Agile
- Increase Value of Agile
- Less resistance to Change



Iterative Project Flow



Environment for Retrospectives

Adopting retrospectives is an organizational change where professionals adapt their way of working, their behavior - It won't just happen, and if not properly supported it may take much time, or even fail.

- Purpose
- Facilitation
- Do and Evaluate



Adopting Agile Retrospectives

Purpose of Retrospectives

Understand why to do retrospectives

- Authority and responsibility on how to work together
- Need for continuous improvement
- Celebrate and reward success
- Emphasize “why over how”



Sustainable Improvement through Agile Retrospectives

Capable Retrospective Facilitators

Effective and Efficient Retrospectives:

- Vital few improvement actions
- Keep invested time low

Facilitation by capable people:

- Qualify and Authorize facilitators
- Train: Purpose, techniques, skills
- **Mentoring & coaching**
- Share & discuss retrospective experiences



Agile Improvement

Do and Evaluate Retrospectives

- Prepare: Purposes and establishing capable facilitators
- Start with retrospectives in your first iteration
- Simple technique: **asking questions** or **boat exercise**

Evaluate the Retrospective, ask:

- Is this useful?
- Helps to get a shared understanding how things go?
- Do the actions make sense?
- Does meeting as a team to reflect feel good?

Leading Retrospectives

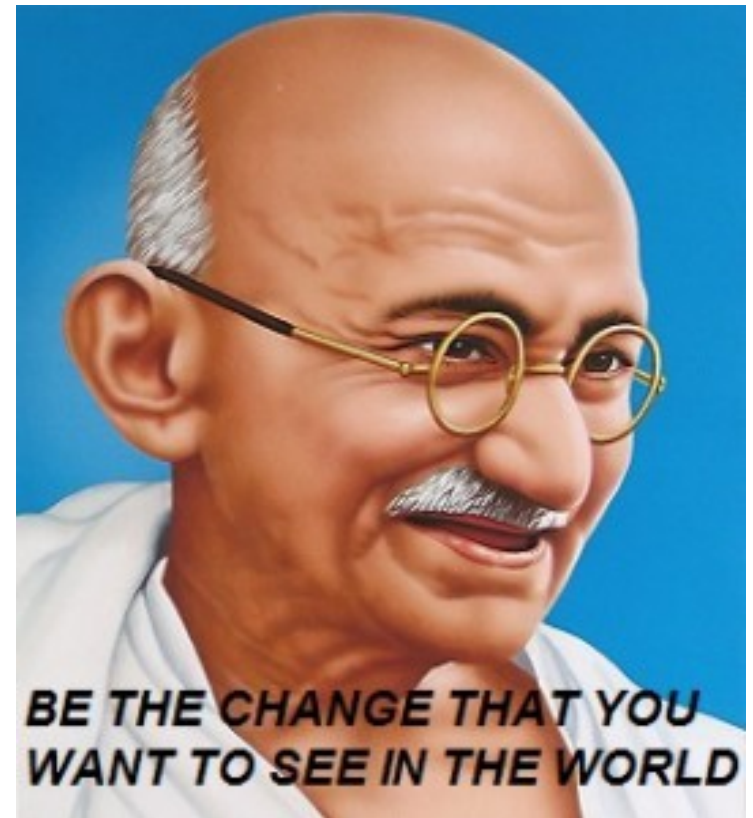
Roles

- Facilitator – Servant Leader
- Coach – Support Change
- Manager – Arrange for Change

All roles are needed

Play the game together

Action is in the interaction



Business Value

Agile retrospectives help teams learn and improve, and increase their business value to their customers and the company

Getting more Business Value:

- Expectations
- Limit Actions
- Follow up on Actions



Getting Business Value out of Agile Retrospectives

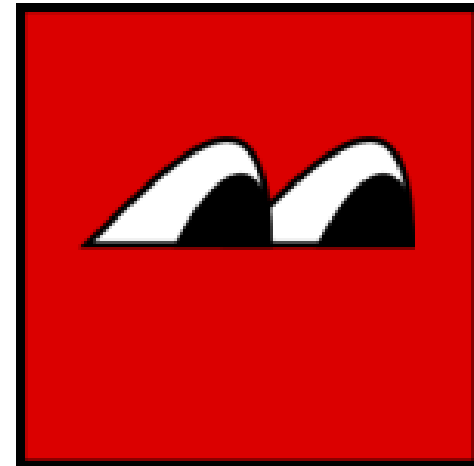
Expectations for Retrospectives

- Effective Teamwork
- Better Collaboration
- Development Process
- Velocity / Productivity
- Product Quality
- Costs
- Lead Time



Limit the number of Actions

- Small Action
- Change Frequently
- Focus on Value
- Stop Starting, Start Stopping
- Kanban



Short Cycled Improvement

Follow up on Actions

- Make them Visible
- Check status in the next Retrospective
- Mentor & Coach teams on Continuous Improvement

Making Quality & Process Improvement Visible

Uncovering Better Ways to do Process Improvement

Golden Rules for Agile Process Improvement

Retrospective Benefits

- Actions done by the Team
- Power to the Team
- Changes that Stick



Toolbox of Retrospective Exercises

- Teams are different
- Needs vary in time
- Deliver more value for Teams

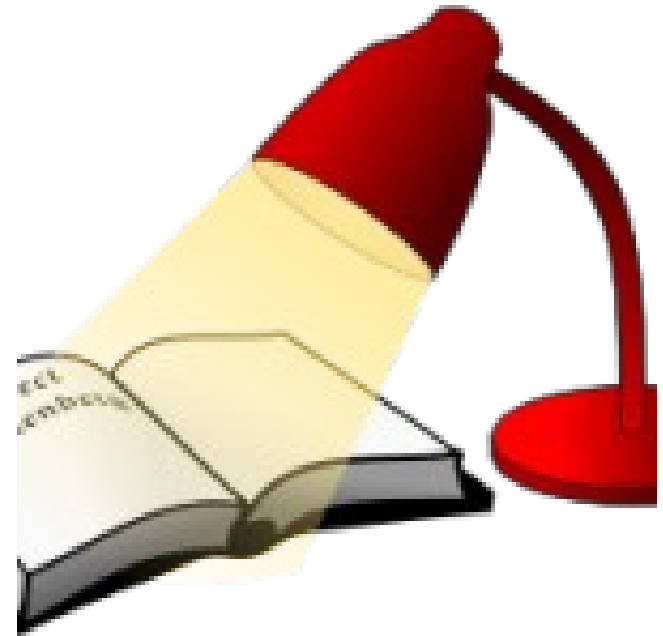
You can plan a retrospective meeting, and think about the technique that you want to use, but be open to change it on the spot whenever needed.



Toolbox of Retrospective Techniques

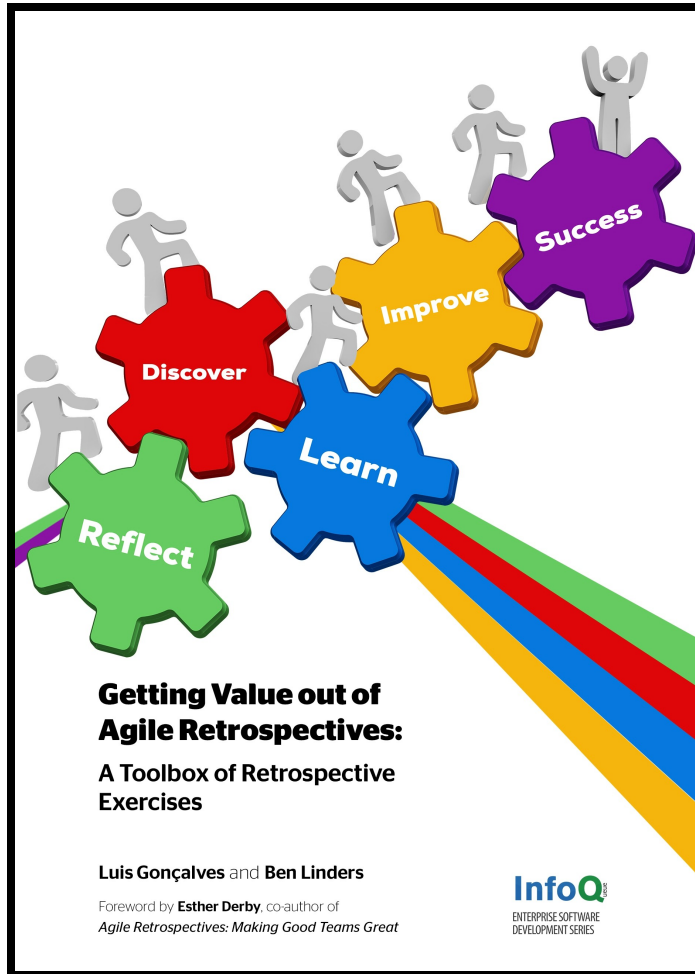
Retrospective Exercises

- Asking questions
- One-word retrospective
- Root Cause Analysis
- Timeline
- Flow and Energy
- Asking Why?
- Strengths (Solution Focused)
- Perfection game
- Action priorities
- Retrospective of Retrospectives
- Teams with multiple customers

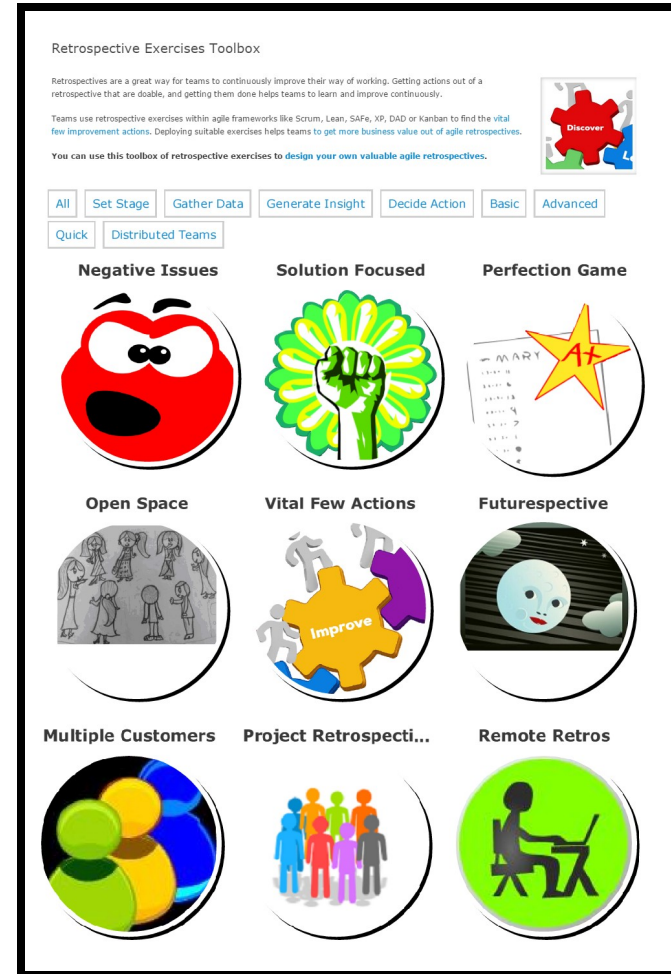


Book with Agile Retrospective Exercises

Designing your Retrospective



amazon.com/dp/B00SWJO1DI



benlinders.com/exercises/

Examples

The Sprint that failed



- Trust and Empowerment
- Deal with Feelings

The team that wasn't a team yet



- Getting to know each other
- Skills & Open Culture

Take Away

Retrospectives:

- Frequent, Fast Feedback
- Well Facilitated
- Effective Exercise
- Take Actions



Questions?

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