

Talking to Users

Presentation to
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What This Presentation Is About...



- Who are your 'Users'?
- Finding out what's important
- Learning their Language
- Documentation
- Changes during Development
- Training your Users
- Support Issues

But First, A Confession...

What triggered this presentation were two projects that went wrong.

Previously, I'd done several very successful projects, so they made me want to understand:

Why?

Is Extreme Programming the Answer?

There may be those who feel:

“Of course it is!”

Others who feel:

“It’s an expensive fad”

BUT, you should at least consider whether elements of XP can be used in your corporate culture.

Who are your 'Users'?

- Clients
 - People who 'commission' and 'pay' for your efforts but may not actually use the program
- Hand-On Users
 - People who use the program
- 'Victims'
 - People who feel the consequences of your program.

Examples of 'Users'

	Call Centre System	Data Extraction System
Clients	The IT Department	A Particular Manager
Hand-On Users	Agents and their Supervisors	<i>None</i> – Automated System
'Victims'	People who make calls	Everyone who uses electricity

What is an 'Experience Session'?

- It's where we share our own experiences
- Share actual experiences, not theories
- Basic rules:
 - Listen as much as talk
 - Be honest
 - Respect one another
 - *Obey the chairman!*
- This is a first – so let's hope they go well

Our 1st Experience Session

Do you agree that the division of users into Clients, Hands-On and 'Victim' is:

- Correct?
- Helpful?

If not, what can we do to improve on it?

Finding Out What's Important

Another confession...

The projects went wrong because I didn't find out what was important to each group of users.

You must:

- Find out what is important to each group
- Reconcile differences

But, How?

- Involve *All* Users at *All* Stages
- Put some Structure into their Involvement
- Document Everything

An aside: Do you need to consider “Needs”
Versus “Desires” ?

First And Foremost...



Learn the Language
of your Users

But how???

Our 2nd Experience Session

How to learn the language of our users...

For example, by:

- “Walking the walk, talking the talk”
- Shadowing an experienced user
- Shadowing a novice user

What other ideas can you come up with?

Documentation

- Never produce a document for the sake of it
- Always ask yourself:

Why am I writing this?

Who will use it?

What information do I need to include?

What can I leave out?

Everything Always Changes

No matter what you do, everything always changes
so...

- Learn to accept change
- Develop methodologies for dealing with change

But:

- Don't be afraid to say "No" – politely but firmly

Our 3rd Experience Session

What is your experience of saying “No”?

Was it accepted?

If not, what did you do?

Now's your chance to share experiences...

Training your Users



- Focus on what's important to the users
- Use their language
- Document your training, so you save time if it needs to be delivered more than once

Supporting your Users

- Design and document a “Support Process”
- The process should include:
 - Bug Reporting with Priority
 - A “Suggestion Box”
 - Periodic “User-led Reviews”

Our 4th (and Final!) Experience Session

Do you agree that we need to design a support process as an integral part of every project?

What's missing from the list of issues just given?

Thanks for Listening

- You'll find this presentation at:
www.tof.co.uk/talking
- Any comments to:
talking@tof.co.uk
- We hope it made you think about your users and their needs