Beyond Proxies and Permission

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What Guides Your Life’s Work?

Bret Victor
Inventing on Principle

Bret’s Guiding Principle:
Creators need an immediate connection with what they create.

Our Guiding Principle:
People need to figure things out for themselves.

Combining Principles:
People need to figure things out for themselves through an immediate connection with the results of their work.

http://vimeo.com/36579366z

Let People – and Teams – Think For Themselves!
Organizational Structure for the Digital Age

The Cathedral

The Bazaar

The Cathedral and the Bazaar by Eric Raymond

Linux: A great babbling bazaar of differing agendas and approaches out of which a coherent and stable system could seemingly emerge only by a succession of miracles.
The Bazaar
A Bazaar is a Platform
For small, independent businesses

Imagine a World Where....

A Company is a Platform
For small, independent business teams

Teams Get to Figure Out Things for Themselves.
How do Teams Know What to Do?

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Many Don’t!
Half the Time the Product Manager is Wrong
Two thirds of the features and functions in project “requirements” are unnecessary.
Some Teams Know Exactly What to Do

At AWS

Each team is responsible for the Outcomes and SLA’s of a service

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Teams That Think for Themselves

- Two Pizza Teams – Amazon’s organizational model, designed to dramatically reduce the need for communication, enabling growth.
- Typically teams have 6-12 people, including a leader who may act somewhat like a CEO.
- Teams are ‘separable’ [organizationally] and ‘single-threaded’ [work on a single thing].
- Teams are responsible for a measurable set of external outcomes, focused on end customers [and immediate consumers].
- Team decide internally both what they will work on and how they do the work.
- Dependencies between teams are kept to an absolute minimum.

Before it was a system architecture, the Cloud was an organizational architecture designed to streamline communication.

Autonomous Agents are Essential for Serious Scale
It’s Still Day 1
Day 2 is stasis. Followed by irrelevance. Followed by excruciating, painful decline. Followed by death. And that is why it is always Day 1.

How to Avoid Day 2*
1. True Customer Obsession
2. Resist Proxies
3. Embrace External Trends
4. High Velocity Decision Making

*Jeff Bezos - April 2017 Letter to Shareholders

Resist Day 2!
Resist Proxies

- The Process
- The Business
- The Market Study
- The Product Owner

Profit
Productivity
Shareholder Value
Cost, Schedule, Scope

Digitization ➔ Disintermediation

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Eliminate Permission

High Velocity Decision Making
Why Do We Need Permission?

Handoffs

Dependencies

*2017 State of DevOps Report, presented by Puppet and DORA

The Best Performing Teams Act Without Permission *
Break Dependencies:
Change the Architecture

- Full Stack Team
- Independent Deployment
- Microservices
- Extensive Automation
- Local Persistence

Have a Communication Problem? That’s an Architecture Problem!

Photograph © Tom Poppendieck
Minimize Handoffs:

Build Whole Teams

- Knowledge
- Responsibility

Do Not Separate

- Feedback
- Action
Acceptance test driven development process

Cross-functional teams include Product, QA and Ops

Automated build, testing, db migration, and deployment

Incremental development *on the trunk* with continuous integration

Software always production ready, or everything stops until it is

Deploy constantly, release by switch

*Credit: Jez Humble*
Maintain a **Continuous, Two-Way** Conversation with the Market

- Small, Multi-Disciplined Teams
  - Including Design, Engineering, Product, Ops...
- Clear Strategic Intent, Metrics, & Constraints
- Freedom to Act
  - Without Permission – from colleagues or mgt.
- Frequent (Continuous) Deployment
  - To obtain feedback from the market
- Learning is More Important than Delivery
  - What do customers love? How do we know?
- Success = Meaningful Outcomes
  - Not Proxies (Process, Features, Output)
**Case Study:**

- Agile is a Waypoint, Not a Destination. Same for DevOps.
- Policy Deployment: Cascading Goals + Classic Problem Solving.
- Reorganization Goal: “Build Stronger, more Rounded Professionals out all our People.”
- Independent, Multi-discipline Teams with End-to-end Customer Responsibility.

*Engaged Engineers: The Essential Competitive Advantage*
Start with Signals
Focus on Problems
Plan with Hypotheses

Signals / Patterns

Analysis & Conclusion

Problem Statement

Not Requirements
Not Features
Not Estimates

Do Multiple Experiments
Use Data to Decide

Experiment

Hypothesis

Not a Backlog of Stories
Don’t Guess at a Solution

The Proven Learning Process
People need to figure things out for themselves.

Creators need an immediate connection with what they create.
Thank You!

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