

On Project Retrospectives

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The word *Retrospective*

From Latin -

“retrospectare” - looking back

New Oxford American Dictionary -

“looking back on or dealing with past events or situations...”

Wikipedia on Software Engineering -

“to discuss what was successful.. what could be improved”

Wikipedia on Agile development -

“held to look for ways to improve the process for the next iteration”



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Project vs. Iteration Retrospectives

	Iteration Retrospective	Project Retrospective
Scope	Last Iteration	Whole Project
Length	Typically 30-60 min	Typically Half day – one and half day
Participants	Dev team, (PO), Facilitated by: Project Lead (Scrum master)	Dev team, Internal Stakeholders, Management, External facilitator
Methods	Typically by asking participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What worked well?• What can be improved?• Suggestions for improvement?	Menu of activities within three main parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Setting the stage why, how)2) The Past (what happened)3) The future (how can we improve)



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Employing Iteration and Project Retrospectives

Iteration Retros are not enough

- Scope too narrow for holistic solutions
- Assumptions seldom challenged

Betware employs Double Loop learning

- Iteration and Project Retrospectives
- Post Project Customer Surveys

Our Conclusion

- Project Retrospectives are essential!
- Allow the company to learn and grow



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Project Retrospective Facilitator Group

Group of six Project Facilitators

- Their Purpose
 - “to build and share knowledge & experience on how to facilitate a successful retro”

- Independent facilitator

How to facilitate Project retro?



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Added by Thomas Schmidt, last edited by Björn Brynjar Jónsson on 12 Sep, 2010

Project Retrospectives

For some time now a group of Betware employees has been reading material on project retrospectives. The goal is to be able to facilitate retrospectives for all projects that t

Who

The facilitator group consists of:

Name	Location
Björn Brynjar	HQ
Gauti Guðmundsson	HQ
Gunnhildur Ólafsdóttir	HQ
Kristín Bestla Þórsdóttir	HQ
Ólafur Guðmundsson	HQ
Thomas Schmidt	Certus

Why

Basically a retrospective is about past to improve the future. This is human interactions, understanding. Thus a retrospective stands out in development practice as this is one people minded activities you can engage in at the end of their lifecycle. Question is whether all projects should have retrospectives at the end of their lifecycle. answer is that in general retrospectives are needed for small projects but this should be assessed in each case. Small projects (2-3 people) do not need retrospectives, unless a special reason, team members may find it to have a project retrospective because of experience during the project lifetime.

What has been done

A list of retrospectives can be seen below

- 2xJoker Retrospective (Certus)
- Oddsat Retrospective (Lotteries and Projects)
- STL Digital TV Web Services Retrospective (Teams)
- BCLC Raffle Project Retrospective (Teams)
- Spirit

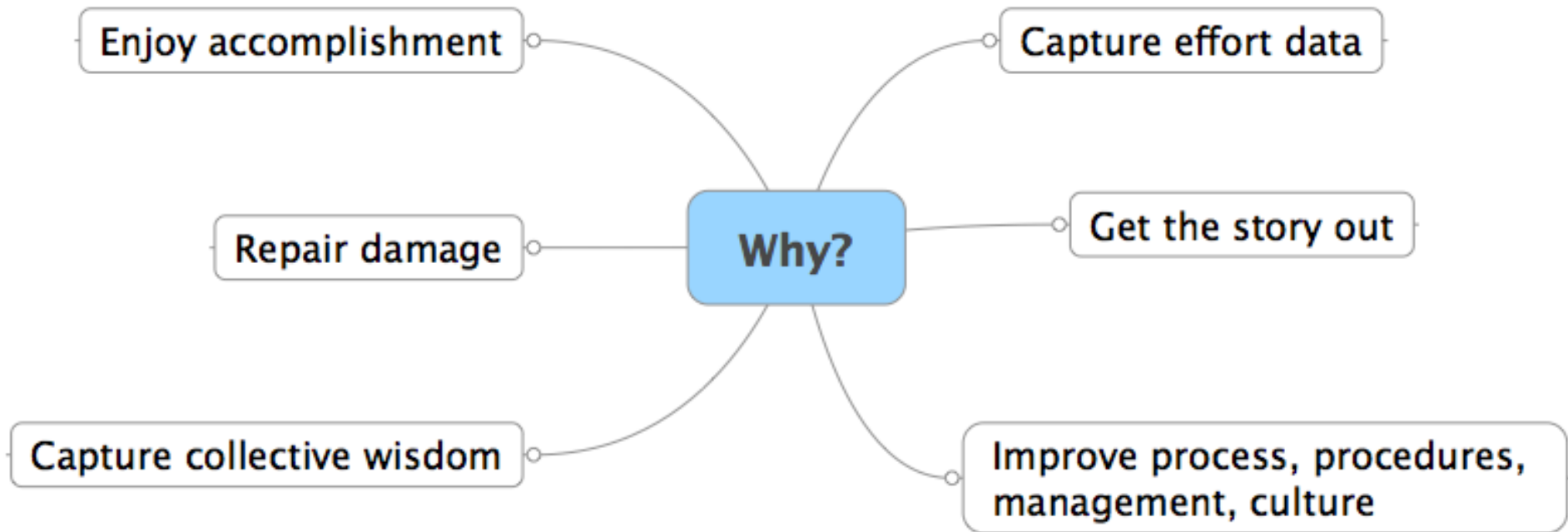
How

Retrospectives can be conducted in various ways. A few different methods have been used in Betware project retrospectives, i.e. creating a timeline where participants create a timeline with memorable events from the project lifetime. The team then reviews the timeline and the major events. The project in some way

Why

Start with why

Conducting a Project Retrospective



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Retrospective Agenda

Every project is different – agenda set up to fit project & purpose

Part I The readying	Part II The Past	Part III The Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build trust• Establish safety• Positive outcome• Openness, Discovery, Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share stories• Connect the pieces• Understand what really happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply lessons learned• Proposals for change

How does a typical agenda look like?



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Retrospective Agenda

Time GMT	Phase	Exercise
9.30	Setting the stage (why, how)	Introduction (Review goals and agenda)
9.45		Working rules
10.00		Create Safety
10.20		Define Success
10.30		Break
10.45	The Past (what happend)	Develop Project Timeline
12.40		Continue Develop Project Timeline
13.20		Mining the timeline for gold
14.30		Break
14.45	The Future (how can we improve)	Develop improvement suggestions
16.00		Closing the retrospective



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Exercises?



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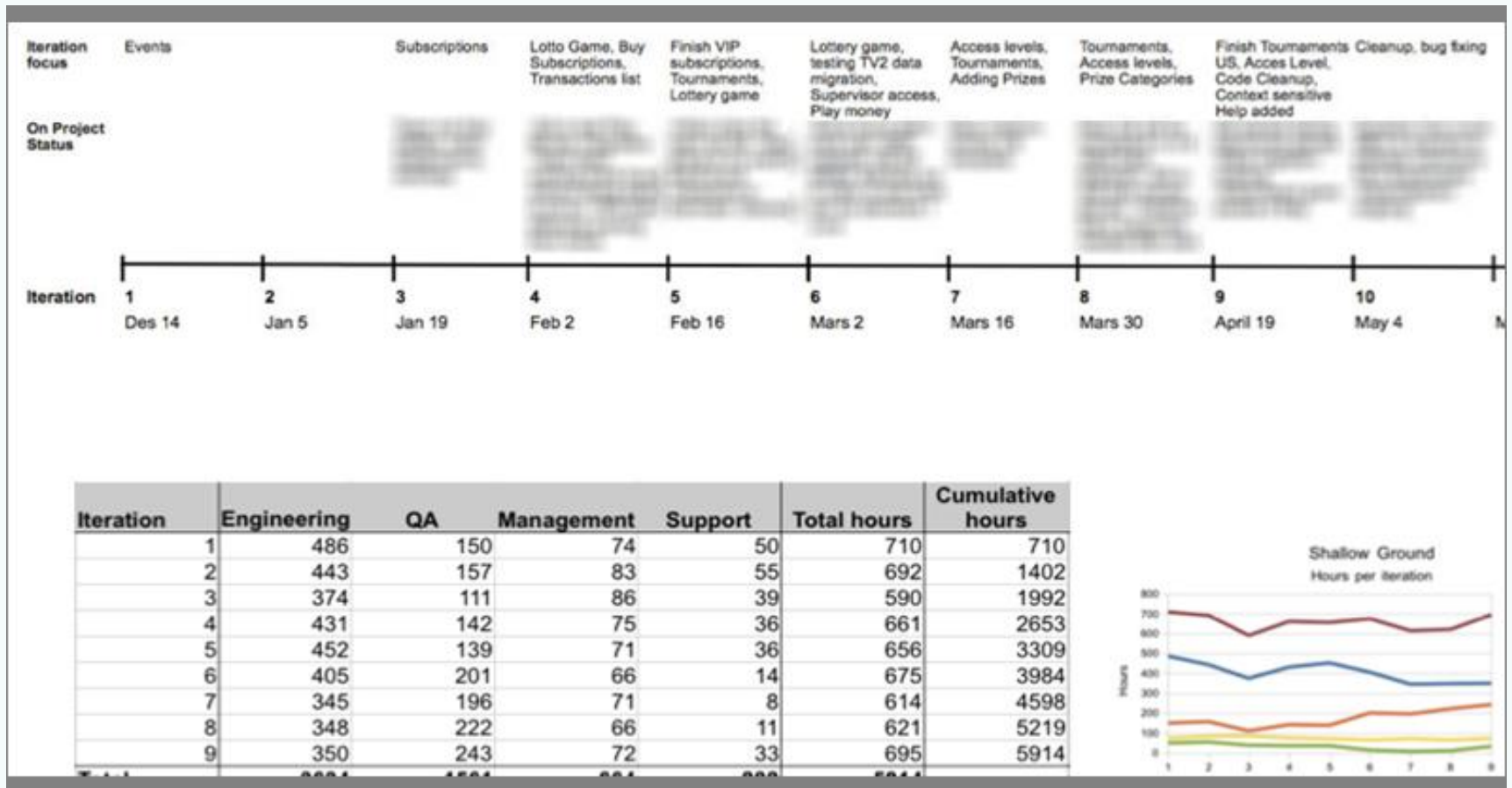
Develop Timeline



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Develop Timeline - handouts



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Picture It!



Retrospective Outcomes

- closing the circle

“Formulate proposals for change”

- Who carries out proposals for change?
- How is the knowledge internalized within the company?

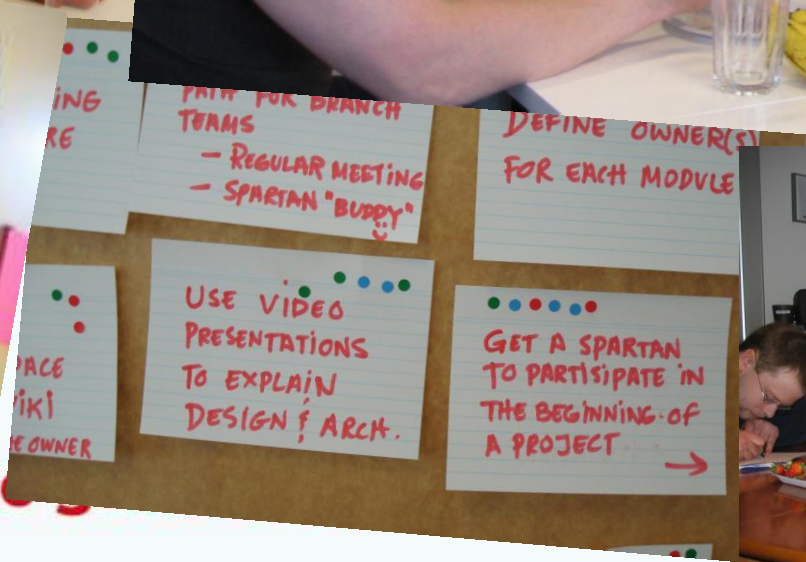
- The Teams
- Quality Circle
- PMO

- Product Office
- Management team
- CEO
- Company Board?

- To summarize our results - worth every minute spent!

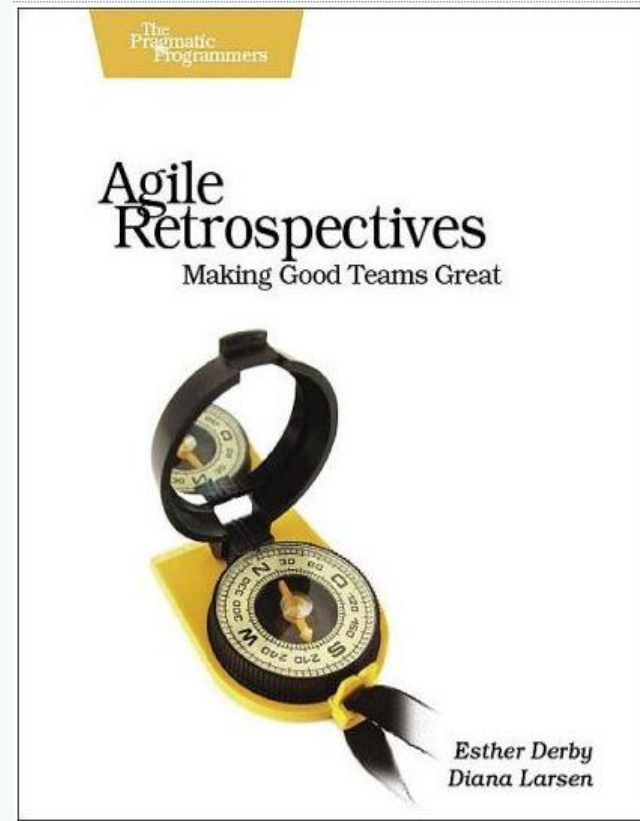
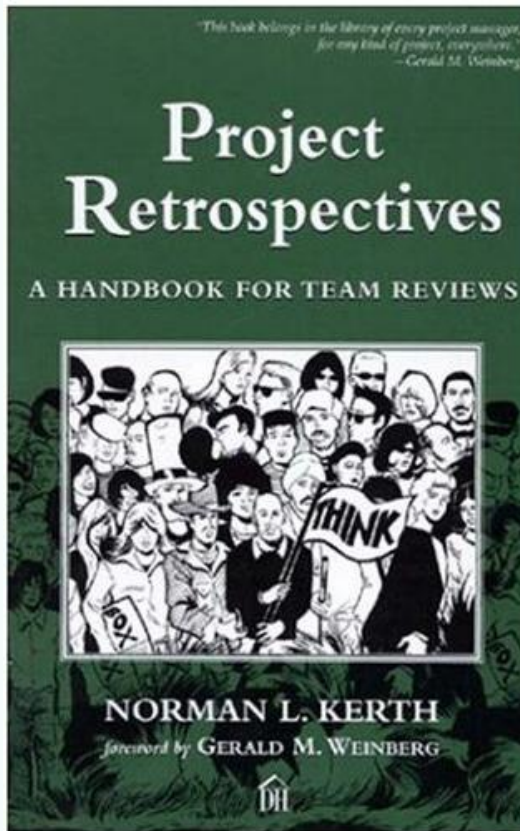


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References



- http://retrospectivefacilitatorgathering.org/doku.php/2010_results



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