Introducing Agile to a PRINCE2 Environment in UK City Government

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Agenda

• Context & challenges

• Working Agile in and around PRINCE2 - “A picture is worth a thousand words”

• Lessons learned

• Questions and discussion
Context

• Mike joined the UK City Government team as Agile Coach in early 2014.
• He served as a trainer & mentor for the team, as well as scrum master.
• The team was responsible for building the new website for the Mayor and Assembly, set to go live before the next elections in May 2016.
• The engagement involved three phases: Technical proof of multiple new concepts (Alpha) through Sept 2014 (the immediate challenge); approvals and then build-out at scale to go “public” (Beta) in early 2015 and “live” in late 2015.
Challenges

• The organization was immersed in PRINCE2. ALL IT staff were required to have been trained in PRINCE2. The Agile project had to conform to PRINCE2.
• The technical proof-of-concept development was outsourced to a local vendor (who refused to send developers on-site).
• The PMO was forced to consider Agile against their will. They agreed to send 2 PM’s to scrum training but refused to allow outsourced developers to participate on the grounds that they “were familiar with Agile.”
• I found out on arrival that the PMO had already placed traditional, non-Agile contracts with outsourced vendor and were planning workshop that week to finalize all requirements.
The PRINCE2 Compromise
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“Users” were grouped into several “constituencies” with different perspectives from “Does it work?,” to “Is the content right,” to “Is it pretty enough?,” to “Can’t it be cooler?”. Hence:
AND … “Documentation” for Audit

• In a government organization, they need to be prepared for an audit into failure, so under PRINCE2 we were required to produce “Who did what” documentation. Jira helped:
Lessons Learned …

• Contracts:
  – Particularly in the government space, buyers and sellers have learned that there is a significant risk that someone will suffer if the clearly visible outcome is different from the vaguely defined and remembered concept, so get it in writing upfront!
  – For Agile in government you need to get ahead of the procurement & PMO to set up an Agile development contract
  – And you can get help with this. 😊

• Process Standards
  – The process standards had to be significantly updated to include Agile – not a very Agile task – but a requirement for this government agency to satisfy audit requirements.
  – And you can get help with this. 😊

• Tools
  – Nothing new here, but continuous integration with automated testing on a daily basis is essential for Agile. It’s also quite foreign to most non-Agile shops. In this case, the government agency had been burned in the past by not having outsourced vendor code working in their own environment, so they demanded daily code drops into the government environment (but settled on twice weekly).
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