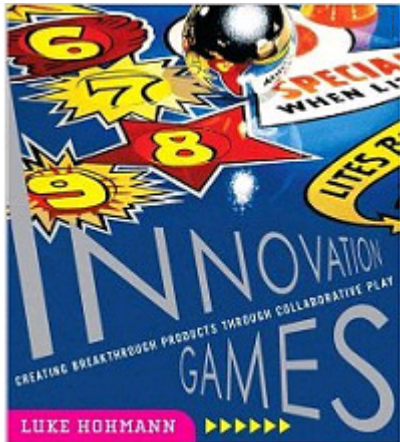


The Sailing Boat

Bertrand Blanc, July 2013



Keywords: sailing boat, speed boat, collaborative games, serious games, corporate games, gamification, retrospective, feedback, silent game.

The Sailing Boat is a derivative from the Speed Boat proposed by Luke Hohmann in his book “*Innovative Games: Creating Breakthrough Products through Collaborative Games*” (2006).

The purpose is to address in a *casual atmosphere* the retrospectives by removing psychological roadblocks like the *blanksheet syndrom*, creating a safe environment with *anonymous feedback*, engaging with everybody using written *post-its* especially with non-vocal and timid people, and managing the vocal people with the *silent* activity.

The Speed Boat is available on-line for multi-sites collaboration: <http://innovationgames.com/speed-boat>

The role of the facilitator

The facilitator drives the process. Each activity is timebox, he ensures that the timeboxes are set and respected. The facilitator shall not provide. He ensures that the ground rules are followed so that everybody has fun sharing their feedback. There's no stupid comment, the facilitator will ensure that everybody is respectful from the feedback from others.

Before the game starts

The facilitator

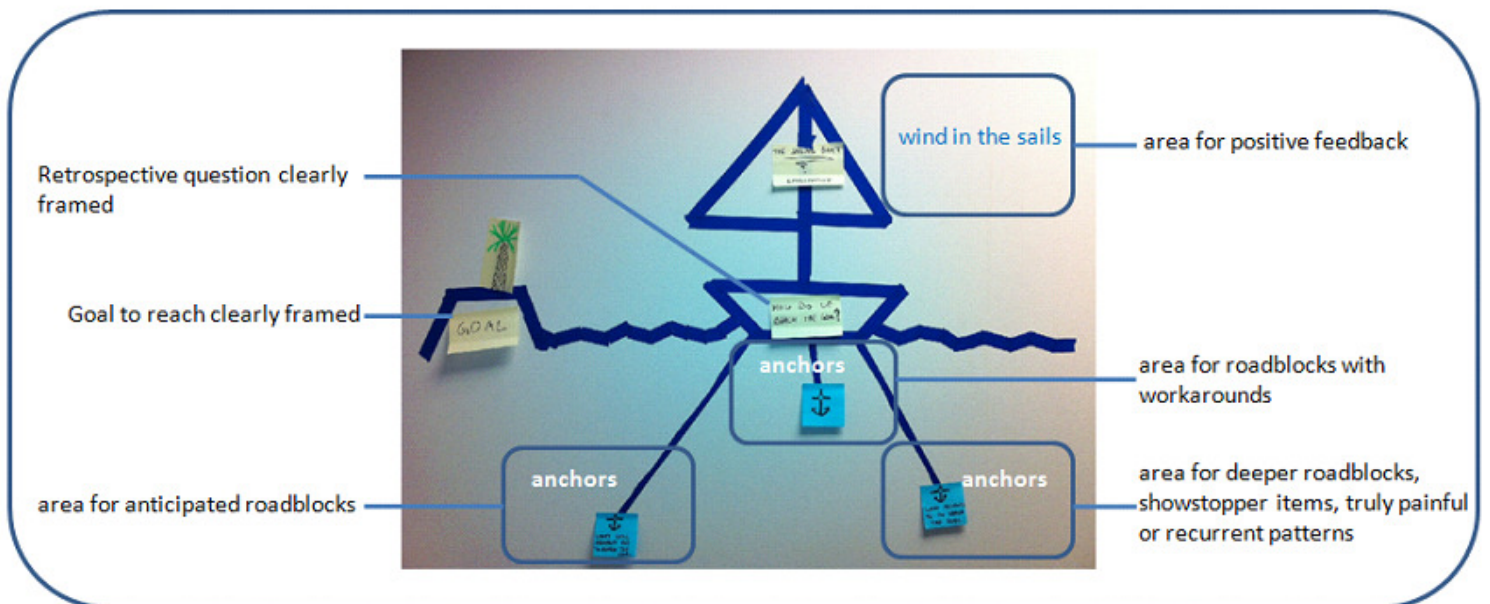
- Frames the question that the attendees will have to answer in the retrospective
- Invites the people (8/10 max) who should be involved in the retrospective with enough heads up time
- Prepares the Sailing Boat, drawing it on the white board
- Brings post-its and sharpies
- Takes pictures, unless a photographer is appointed
- Defuses tensions
- Provides recommendations for the areas of feedback
 - Time – Resources – Money
 - Time – Scope – Quality
 - 5M's: Money – Management (facilitation, servant leadership, execution, goals, instruction, ...) – Men (people, engagement, tensions, headcount, thank-you) – Methods (process, flows, methodology) – Machinery (tools, support)



The Sailing Boat

No specific artistic skill is required. Many version of the Sailing Boat exists in the field, I chose to present that one. Feel free to tweak it according to the purpose you'd like to achieve. The Sailing boat represents how the project flowed towards the goal. The wind in the sails represents what went well that the attendees more likely would like to continue as a good or best practice for the next iteration. The anchors represents the issues that the attendees faced during the execution of the project which led to impede to reach the goal smoothly. This version of the game presents 3 areas of roadblocks:

1. the anchors close to the surface represent minor issues or issues with easy workarounds
2. the deeper anchors on the right represent bigger issues drastically empeding boat to move towards the goal
3. the anchors on the left don't currently prevent the boat to move but at some point may become an empediment to reach the goal. This area is applicable for iterative life-cycle processes when a retrospective is held at the end of each iteration to improve the next iteration towards the goal, typically in Agile environment.



The process

Introduction: 5 minutes

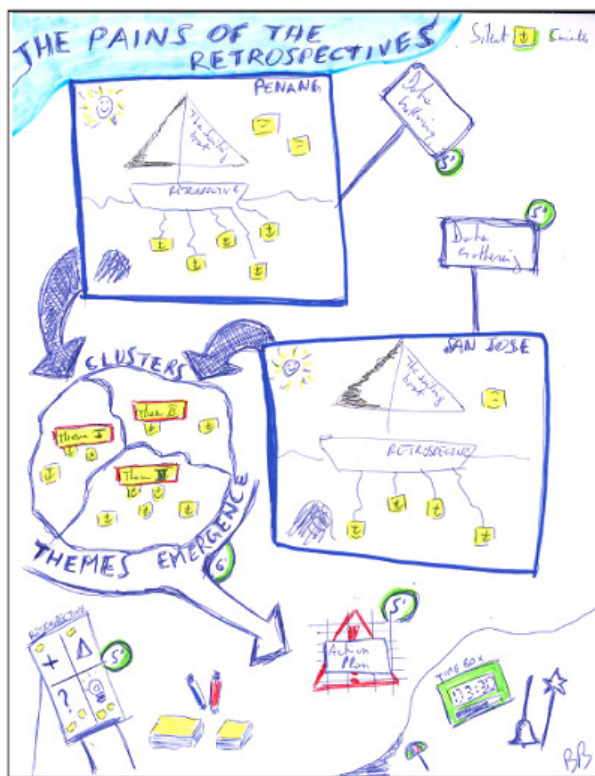
The facilitator presents the process, the ground rules, the question.

Data gathering: 10 minutes

Silently, each invitee provides his feedback regarding the question, one piece of feedback on one post-it written with a sharpie. The invitees will try to do their best to write in a readable manner so that the facilitator will be able to read aloud the comment.

When the post-its are ready the attendees bring them on the wall and stick them on the Sailing Boat according to the defined categories.

Feedback Delivery: 10 minutes



Since everybody's comments are important, then each post-it is read aloud by the facilitator. If the comment cannot be read by the facilitator, he will ask the help of somebody to help deciphering the comment. The comments are anonymous. If somebody wants to get a personal answer to a comment, one can write her name.

If some comments are fuzzy, he may ask for clarifications which will offer the opportunity to build on the postit to potentially create other piece of feedback. Additional post-its can be added by the attendees during this phase.

While reading, the facilitator will start arranging the post-its by theme. The audience will help him understanding the content in order to create meaningful themes. Before starting moving the post-its, the photographer takes a picture of the

sailing boat to remember where the pos-its were initially stuck.

If some comments are not applicable to the question (judgement call required), then the comment is moved to the parking lot.

Themes Emergence

According to the feedback provided in the previous step, some themes have naturally emerged.

Optionnaly, 2 (or 3) most important themes should eb addressed with the highest priority, the remaining ones considered as important, but less important and could be addressed only after those with higher priority have been addressed. 3 stickers are given to each attendee, they stick them on the themes they believe to be the most important

The facilitator sets rules on-the-fly. For example: no rule, one's can stick 3 sticker on a single topic, or one cannot stick more than one sticker on the same theme, or it's possible not to use the 3 stickers.

Wrap-up: 5 minutes

The facilitator thanks the attendees for their participation and introduces the follow up. He will review the feedback and will provide a written report to the attendees.

The follow up option may be presented to tell the attendees how their feedback may be used. For example, a brainstorming session may be scheduled to address the highest priority themes, or another team will be in charge of addressing the resolution of the themes, or the feedback will be included in higher level retrospective to be provided to the management for action, or ... etc ...

After the game ends

The facilitator takes all pictures he needs to remind the dynamic of the board. He archives the comments by theme.

For 30 minutes data gathering, 2 hours of deeper data analysis may be needed in order to produce a report, including the follow up reports and actions.

The report will be composed of

- the question to be answer during the retrospective
- the list of attendees
- the incidents during the session
- pictures
- the positive themes and comments to keep
- the themes to improve sorted by priority
- the exhaustive list of comments sorted by theme
- solution proposal if the facilitator has the knowledge to do so
- recommendation for the next step towards addressing the items to fix