

If human behaviour is
badly affecting our work,
can we do something about it ?

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- Independent Team, Project, and Organizational Coach
- Expert in helping optimizing performance
- Helping projects and organizations to quickly become
 - More effective - doing the right things better
 - More efficient - doing the right things better in less time
 - Predictable - delivering as needed
- Getting projects back on track (project rescue)
- Embedded Systems architect (electronics/firmware)
- Project types
electronic products, firmware, software,
space, road, rail, telecom,
industrial control, parking system, ...

Human Behaviour

- Systems are conceived, designed, implemented, maintained, used, and tolerated (or not) by people
- People react quite predictably
However, often differently from what we intuitively think
- Often, we
 - ignore human behaviour,
 - incorrectly assume behaviour,
 - or decide how people should behave (*ha ha*)
- To be successful, we must study and adapt to real behaviour rather than assumed behaviour
- *Even if we don't agree with that behaviour*
They shouldn't behave like that !
Well if they do, they do. They're only human.



Movie: Six Days, Seven Nights

Discipline

- Control of wrong inclinations
- Even if we know how it should be done ...
(if nobody is watching ...)
- Discipline is difficult
- Romans 7:19
 - The good that I want to do, I do not ...



Things we can do:

- Helping each other (watching over the shoulder)
- Rapid success (do it 3 weeks for me...)
- Making mistakes (provides short window of opportunity)

Intuition

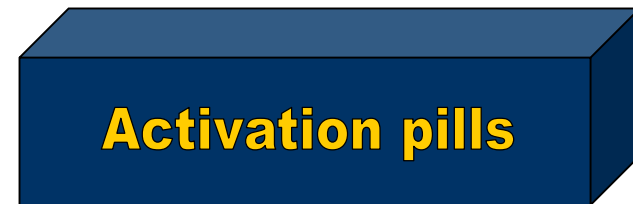
- Quick and ready insight
- Makes us react on every situation
- Intuition is fed by experience (before birth it's *instinct*)
- It is free, we always carry it with us
- We cannot even turn it off
- Sometimes intuition shows us the wrong direction
- *Sleeping on it* may help us to make better decisions
- Coaching is about redirecting intuition

User behaviour

The user is always right ... even if he's not

We're so deformed,
we don't anymore know what normal people find normal

Is intuition wrong, or is the design wrong ?



Case at demo: Parking system

- Please fill in your credit card number ...
- 20% of the software is there to make the computer do what it should do
- 80% of the software is there to make the computer not do what it should *not* do

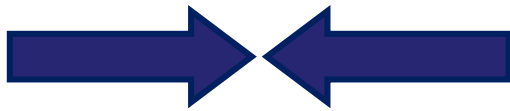
Communication



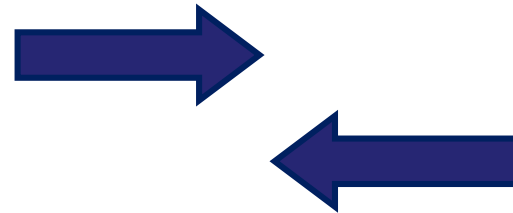
- Traffic accident: witnesses tell *their* truth
- Same words, different concepts
- Human brains contain rather fuzzy concepts
- Try to explain to a colleague
- Writing it down is explaining it to paper
- If it's written it can be discussed and changed
- Vocal communication evaporates immediately
- E-mail communication evaporates in a few days

Communication

- Talking as near as possible past each other



To each other



Past each other

- Don't assume we understand: check !

Case: Agreement ?



- **Mantra: “Better assume our assumptions are wrong”**
 - Deliver in two weeks ?
 - Which date ?

Even in our team (developers, testers, ...)



Perception



- Quick, acute, and intuitive cognition (www.M-W.com)
- Intuitive understanding and insight (www.oxforddictionaries.com)
- What people say and what they do is not always the same
- The head knows, but the heart decides
- Hidden emotions are often the drivers of behaviour
- “Customers who said they wanted lots of different ice cream flavours from which to choose, still tended to buy those that were fundamentally vanilla”
- Trying to find out what the real value to the customer is, can show many paradoxes
- Don't believe what (you think) they say: check!

It can't be done, *they* don't allow it

- Case: Did you ever observe users of your software ?
The sales manager said he can make arrangements
- They're in another country !
- Yes, did you ever go there ?
- The boss won't allow us to travel that far
- Did you ask ?

- Don't assume ... Check !

It can't be done, *they* don't allow it

- **Case: procurement manager:**

I should travel to China with an engineer, to discuss the plastic casing with our supplier, but the boss never would let us go there

- **Did you ask?**

- **I went to the boss:**

Shouldn't they travel to China, to discuss the details of the new casing ?

- **Boss:** Of course they should !

- **Procurement manager after returning from China:**

Discussing on site saved us many engineering iterations !

Excuses, excuses, excuses ...



- We have been thoroughly trained to make excuses
- We always downplay our failures
- It's always 'them' - How about 'us' ?
- At a Fatal Day, any excuse is in vain: *we failed*
- Even if we “really couldn't do anything about it”
- Every day we see a problem earlier, we have a day more to do something about it
- **Mantra:** What are we going to do about it ?
- Failure is a very hard word. That's why we are using it !
No pain, no gain
- We never say: “You failed” - Always use: “We failed”
 - Because we didn't help the person not to fail



Causes of Delay



- **Some typical causes of delay are:**
 - Developing the wrong things
 - Unclear requirements
 - Misunderstandings
 - No feedback from stakeholders
 - No adequate planning
 - No adequate communication
 - Doing unnecessary things
 - Doing things less cleverly
 - Waiting (before and during the project)
 - Changing requirements
 - Doing things over
 - Indecisiveness
 - Suppliers
 - Quality of suppliers results
 - No Sense of Urgency
 - Hobbying
 - Political ploys
 - Boss is always right (culture)
- **Excuses, excuses: it's always "them". How about "us" ?**
- **What are causes of these causes ?** (use 5 times 'Why ?')

Causes of causes

- Management
- No Sense of Urgency
- Fear of Failure
- Ignorance
- Incompetence
- Politics
- Indifference
- Perception
- Uncertainty
- Lack of time
- Not a Zero Defects attitude
- No techniques offered
- Lack of Discipline
- Intuition



What are we going to do about it ?

The aim of Testing



- Being done as soon as the development is done
 - Well, almost
- Excuses, excuses, excuses
 - The developers are always late
(What did you do to help them ?)
 - The developers don't take us seriously
(Developers could ask testers for help)
 - The developers don't inject enough defects
(Now testing becomes a real challenge)
 - We are the bearers of bad news
(Find out what you're *really* supposed to do)
- Helping the development to be successful

Mistakes, unnecessary things

- What was the last time you made a mistake ?
- What was the last time you did something unnecessary ?

- Did you talk with others about it ?
- Did you learn from it ?
- What did you do about it ?

- Case:
 - Learning 10-fold from mistakes

Ignore the first reaction

- If you show something is wrong
- Even if the person agrees, first you'll get:
 - “Yes, but ... bla bla” or,
 - “That's because ... bla bla”
- We have been trained from childhood to make excuses
- Ignore the bla bla
- Let the excuse come out and wait for the next reaction

The power of question

- Don't tell people what or how to do or not to do ! (I just did)
- Shouldn't we better use the question form ? (I just did)
- Just telling may create resistance
- A question invites a response
- Wouldn't a 'nice' question invite an even better response ?

It's not about being right

It's about how to make it accepted as right

We could even be wrong, couldn't we ?

Avoiding 'you'

- Why did you do it wrong ?
- What did we do wrong ?

- What are you going to do about it ?
- What are we going to do about it?

- What could and should we do about it ?
- In case of a blank face, perhaps 'suggest', to trigger the imagination:
 - Would xxx perhaps work ?
 - How about trying xxx ?

Culture

- **Culture: Ingrained customs**
 - Things we learn by mimicking what we experience around us
 - Language
 - Social behavior
 - Faith, religion
 - Folklore
 - Doing what we're used to
 - We don't really know why we do it, or even that we do it; we just do it
 - Experience → intuition → culture
 - Not genetic (that would be *instinct*)
- **Once we see other cultures,**
we can see that our own culture isn't obvious at all; neither is theirs
- **Still we judge others through our own cultural spectacles,**
whether we like it or not

Culture

- Culture: Ingrained customs
- We cannot change culture
- Culture can change

Cultural differences ?

influences on project results ?

Dutch

- open, direct, explicit, blunt
- informal
- preaching
- assertive
- can say no
- egalitarian, not showing wealth
- little power distance
- authority must be earned
- little brand value
- not spending more than necessary
- consensus
- win-win

Japanese ?

- ...
- ...
- ... ?

Cultural behaviour

- Case:
Can you say “No”?

- Case:
Outsourcing to a development team in Minsk
 - Behaviour of the project team
 - How we expected the project team to behave

People oppose change !

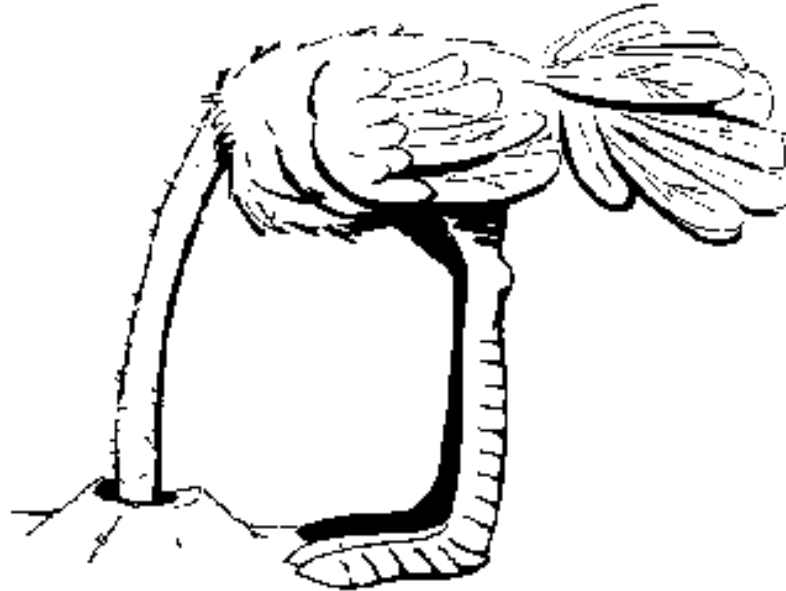


- Right ?
- People are not against change
- People (sub-consciously) don't like uncertainty
- Any project changes something and thus introduces uncertainty
- People can cope with uncertainty for a short time

We failed because of politics

- **Good politics:**
 - People decide differently based on different beliefs
- **Bad politics: hidden agenda's**
 - Say this, mean that - often even unintentionally
 - Politics thrive by vagueness
 - Facts can make bad politics loose ground
- If we accepted the responsibility, failure because of “politics” is just another excuse
- What did we really do about it ?





Our problems are not the real problem,
the real problem is when we don't do something about it

Every day we see a problem earlier,
we have a day more to do something about it

Conclusion

- We've seen several elements of human behaviour
- ~~Recognizing and understanding our behaviour is the start of doing something about it~~
- Recognizing and understanding our behaviour is the start of doing something *with* it

If human behaviour is
badly affecting our work,
let's do something *with* it !

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