The SM & Kaizen Culture V.10

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Intro



Reminder to me…

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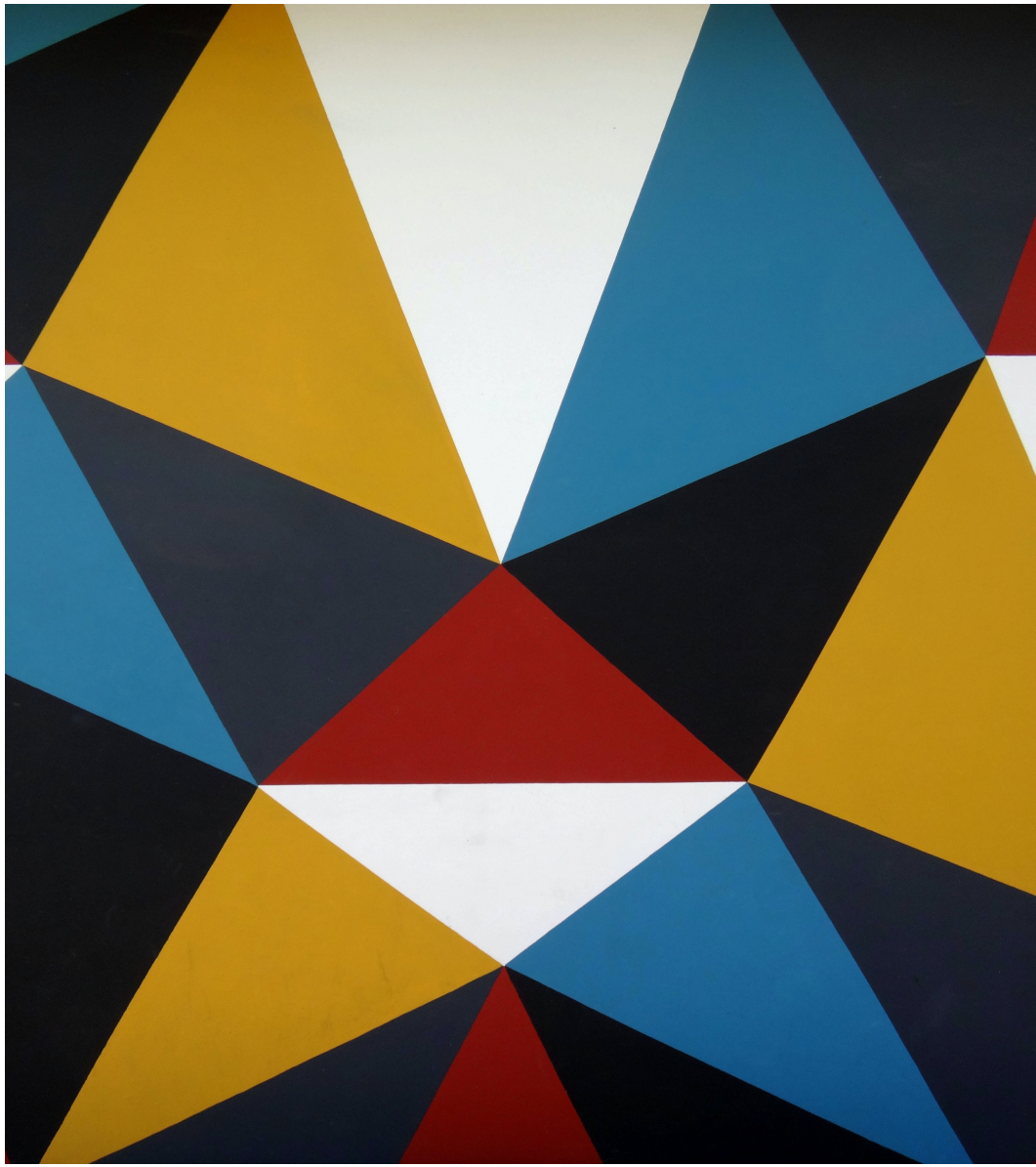


Recommendation

- “**A Scrum Book”** by Jeff Sutherland, James Coplien et al.
- It’s full of 94 Patterns in ~500 pages.
- Patterns movement.
  - See Christopher Alexander, “A Pattern Language.” “The Timeless Way of Building.”
  - See wikipedia (“A Pattern Language”).
  - See also: ScrumPLOP.org or scrumbook.org



Let’s state the idea quickly

- The SM is supposed to help the Team become more effective
- That means: continuously improving
- aka “Fixing Impediments”
- So, an Impediment List
- But more: You need a Kaizen Culture
- You need the Team, the Managers, the whole Company - to have a Kaizen Culture
- And it starts with **YOU** (the SM or agile advocate).

- Let’s Start



Now…

- Let’s discuss
- Connect the dots



Some Ideas to Share



Talking about change

- We must have a sustainable pace of **change**
- Not for you, but “the culture”
- “Hard to see, this one is”



What do we mean?

- First: One impediment at a time. We are fixing them at a speed that “the situation” can sustain.
- “Bend them, but don’t break them”
- First problem: Zero pace of change
- BUT: we might start to go too fast
- **Is every team fixing the 1 top impediment always?**
- SECOND: The SM must slowly establish a Kaizen Culture with “everyone”.
  - At a sustainable pace
- Most firms do NOT have this (IMO)



“Begin with the End in mind”

- What does a Kaizen Culture look like when we “get there”?
- First: there is no end point. We can always become better. Always. Always.
- The Lean community says it helps to have a “vision of perfection” that at least seems attainable.
- One example: At one point, Toyota was getting one A3 per person per month. More than 1 million per year. Across the whole business. A **LOT** of continuous change. In most of your situations, you are NOT there yet. (Also: Toyota was not and is not perfect.)



One vision of “perfection”

- So, 1 million A3 reports (1 million changes).
- For Toyota: 1per employee per month.
- Now that represents a Kaizen Culture (at least compared to what you currently have - I guess).
- Everyone supported it. From the CEO down through “everyone” (Everyone?)
- A SM will NOT get that to happen in one month.



Exercise: Write your questions, so far

- Write your questions - if you were doing a Socratic dialogue, what would you want to ask?
- In the Chat window.
- OR: Write a comment or observation or take-away.
- Something to share.



Some pieces



Set a goal

- “You have to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.” Yogi Berra
- “If you don’t set goals, you can’t regret not reaching them.” Yogi Berra

- Example: Double Velocity in 12 months.
- Maybe two goals: One for you, internally. And one for the Team, a bit more public.
- Under-promise and over-deliver. Some.



Get Team buy-in

- To fixing one impediment (or so) per Sprint
- And to the idea of continuous improvement
- And to sustainable pace
- And to “the most important thing first”
- To your main Goal

- You can get “Let’s try it” fairly easily
- Getting deep buy-in, commonly: “I’ll believe it when I see it.”



Start talking to the manager

- The manager(s) may not know “kaizen”, but they always like the basic idea of continuous improvement (ok, almost always).
- Talk to them. Get them to understand the agile-scrum way of doing this.
- Ask the manager to participate some. Ex: Approve an A3.



Commit to spending 20% of team time per sprint on improving

- One SM for Team of 7 = 14% ish.
- 6% ish from rest of Team
- Did I mention **EVERY** Sprint???
- In that case, you must start to fit this in with the existing Lean culture. — Should not be hard.



Connect the dots!

- As you start to do it (eg, fixing impediments, or, really, continuously improving) - tell people.
- Let them see. Connect the dots for them. Talk about the small wins. Let them feel it!
- First: The Team and the manager.
- Later: More people.
- It will grow more easily if they see the success. You (SM) are the Minister of Transparency.



Who else?

- “You” could also be any agile advocate (eg, someone who has taken a CSM or CSPO course). A common example: The PO.
- You could also be an agile coach or a manager.
- The Agile Advocate should at least help the SM do this with the Team.
- Definitely help with the Culture.



Now we go into some more detail

- Let’s go!



Some basics



YOU!

- You (the SM?) are key to this.
- You must accept this as KEY to your role, mission, etc.
- Change your prior view of the job to this one, at least fundamentally.
- Yes, you still coach, facilitate, teach, etc. But now you see it as “kaizen”.
- You are the “Minister of Kaizen”. (Let’s have a little fun with it.)



Hold on - what if…

- Yes, if could be true that your firm is influenced by Lean, even heavily.
- In that case, you must start to fit this in with the existing Lean culture. — Should not be hard.



Stephen Covey

- Most famous: 7 Habits
- “Sharpening the saw” (7th Habit)
- I’m too busy today, but I’ll do it tomorrow.
  - Sure you will!
- So, you must, in yourself first, make “continuous improvement” actually ***continuous***.
- This is a problem!
- Why?



Continuous

- But also sustainable.
- And I’ll say next: FUN.



Impediment List



Quick Survey

- An Impediment List (for a Team) is:
  - Very Common (> 74%)
  - Common (55-74%)
  - 50-50 ish
  - Somewhat Common (20-45%)
  - Uncommon (5-19%)
  - “We never heard of it” (0-5%)



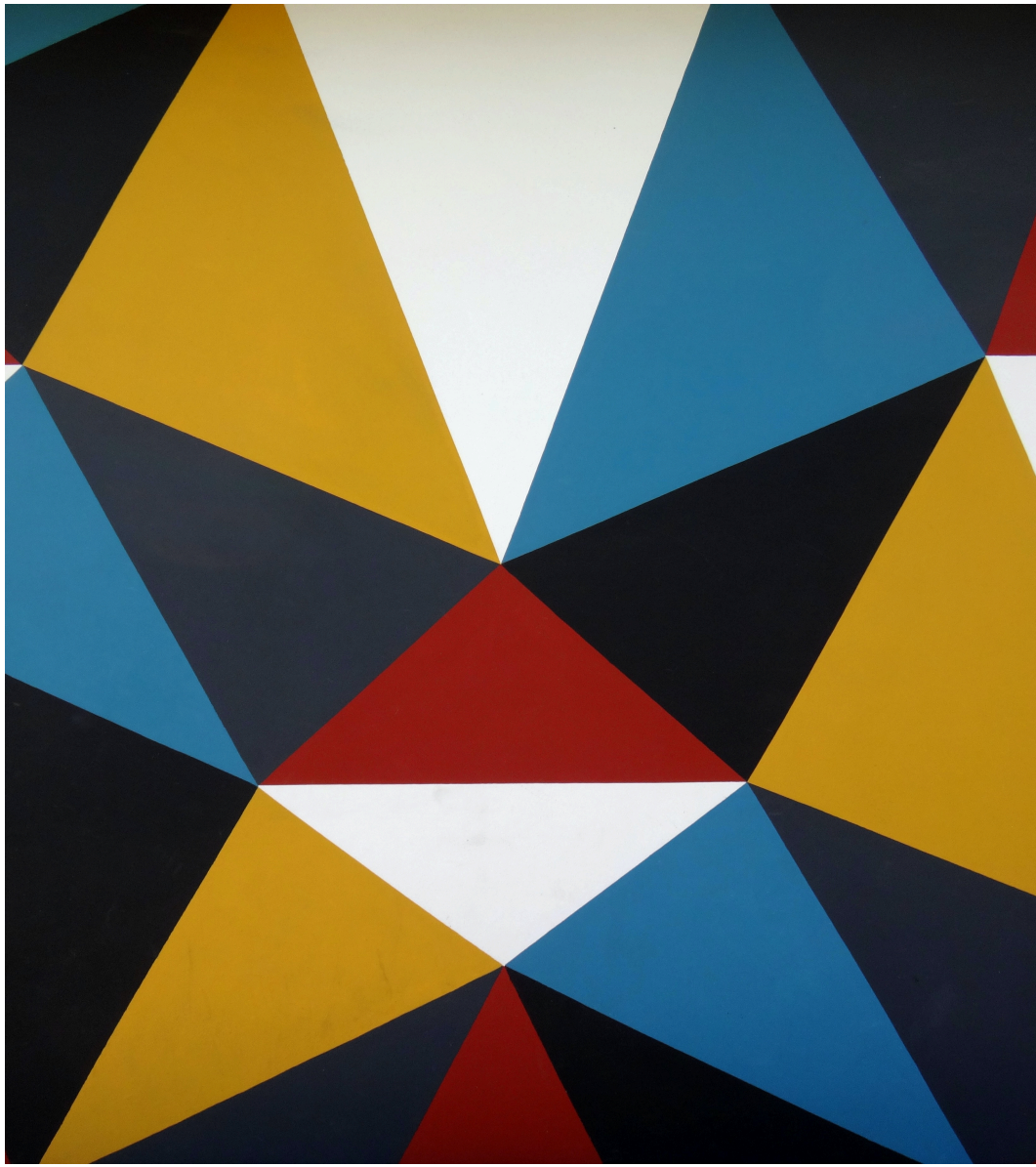
Impediment List Is a Pattern

- This pattern fits with other patterns (e.g., ScrumMaster, First Things First)
- A pattern (we hope) helps you become better, or your team becomes better. And maybe more broadly, helps others become better.



Not Just One Pattern, but How It All Works Together

- **Also:** Not a noun, but a verb.
- It's not having an Impediment List, but rather working the Impediment List to become better.



What is an Impediment List?

- A list of Impediments.
- A list of the Top 20 (?) (a) things to fix, or (b) opportunities for improvement
- Prioritized: By benefit (mostly incr. Velocity), ROI (b/c), and other factors
- Prioritized by the Scrum Team
- Part of the social contract between Organization and Team



What Is an Impediment?

- Anything that is “slowing us down”
- Not just “blockers”
- I suck, we suck, they suck.
- Any “opportunity for improvement.”
- From which: A subset of improvements that helps us become 100% more productive fairly quickly.
- Ask them: *“What do we need to change around here to become 100% more productive?”*



How Big is an Impediment?

- By the time an impediment gets to the Top…
- (Partly) fixable (mitigated) in **one Sprint**
- Slicing and dicing takes cleverness
- Some resulting benefit (ROI on the impediment) starting (we hope) immediately
- Sometimes: “Oh sugar, maybe that was not the right thing to fix!”
- Fixing “Company Culture” is definitely TOO big for one sprint.



If you (or any person) or we or they or “it” is not Perfect

- …then you have an impediment.

- Let’s be fair: by that definition everything is an impediment, or has some level of “impediment-ness.”
- “The relentless pursuit of perfection.”
- Yes, it is humbling. And relentless.



Watch Out!

- Improving also requires these:
  - More happiness / fun
  - Higher quality
  - Fewer hours
  - More BV per Story Point
  - “I never want to leave this team — the best 6 months of my work life, ever.”
- Otherwise: They will assume that “impediments” is just talk, and assume management wants us to work harder. “Under Pressure”



Exercise: Write Impediments

- Take 1 minute and write as 3 impediments for a recent Team.
  - I suck
  - We suck
  - They suck
  - It sucks
- In the Chat window
- So, you all have some examples.



Problems

- Telling the truth…
- Team members don’t want to admit they are not perfect.
- The “organization” does not want to talk about the dirty linen.
- People blame Scrum for the problems Scrum reveals.
- Hence: “Courage”



Some Domains for Impediments

- People issues
- Scrum-Butt
- Automation (Testing, CI, etc.)
- Distractions
- Organizational impediments (wide range)
- Unwillingness to change, mindset, culture
- Business side issues (PO sucks, BSHs suck, DOR process sucks)
- Etc.



Prioritize - factors

- Benefits:
  - Increased velocity
  - Higher morale
  - More BV
  - Less confusion
  - Higher quality
- Costs of implementation
- ROI (benefit / cost)
- Other factors
- Make impediments the right size - key for prioritizing



“One step at a time.”

- Work on one impediment at a time. Usually.
- Don’t get distracted. (So easy to get distracted.)
- Suggestion: Make a list of the impediments fixed or mitigated. And a Velocity chart (improving?) - over time.
- Don’t scatter your energies on many small impediments and get nowhere.



The People



The Team Must Help

- We mean the whole Scrum Team, including the PO.
- Help identify the best impediments
  - gets better with time
- Help work on some impediments…



ScrumMaster

- Guides, cajoles, coaches, etc.
- Works on some impediments
- Pulls in the other parties, eg, managers
- The main driver (“the straw that stirs the drink”)



The Manager

- [A Team should have one manager.]
- A manager must encourage them attack impediments — in general and specifically.
- The manager must say yes (sometimes) to people, money or approval, or all 3.
- A manager might actually fix some impediments.



Business Stakeholders

- They see the list every Sprint (or the Top 3)
- Let the BSHs choose whether to invest in fixing some impediments. (They have some money, normally)
- They should help some (maybe only by saying yes)



Summary:
Who fixes impediments?

- The SM
- The Team (like a PBI in the sprint). The whole Team… (PO)
- The Manager
- Business Stakeholders (BSHs)
- Other people outside the Team
- **People outside the company (eg, a vendor)**



The Bigger Picture



Impact?

- If you did the Top X [8?] impediments, could you double the Velocity?
- How long to fix the Top X?



Metrics

- I think you must “add” some good metrics.
- And talk about them.
- And remember: (a) metrics can lie (or be un-useful, and (b) metrics are never “everything”
- Kaizen culture is really a spirit and a feeling within the people (and the culture). It is: “I like this feeling of continuously improving, and working together on it.”



Get Feedback / Learn

- You are not an expert. Get help.
- Get feedback on how it's going, and how it's going for them.
- Yes, surveys or metrics might help too. And also some good talking.
- You will always be learning how to do this. Well, you can retire when you are Bill Belichick.



Transparency

- The Impediment List brings transparency.



How Does It Help?

- Let’s list the ways a good SM with a Kaizen Culture **could** help.
- In the Chat window please…



Benefits

- Increased velocity
- Visibility
- Transparency
- First Things First
- Less complaining
- Higher quality
- Less Stupid
- Higher morale
- They learn to identify the important stuff
- SM work list
- SM less distracted

Discussion, Questions



Discussion, Questions

- Don’t be shy!
- Just turn off the mute
- OR: Type them in the Chat



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