

Reflection On A Completed Software Project

"What went well?" "What would we do differently next time?" "Were there any hidden time-traps?" "Getting the listening types to speak and the speaking types to listen"

Overview

There are lessons to be learned from every major software development project. Before rushing off to tackle their next project, software teams would be well advised to spend a little while reflecting on how the just completed project fared and tuning their work practices accordingly. This Project Retrospective Workshop helps teams in this endeavour. A facilitator from Clipcode works alongside the software project team to reflect upon a just completed project - via group exercises, discussions and information exchange.

Nine-Stage Strategy

<i>Preparation</i>			<i>Past</i>			<i>Future</i>		
Info Collection	Meet The Team	Goals, Rules & Safety	The Real Timeline	Event Analysis	Special Thanks	External Messages	Tuning Next Project	Report

- **Info Collection** – Team members gather as much information as possible about the progress of the project (status reports, metrics, plans, scheduling, requirements, architecture docs, etc.)
- **Meet The Team** – The facilitator meets each member of the team one-to-one; to discuss their role on the project, how they believe the project evolved & their suggestions for the retrospective
- **Goals, Rules & Safety** – Agree arrangements to ensure frank exchange of ideas
- **The Real Timeline** – Team members identify their tasks in the project, and these are merged to form a detailed project timeline that outlines what really happened during the project
- **Event Analysis** – Need to identify "interesting" experiences during the project – which may be what worked well or problems that arose; need to determine what impact these had
- **Special Thanks** – Recognising people who performed roles exceedingly well
- **External Messages** – Intra- and inter-team messages need to be clearly articulated to others
- **Tuning Next Project** – We often learn near the end of a project how it really should be approached ("wisdom blooms late in the season"). What are the lessons for the next project?
- **Retrospective Report** – The facilitator and team members draw up a report on the workshop

Features & Benefits

Info Collection	By collecting official and un-official information about the project, the participants re-aquaint themselves with all the project steps. If little or no information is available, that in itself is an interesting finding.
Meet the team	By meeting the team individually, the facilitator can answer any pre-workshop questions and participants can highlight issues that they wish to have discussed in the retrospective
Goals, Rules & Safety	Clearly defines what we consider to be a successful retrospective. Provides encouragement for unhindered open discussion on all issues.
The Real Timeline	Helps participants appreciate the entire project (participants join and leave the project at different stages; or work on different modules). Identifies where the time really was spent (as opposed to scheduled)
Event Analysis	Detailed consideration of what happened during project leads to understanding impact of decisions and learning lessons
Special Thanks	Individuals make a project happen. By appreciating the specific heroic tasks they performed, they can see their effort has not gone un-noticed.
External Messages	Conveying messages (e.g. about performance, procedures) to other groups - such as managers, testers, operations, support – ensures wider co-ordinated initiatives for productivity & quality improvements
Tuning Next Project	The real return on investment (ROI) of a retrospective is provided by how it leads to optimising work practices for the next project
Retrospective Report	By documenting the lessons from the workshop, participants can easily refer to them in future and other teams can also learn from it

Target Market

This workshop is aimed at software engineering teams that have completed a major project and wish to reflect upon it. Successful software development teams are constantly evolving their work practices to incorporate lessons learned from experience of previous projects.

Retrospective Workshop Facilitator from Clipcode

The facilitator Clipcode provides will be an experienced software architect and project manager, with a rich understanding of both the technical and organisational aspects of software development projects.

Who Should participate from the Client

All members of the extended software project team should attend - including all those who participate in some way in the project – such as a senior manager technical writers, testers, the secretary, etc.

How to proceed

If you need to reflect on a completed software project, and would like to arrange a Project Retrospective Workshop in your company's offices, please contact Clipcode below. We need to discuss arrangements further, agree goals for the engagement and set a tentative schedule.



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If your dev team is starting an important project and needs help, please contact us via email at sales@clipcode.com to discuss how we can be of assistance.