



DISTRIBUTED SCRUM TEAMS WHACK A MOLE:
**CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO
COMMON OBSTACLES**

Kimberly Andrikaitis, Agile Coach, Vaco

About You

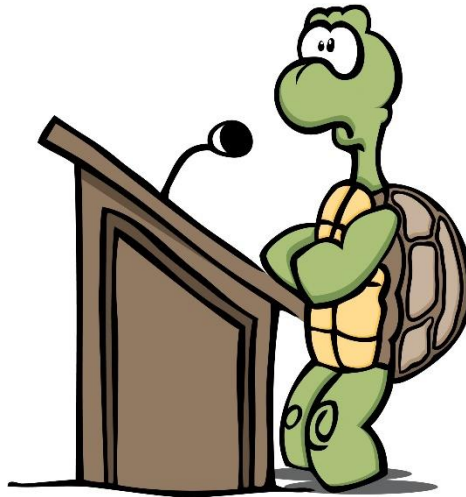
2



www.menti.com
code 66 24 53

About Me

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www.agile-dork.com

[in](#) LinkedIn: Kimberly Andrikaitis

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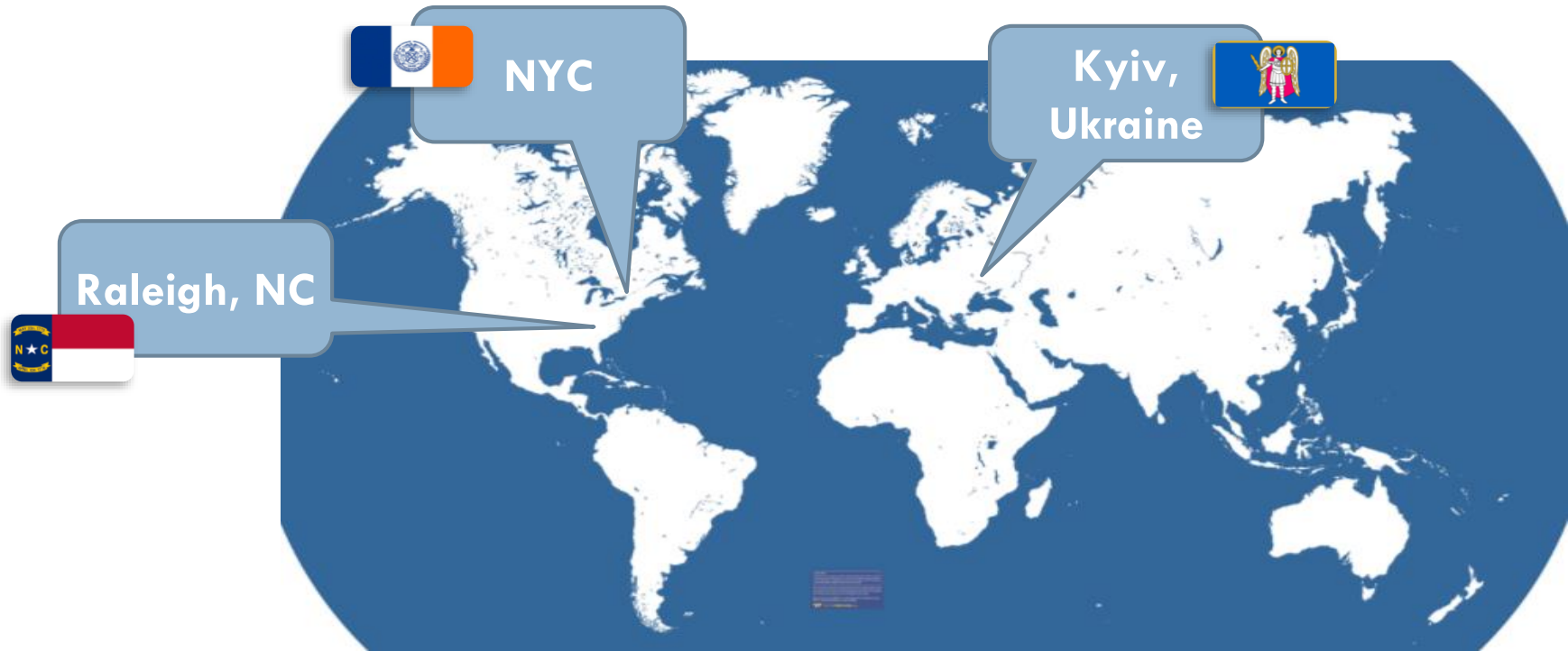
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- My Story
- Distributed Team Challenges
- Moles (& Whacks)
 - Disconnection
 - Weak Agility
 - Limited Focus
 - Lifeless Scrum Events
- Conclusion



Once Upon a Time...

5



Meet My New Team

6



Product Owner



Manual Tester



Developer



Developer



Product Owner



Developer



Auto Tester



Developer



Product Analyst



Developer



Auto Tester



Developer



Scrum Master



Developer



Manual Tester

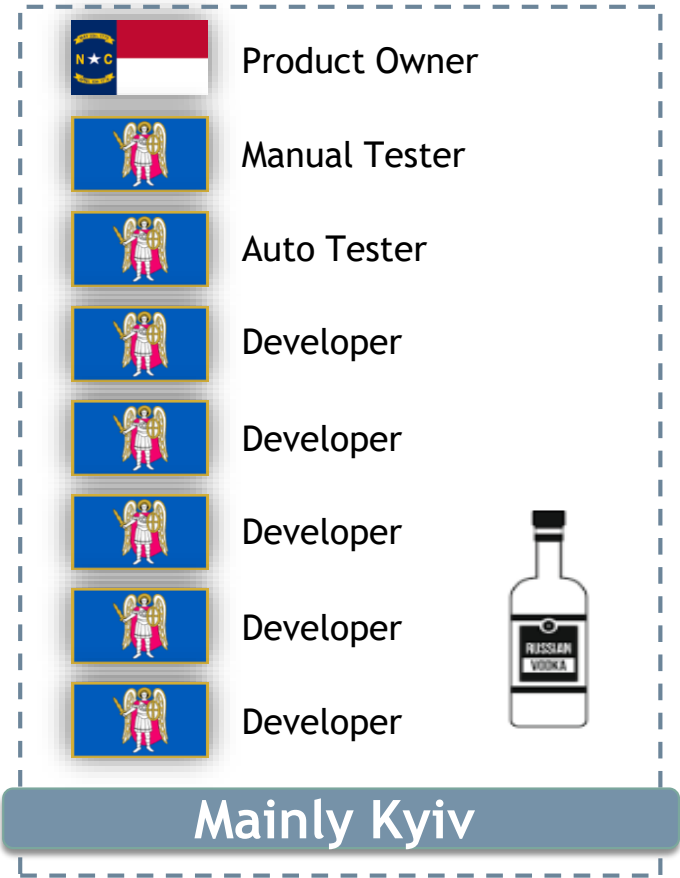


Developer

One Team of 16 people
Across 3 Locations

Lack of trust. Spotty communication. Misunderstanding of Scrum. No Team Unity. Low Morale.

The Team Split



A dashed blue box containing a vertical list of team members. From top to bottom: a Product Owner (N★C flag), a Manual Tester (angel icon), an Auto Tester (angel icon), and five Developers (angel icon). A bottle of Russian Vodka is positioned to the right of the bottom three members. A blue bar at the bottom contains the text 'Mainly Kyiv'.

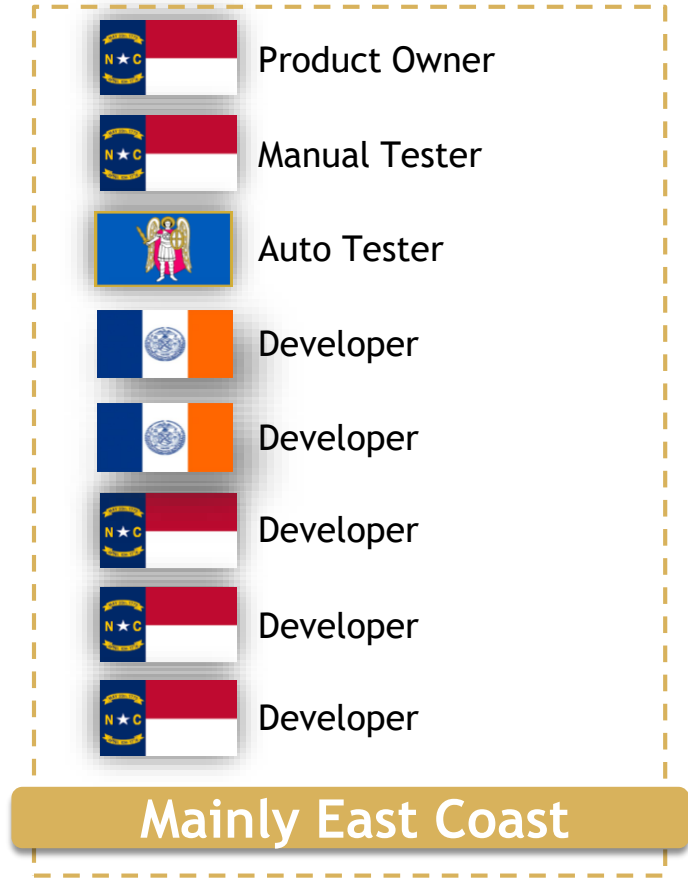
- Product Owner
- Manual Tester
- Auto Tester
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer

Mainly Kyiv



Two team members are listed in the center. The first is a Product Analyst (N★C flag), and the second is a Scrum Master (N★C flag).

- Product Analyst
- Scrum Master



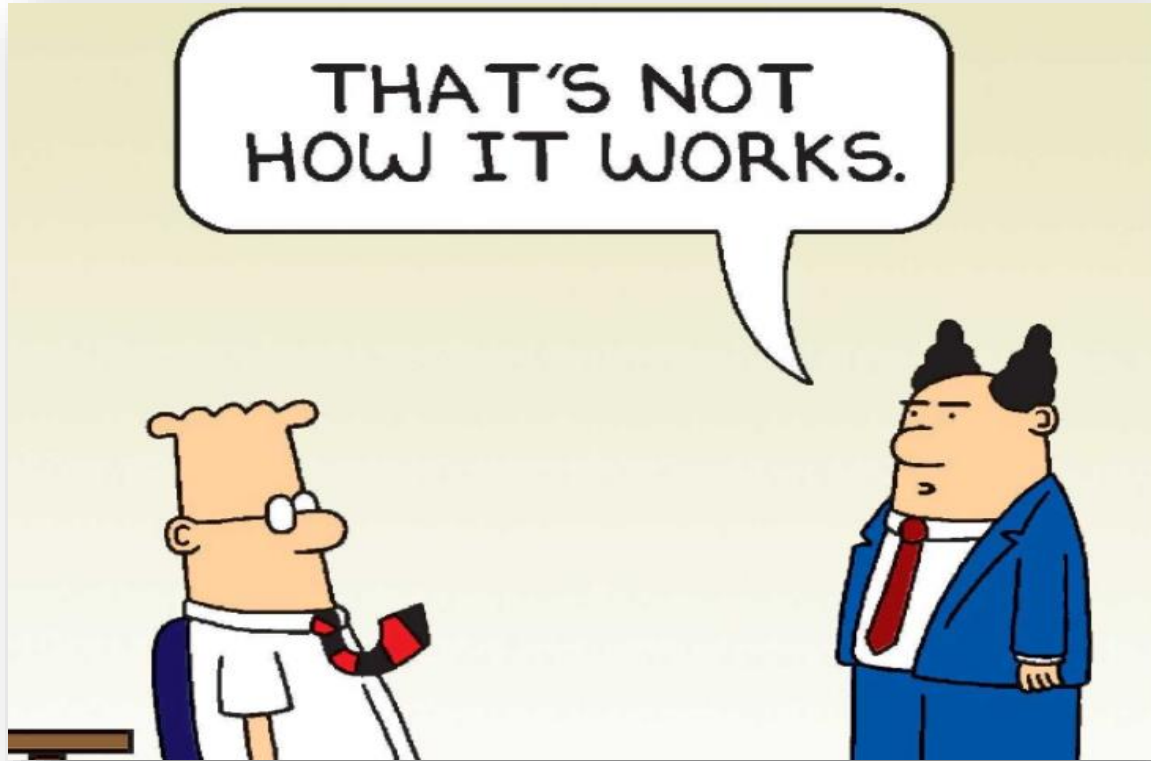
A dashed orange box containing a vertical list of team members. From top to bottom: a Product Owner (N★C flag), a Manual Tester (N★C flag), an Auto Tester (angel icon), two Developers (US flag), and three Developers (N★C flag). A gold bar at the bottom contains the text 'Mainly East Coast'.

- Product Owner
- Manual Tester
- Auto Tester
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer
- Developer

Mainly East Coast

The Response

8



Distributed Team Challenges

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Raleigh / Kyiv Team

- Time Zone Mismatch
- Cultural Differences
- Language Differences
- No F2F Interaction
- “Us” vs. “Them”

Ready, Set, Whack!

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Disconnection



Weak Agility



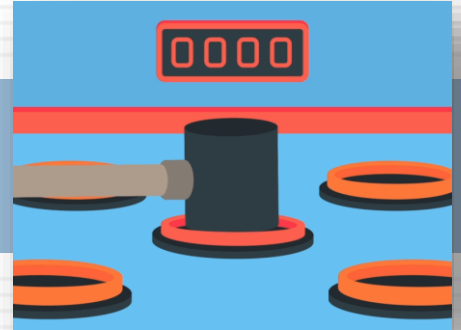
Limited Focus



Lifeless Scrum Events

DISCONNECTION MOLES

- Suspicious of “True” Motives
- Lack of Connection
- Withdrawn / Reserved Team Members
- Minimal Opportunities for Teaming



Suspicious? Ease their Weary Minds

12

“What does she want?”

“Why is she here?”

“What will she make me do?”

“Can she be trusted?”

“What are her intentions?”

“What will she change?”

“What will she tell my Mgr?”



Lacking Connection? Schedule 1:1's

13

- Create a Recurring Meeting
- Swap Agendas
- Find a Quiet Room
- Turn the Camera On
- Grab a Pen & Paper
- Listen. Inquire. Understand.



Reserved Individuals? Ask Powerful Questions

14

Internal:

- Motivations
- What's working
- What's Not
- How do you feel about...
- Suggestions
- Pain points
- Needs
- Help?



External:

- Hobbies
- Vacations
- Weekends
- Sports
- Books / TV / Movies
- Career
- Achievements
- Family

Withdrawn Individuals? Encourage Sharing

15

- Desk Show & Tell
- Photo Exchange
- Google Earth!

FREE!



Team is Too Serious? Inject Surprise

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FREE!

www.thinkwitty.com



PRIZE!

https://thinkwitty.com/2007/10/who-owns-zebra-puzzle.html#.XMWc5ehKg2w

Apps Vaco Webmail Vaco Personal Portal OneDrive Business Agility - V... JIRA Noun Project Headshots

Think Witty Puzzles Humor Facts Book Summary Lateral Thinking Puzzle of the day The Am

Who Owns the Zebra Puzzle

BY SUNIL KUMAR · PUBLISHED OCTOBER 20, 2007 · UPDATED JULY 26, 2017

f t p in +

Who own the Zebra Riddle

“ On a city block there are five houses in a row, numbered from left to right, each of a different color and inhabited by men of different nationalities, with different pets, drinks and cigarettes. You are given the following clues:

- * The Englishman lives in the red house;
- * The Spaniard owns the dog;
- * Coffee is drunk in the green house;
- * The Ukrainian drinks tea;
- * The green house is immediately to the right of the ivory house;
- * The Old Gold smoker owns snails;
- * Keels are smoked in the yellow house;

SHARE

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0

p

Team Doesn't Know Each Other? 7 Questions

17

Guess Who?

1. What was the first thing you bought with your own money?
2. What was your first job?
3. Have you ever met anyone famous? If so, who and where?
4. If you could pick up a new skill instantly, what would it be?
5. What is your favorite place you've ever visited?
6. Who had the most influence on you when growing up?
7. What is something you would like to do next year that you've never done before?



Still Disconnected? Let the Wheel Decide

18

Is confession
good for the
soul?



Who is the
one person
you can
depend on
when you are
in trouble?

FREE!

www.wheeldecide.com

Just Plain Curious? 16 Personalities

19

- Analysts
- Diplomats
- Sentinels
- Explorers

Analysts

| Architect | Logician | Commander | Debater |
|---|---|--|---|
| INTJ-A / INTJ-T | INTP-A / INTP-T | ENTJ-A / ENTJ-T | ENTP-A / ENTP-T |
| Imaginative and strategic thinkers, with a plan for everything. | Innovative inventors with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. | Bold, imaginative and strong-willed leaders, always finding a way - or making one. | Smart and curious thinkers who cannot resist an intellectual challenge. |

FREE!

www.16personalities.com

4 MOLES

- Suspicious of “True” Motives
- Lack of Connection
- Withdrawn / Reserved Team Members
- Minimal Opportunities for Teaming

13 WHACKS

- Summarize Your Role
- Demonstrate Active Listening during 1:1s: Quiet Room, Camera On, Swap Agendas, Take Notes
- Encourage Communication (Powerful Q's, Show & Tell)
- Exchange Photos
- Travel Virtually Through Google Earth App
- Inject Surprises (Riddles/Games)
- Engage the team - Spin the Wheel, “Guess Who” Game
- 16 Personalities

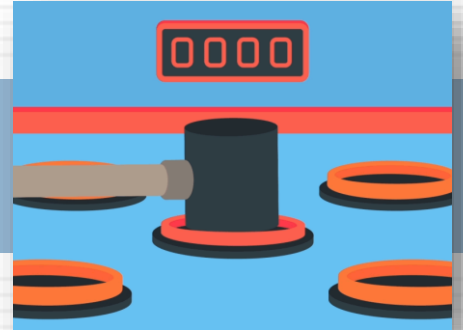
DISCONNECTION MOLES



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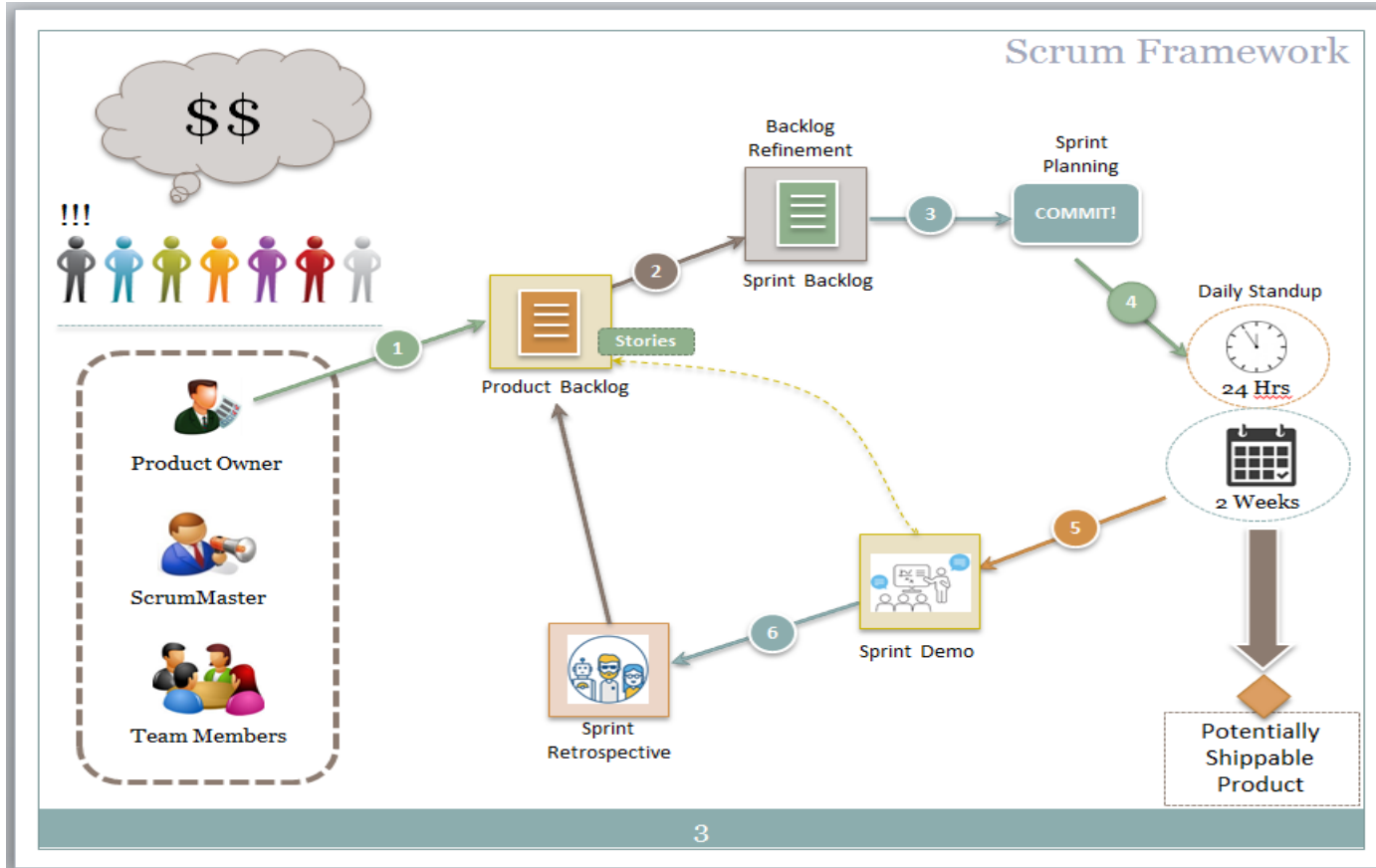
WEAK AGILITY MOLES

- Not Bought In
- Lack of Team Identity / Unity
- Resistant To Change



Scrum Confusion? Teach the Framework

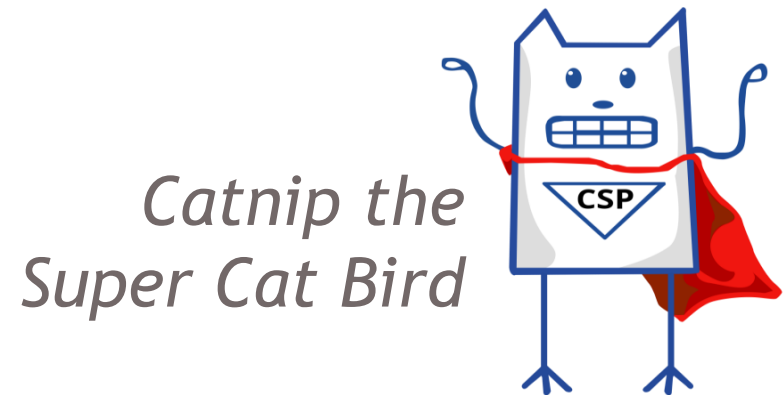
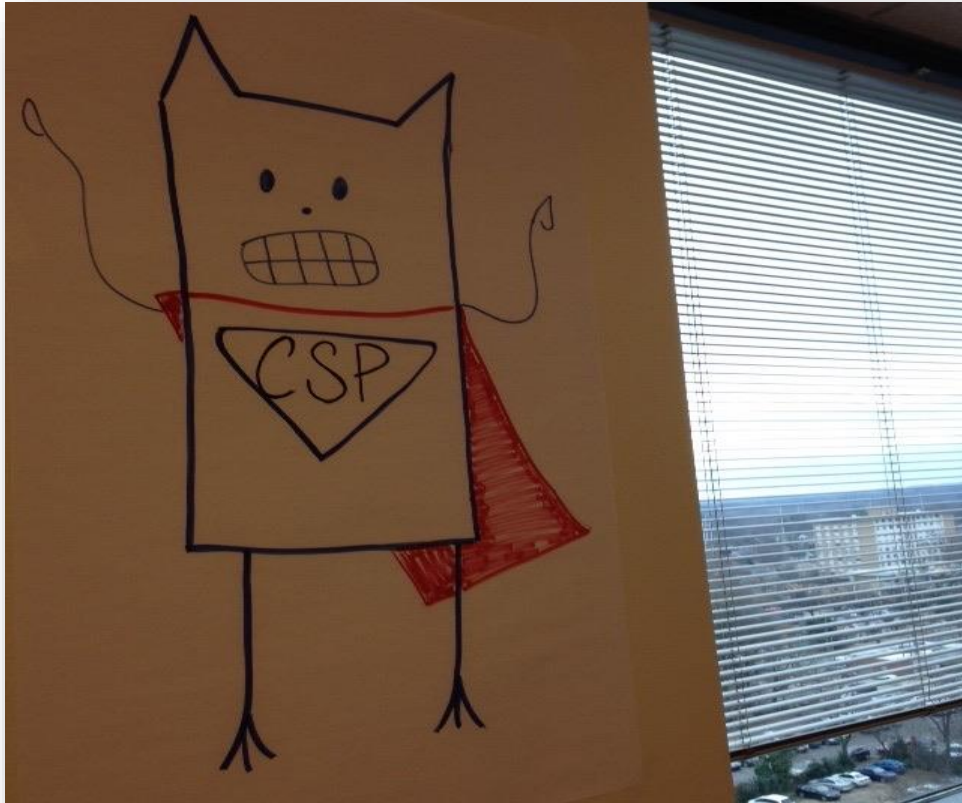
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- Sprint
- Scrum Roles
- Events
- Flow

No Team Identity? Listen, Observe, Respond

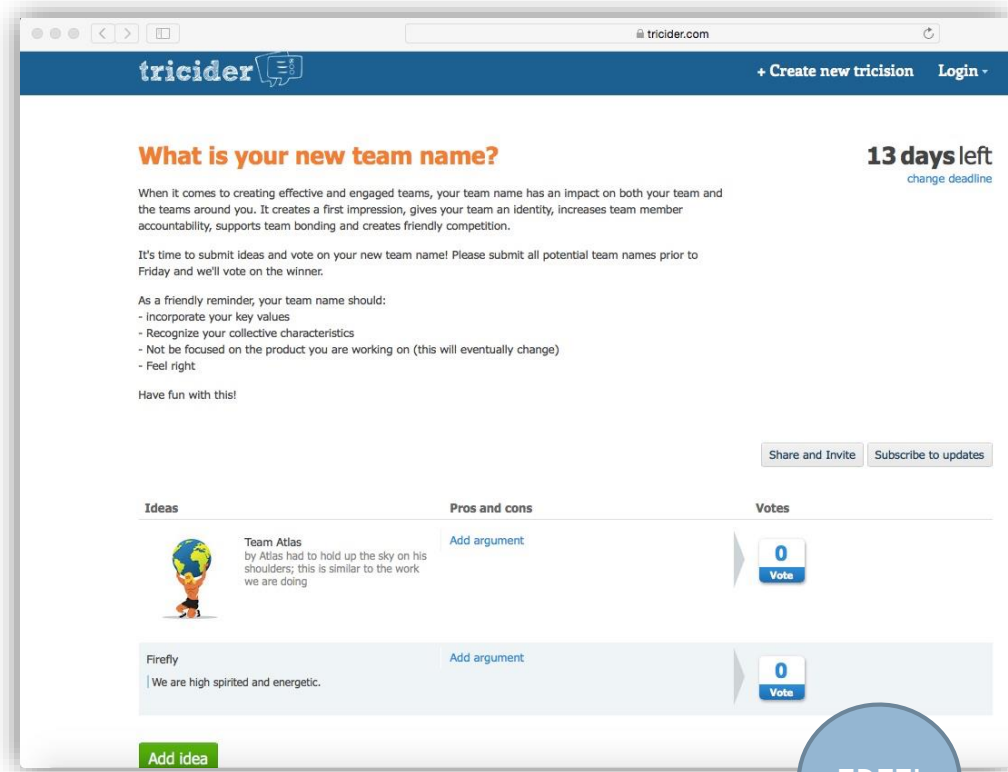
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*Catnip the
Super Cat Bird*

Team Not Unified? Identify Team Names

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The screenshot shows the Tricider website interface for selecting a team name. The page title is "What is your new team name?" and it features a "13 days left" deadline. The main content includes instructions on how to choose a team name, a list of guidelines, and a section for submitting ideas and voting. Two ideas are visible: "Team Atlas" and "Firefly".

What is your new team name? 13 days left
change deadline

When it comes to creating effective and engaged teams, your team name has an impact on both your team and the teams around you. It creates a first impression, gives your team an identity, increases team member accountability, supports team bonding and creates friendly competition.



It's time to submit ideas and vote on your new team name! Please submit all potential team names prior to Friday and we'll vote on the winner.

As a friendly reminder, your team name should:

- Incorporate your key values
- Recognize your collective characteristics
- Not be focused on the product you are working on (this will eventually change)
- Feel right

Have fun with this!

[Share and Invite](#) [Subscribe to updates](#)

| Ideas | Pros and cons | Votes |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|
|  <p>Team Atlas by Atlas had to hold up the sky on his shoulders; this is similar to the work we are doing</p> | Add argument | 0 Vote |
|  <p>Firefly We are high spirited and energetic.</p> | Add argument | 0 Vote |

[Add idea](#)

Importance of Team Names:

- First Impression
- Identity
- Accountability
- Bonding
- Friendly Competition

www.tricider.com

FREE!

Resistant to Change? Find a Proxy

25

- Locate your kindred spirit
- Reach out
- Explain your problem
- Ask for help
- Check in repeatedly



Who can you partner with?

3 MOLES

- Not Bought In
- Lack of Team Identity / Unity
- Resistant To Change

4 WHACKS

- Teach the Framework
- Cultivate a strong team identity (ie: Team Mascot, Team Names)
- Pinpoint and leverage your global partners (Who's your Svitlana?)

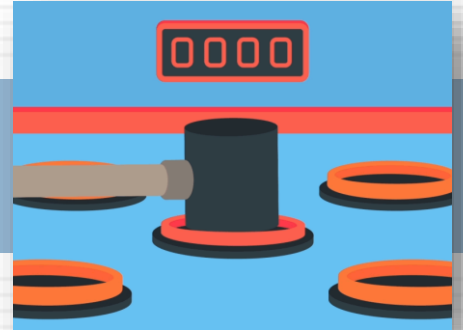
WEAK AGILITY MOLES



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LIMITED FOCUS MOLES

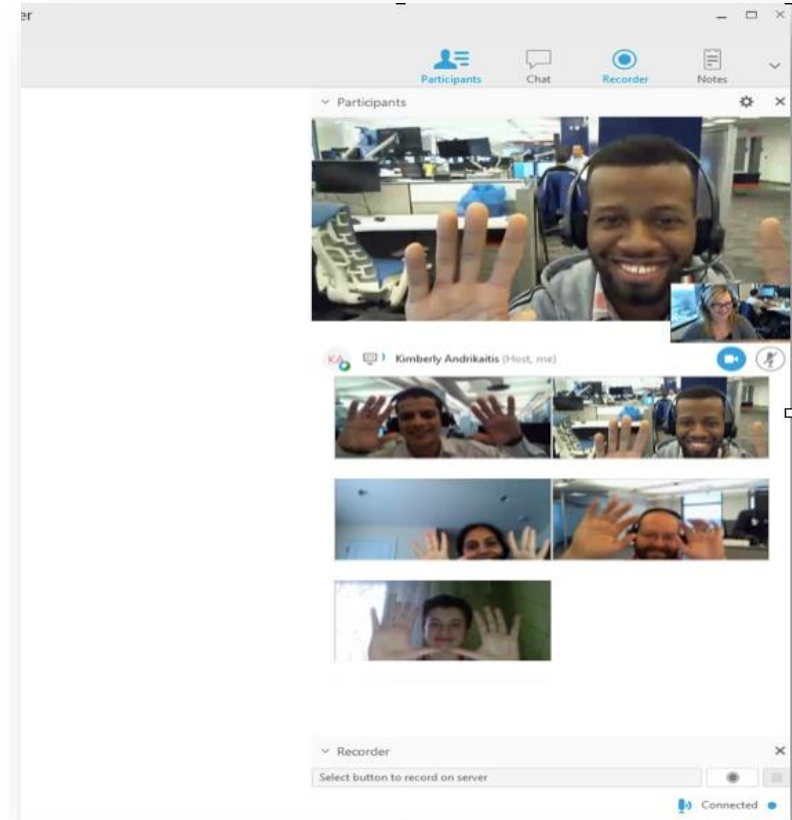
- Distracted Team Members
- Chaotic / Never Ending Meetings
- Lack of Participation / Engagement
- Reluctance to Step up



Team Distracted? Regain Focus

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- Camera On
- No Meetings Day
- Physical Room, if possible
- ~~Bribery~~ Carrot Dangling, when all else fails



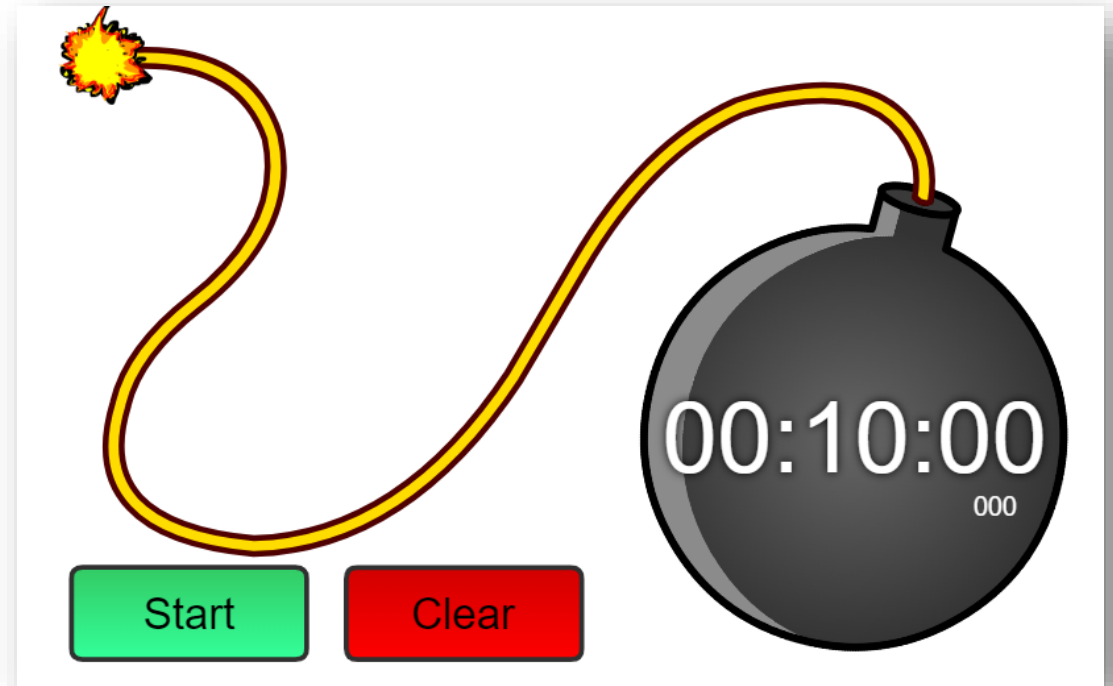
Meeting Digressing? Watch The Time

29

- Define and Limit the Time
- Upfront Team Agreement
- Enlist Help



www.online-stopwatch.com



Meeting in Chaos? Use MeetingMinders

30



Team Uncertain? Incorporate Voting Techniques

31

** FIST OF FIVE **

- Closed fist: No. {Blocks consensus}
- 1 finger: Major concerns
- 2 fingers: Minor issues
- 3 fingers: Whatever
- 4 fingers: It's all good
- 5 fingers: Yes! 100%



Reluctance to Volunteer? Gamify It!

32

Any Volunteers?

Anyone?

Am I On Mute?

Great for:

- Sprint Reviews
- Support Rotation
- Daily Scrum Facilitator

RANDOM.ORG Search RANDOM.ORG Search
True Random Number Service

Do you own an iOS or Android device? Check out our app!

List Randomizer

This form allows you to arrange the items of a list in random order. The randomness comes from atmospheric noise, which for many purposes is better than the pseudo-random number algorithms typically used in computer programs.

Part 1: Enter List Items

Enter your items in the field below, each on a separate line. Items can be numbers, names, email addresses, etc. A maximum of 10,000 items are allowed. Please don't enter anything you would consider confidential ([here's why](#)).

Kim
Heena
Brad
Josh
Borys
David
Will
Polina

(you're viewing this form **securely**)

Part 2: Go!

Be patient! It may take a while to randomize your list...

Randomize Reset Form Switch to Advanced Mode

There were 8 items in your list. Here they are in random order:

1. Brad
2. Josh
3. Will
4. Kim
5. Heena
6. Polina
7. Borys
8. David

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FREE!

www.random.org/lists

4 MOLES

- Distracted Team Members
- Chaotic / Never Ending Meetings
- Lack of Participation / Engagement
- Reluctance to Step up

8 WHACKS

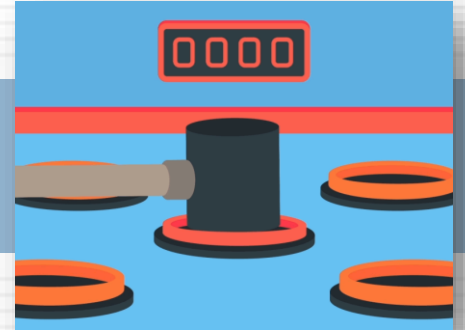
- Regain Focus: Cameras On, No Meetings Day, Physical Rooms, Carrots
- Watch the Time!
- Use Visual Cues: MeetingMinders
- Capture Consensus with the Fist of Five Technique
- Gamify Team Resistance with Randomizer

LIMITED FOCUS MOLES



LIFELESS SCRUM EVENT MOLES

- Silent Retrospectives
- Low Team Morale
- Lack of Recognition



Silent Retros? Go Wordless

35

The image shows a digital retrospective board with three columns. The first column, 'What went well?', contains icons for a gift, a person celebrating, a flower, and boxing gloves. The second column, 'What didn't go well?', contains icons for a person at a desk, a fire, an ambulance, a tire, and a sleeping face. The third column, 'Ideas for Improvement?', contains icons for gears, a checklist with a checkmark, a cycle diagram, a cookie, and a robot. The board is titled 'Sprint 19: Thank you to...', 'Sprint 19: What went well?', 'Sprint 19: What didn't go so well?', and 'What's on your mind?'. The board is set against a starry background.

Before ^

After >

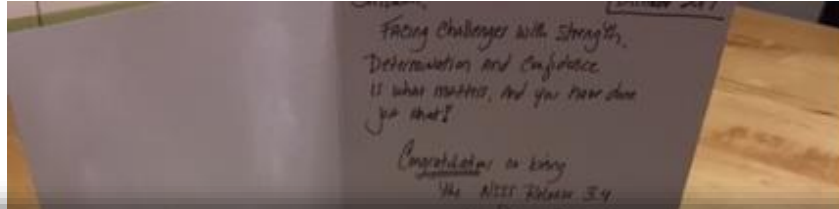
Miro (formally: www.realtimeboard.com) or Mural (www.mural.com)

Feeling Unappreciated? Kudos Board

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|---|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Alisa | Your assistance with test automation truly helped the team meet their sprint goals | good JOB | | | | | | | |
| Andrii | | Thank you for working those hot fix items!! (SP 22) | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | | | |
| Denys | | For picking up Atlas automation in sprint 22 | Useful Review | | | | | | |
| Dmytro | | Although you are new to the team, you have quickly taken ownership of your work | Always first on standups! | Helping investigate PROD issue | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | |
| Illia | | | For staying late on code freeze night during sprint 22 | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | Good JOB | | | | |
| Maks | The king of FIX! | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | | | | |
| Pavlo | | For staying late on code freeze night during sprint 22 | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | | | |
| Rick | For coordinating w/ Azeem to write detailed user stories | | | | | | | | |
| Ruslan | | For staying late on code freeze night during sprint 22 | True Open-Door-man | Finding denom error in PROD issue | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | |
| Svitlana | | For brainstorming Retro ideas with me | For staying late on code freeze night during sprint 22 | For all the testing that you do! | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | Thank you for the IL Presentation! | | | |
| Vlad | | For staying late on code freeze night during sprint 22 | Your focus helped your team meet their sprint commitments! | | | | | | |

Lack of Recognition? Release Superstar

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Release Superstars!



Kimberly Andrikaitis
Last modified Jan 05, 2018

| Release | SuperStar | Awards |
|---------------|------------|--------|
| 3.5 (18.1) | [Redacted] | |
| 3.4 | [Redacted] | |
| | | |
| | | |



3 MOLES

- Silent Retrospectives
- Low Team Morale
- Lack of Recognition

4 WHACKS

- Facilitate lively and engaging retrospectives (using **only** images)
- Provide opportunities for peer appreciation (Kudo's Board)
- Recognize high performers by identifying a Release Superstar
- Provide inexpensive / thoughtful rewards to show your appreciation

LIFELESS SCRUM EVENT MOLES

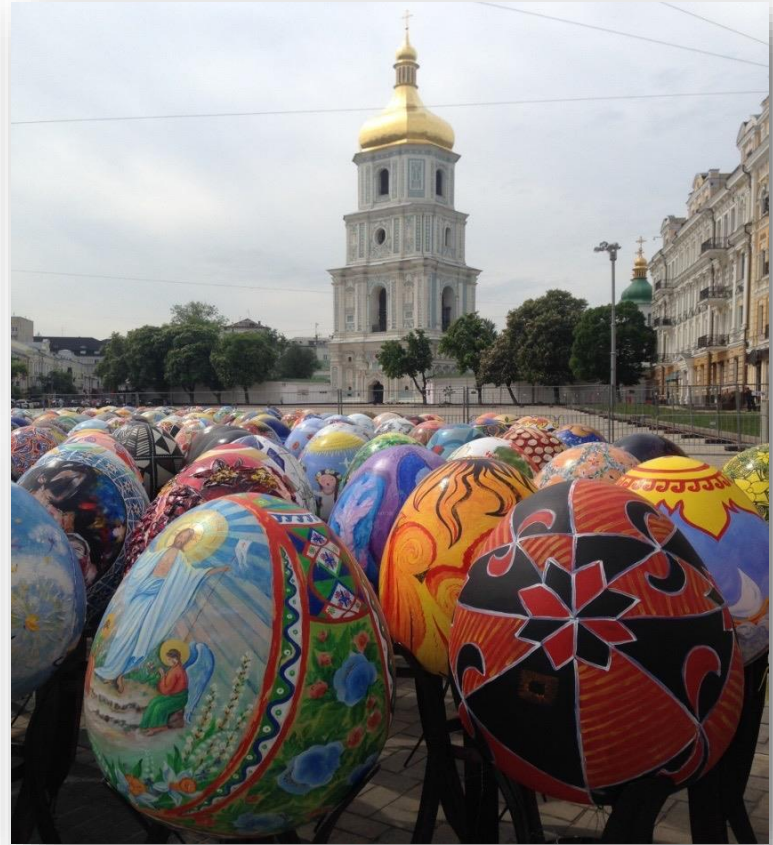


... RESULTS?

- **Healthy, Happy, Respectful Team**
 - ... of Scrum Promoters!
 - ... and Risk Takers
- **Who embraced the Core Scrum Values**
 - ... Commitment | Focus | Openness | Courage | Respect |
- **And held each other**
 - ... accountable
 - ... by asking the hard questions

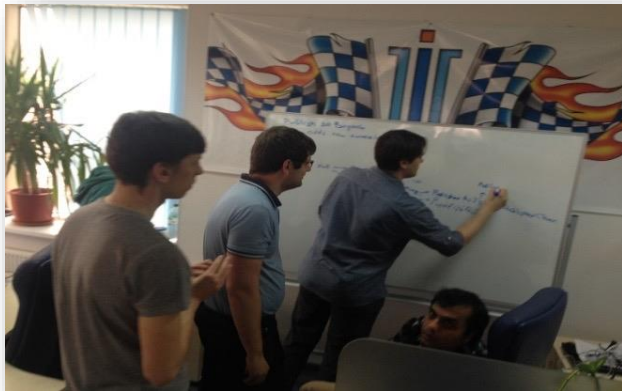
And Finally!

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Teaming! (And Vodka!)

41



KEY TAKEAWAYS



- Be Creative
- Have Fun, Experiment
- Identify Opportunities
- Don't Give Up!!



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CONNECT WITH ME

 LinkedIn: Kimberly Andrikaitis
www.agile-dork.com

Any Questions?

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APPENDIX

Online (Mostly Free) Resources!

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| Website | Address | Description | Used For |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Think Witty | www.thinkwitty.com | Various brain teasers and puzzles. | Injecting fun (ie: Zebra Puzzle). Works best when prizes are awarded. |
| Miro Or Mural | www.realtimeboard.com www.mural.co | Online whiteboard for remote team collaboration. | Anything you can imagine! Image only retrospectives, kudos board, release superstar, sprint/PI planning, brainstorming, bullseye game, team agreements etc. |
| 16 Personalities | www.16personalities.com/ | Personality Test which describes who you are and why you do things the way you do. | Learning about your colleagues. *Tip! Visibly post your characters in a shared space for easy accessibility. |
| Tricider | www.tricider.com | Tool for easy brainstorming, voting, decision making, crowdsourcing and idea generation. | Deciding on team names, team events, logos etc. |
| Random | www.random.org | Randomly reorders lists. | Choosing volunteers for team demo's, support rotation or meeting facilitator. This is a fantastic resource when you face team reluctance. |

Online (Mostly Free) Resources!

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| Website | Address | Description | Used For |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Online Stopwatch | www.online-stopwatch.com | Easy to use and accurate stopwatch with lap times and alarms. | Keeping track of time during sprint reviews, tight agendas or refinement sessions. |
| Google Earth | https://www.google.com/earth/ | Explore the globe with a swipe of your finger. You'll never have to travel again! | Showing off your neighborhood / favorite coffee shop / most loved park to your global colleagues. |
| Slack | www.slack.com | A collaboration hub where you can communicate efficiently, stay connected, and get things done faster. Sorry ya'll. This one isn't free. | Staying connected with your colleagues, sharing photos / links / news etc (bloopers page). |
| Kimberly Andrikaitis | agile-dork.com | Agile website containing blog posts, creative ideas and shopping! | Purchasing MeetingMinders, connecting with Kim for future speaking engagements, keeping on top of her latest agile experiments. |
| Wheel Decide | www.wheeldecide.com | A free online spinner tool that allows you to create your own digital wheels for decision making | Getting to know one another, identifying retrospective items to focus on |