HOW WE GREW
FROM ONE TEAM TO TWO

MAC CHAPMAN - 29/10/2017
WHAT I’M GOING TO TALK ABOUT

• Background - how we ended up with too many people in one room
• What options we had
• What we did
• How it’s working out
WE HAD ONE TEAM
AND IT WAS GOOD

- Small enough to fit almost everyone in the company around one table every 2 weeks
- Even sales, support, marketing
- Business stakeholders could be directly involved in feature discussions
A BIT ABOUT OUR PROCESS

THIS MIGHT BE RELEVANT

• We roughly followed scrum
• 2 week sprints
• Sprint review, retrospective, planning, every Tuesday morning
• It worked pretty well
WE GOT BIG! (WELL, BIGGER)
MORE MONEY, MORE PROBLEMS

• We started hiring!

• Once that meeting hit 11 people, we ran into trouble

• We started running into lunchtime
LINES OF COMMUNICATION

IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT ONE MEETING...

3 people, 3 lines
4 people, 6 lines
5 people, 10 lines
6 people, 15 lines

7 people, 21 lines
8 people, 28 lines
9 people, 36 lines
10 people, 45 lines

11 people, 55 lines
12 people, 66 lines
13 people, 78 lines
14 people, 91 lines

What can we do?

- We could make the meetings longer, but a whole morning is enough.
- We could add more meetings on different days, but that’s more scheduling and less focus.
- We could make the meetings more efficient and time box everything, but that would suck the life out of them.
ONE MORE THING - CHAT
CHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT

• Chat is good for team building
• Most of our good ideas came from chat
• Most of our product management was chat
• It turns out a lot of our process was chat!
• With no time for chat, we had no time for all of this
A COUPLE OF OTHER OPTIONS

CAN YOU AVOID SPLITTING UP?

• We could remove support from the team
• We could remove everyone but the engineers
• We could put engineers together into small sub teams
• But ultimately, we decided to split into two
SO HOW DO YOU SPLIT YOUR TEAM?
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SPLIT ON?

• Figure out what you want to split on
  • Internal products?
  • Software boundaries?
  • Customer type?
  • Roles?
  • Goals?
SO HOW DO YOU SPLIT YOUR TEAM?

HOW MANY TEAMS WORKS?

- How many teams do you want?
- Maybe 2 isn’t the right answer
TEAM COMPOSITION
CROSS FUNCTIONAL?

• You probably don’t have two of everyone you need

• Teams aren’t going to be identical

• Think about how you’ll divide up the work as you divide up your people
Can your CTO be in every sprint meeting? How will they react to not being there?

How will you communicate to your support team now?

How will you make product decisions?

How will the teams communicate with each other?
THINK BACK TO YOUR GOALS

• Now that you have a plan, does it solve your problem?
WHAT WE DID

• I spoke to everyone in 1:1 meetings

• We chose to have 2 teams and picked 2 leaders

• Teams were broadly cross-functional and had no specific focus

• We ran sprint meetings at the same time

• Once every 3 sprints, we ran a departmental retrospective
WHAT WE DID (2)

• We added a Technical Stakeholder Meeting to report on sprint work and provide direction

• We already emailed our sprint reports to all@osirium

• Our CTO, marketing manager, and support team no longer regularly attended sprints

• Had our final sprint as one team, planned together, then operated the sprint separately
OUR TEAMS

PRESENTING OUR TEAMS...
WHAT WE WORRIED ABOUT
EVERYTHING

• How will people mesh together?
• Will we lose our informal communication?
• A team vs B team?
• Will we actually be able to get things done?
OVERALL, GOOD!

• Moving product decisions away from the teams slowed us down
• We were slow to ramp up
• Stakeholders gave us direction, not specifics
• We added a team lead meeting to assign tickets
• No one team was best for a specific job
WHAT WE’RE WORRIED ABOUT NOW

EVERYTHING

• Planning work in the stakeholder meeting can be very top-down
• Teams without missions can struggle to feel ownership
• People outside the teams can feel alienated
• Too much process? Too little?
THINGS I WISH I’D KNOWN EARLIER

- Over-communicate everything
- Lack of ideas != Lack of interest
- This impacts everyone
- Team missions / goals / boundaries
THANKS!

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