Great team development workshop with Conrad Giller

By Sebastian Radics

Today I had the opportunity to join a workshop day with Conrad Giller regarding team development and would like to share some insights with you.

If you would like to learn much more about team development phases you should join Conrad's session. It provides a deep overview about the Tuckman team phases that you cannot get from a book or a presentation. Ideally made for ScrumMasters and Agile Coaches who would like to get in touch with their teams much better and use these phases and provided analysis to help the group becoming a team.

I like the combination of 5 dysfunctions and the Tuckman team phases and Conrads approach to have a common discussion base by analyzing the great movie Remember the Titans and mapping scenes to team phases.

A combination with real cases from our daily situations provided a chance to apply the models and get expert hints and facilitation directly from Conrad as an expert in areas like team development and conflict management.

Some key learnings

- Try to think in the teams eye (and not in the coach eye).
- Take notes on concrete **observations** (and not already rephrased terms that don't reflect the originally observation). This makes it much more likely that you can address problems with the team by using concrete situations. Clear observations show problems in a much more dramatic way.
- When using games to illustrate something use a debriefing where you abstract takeaways in a way that it gets usable in the teams daily business (remove all the connections to the game).
- Establish rules based on concrete examples and situations in the team. Not all at once but better one by one when needed. **Event based rule setup**
- Learn more about body language to learn observing the signals of introverts better.
- **Appreciation by observation** and working with these observations.
- It needs strong one-on-one contact with every team member. One can solve topics much better in direct conversations instead of all team discussions.
- Sense for possible majority in smaller rounds.
- Don't invest too much time in discussing about values in a generic way but make them visible by everyones story from past working experiences.
- Use tools/games to discover the levels behind the surface.
- Coaching: Asking the right stupid questions at the best fitting situation.
- A team can hardly reflect on the Agile Coaches work when doing it right. It should feel like they did it on their own. (And this is a challenge for the Agile coach not to get in the center)
- **Check for the teams values** and not just your own to derive actions.
- **Ensure fast integration of new team members** and clear good byes for leaving members. Take your time. Appreciation and Thank you!
- It's the agile coach job to communicate observations.
- Work with hypotheses – create them and check what's behind.
- Remove „war" language. It's not about fighting and winning above others. Better ask: **What does she miss at the moment? What is their need?**

- Use **clear and acceptable information/sentences** instead of either not binding and blurry or scarce and confronting versions.
- Relegation needs to parts – one sender and one receiver. You need to check both sides.

> What's the most beautiful memory of your work so far?

> Love it! Leave It! Or change it!

> Who is the one that can give me appreciation?

> How many percent of your work do you enjoy? (<70% as an indicator that this person is going to leave soon)

Tuckman Phase 0: Orientation

> What's the point?

- Provide all information you already have at hand, early and transparent for everyone involved in the team.
- As clear as possible and as much as possible
- Don't try to hide things as this just sets the ground for too many assumptions
- Make the phase between initial information and start of the project as small as possible
- It's about speculations and rumors and with proper actions you invest in building trust and engagement

Tuckman Phase 1: Forming

> Who are the others?

> Work is a means to an end

- Get to know each other
- This phase is all about trust and as an agile coach you work on establishing a culture for having discussions and engagement
- You cannot expect great work results already. Work just is about getting to know another more deeply!
- Learn about strengths and weaknesses.
- High individual need for security.
- Rules are still to early to be remembered later on.
- Get to know the influencers and what is at stake for everyone. Use wise interventions where you consider your role observations.
- Foster two-people-communications (its to early to bring topics to the team level)
- Ensure fairness.

Tuckman Phase 2: Storming

> Where am I?

> Work is a means to an end

- Allow conflicts (up to a certain level).
- Use humor. Laughing in a group is that important!
- Danger of having the illusion of being a team.

Tuckman Phase 3: Norming

> Me and them

- Real work starts here.
- One needs to establish proper monitoring if the teams gets back to previous stages!
- Still using a scapegoat.
- Responsibility and attention to results.

Tuckman Phase 4: Performing

> We

- Celebrate success.
- The teams works intrinsically towards the goal.

Tuckman Phase 5:Adjourning

> It was nice

- Take your time to remember and saying goodbye.
- What will we take with us and what will we throw away?

Summary

It's been a great experience today and can highly recommend to get to know more about team development and team phases. Working with Conrad through that interesting topic was a great experience! Have fun with your next steps…