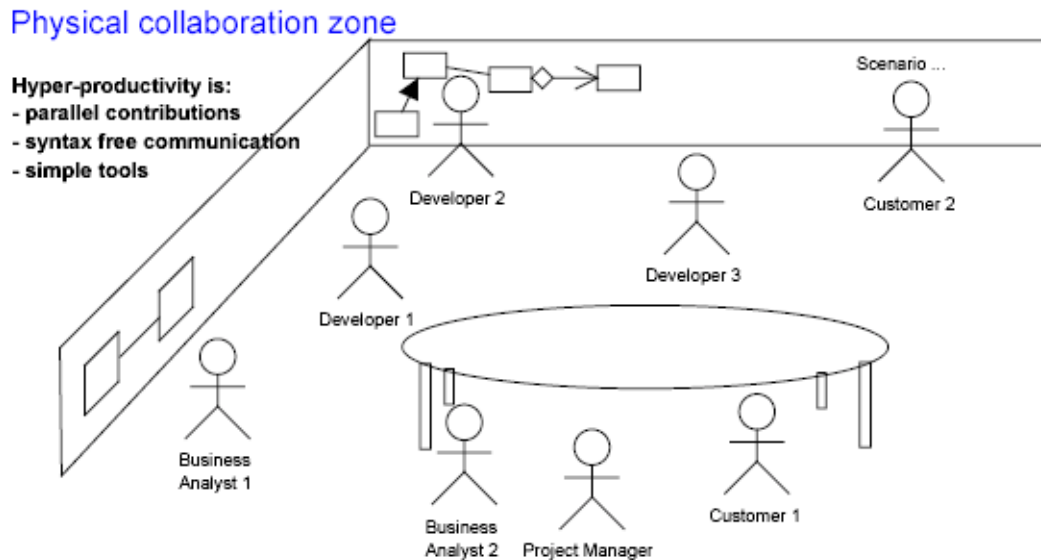


What is a Wall of Wonder?



Ellen Gottesdiener coined the term Wall of Wonder (WoW). She describes it as "something that combines the art and science of facilitation, customer involvement, and good (agile) requirements development/modeling practices. It is fast, fun and really engages stakeholders."

In order to make agile methods responsive, a collaboration zone is needed in either a physical or virtual context.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of a Wall-of-Wonder are that it provides the framework for promoting greater visibility of the collaboration process. By using primitive tools the key interactions can be quickly captured, maintained and found. These include:

- Parallel contributions with project stakeholders/customer working on:
 - Business process flows
 - Use-case specifications or scenarios
 - Business rule definitions
 - Screen sketches for UI prototyping with customer
 - Design and implementation models
 - Test cases
- All project stakeholders (incl. customers) contributing using a basic communication or modeling languages that everyone understands
- Project stakeholders sharing and finding information that spans:
 - Use-case specifications
 - Screen sketches
 - Business rules
 - Test cases
 - Etc.

How are these benefits measured?

The benefits of a Wall-of-Wonder are measured by the

- Customer Satisfaction Metrics (CSM)
 - Manage changing business priorities
 - Manage changing requirements

The alertsites and hotspots CSM metric measures the time taken to resolve severe customer issues.

How is it different to other methods?

The alternative to a Wall-of-Wonder approach is the traditional formal specification capture approach.

The traditional formal specification approach is characterised as:

- Only one stakeholder can update the specification document at a time (e.g. documents are coarse grain)
- Toolkits with high learning curves. Often stakeholders do not understand what has been produced. Furthermore, many stakeholders are unable to contribute because they feel they do not understand the tool's modeling language rules to communicate
- Toolkits that are too difficult for everyone to use. There is too much dedicated tools used to create specification elements (e.g. use-case specifications, business rules, screen sketches, UML diagrams etc.)
- Information in disparate locations and formats and difficult to find

Who should use it?

Traditional heavy methods were good for predictable projects. However, most businesses are now challenged with an unpredictable, new technology or new domain project setting with time-to-market pressures. Such a setting is ideal for an agile approach.

A Wall-of-Wonder collaboration zone should be used by management in an agile project to:

- Monitor the collaboration effort
- Control the collaboration effort
- Promote information sharing across the project/enterprise

What support is out there for this new collaboration approach?

All agile methods are centered on a collaboration zone or knowledge management system. Such approaches are used as part of the following methodologies:

- SCRUM
- Crystal
- Feature Driven Development (FDD)
- Dynamic Systems Development Methodology (DSDM)
- XP

How long after implementation does it take to start delivering benefits?

Unlike a new method or even a new technology, there is nothing very new about the Wall-of-Wonder. The most common Wall-of-Wonders are work places with whiteboards side-by-side one another. Hence, there really is no lead-time associated with delivering the benefits.

What will it cost?

The establishment of this collaboration zone is the greatest cost for businesses. It may be ideal, but often it is unrealistic and unlikely to have:

- All project stakeholders co-located
- All project stakeholders available full-time working on the project

Fortunately, there are alternatives...

Summary

In this paper we covered:

- Collaboration zones are environments to make the collaboration process more visible.
- A Wall-of-Wonder gives management the monitoring and controls on a collaboration effort.

In the next paper in this series we will introduce the Virtual Wall-of-Wonder and how it solves the issues regarding the physical Wall-of-Wonder.

About the Authors



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Ashin and the Self team were responsible for creating the CollaborativeAID collaboration portal, delivering agile workshops/courses and generally educating the Australian market on better techniques for developing software.

High Octane is the consulting practice of Ir Philippe Back. Philippe has been working with software projects for more than ten years now since he earned a degree in Civil Engineering in 1992. He has extensive background in leading, facilitating and mentoring teams in delivering interactive systems. He also has a strong and proven object oriented skillset, hardened by experience. He has applied his skills in various sectors including interactive telephony, security, banking, food retail, telecom, media, insurance, education and automation. Knowledgeable in end-to-end information systems modeling and construction, he has delivered on Unix and Windows platforms. Philippe is also active in the training field, providing Requirements engineering, UML, Unified Process, Java and J2EE courses in Belgium and France. He has a RENTIC agreement from the AWT (RENTIC0001).