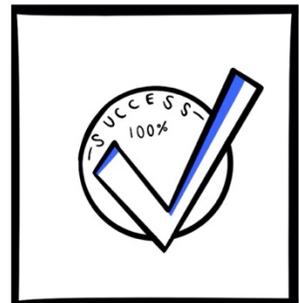
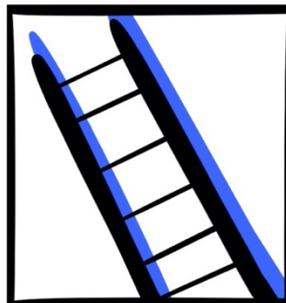
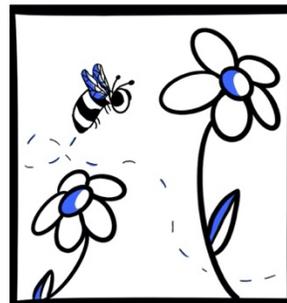
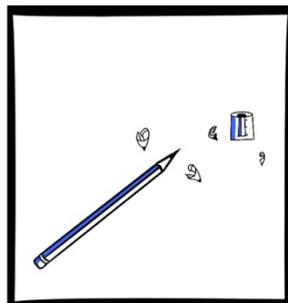
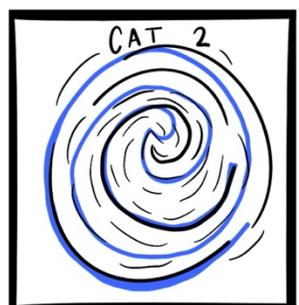
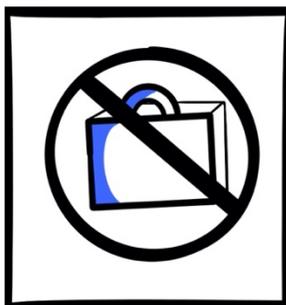
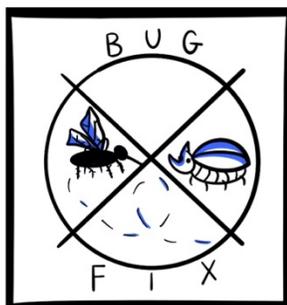
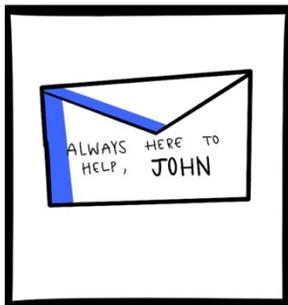
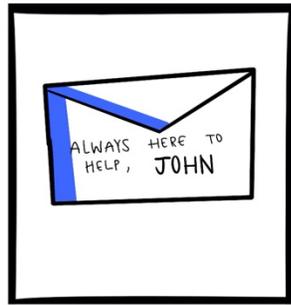


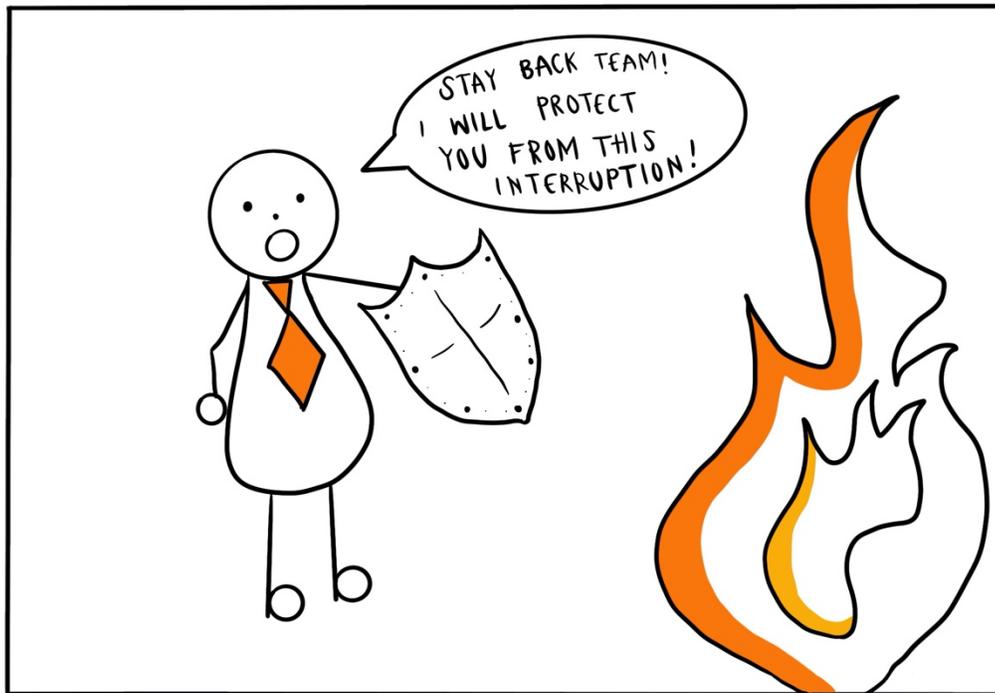
TEAM JOHN



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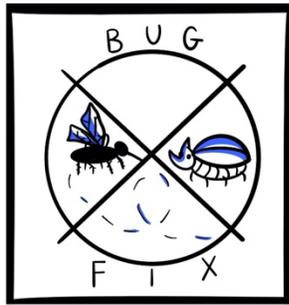
What is Team John?



What exactly is Team John? This revolutionary concept was invented by V. Lee Henson of AgileDad back in 2008 when he conducted a study of numerous Agile Teams to try and prove a hypothesis that a team of five with no interruptions would be more productive than a team of six with frequent interruptions. Team John was named as a tribute after a very dear friend of AgileDad who passed away years ago. He would sign every email 'Always here to help, John'. The concept is that no matter what happens, this individual would always be there to help shield the team from distraction & interruption.

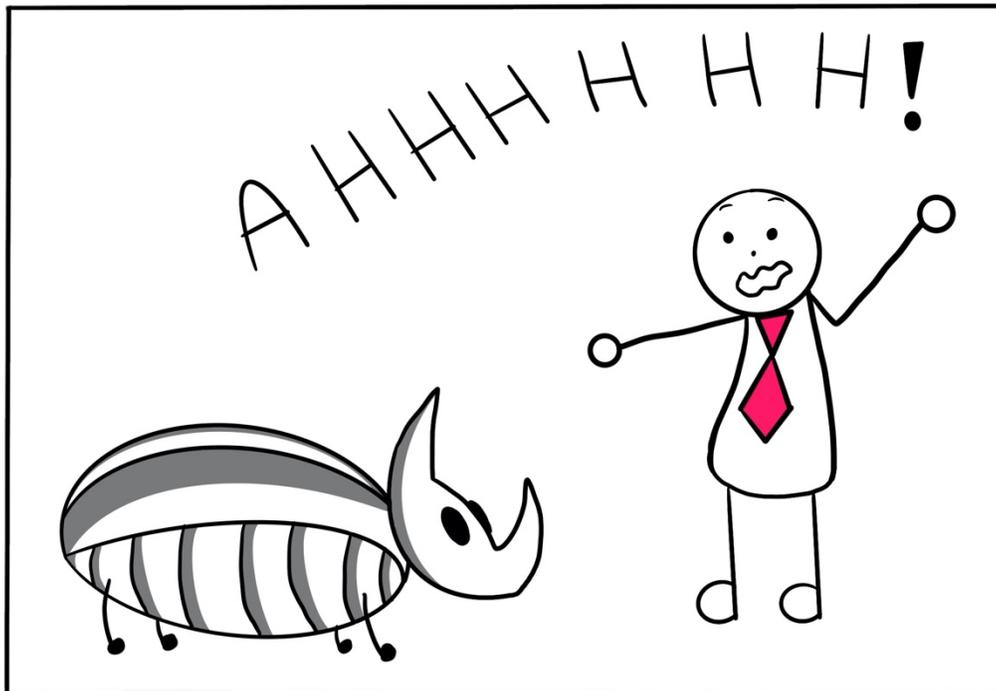
While it remains the ScrumMaster's key responsibility to dissuade and or thwart interruptions, they often times still remain and cause teams and organizations to struggle with how to handle the growing influx of requests, reports, and emergencies that prevent teams from completing their sprint goal.

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Team John Logistics

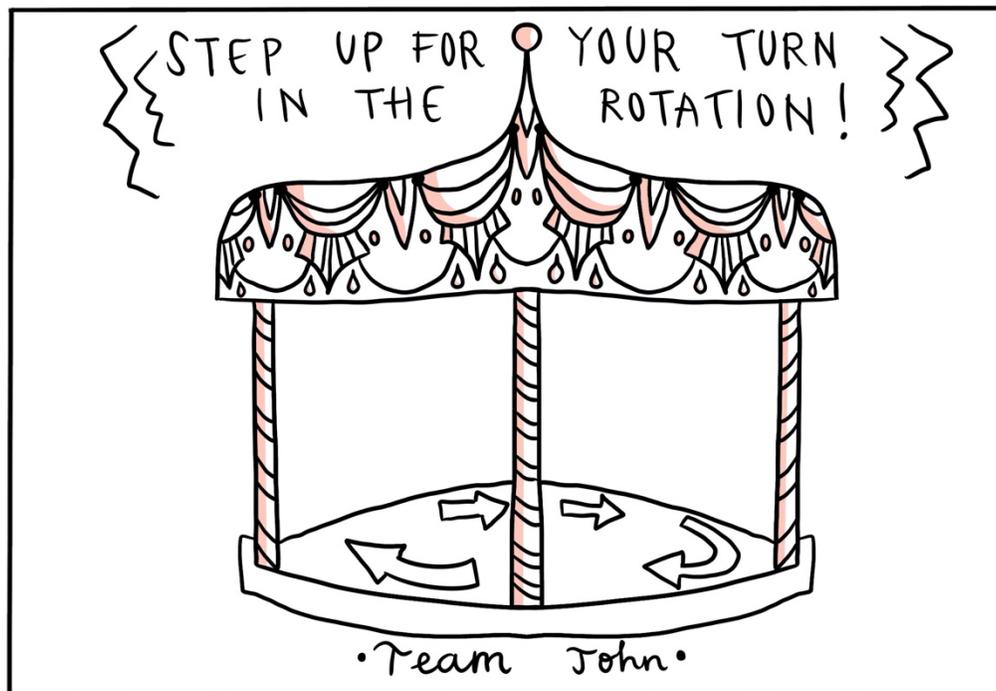
In order for Team John to work effectively, the following must be practiced the team must be in Norming or Performing phase of the Tuckman Model. Attempting this technique with teams that have no working relationship could prove very difficult if not impossible to work correctly. The team cannot have less than six full time team members in order to remove one per sprint and never go lower than five team members. Teams should be transparent when attempting this concept and should allow time to see tangible results. This typically occurs in 3-6 working sprints. Teams should strive to eliminate as much technical debt as possible prior to kicking off Team John. Team John is NEVER intended to be a bug fix team. The queue should be close to clean before you initiate this practice.



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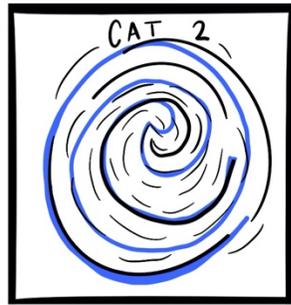
Team John Rules



The first rule of Team John is every team member is required to rotate off for a single 2-week sprint when it is their turn to rotate off. The member who rotates off MUST follow the following rules in order to qualify to enter the rotation:

- 1) Team members are not allowed to work on ANY work in the current Sprint while on Team John.
- 2) Team members are not allowed to be on vacation when rotated on Team John
- 3) Team members are not allowed to pull from a never-ending defect queue while on Team John.

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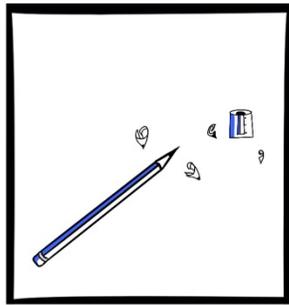
How We Handle Interruptions Is Key

If an interruption during the sprint boundaries should occur, the team member on Team John should assess the interruption and make a logical decision. If at any point the Team John Member is not certain which category applies, they will immediately seek the help of the Product Owner and ScrumMaster for resolution. A category one interruption would involve any topic that is not critical enough to warrant an interruption. These would fall into a known but not resolved category and should be documented and archived accordingly.



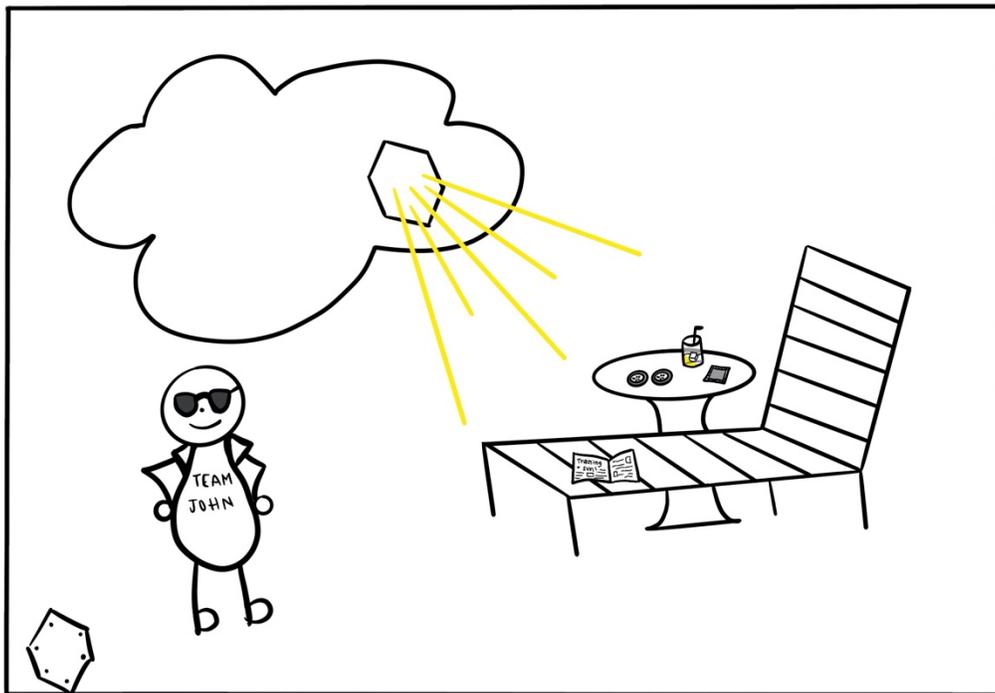
These will be addressed should the same issue arise a second time. In most cases these types of defects have a suitable workaround or have already been resolved as we tended to a different matter in the product. Sometimes the reported issue is not an issue at all and is just a request for enhancement which should be treated as such. Category 3 situations are dire and considered all hands-on deck. These are the showstoppers that we alert all needed parties and, in many cases, halt all forward progress in order to get them resolved. These are mission critical and of the most urgent nature. Category 2 interruptions are the ones that apply to Team John. These are interruptions which would typically disrupt the team, but are not of such an urgent matter that they warrant ending a current sprint to address. These are either discovered and queued up to be the first items addressed in the next sprint, or are addressed by the Team John member if possible while the team completes work related to the Sprint Goal. At very minimum it is required that the team member who rotated off for the sprint should be aware of the issue and able to reproduce the error to present to the product owner and other stakeholders as needed. This is how a Team John member handles interruptions which would normally impact the team.

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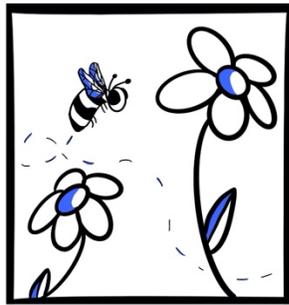


No Interruptions?
No Problem!

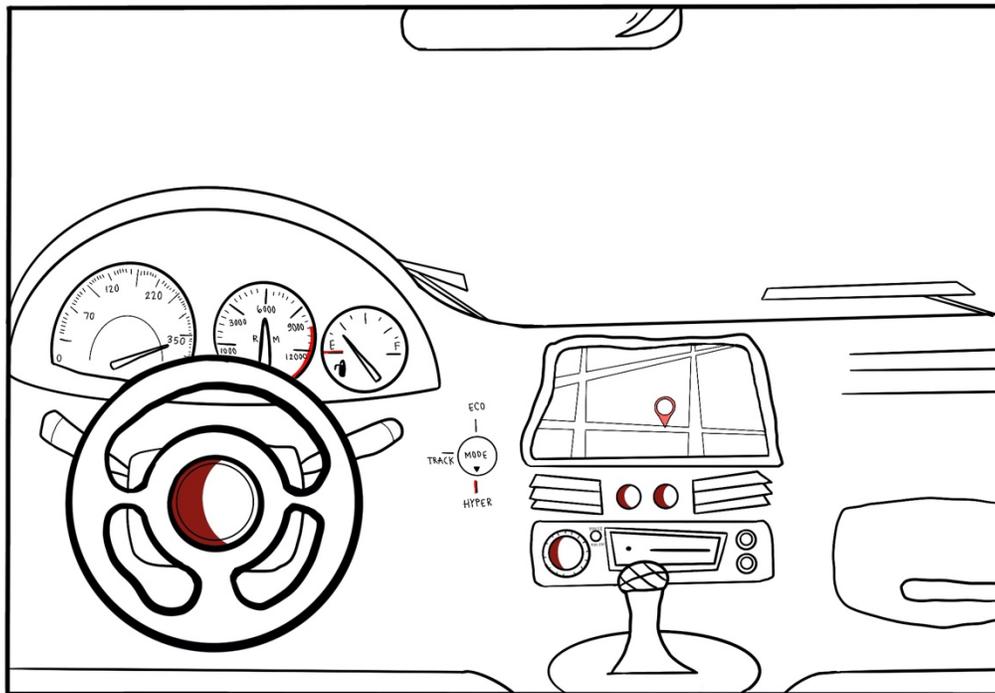
I know what you are thinking, what if there are no interruptions? What if the sky is not falling? What is the Team Member who rotated off supposed to be doing? Herein lies the beauty of Team John. The team member could wipe their machine, or install the latest instance of visual studio or eclipse. They could attend a training workshop, read a book, etc. The intent is that if they are not busy dealing with interruptions, that they will utilize this time to sharpen their skill set. This could include pairing with other Team John members to learn something new, working on an innovation backlog, attending a charity event, or doing whatever is needed in order for them to add value as they decompress and prepare for the next several weeks of Sprinting.



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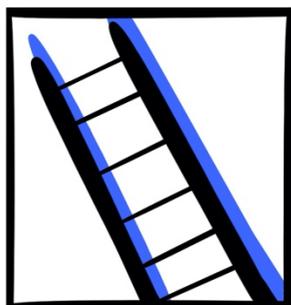


Achieving High Performance



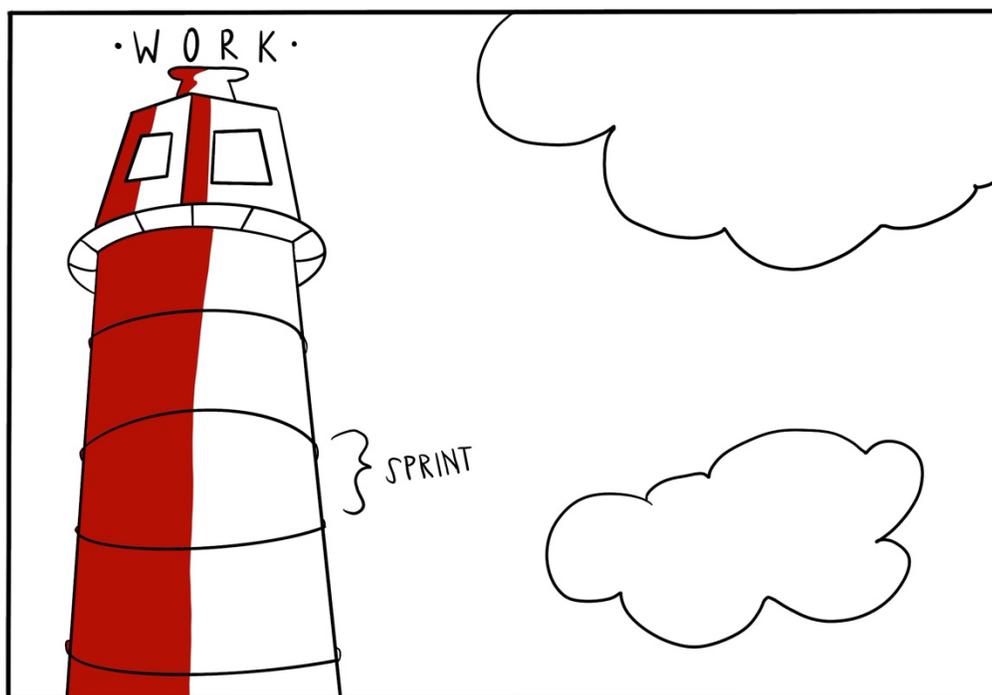
The concept is that out of the five active team members, one is in hyper performing mode as they are ready to rotate off onto Team John. A second team member is fresh as they just had the previous two weeks rotated off on Team John. In essence 40% of your team is in High Performance mode at all times. As a result, over time, the core team will finish more work as a team of five than they did as a team of six without interruptions. The team member who rotated off also has a chance to cross pollenate and learn about other areas of the product or service where they may not have expertise thereby creating more proficient t-shaped individuals.

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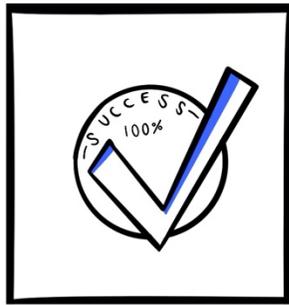
Team John Side Effects

One really cool side effect is that Team John also helps break down work silos. For the first several sprints as this is implemented, I not only support, but encourage team members to interrupt the one and only subject matter expert on any topic where they are the only ones who are aware how a specific part of the product or service is built or operates. This allows for them to perform knowledge share to the rest of the team.

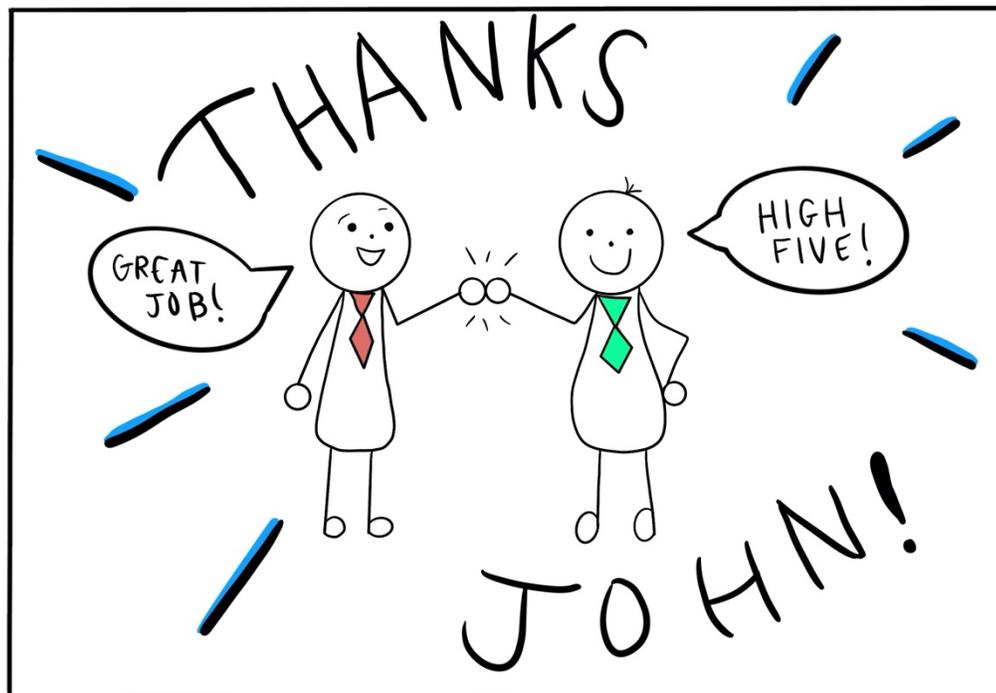


In the end it will be better to have five team members who understand 20% each of the coverage that are willing to learn from each other than a single point of failure where one individual is the only person who holds the keys to the kingdom. After a few short sprints, these individuals will come to the conclusion quickly that they need to find a way to disseminate the information to other team members or they will become completely frustrated and attempt to leave the organization. Either way, the team becomes stronger once the information is out there and the person with the knowledge is now allowed to expand their knowledge working on new and innovative parts of the product or service.

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Application and Implementation of Team John



Many organizations have already applied these teaching and 100% have seen favorable results. Other organizations have taken parts of the Team John concept and applied them in different ways that work best for them as an organization. While this is designed to work as described, taking steps towards incremental improvement are always acceptable. As a result of the implementation of Team John, morale will increase. People will have better work-life balance. Teams will become better at communication. Core teams will work without interruption. No single person will be considered a point of failure on any product or service. Teams will become energized when they are allowed to work on things that are important to them and see marked progress. People will once again love where they work and talk to others about having two weeks off per quarter to promote self-improvement thereby drawing new and better talent to the organization as a whole. I saved the best part for last. Applying this initiative is 100% free! It costs nothing to implement. In fact, it is a profit center as teams will be more productive and people will become more knowledgeable over time. Perhaps it would make sense to change the name to the Agile No-Brainer.

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