



Mission Control to Steer in Uncertainty

Mission control is known as a facility for managing space flights from launch till landing or the end of a mission. The idea of gathering all relevant people and information in a single location improves the decision-making process as well as the quality of decisions.

by Zsolt Szabó-Jilek

Today's rockets are agile projects and it is necessary to steer them accordingly. Organizations are operating more and more in quick agile iterative sequences, where the success of single projects provides the key business results. To ensure that what is being decided is the right thing to do, access to information is essential. Creating an operating space will boost agility right away. The project team place provides a location for accountable teams to meet and carry out planning, communication, problem-solving and status reporting associated with a project. Equipped with Kanban boards, whiteboards or projectors, visual information is easily shared. Activity plans and information for participants improve decision-making. An agile project room is one of the greatest assets for transformation; its setup provides so many benefits. A high level of visualization brings fast understanding. Direct communication eliminates misinterpretations delivered via email and saves time. Kanban boards with Post-its (to do, doing, done), documentation and a wall for posters all create a comprehensive overview. Gathering the team in one room increases commitment and cooperation and shapes team spirit and a sense of togetherness. Furthermore, a project room allows for a focus on the effort and its end goal and leads to higher performance through faster decision-making and quicker reactions. Here are some examples of working structures from different agile principles:

Go to Gemba

Gemba walks are a source of improvement coming from lean management. Gemba is a Japanese term meaning »the actual place.« Japanese detectives call the crime scene Gemba, and Japanese TV reporters may refer to themselves as reporting from Gemba. In business, Gemba refers to the place where value is created. By visiting the place where the work is done, leaders gain valuable insight into the flow of value through the organization and often uncover opportunities for improvement and learn new ways to support employees.

Today's organizations are rarely flat, i. e. more organizational levels separate top management from operational staff. This situation extends communication paths and reduces confidence in the information received. It slows down decision-making and often leads to wrong decisions and a reduced over-all perfor- ►



Recommended reading

»How to Do a Gemba Walk: Coaching Gemba Walkers«
Michael Bremer; Independently published; 2018

»Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs«
John Doerr and Larry Page; Portfolio; 2018

»A new era is dawning over the horizon. Agile operating teams are taking over many organizations, often steered from new control rooms.«

mance. Go to Gemba methods help managers and board members save time. Instead of long presentations, a quick visit to the agile project place provides first-hand reliable information on progress, the status of problem solving and achievements. It also speeds up decision-making and effectiveness.

Open opportunities with an EVR

Widening this concept to the whole company or organization will change the way of working. An Enterprise Visibility Room (EVR) concept supports the strategic ambitions of the organization in four major directions:

- 1 Clear transparency about the work in progress activities for the strategic overview.
- 2 Easier communication about the key programs to empower people.
- 3 Better alignment with the functional organizations; fewer delays in cross-functional work.
- 4 More understanding of how to contribute to the corporate strategy; more sense of engagement.

The EVR visualizes the active strategy work and which teams are involved in delivering that value. These attributes can help limit organizational work in progress (WIP), reconsider the organizational structure, clarify the top priorities for the enterprise, and make it obvious how teams are helping deliver on the strategy. In addition to the physical elements of the EVR, five ceremonies embody the formal operation of the room: prioritization run, planning circle, SCRUM of SCRUMS stand-ups, demonstrations, and retrospectives, all occurring throughout a quarterly cycle with the dedicated teams.

Build your own EVR concept

Every company is special, so it makes sense to strive for a tailored way of EVR for any organization. Three main steps always form the key elements. First, we have to build viable foundations. Creating reliable executive support, cross training the organization and breaking down the strategic targets with defining necessary OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) with clear descriptions of value for each and every strategic outcome is essential. Second, a sustainable framework is set up. Designing a motivating, inviting EVR space, defining the cross-functional teams and launching the five ceremonies serves as a manifestation for change. Third, reviewing and fine-tuning the concept leads to better results. Use the quarterly retrospectives to align the processes and improve your way of working. And never forget; a control center is not only useful for achieving individual Mars missions of an organization. It can also add a lot of fun to your daily work. ●



Source: »War room.« www.workdesign.com