Beating the Post-Agile Blues

Presented by Susan Block, CBAP
Project Manager, The Vanguard Group

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The Post-Agile Blues

The Syndromes
  - The Symptoms
  - The Cause
  - The Remedy
The Syndromes

- The Price is Right
- Hockey Stick Effect
- All Work and No Play
- Being Mistaken for a Cheetah
- This Doesn’t Seem Agile
- The Necessary “Evil”
- Promises, Promises
- We, the People
- Surprise!
Syndrome: The Price is Right

**Symptoms / Cause**
- Since the business is paying for the project, everything the team does must be correlated to business need
- The product backlog contains much more than the budget supports

**Remedy**
- Recognize that the “business of IT” has value and ensure that IT internal needs are accounted for in the product backlog
- Value the cost of features in product backlog
- Clean out any technical debt
### Syndrome: Hockey Stick Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms / Cause</th>
<th>Remedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stories spill over from sprint to sprint and new stories are piled on</td>
<td>The team should avoid overcommitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many stories are opened at the same time</td>
<td>Avoid swirl by making sure that the requirements are clear and that the product owner is accessible to clarify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories don’t close until a mad rush at the end of the sprint</td>
<td>Staff the team with multiple skillsets and leverage them for swarming</td>
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</tbody>
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## Syndrome: All Work and No Play

### Symptoms / Cause
- Unrealistic deadlines
- Pressure to constantly increase productivity
- Lack of communication, teamwork, and possibly trust

### Remedy
- Plan to include slack for other activities
- Provide for downtime & fun-time – together as a team and as individuals
- Take action from retrospectives
**Syndrome: Being Mistaken for a Cheetah**

**Symptoms / Cause**
- Sprinting for too long
- Quality is sacrificed to gain speed
- No rest for the weary

**Remedy**
- Measure velocity and adjust periodically
- Alter the intensity of the sprints
- Follow the cadence of the development lifecycle
**Syndrome: This Doesn’t Seem Agile**

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<td>o  Sprint is often interrupted for immediate “fire drills”</td>
<td>o  Create operational model to respond to production support needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o  Lack of vision or feature prioritization</td>
<td>o  Roadmap the product features iteratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o  The team is going through the motion of following Agile protocols</td>
<td>o  Calibrate Agile adoption to make it real</td>
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# Syndrome: The Necessary “Evil”

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<tr>
<td>Regression testing is arduous</td>
<td>Invest in test automation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The code is not maintainable</td>
<td>Allocate time for refactoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No allowance for refactoring</td>
<td>Consider architectural direction if change is warranted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either no product backlog “pruning” or excessive care given</td>
<td>Prune the product backlog in the right dose</td>
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## Syndrome: Promises, Promises

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<td>o Delivery deals are made without the team’s knowledge</td>
<td>o Empower the team to be engaged and accountable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Team estimates are improbable</td>
<td>o Refine the estimation method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o False constraints are imposed</td>
<td>o Apply classic impact analysis on scope, schedule, and cost</td>
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</table>
Syndrome: We, The People

**Symptoms / Cause**
- The team is not empowered
- The team is not expanding their skills
- Continuity or duration of resource allocation is challenging
- Wrong resources are assigned

**Remedy**
- Adopt a self-directed approach and protect the team
- Demonstrate commitment to learning
- Plan rotational opportunities carefully
- Staff project by skill, not just by role
Syndrome: Surprise!

Symptoms / Cause

- Business priorities shift or conflict
- Resources are strained due to unforeseen issues
- Technical hurdle occurs

Remedy

- The product owner must prioritize
- Deepen the bench by pairing
- Engage ancillary resources
- Make impediments extremely visible
Agile relies on the people who invest in the extraordinary discipline it takes to sustain success
Susan Block
Project Manager
Information Technology
The Vanguard Group

susan_block@vanguard.com
Activity increases speed  Activity maximum exists  Activity slows down dev