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Rolling Rocks Downhill: The Fastest, Easiest, and Most Entertaining way to Learn Agile & Lean - The Agile Business Novel

Notes

Simple introduction to lean thinking which has been a starting point for many people done in the “business novel” format where the a story is told to illustrate a business concept (ala The Goal). This is the story around the world of software development; its challenges and its solutions. The good news is that you will be very tempted to implement new approaches based on an understanding of this book. While the approaches reflect modern Agile, Theory Of Constraints, Systems, and Lean thinking, it doesn't require any one particular approach or push on a particular flavor. The author is result oriented and, lets face it, with an improved understanding of the nature of software development work, you can takes steps toward improvement without becoming religious about it. This book will help you with that understanding.

The book has a lot of pithy quotes that may be useful in selling ideas to others. For example:

- “That was how we motivated people: by keeping the pressure on. It didn't actually work, because we almost always delivered late anyway, but I hated to think how late we'd deliver if we took the pressure off”
- “The scope of the project always expands until it's too big to fit in the time available to deliver it.”
- “Forecasts, by definition, will sometimes be right and will sometimes be wrong; otherwise we'd call them facts.”
- “I asked for X, Brian interpreted X differently than what I intended and wrote software that did Y. It is very common. The English language is sometimes open to many interpretations.”

And sound advice such as:

- “Remove defects at the front end, build quality in, and produce small batches. All three had improved the quality of the product.”
- “When they started cooking in smaller batches they started finding problems far sooner, when it was cheaper and easier to fix them.”
- “Sacrificing quality almost always slows things down.”
- “A small batch was a small project in which we delivered a small selection of features; not just a small selection, but a small selection of the most important features.Read more at location 2132 • Delete this highlight”

The one idea that I learned was the idea that by doing the important stuff first you increase the amount of flexibility you have for the going forward plan. The idea borrows from how newspapers work “That was the clever way reporters wrote articles. They put the most important stuff at the top, and then the next most important and then the next. It gave them and their editors huge flexibility” when it came to laying out the paper (they could choose how much of a story was going to be published because they knew the important stuff had been covered.

As said, this is a simple introduction to lean thinking. I will say that as introductions go, I actually preferred "This is Lean: Resolving the Efficiency Paradox" - Niklas Modig as it was more directly useful to. I expect this is because I got to this book too late in my learning.

Book, Learning, Basis, Lean, Review

~~LINKBACK~~ ~~DISCUSSION~~

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