

Extracted from:

The Dream Team Nightmare

Boost Team Productivity Using Agile Techniques

This PDF file contains pages extracted from *The Dream Team Nightmare*, published by the Pragmatic Bookshelf. For more information or to purchase a paperback or PDF copy, please visit <http://www.pragprog.com>.

Note: This extract contains some colored text (particularly in code listing). This is available only in online versions of the books. The printed versions are black and white. Pagination might vary between the online and printed versions; the content is otherwise identical.

Copyright © 2013 The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

The Pragmatic Bookshelf

Dallas, Texas • Raleigh, North Carolina

The
Pragmatic
Programmers

The Dream Team NIGHTMARE



Boost Team
Productivity
Using Agile
Techniques



Portia Tung

Edited by Lynn Beighley

The Dream Team Nightmare

Boost Team Productivity Using Agile Techniques

Portia Tung

The Pragmatic Bookshelf

Dallas, Texas • Raleigh, North Carolina



Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in initial capital letters or in all capitals. The Pragmatic Starter Kit, The Pragmatic Programmer, Pragmatic Programming, Pragmatic Bookshelf, PragProg and the linking *g* device are trademarks of The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

Every precaution was taken in the preparation of this book. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages that may result from the use of information (including program listings) contained herein.

Our Pragmatic courses, workshops, and other products can help you and your team create better software and have more fun. For more information, as well as the latest Pragmatic titles, please visit us at <http://pragprog.com>.

The team that produced this book includes:

Lynn Beighley (editor)

Molly McBeath (copyeditor)

David J Kelly (typesetter)

Janet Furlow (producer)

Juliet Benda (rights)

Ellie Callahan (support)

Copyright © 2013 The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN-13: 978-1-937785-71-0

Encoded using the finest acid-free high-entropy binary digits.

Book version: P1.0—December 2013

To Snow Dragon

For making dreams come true

Slander

“Morning, Jason,” says Patrick as Jason takes a seat next to Patrick and directly opposite you.

“Jim’s already filled me in on the team’s progress,” says Patrick. “Now I’d like to hear what you think.”

Jason avoids making eye contact with you.

Addressing only Patrick, Jason launches into a tirade of all the outstanding work the team still has to do for the current release. He questions the value of the numerous meetings you’ve set up for the team. Jason describes them as a “complete waste of time” and wonders what you hope to achieve out of them that the team can’t do by itself.

Continue with the adventure [on page 7](#).

Treaty

After Jason finishes, Patrick says, “The management team has asked Jim to come up with recommendations to help the team move forward. Based on my understanding of your continued concerns with the team and Cassandra, you would agree that we simply cannot continue with the team as is if we want take our product to the next level.”

Jason leans forward to respond, but Patrick holds up his hand and continues. “We hope the recommendations will provide the opportunity for the team to prove they can work together and deliver at least 50 percent of the estimated value based on the original business case for this release. Our company needs this right now if we’re serious about going public.”

Jason can’t remain silent any longer. “I’ve mentioned a million times that the developers simply do not have the ability to appreciate the intricacies of the in-house framework we’ve developed. Then there’s that woman who claims to understand our customers better than those who created the original product. We don’t need to ask customers for their input and feedback to know we’re right. That’s just a waste of time!”

Patrick remains perfectly composed. “To reiterate,” he says, “We have less than three days for Jim to come up with recommendations and we need to know if you’re on board with this exercise. Consider this week as a modest additional investment, given how much the current release has already cost us.”

Before Jason can respond, Patrick thanks you for your time and tells you he will continue the conversation with Jason in private. Patrick tells you to move forward with the team without further delay.

Continue with the adventure [on page 8](#).

Desperate Remedies

When you return to the team space, Ben says he's got something important to tell you.

"I overheard Patrick telling one of the managers last week that Love Inc. has a number of options when it comes to the future of software development. They can choose to out-source IT entirely or address the challenges we have one by one, beginning with the Dream Team," Ben says.

According to Ben, management can either keep the team together as is or split the team up and redistribute the people across other teams. Or they could disband all existing teams and shuffle people around in the hope that a change of teams will be enough to reinvigorate everyone and give the organization a morale boost.

"Whichever option they choose, it won't count for much unless they address the root cause of all the problems," Ben tells you.

"In my opinion, the rift between the business and IT has become a chasm. It may be too late to build a bridge to meet each other halfway," he continues.

"One more thing," says Ben. "Patrick said yesterday that he's prepared to wait until after hearing your recommendations before deciding what to do with the team. Whatever management decides to do next with the Dream Team will set a precedent for the entire IT department going forward," says Ben.

Continue with the adventure [on page 9](#).

Truce

Instead of holding the project retrospective immediately, you inform the team that the meeting will resume after lunch today. You hope this will buy Jason some time to make up his mind about whether or not he'll help the team. This way, if he chooses to stay and help, he won't feel the team has left him behind.

By late morning, Jason returns and tells you he has decided to stay. He mutters he'll do his best to make things work. You notice he says this without looking you in the eye.

Continue with the adventure [on page 10](#).

Hinder, Not Help

Over the next couple of days, despite Jason's words of collaboration, he continues to challenge everything you do, as well as everything the team suggests. Jason's active resistance, combined with the delay from postponing the project retrospective, has resulted in severe consequences for your five-day schedule.

By the end of the week, the team's exhausted from the constant conflict and resistance. There are daily murmurings of team members looking for new jobs when—not if—their project gets outsourced.

You realize too late that you could have done things differently. Rewind back to Tuesday's project retrospective. Judging from your one-on-one conversations with the individual team members beforehand, it's likely the majority would have voted to continue the meeting had you given them the chance. The meeting would have therefore gone ahead, and Jason's outburst wouldn't have been such a big deal.

Alternatively, after your three-way conversation with Patrick and Jason, you three should have agreed on some concrete actions that would have ensured that Jason helped to get the project back on track instead of getting in the way.

Unfortunately, hindsight is a luxury you can't afford. Patrick and the management team are unimpressed by the rapid deterioration in the team's morale and progress. After your presentation on Friday, they thank you for your time and tell you your services are no longer required.

THE END