



THE PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS DURING AGILE TEAMS MEETINGS IN IT COMPANIES – A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract:

The paper gives a literature review regarding the problems faced by IT (Information Technologies) companies during meetings of agile teams. The goal of the paper is to identify existing issues and propose potential solutions. Existing problems identified through the literature review were: lack of focus, engagement and transparency; technological difficulties, and conflicts in the team. Lack of focus is often the result of poorly structured meetings without defined goals, and lack of engagement leads to poor communication and unproductive discussions. Technological issues can disrupt the flow of meetings, and a lack of transparency can lead to team confusion. Conflicts in the team negatively affect the atmosphere and productivity.

A literature search was performed using selected academic databases. Abstracts of identified references were reviewed to assess their relevance. Selected studies were analysed to extract data on agile meeting challenges and solutions. Findings from different sources were synthesized to develop a comprehensive overview of issues and corresponding solutions. Suggested solutions include: conducting short, well-structured meetings; encouraging active participation of all team members; using stable technological solutions; regularly establishing open communication channels for conflict resolution. The results obtained indicate the need to improve agile meetings and consequently to enhance the performance of agile teams.

Keywords:

Agile Meetings, Agile Teams, IT (Information Technologies) Companies, Problems, Solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Agile methods have become crucial in software development due to their flexibility and focus on rapid adaptation to changes [1]. Agile teams are self-organized, cross-functional teams that work together to deliver value through iterative development [2]. Agile meetings are regular meetings that allow teams to discuss progress, challenges, and plans [3]. They promote communication and continuous improvement. Agile meetings are important for maintaining team cohesion and productivity.

The goal of this paper is to present the overview of the team problems in agile meetings and to suggest potential solutions relevant for IT companies which were found through a literature review.

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Agile meetings often run into problems that can compromise team effectiveness [4]. Agile team meeting issues are extremely important for IT (Information Technologies) companies. Meetings must be effective because they are the basis for coordinating activities in agile teams. Due to the ineffectiveness of the meetings, there may be a loss of time and resources, which can then affect the development of the project [4]. Effective communication is key for teams. Difficult communication and communication problems can lead to misunderstandings, errors in work, and ultimately to a drop in the company's productivity [5]. It is desirable that the team members as well as teams cooperate with each other and support each other. If there are problems in the meetings, it can affect the team dynamics making it bad or disrupting it which can ultimately diminish team motivation [6].

It is necessary for the meetings to be productive, to identify problems and to respond to those problems in a timely manner in order to prevent or alleviate delays in the realization and delivery of the project [7]. Lack of clear guidelines and inconsistency among team members can lead to mistakes that could have been avoided with more efficient planning of meetings [8]. Poor communication in meetings can lead to conflict among team members, which can create a bad atmosphere in the working environment [9].

Effective meetings also assume that clients are timely informed about the progress of the project and that their feedback is taken into account, which would increase their satisfaction. Addressing these issues can improve the performance of agile teams, and thus the overall success of an IT company [10].

2. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this paper is to present team problems, during agile meetings in IT companies. After that, solutions to the problems are also explored and suggested. In order to find problems, and potential adequate solutions, literature search methodology is applied [11].

Based on the research objective, the research questions we defined are:

- RQ1: What are the common problems agile teams face during agile meetings?
- RQ2: What potential solutions can be proposed to solve these identified problems in agile meetings?

A literature search was performed using the following academic databases: Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, Springer, Wiley Online Libraries. A combination of keywords such as "agile meetings", "agile team questions", "focus on agile meetings", "engagement in agile teams", "technology issues in meetings", "transparency in agile teams" and "team conflicts in agile development" was used. The books, studies and articles published over the last 20 years were included to be investigated further, with an emphasis on those not later than the last 10 years, which deal with problems and solutions in agile teams and meetings. Papers that did not directly engage in the exploration of agile methodologies, or did not provide empirical data or articles that were not peer-reviewed were excluded. The abstracts of identified papers and other sources were reviewed to evaluate relevance. Relevant papers were selected and detailed information on the problems and proposed solutions gathered. Findings from various sources were organized and synthesized in order to include all problems and corresponding solutions in the review paper.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES IN AGILE TEAMS

Agile meetings are designed as efficient, focused and collaborative events. They are specified by emphasizing dynamic communication and adaptability. In agile teams, it's easy for participants to drift off topic, which can waste valuable time and reduce the overall effectiveness of the meeting. Lack of focus can be result of poorly structured meetings without clear objectives. In order to solve this issue, it is recommended to conduct well-organized meetings with defined goals and time limits. The approach like this can help ensure that the team remains focused on the task and maximizes the use of meeting time [12], [4].

Lack of team member engagement can lead to ineffective communication and unproductive conversations. When team members are not actively participating, the meeting may not achieve the desired results. It is necessary to foster a way of conduct and an environment in which each team member is encouraged to actively participate. This can be achieved by involving team members more e.g. through questions and by encouraging them to contribute to discussions. In this manner improving overall engagement and productivity would be achieved [13], [14].



Problems such as a poor Internet connection or inadequate video conferencing tools can disrupt the flow of a meeting, in case the hybrid form is chosen, making it difficult for participants to communicate effectively. These disruptions can interfere with a team's ability to collaborate and make decisions. It is important to use reliable video conferencing tools and have options to resolve any technical difficulties that may arise during the meeting [15], [16].

A lack of transparency can lead to confusion and reduced team productivity, as it may not be clear to team members what is expected of them. Sharing information about progress and task priorities can help ensure that all team members are on the same page and understand the current state of the project being developed [17], [18]. Differing opinions and unresolved disputes can create a negative environment, hindering collaboration and effective decision-making. In order to resolve this issue, it is crucial to establish open channels of communication where conflicts can be resolved constructively. Promoting team spirit and encouraging collaboration can also help minimize conflict and maintain a positive and productive meeting environment [19], [20].

Table 1 summed up overview of the essential challenges in agile meetings, and possible adequate solutions.

Related previous work is in [21], [22], [23], [24]: analysis and development of a conceptual framework for dealing with agile meetings' problems [21], and of job satisfaction in scrum teams [22], investigation on IT experts' attitude regarding frequency of agile meetings [23]. Additional communication challenges in agile meetings are elaborated in [24].

4. DISCUSSION

Agile meetings often have several challenges that can impede team productivity and satisfaction. The discussion provided here focuses on identifying the main problems frequently arising during agile meetings, as well as on suggesting potential the solutions to these problems. The authors of the paper agree with the relevance of the problems identified and solutions proposed. The authors also suggest several additional/ alternative solutions:

1. Organizing meetings with a clearly defined agenda and goals. This also ensures that the meeting is not delayed and that the meeting is implemented in accordance to the agenda; It may be of importance that the manager is experienced, to pay more attention to these items, because if the team members are dissatisfied with the implementation of the agenda and if the deadline and duration of the meetings is broken, it can lead to many problems and all these can reduce the productivity of the team members;
2. Encouraging the active participation of all team members during the meeting; Team members should support each other by finding the right way to collaborate according to the characters of the team members; The manager must be familiar with his team members and their characters; He or she needs to motivate his or her colleagues to attend meetings actively and work efficiently together;

Table 1. Overview of challenges in agile meetings, and corresponding solutions

Challenge	Sources	Description	Solution
Lack of Focus	[12], [4]	Lack of focus during agile meetings can significantly reduce their effectiveness. Team members can get off topic, wasting valuable time.	Implementing short, well-structured meetings with clearly defined goals and time limits can help maintain focus.
Lack of Engagement	[13], [14]	A lack of team member engagement during meetings can lead to poorer communication and less productive discussions.	Encouraging the active participation of all team members through asking questions and engaging in discussion can significantly improve engagement.
Technological Challenges	[15], [16]	Technical issues such as poor the internet connectivity or inadequate video conferencing tools can hinder agile meetings.	Using reliable access to internet, stable video conferencing tools and providing backup options to deal with technical difficulties can reduce these problems.
Lack of Transparency	[17], [18]	Lack of clarity regarding tasks and goals can lead to confusion and reduced team productivity.	Regular sharing of information on progress and priorities can improve transparency.
Team Conflicts	[19], [20]	Different opinions and conflicts can negatively affect the atmosphere and productivity during meetings.	Establishing open communication channels to resolve conflicts while fostering team spirit and cooperation can help reduce conflicts.



3. Using reliable technological solutions and tools for communication; Software tools need to be made available to employees so they can also work and collaborate from home, thus, employees will be more engaged and motivated to work; and
4. Establishment of open channels for communication within the team to resolve conflicts and eliminate doubts; Team members need to be motivated regularly or frequently, which would reduce the chances of conflicts and dissatisfaction within the team; If team members cannot resolve issues and misunderstandings themselves, the manager needs to react in a good way – as a leader rather than a boss.

The proposed solutions aim to improve the effectiveness of agile meetings. However, limitations to these approaches exist. It is of importance that all these should be considered when analysing the problem.

The limitations to the proposed solutions are as follows:

1. Not all team members may feel comfortable with active participation and initiatives during meetings;
2. Technological problems may still occur despite the use of the available tools;
3. Conflict resolution methods may not be guaranteed to be effective in all cases of team dynamics; and
4. Although the agile approach is more than 20 years old and certified trainings in agile methodologies exist there is still a need to gain better insight regarding its successful implementations in practice and to conduct further research to provide ways to ensure this.

5. CONCLUSION

Agile meetings are one of the crucial activities in contemporary IT companies, driving efficiency, collaboration and adaptability. Identifying, understanding and resolving the issues that arise in agile meetings is key to improving team productivity. To improve collaboration among team members, to help facilitate communication, and create a more efficient work environment several solutions are proposed in the existing literature and here which all can contribute to achieve better overall results.

Suggestions were added to the existing solutions which are valuable, thus expanding the study. They indicate that further investigation is needed to identify more problems and derive corresponding solutions.

By analysing specific meetings in details, teams can effectively implement agile methodologies and improve their project outcomes.

In the future, it is necessary to examine whether there are any additional challenges during meetings of agile teams in IT companies, and to find out whether IT experts would suggest some of their personal solutions to eliminate or avoid these problems. All this can help to increase the satisfaction of employees and customers, boost teams' productivity, and the successful implementation of projects in companies.

In IT companies, where rapid development and adaptability are crucial, successful agile meetings can have a vital role to ensure that projects are delivered efficiently and effectively. Essentially agile meetings are designed to promote effective communication, collaboration and continuous improvement, enabling the agile teams to deliver timely solutions of appropriate values.

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