Who am I

mattias.skarin@crisp.se
Help organisations succeed with software

Book: “Kanban and Scrum – how to make the best of both”

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin

ISBN: 978-0-557-13832-6
Questions & challenges

- Can technical operations be viewed as a flow problem?

- Is it possible to get team work benefits in a field with high specialization?

- How well can continuous improvement be deployed in operations?
Flow

What matters?

The work we try to do...

Our bottleneck

..or the work we can complete?
**What is Kanban?**

- Only start new ..
- ..once last item is complete
- "Work in progress" limit

1. Limit Work In Progress
2. Only start new when last item was complete
3. Balance demand against throughput

---

Mattias Skarin

2009-10-31
A view on Scrum?

Standardized package

- Lean principles
- Prioritization
- Cooperation model
- Continuous improvement
Nature of technical operations
### Nature of demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations</th>
<th>Software</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interrupt driven</td>
<td>Focus time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized issues</td>
<td>Shared work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneven</td>
<td>Continuous flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly interdependant</td>
<td>Answers to themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Run Scrum?**

No! We have a different problem

---

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
The case

10+ Teams

- Dev
- Operations
  - DBA
  - Sysadmin
  - Support

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
"Us" (tech ops)

"Why aren’t you using the existing platform advantages?"

"Let’s make release work easier"

"We are hurt by your bad quality!"

"Them" (development)

"will but no way.. getting help is heavy"

"very competent when it comes to infrastructure"

"projects takes too long"

"They” ought to change

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Asking the right questions

“How can we improve?”

“What can we learn from Agile?”
How we got going

1. Why do we want to do this?

Work closer with product development

Tell end customer when we can deliver

Management can shift focus from the imminate stuff

Better opportunities of growth and teamwork
3. Meet stakeholders

- Upstream
- Downstream
4. Sketch/review some potential kanban designs

Use the nature of the demand as input
4. Get going!
Keep managers involved :)
How did the work work?

- Keeping priorities updated
- Tell why
- Problem solving

Prioritisation
New projects

Progress, Problems indicators

Kanban board

How & when to do the work
Add own stories (up to 2d)

Weekly
- Breakdown of new projects
- Continuous improvement

Team

Daily
- Standup
- Blockers in flow?

45 min

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Learning

1. Fewer projects
2. Flow redesigns
3. Surfacing of constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Release</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Project A</th>
<th>Project B</th>
<th>Project C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Done</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Work</strong></td>
<td>Signup</td>
<td>Spike</td>
<td>Fix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ready for work</strong></td>
<td>Cart</td>
<td>Perf.tst</td>
<td>Perf.tst</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Backlog</strong></td>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surfaced constraints

---

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Evolving teamwork

Team charter

We value:

• Respect the board
• Respect work someone else started

We will hold each other accountable for:

• Avoiding being straight
• When ideas are rejected without consideration

Nothing beats just doing it, sharing tasks in everyday work.
Beyond stable

REFINED CONCEPTS
One sysadmin per team

Before

?  

Development Team

After

Dedicated contact within sysadmin  

Development Team

2009-10-31

Mattias Skarin
Two approaches to planning

Before planning
Do we understand what is needed well enough to draft a solution?

At planning
- Recheck solution
- Breakdown to tasks

Project A
Senior dev
Manager

On senior and one junior
Switch and review

Project A
Breakdown to tasks

Project B

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Doing continuous improvement

.. nothing fancy just..

Solve 1 pain per week

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Addressing causes outside team

- Manager have two slots at any single point of time.

- If both are full, you can add a new one as long as you remove the less important one.

- Team decides when issue is solved.
.. and his managers door..
DID WE GET SOMEWERE?
3 months later
Sysadmins awarded “best performing team”

“Miracles have happened to the sysadmin team. The incident we had on yesterday was earlier something that required several phone calls and took usually hours or even a day to resolve. Typically I had to call the manager to get things moving forward.

Now I feel that it’ unnecessary to raise this kind of small things as impediments”

-- Test Lead

4 months later..
Development opens support for production disturbances

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
What didn’t work?

Burndown charts for projects smaller than 1 month

Estimations – rarely needed

Incremental improvements on higher level
DBA Team Velocity

- Total Velocity
- Small support tasks (not included in total velocity)

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
OBSERVATIONS & LEARNINGS

2009-10-31
Mattias Skarin
Many projects...

.. leads to long delivery time
Problems know no organisational boundaries
The problem is not always where you think.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Backlog</th>
<th>New Invest</th>
<th>Follow Up</th>
<th>Painkiller</th>
<th>PO Tasks</th>
<th>Overflow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>notified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WIP overflow can be handled

But quality is the long term cure..
Why is each board different?
Lookback

- Can technical operations be viewed as a flow problem?

- Is it possible to get team work benefits in a field with high specialization?

- Can continuous improvement work in this environment?

No magic involved
Today

Operations
Thanks for listening!

mattias.skarin@crisp.se

Blog:
http://blog.crisp.se/mattiasskarin