The TameFlow Connection Newsletter

The latest news and ideas about the *TameFlow Approach*

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Hello Friends of Herbie!

Here's the latest *TameFlow Connection* newsletter. As I mentioned last week, the *TameFlow Approach* is gaining in popularity. One sure sign of this is that we are starting to see more articles and posts authored by TameFlow Community members. Of course, I strongly encourage more of that!

In the ongoing *Campfire Talks with Herbie* broadcasts (if you haven't seen them, checkout the full playlist) I am hosting guests that represent other "schools of thought" too. One effect of their presence, is that the audience can compare how the *TameFlow Approach* can relate to such other schools of thought. In the last couple of episodes we had Venkatesh "Venky Krishnamurthy who talked about Large Scale Scrum (LeSS); and Clarke "the bottleneck guy" Ching who talked about *Agile* and the *Theory of Constraints*. In the next installment we will have the legendary Tom Gilb and his Evolutionary Development (EVO) method. Details further down. The insights offered by these guests highlight how the *TameFlow Approach* can adapt itself to other contexts - primarily thanks to the fact that it is based on *Mental Models* and *Patterns*. And that is a good reason to watch the *Campfire Talks*!

Interesting Reading Material

The Magic of Agile

In The Magic of Agile, our Michael "Thought Provoker" Küsters has a rather entertaining take on the superstitious beliefs that at time develop around "Agile."

Michael arrives at the conclusion: *There is no magic in "Agile!"* - and that must be a great disappointment for many!

Consequences of Ignoring the Agile Manifesto

On a related note, in a community post, our [Srinivas "Sri" Garapati](#) presents some interesting thoughts in his post [Individuals and Interactions Over Processes and Tools. What is this value and what would be the consequences when we ignore what was written in the footnotes of the Agile Manifesto?](#).

Actually, I got doubts and checked the [Manifesto for Agile Software Development](#): I did not find any footnotes! So I got curious about what Sri had on his mind and read the article. It is indeed a worthwhile read!

Resolve Issues Rapidly

Our [David Hodes](#) published this post: [Resolving Issues Rapidly](#). This is an amazingly good article, which goes to the heart of **Informational Flow** and **Work Execution Signals**.

The best take-away is the **Two-Hour Rule**: *"The person who's received such an escalation notice then has two choices: (1) Resolve the issue within two hours, or (2) Take accountability for any delay caused by the issue, in a written response to the person who raised it"*.

Read David's post to get all the details. I will steal this rule and make it part of what we suggest with *TameFlow*! (Thank you, David! :)

Re-Read Saturday with Tom Cagly

Thomas "Tom" Cagley Jr. - the host of the *Software Process and Measurement Cast* - posted this weeks' [Re-Read Saturday](#), covering Chapter 14 about **Flow Efficiency, DBR and TameFlow Kanban Boards** of my [Tame your Work Flow](#) book.

He also reflects on the merits of the **Full-Kitting** activity, and refers to his older post [Ready to Develop](#), and on the meaning of *"Definition of Ready"*, which presents many relevant points. What I would add, is that *Full-Kitting* at the portfolio level is more than simply getting ready for the work. It is primarily about making "business" meet with "engineering" and establish and compare the business value with respect to the time forecast, as to determine the **Financial Throughput Rate** of every **MOVE** under consideration.

TameFlow and Enlightened Self-Interest

It seems that Tom Cagley's *Re-Read Saturdays* of *Tame your Work Flow* truly inspires him to reflect on a number of topics! In particular

last week he produced two very interesting posts about **Enlightened Self-Interest.**

Enlightened Self-Interest is a fundamental **Pattern** in the *TameFlow Approach*.

The first post is [Enlightened Self-Interest](#) where, unfortunately, it seems that Tom misunderstood how *Enlightened-Self-Interest* works in the *TameFlow Approach*.

He writes:

> *[Steve Tendon] suggested that enlightened self-interest would lead product owners and leaders to put the good of the firm in front of their own interests.*

This is really the opposite of how the *Enlightened Self-Interest* **Pattern** works in *TameFlow*! The *TameFlow* **Pattern** really puts the most greedy, selfish **self-interest** at the center of the action. So how can that possibly bring any good? Bear with me.

Tom further compares *Enlightened Self-Interest* to barn-raising, and writes:

> *Enlightened self-interest requires a philosophical and ethical framework that supports this transaction; this form of reciprocity. All organizations that use agile, TameFlow, or any other framework have an expectation of a payback.*

Again this is *far* from what the *Enlightened Self-Interest* **Pattern** is in *TameFlow*, where there is absolutely no expectation of reciprocity whatsoever. Again: in *TameFlow* the **Pattern** is one of absolute self-interest. Bear with me, some more.

The second is a guest post published by Tom: [Enlightened Self-Interest and Rational Selfishness; A Guest Essay by Joe Schofield](#). It starts by citing the [Wikipedia](#) entry on the topic, where the take is one of *ethical philosophy*, and in particular dissects the concept into five subtypes (see the Wikipedia page for details):

1. Unenlightened self-interest
2. Golden Rule
3. Deferred Gratification
4. Altruism
5. Rational Selfishness

Out of these five sub-types, the last one, **Rational Selfishness** is the one that mostly resembles what we have in the *TameFlow Approach*;

yet it still misses the mark, in that individual selfishness is seen as possibly benefiting the group or society as a "by-product," as a potential "side-effect."

In *TameFlow* the benefit to the group comes out of an act of deliberate design - and must invariably happen. It certainly is not a coincidental side-effect that *might* potentially happen. If it doesn't happen, then the **Pattern** has not resolved.

So let's now try to understand how to look at this from a *TameFlow* perspective. First we need to grasp that in *TameFlow* we are dealing with the (Alexandrian) **Pattern** of **Enlightened Self-Interest**, and not with the philosophical concept of *Enlightened Self-Interest*.

Above I used bold text to highlight the word **Pattern** when referring to the *TameFlow* perspective on *Enlightened Self-Interest*. This is fundamentally important. In *TameFlow*, *Enlightened Self-Interest* is seen as a **Pattern**, not as a philosophical, ethical ideal.

Being an *Alexandrian Pattern*, it is about a solution to a problem in a context.

In broad terms, here the context is any business organization tending towards a **Goal**, where such a *Goal* is shared and fully supported by all actors. The problem is how to create an alignment between all actors, and eliminate all conflicts.

The crucial aspect here is to grasp what the *"Enlightenment"* is about in this *Pattern*. The enlightenment is *not* about the gaining of some philosophical awareness that the greater good might transcend ones own priorities, and we should be ready to sacrifices ourselves for the good of others.

In *TameFlow*, this *"Enlightenment"* is only about being receptive to the new **Mental Models** that we propose - and, in consequence of which, decisions will be made differently.

The driver is a most selfish one.

The **Mental Models** shed the light of enlightenment, and they will clearly spell out what is in the most selfish and most greedy decision that the decision maker can pick for their own self-interest. The decision maker will *want* to make the decision suggested by the new *Mental Models* they have acquired, because of this absolute benefit for themselves and no one else. This is intrinsic motivation combined with the most basic survival instinct of self-preservation. It is *only* about self-interest.

It is in this self-interest that the decision gains its force.

So what is the trick?

Fact is that all the proposed *Mental Models* - being part of a larger network of patterns, the **Pattern Language** of the *TameFlow Approach* - are such that they are all coherent and consistent among themselves. There is conceptual integrity across them. Conceptual integrity that aims at the fulfillment of the shared *Goal*.

Thus any decision made by anybody at any level of the organization - again because selfishly enlightened by the new *Mental Models* - will be coherent and consistent with all the *decisions made by others*.

It is in this consistency, coherence and integrity of decision-making that the **Enlightened Self-Interest Pattern** gains its force: everyone starts pulling in the same direction, despite - or because of! -their decisions being based on self-interest motives.

The solution to the problem in the context is: allow individuals to put their own self-interest before anything else by means of a system of *Mental Models* that create **Unity of Purpose** through coherent and consistent decision making.

I hope this is enlightening enough!

Events and Media

Upcoming Events

September 15th, 2020, at 20:0 CEST: *Campfire Talks with Herbie 27*. The guest will be quantification expert and agile pioneer [Tom Gilb](). Tom will give us his views on how to **Quantify Value** and bring us up to date on his latest writing: a new book about quantification: [Quanteer]() (a Dropbox download link from which you can get Tom's "daily build" of the book). We will see how his ideas can support the **Full Kitting** activity in the *TameFlow Approach*. You can register [here]().

September 23rd, 2020, at 17:00 CEST: *What next for pandemic hit organizations utilizing Lean, Agile, Scrum?*. A panel discussion moderated by [Nigel Thorlow](), former Chief of Agile of Toyota and the co-creator of The Flow System. Panelists will be: [Sonja Blignaut](), the complexity and Cynefin expert who leads global operations for Dave Snowden's Cognitive Edge; [Jabe Bloom]() who leads the Global Transformation office at Red Hat; [Andrew Blain]() creator of the Remote Agility Framework; [Dirk Van Goubergen]() Europe's leading expert in Lean and Value Stream Design; and last but not least yours very truly. You can register [here]().

Recent Events

September 8th, 2020: [Campfire Talks with Herbie 26](#) welcomed [Clarke 'the bottleneck guy" Ching](#). Clarke is one of the most longstanding people who has been bridging the world of **Theory of Constraints** and **Agile**, which was also the main topic of our conversation.

That's it for this time.

Have a great week!

Steve

P.S.

Do you enjoy this newsletter? Spread the word and tell your friends and colleagues to subscribe to this [TameFlow Connection Newsletter](#) - or just forward them a copy of this issue. And invite everyone to watch the [Campfire Talks with Herbie](#) live streams. Or invite them to join the [TameFlow Community](#).

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