



DISTRIBUTED AGILE TEAMS

DO'S AND DON'TS

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About Us



- Scrum.org Trainer and Consultant
- Principal Consultant, Practice Agile Solutions Private Limited
- Co-organizer of [Practice Agile Community](#)
- Over 19 years of Software Development experience
- Led large scale Agile adoption at a US bank, Forex company, with BCG at large US Investment Bank
- Trained over 7 organizations and 1000+ students on Scrum
- M.S. Computer Science, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA



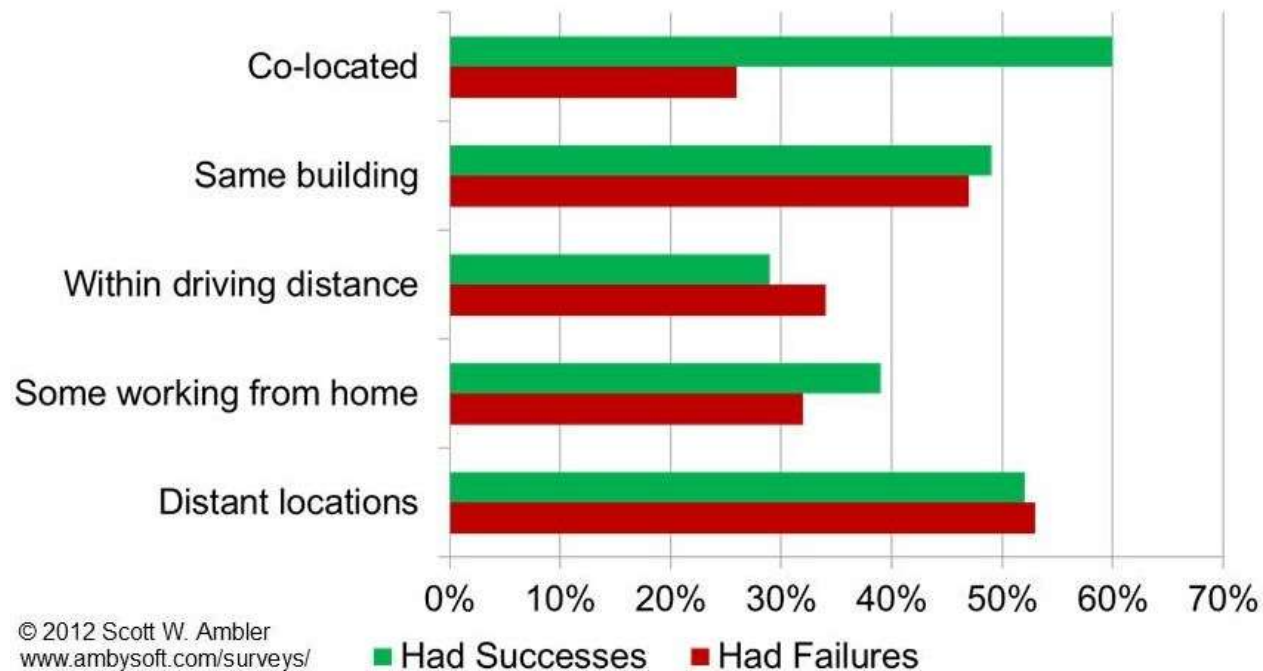
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Facts About Distributed Team Success



Agile Experiences with Geographic Distribution

On your successful/failed agile projects, how distributed were team members?



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www.ambysoft.com/surveys/

Distributed Agile Teams

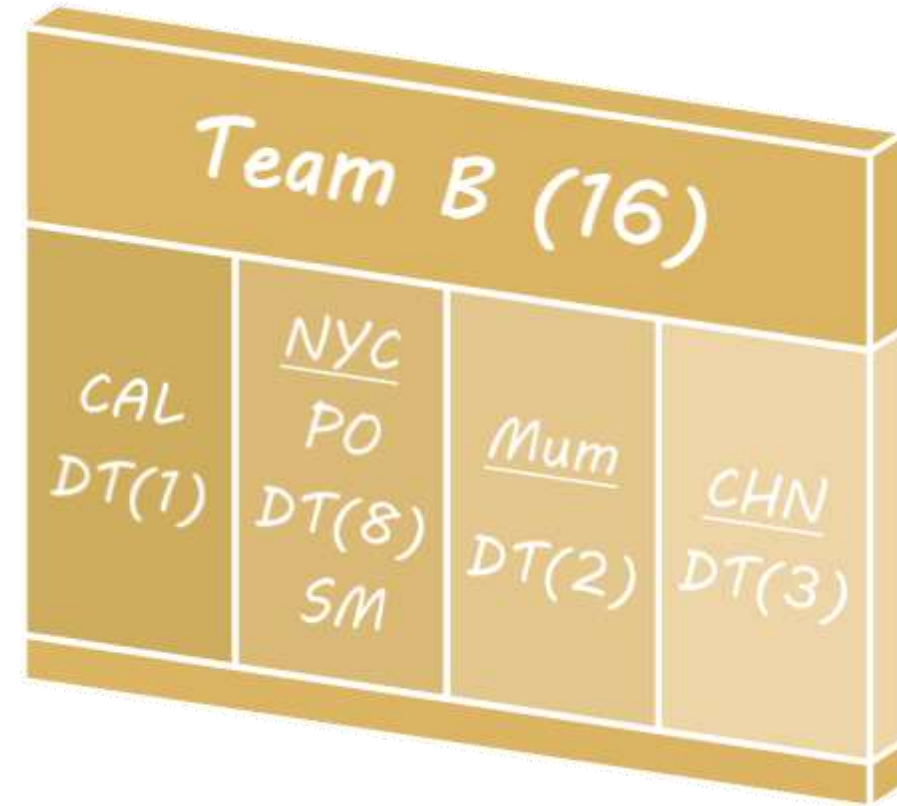
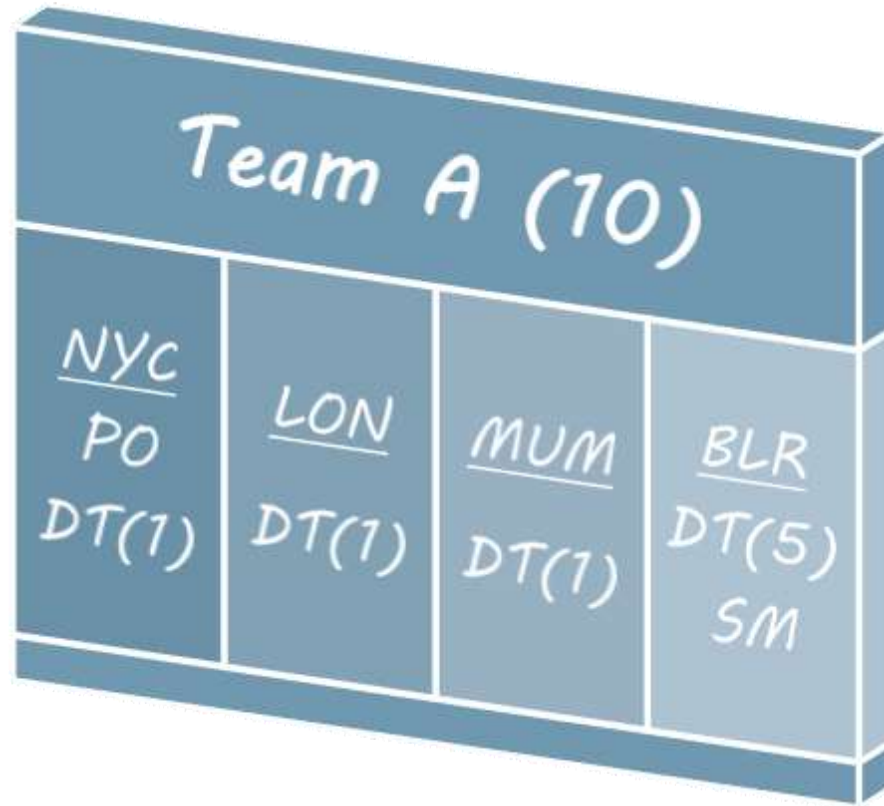
While working together, face-to-face, can be desirable for agile practices, survey respondents indicated that organizations are supporting distributed teams and team members. There is no evidence of a trend toward increased co-location, as organizations continue to support and encourage team collaboration across geographic boundaries and timezones.

78% of respondents said their organization practices agile with team members distributed (not co-located).

68% of respondents said their organization practices agile with multiple co-located teams, collaborating across geographic boundaries.

*Courtesy: 13th Annual State of Agile Survey
August 2018*

Tale of 2 Distributed Agile Teams



PO: Product Owner
DT: Development Team
SM: Scrum Master

Team Size/ Time Zones



Team A



Team B

All Development Team members working full time

Everyone attended all the Scrum Events

Easier collaboration across locations due to team members focussed on same project

Pain sharing among cross-location team members

5 Development Team members in NYC worked part time on the project

Scrum events struggled with quorum due to people having conflicting meetings

Collaboration challenges due to people having conflicting priorities

No pain sharing among cross-location team members



Keep team size small

Partial allocation and Time Zone difference counter productivity

Critical Mass



Team A

Critical mass in India helped improving local collaboration

Isolated team members were SME's in their respective domains

Scrum Master available for entire team



Team B

Development Team split between 2 time zones

Feeling of isolation for team members in Mumbai

Scrum Master unable to dedicate time for team members located in different Geographical location

Critical mass in one location helps in collaboration
Overlap needed with SME Team members
Scrum Master access is important for entire team

Vendor Team/ Collaboration



Team A

2 vendor team members with smooth flow of information



Collaboration primarily using face-to-face communication or group chats

'One Team' attitude towards tackling Sprint Goals

Team B

6 vendor team members with collaboration challenges



Collaboration primarily using email

Sub-groups formation due to siloed collaboration

**Co-location during early stages helps bring the team together
Invest in face-to-face interactions**

Lookout for Anti-Patterns



Remote Team members testing code or fixing defects

Things fall through cracks frequently

Team members are too quiet

Lack of visibility into progress

“Us vs. Them” mindset

Formation of sub-groups due to siloed collaboration

Team members skipping Scrum Events

Scrum Master is the “go-to” person for “issues”

Nip such issues in the bud

8 Must Do's for Distributed Agile Teams



Invest in technology and travels

- Virtual co-location (e.g. shared physical e-whiteboards, video conference)
- Infrastructure (e.g. continuous integration and delivery via Jenkins)
- Collaboration tools (e.g. Skype, WebEx)

Monitor signs for silo behavior

- Monitor signs of breakdown in teaming, “us-vs.-them” mindsets
- Assess collaboration during Retrospectives regularly

Co-locate for key team interactions

- Travel and co-locate around team formation & planning meetings

Encourage deeper collaboration

- Daily Scrum is necessary, but not sufficient
- Plan work allocations to promote deeper cross-team collaboration

Prioritize Scrum Events

- Full team attends key events
- Co-locate in each location
- Use face-to-face collaboration tools to ensure team is really 'present'

Foster shared culture

- Promote informal communications
- Bridge cultural barriers by creating a common vernacular
- Empower teams during local time

Define team norms & overlap hours

- Schedule overlap hours to enable real time interaction
- Flex overlap hours to share pains

Nail it before you scale it

- Do not scale while the team is still adapting to new ways of working

Team Members must feel and work like One Team



Q&A

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