Acute issues
(Motivation, Problems & Conflicts)

11.10.2016

Tensu & Sten
Weekly reports; week 40

- All returned in time
- All were from “week 40”
- All had week/cumulative total/sum.

**Great !!! That means Project Candy.**

- week’s hours were 5..78 h
- total hours were 92..307 h.
Motivation is essential for work

No (wo)man can work 5-6 months on a project without any breaks.

The Gurus ("big boys") say that on every project there are 2-3 motivational dips/holes/pits/gaps (motivaatiokuoppa).

Those low-motivation moments may appear... when or on what occasions??

(hint: project management is NOT rocket science, so you know the answer)
motivation

(time)
motivation vs time
Some usual motivational lowpoints...

motivation

end of Sprint 0

Nov:
exercise
work
jam

Christmas
holidays

time
Motivation is essential...

motivational dips/holes/pits/gaps may appear

- after a holiday or some other break
- after hard intensive work (project fatigue)
- when project work is not advancing, perhaps because of a difficult sw/hw problem
- when groupmembers are busy with other matters (studies, personal, or work)
- because of customer actions (busy, not sure what wants, not responding).
Better motivation inside a project group

- project’s state is discussed openly in weekly meetings
- if you are temporarily very busy with other matters, inform others EARLY (before deadline)
- proceed with the project work with small steps, to make at least some visible progress
- have some good time (party) after some success or major deadline (e.g. after Sprint end)
- sometimes take some free time (a few days, or weekend) from the project (even the whole group)
- too much or too little work may lower motivation (everybody knows what to do this, and next, week)
- but: also “dull” work has to be done in projects
- remember: other students have survived the Project Course in previous years (no one is still in hospital).
Common problems at OHJ/TIE-PROJ

Picked from OHJ-PROJ/TIE-PROJ final reports
• tools (or skills for using those...)
• other hurries (work, other courses, hobbies,...)
• technical problems (environment, hw, sw,...)
• goals not understood right or agreed well
• misunderstandings and communication errors
• documentation errors and too abstract text
• not accurate enough workload guesses
• sickness, illness
• unfamiliarity of projects and/or application area
• incompatible www browsers
• poor meeting process handling.
Some thoughts...

"A man got to know his limitations"
[Dirty Harry movie character]

"The project goes well as long as less than half of the groupmembers are thinking about suicide."
[modified from expedition team handbook]
Some general advice to groups...

- **coding/working nights/days are strongly recommended**

- **motivational events after some considerable effort (e.g. deliverable deadline), e.g. sauna party or just bar night**

- **Plan lecture break = holidays well, and in advance. Share work to everybody and stick in the plan.**
There is not only one right way to do the project.

Every group (team) is different and acts differently.
Possible conflicts in groups

• Somebody may work less than others, others may think (s)he is a “free-rider”. But you have agreed average personal weekly working hours promises in Project Plan. It is OK to have different amount of working hours, if that is agreed within the whole group.

• There may be some interpersonal problems, perhaps different working habits or cultural differences, or most likely misunderstandings. Solve all issues right away within your group.
Causes of conflicts [Borg et al., 2011]

- ambition differences
- cultural differences
- bad communication
- strong wills
- unclear goals
- different prior knowledge (studies)
- aversion towards methods/tools.
Possible solutions to conflicts [Borg et al., 2011]

- state group rules early & clearly
- encourage to discuss problems
- well-defined roles
- start work with small tasks.

TIE-PROJ:
- Project Plan may be considered a “group contract”.