

To Certify or Not to Certify

Angela Martin, Rachel Davies, David Hussman, and Michael Feathers

Abstract. One of the problems the agile community is currently facing is how do we encourage the things that are agile and discourage those that are not? As agile software development has grown in popularity we discover that some people claim to “do agile” and yet “do not”, and no one calls them on it. The principles of the Agile manifesto and the practices within each of the methods becomes diluted and lost. Is certification the answer? Tom DeMarco comments that *“though the rationale for certification is always societal good, the real objective is different: seizure of power. Certification is not something we implement for the benefit of the society but for the benefit of the certifiers”*. So certification is clearly a complex and interesting area and ripe for debate. This panel brings together industry practitioners with differing perspectives and experiences of certification; the audience should come prepared to both ask and answer questions.

Keywords: Certification, Community Direction.

1 Audience

This discovery session is aimed at anyone who is interested in the direction of the agile community including: project managers, testers, programmers and customers.

2 Content Outline

2.1 Set-Up

The student volunteer(s) will distribute index cards and pens on each table within the room 10 minutes prior to the start of the session. The student volunteer(s) will then also hand index cards and a pen to as many attendees as possible as they enter the room.

2.2 Introduction (10 Minutes)

The moderator of the panel will begin the panel by explaining the topic of the panel and introducing the “Question Time”¹ panel format. We have selected this format as we have found it produces the most interesting and in-depth panel discussions.

During the introduction the moderator will cover how audience members should ask questions: – by writing the question on an index card and raising it in the air.

¹ For further information please refer to
<http://www.martinfowler.com/bliki/QuestionTimePanel.html>

Student volunteer(s) will then collect the question cards and give them to the moderator.

The moderator will guide the audience to write their initial questions as she begins to (briefly) introduce each of the panellists.

2.3 Discussion (70 Minutes)

The discussion will begin with a pre-prepared question to allow time for the audience to begin to generate their questions.

During the discussion the moderator and panellists will work together to ensure that all sides of the issue are explored. If one perspective is not presented then the moderator will request a panellist to specifically debate or present that perspective as though they held it themselves. This will ensure that the topic receives a full and interesting discussion.

The moderator will consolidate and organise the questions from the audience into a good conversational flow.

2.4 Wrap-Up (10 Minutes)

This time will be reserved to allow panellists and the moderator to summarise the discussion and lessons learnt during the panel.

3 Presenters

Angela Martin, Martin IT Consulting Limited

Angela will be the moderator of this panel. She has a number of years of facilitation and moderation experience, both in industry and as a conference panel moderator.

Angela Martin is a London based consultant with over twelve years of professional software development experience; she works directly with programmers and customers on agile projects to deliver software that works. She is also completing her PhD research at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, supervised by James Noble and Robert Biddle. Her research utilises in-depth case studies of the XP Customer Role, on a wide range of projects world-wide. Angela is also an Agile Alliance Board Member and can be reached at angela@martinitconsulting.com

Rachel Davies, Agile Experience Ltd (www.agilexp.com)

Rachel Davies is an XP practitioner and makes her living training and coaching agile teams in industry. She is also a director of the Agile Alliance.

David Hussman, SGF Software

David Hussman has designed and created software for more than 13 years in a variety of domains: digital audio, digital biometrics, medical, retail, banking, mortgage, and education to name a few. For the past 6 years, David has mentored and coached agile teams in the U.S., Canada, Russia, and Ukraine. Along with leading workshops and presenting at conferences in North America and Europe, David has contributed to

numerous publications and several books (including “Managing Agile Projects” and “Agile in the Large”). David co-owns the Minneapolis based SGF Software, is a senior consultant with The Cutter Consortium, and has contributed to the agile curriculum for Capella University and the University of Minnesota.

Mike Feathers, Object Mentor

Michael Feathers has been involved in the XP/Agile community since its inception. While designing biomedical instrumentation software in the late 1990s, he met several of the members of the Chrysler C3 team at a conference and was persuaded by them to try XP practices.

Subsequently, he joined Object Mentor where he has spent most of his time transitioning teams to XP. Michael is also the author of 'Working Effectively with Legacy Code.