

A Journey to Systemic Improvement

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Abstract. Various Agile methods focus on delivering “value” or “valuable working software” or “delivering quality code” but what if we are just doing the wrong thing righter? A more recent development has been the popularity of “Lean” thinking for IT. However there is far more to a successful intervention than mapping value streams and finding then removing “waste”. I also see a series of anti patterns forming:

- Traditional IT leaves “knowledge of the work” to a mixture of Business Analysts, Product Owners, proxy customers and managers views.
- Those within IT often point to meeting the needs of the “business” as if they are the ones who produce revenue for the organisation. The customer becomes forgotten.
- The approach of IT implementation is “push” - here is the new IT system, now how do we get people to use it?

I believe decisions about the use of IT should be taken from a position of knowing the “what and why” of current performance as a system. In the Systems Thinking approach IT is “pulled”, the people doing the work understand the “what and why” and “pull” IT into parts of the work, knowing what to expect. The first part of this talk is an overview of Systems Thinking theory, and more specifically how it can be applied to IT and what benefits this will bring. Part two of this talk revolves around a series of experience reports using the Systems Thinking Method in both IT and non-IT areas within BBC worldwide.

David Joyce

David is an agile coach with 12 years technical team management and coaching experience, and 20 years software development experience. In recent years, using Scrum and XP, David has coached onshore and offshore teams and successfully launched an internet video startup from inception to launch. More recently David has coached teams on Lean, Kanban and Systems Thinking at BBC Worldwide in the UK. David currently works for Thoughtworks as a principal consultant and is a Systems Thinker, Lean practitioner, Kanban coach and certified Scrum Master. David recently received the Lean SSC Brickell Key award for outstanding achievement and leadership.