Target Marketing

Search

BRANDING, AGENCY & CREATIVE, MARKETING STRATEGY

Can Agile Work for Your Creative Team?

By **Taylor Knight**   **April 14, 2016**

f ✗ in G+ ✉ 0

It's a never-ending cycle for creative teams: A project is completed by a certain deadline and boom, there's another one waiting for you before you can even catch your breath. Finishing projects on time isn't just a goal — it's a client expectation.

To meet these expectations, creative teams need structure, but not too much or too little. Creatives need to find a happy medium when it comes to this structure. There's no room for chaos or stress, yet there should be some freedom so teams can let the creative juices flow.

On April 6, Target Marketing hosted the webinar "Crushing Deadlines: How to Run a Successful Agile Creative Team," featuring Gabrielle Rein, creative director at Viceroy Creative; and Raechel Duplain, solutions marketing manager at Workfront. (If you missed this webinar, you can catch it here on-demand.)

Agile is a management method that uses incremental repetition to accomplish tasks. Duplain takes her own spin on Agile Management and makes it makes it work for marketers. She says Agile Marketing can be the happy medium creative teams have been searching for. In a Workfront study, 93 percent of marketers say Agile has helped them switch gears quickly and more efficiently when working on projects. Agile is a methodology that keeps teams on track through communication, planning and project management.

Plan

of all projects and work. Order the list from most important to least important, and get the most important stuff done first. Eighty percent of people surveyed reported that Agile has led them to enhanced prioritization. This will help teams be more organized and complete work on time.

Rein plans in a different way — she holds her projects teams to a "48-hour rule" meaning all projects need to be totally done 48 hours before a client's deadline. She says time is the most valuable planning tool and having those 48 hours allows her employees to make last minute changes before the client's deadline.

This time buffer helps the team avoid exhaustion and migraines, things Rein says are exactly opposite of what creative should be feeling. When a project is planned and executed properly, the finished product sells itself.

Communicate

How do you currently receive project requests? Email? Meetings? Desk fly-bys? Duplain explains that it's much easier to stay organized if there is one and only one way of submitting work requests. This can be as easy as creating an email address that all requests are sent directly to. The creative teams can then put the requests in the to-do list mentioned above.

Getting the in-house communication down can free up time for creative teams to devote to clients. Checking in with clients regularly throughout the project, Rein says, can eliminate surprises and reworks. Clients are happy and there's a better chance they will come back to you for future work.

Break Down Projects

Both Rein and Duplain agree that creative teams should break down work into smaller, easier-to-digest projects. Each smaller project should have its own deadline. Duplain calls these sprints. Sprints can last one, two or three weeks depending on what the team is comfortable with and what makes the most sense — you will need to determine how many hours your team can devote to the sprint every week. Duplain lays that out in the visual below.

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR TEAM'S AVAILABLE HOURS FOR A SPRINT

Step 1
Have each team member determine their total number of "lights on" hours for the week

NUMBER OF "LIGHTS ON" HOURS PER DAY						
"LIGHTS ON" ACTIVITIES	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
MEETING HOURS	1	2	2	1	1	
MEETING HOURS						
VACATION HOURS						
HOLIDAY HOURS						
EMAIL HOURS	2	2	2	2	2	
OTHER						TOTAL "LIGHTS ON" HOURS FOR WEEK:
TOTAL HOURS:	3	4	4	3	3	17

Step 2
Find the total available hours, per person, for the week

TOTAL HOURS/WEEK	40
- TOTAL "LIGHTS ON" HOURS/WEEK	− 17
= TOTAL AVAILABLE HOURS	23

Step 3
Find the percent of availability, per person, for the week

|	
TOTAL AVAILABLE HOURS	23
X 100	x 100
AVAILABLE HOURS TOTAL (A)	= 2300
/ TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	/ 40
= PERCENT OF AVAILABILITY	= 57.5%

Step 4
Repeat process for each week in the sprint

Step 5
Gather numbers from entire team for the week

TEAM MEMBER	AVAILABILITY	DAYS OFF	AVAILABLE HOURS
JOHNNY	57.50%	0	23
FREDDY	60%	0	24
ASHLEY	55%	0	22
SHAINA	65%	0	26
JUAN	60%	0	24
		TOTAL AVAILABLE TEAM HOURS FOR THE WEEK:	119

Step 6
If your Sprint is multiple weeks, do steps 1-5 for each week of the Sprint and add totals accordingly

Now that you have smaller projects, you can keep team members and clients up to date with how things are going. Quick, daily meetings are one way to do this or you can use a visual storyboard. Duplain suggests creating a storyboard and housing it somewhere that people can easily see it, therefore eliminating the amount of progress questions the team receives. As a project gets closer to completion, the farther it will move along the visual storyboard.
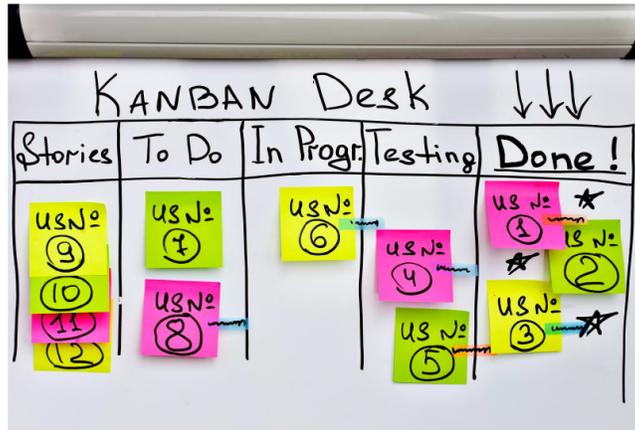
To keep morale and motivation high, creative teams should be rewarded for great work. A company lunch or early release can go a long way.

Now that you have the basics of Agile down, do you think your marketing or creative team can adapt and improve from it?

The Ultimate Guide for Lead Nurturing. Everything from the basics and how to get started to best practices and advanced tactics. This guide has it all. Download now!

1	2	**All**

0 Comments   **View Comments**
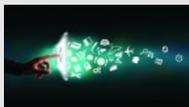
People: Gabrielle Rein   Raechel Duplain

Taylor Knight
Author's page
Taylor Knight is an associate content editor for Target Marketing and Total Retail. She enjoys writing and creating video content to interact with an audience.

⏩ RELATED CONTENT

Insights From 11 of the Hottest Minds in Marketing

7 Ways to Tailor Content to Prospects and Customer

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo With 5 Tips for Engaging With the Hispanic Community

Worth a Thousand Words

Top 10 Direct and Digital Marketing Jobs In Demand for 2013

Give It A Now!