Work:Flow

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A Quick Bully Pulpit

Don't panic!

iPhone announcements apply to iPhone and iPad, not the incredibly rich technology platform we work with

Duality of workflow

We only ever talk about 'work'

When we talk about workflow, we focus more on the work side of things than the flow

Work is quantitative

LOCs, sketches, documents...

LOC's – Lines of Code
We like talking about work because we can measure it

Flow is subjective

Tell me how you *really* feel...

We like talking about work because we can measure it

We'll talk about both

We want our work to flow

When we talk about our most creative, productive moments, we talk about the work flowing out of us

Work

What is it we do exactly?

Everyone has a different work situation
– Shrinkwrap
– Consulting
– Studio
– Advertising

Work

What we do determines how we should do it.

What Kind of Work Do You Do?

- Are you at an agency?
- Are you at a shrinkwrap/software producer?
- Are you at a design studio?
- Are you at an IT Consultancy?
- Are you freelance?

How Does Your Company Work?

- Are you a big company or small?
- Are there clear channels of communication?
- How do you track time usage and utilization?
- Do you know what your weekly utilization should be?

How Does Your Team Work?

- How do you use things like Email, IM, Asynchronous Messaging (SMS,Twitter), project boards like Basecamp
- Do you have project rooms?
- Are you a part of a tiger team or support

How Do You Work?

- Are you an early riser or day sleeper?
- Is your desk pristine or messy?
- Are you for or against headphones?
- Do you have a private office?
- Are you responsive to correspondence or wait till certain periods to reply?

Work

Being Agile™ will break your back.

Trying to force an inappropriate workflow into a work situation is a recipe for disaster

Work

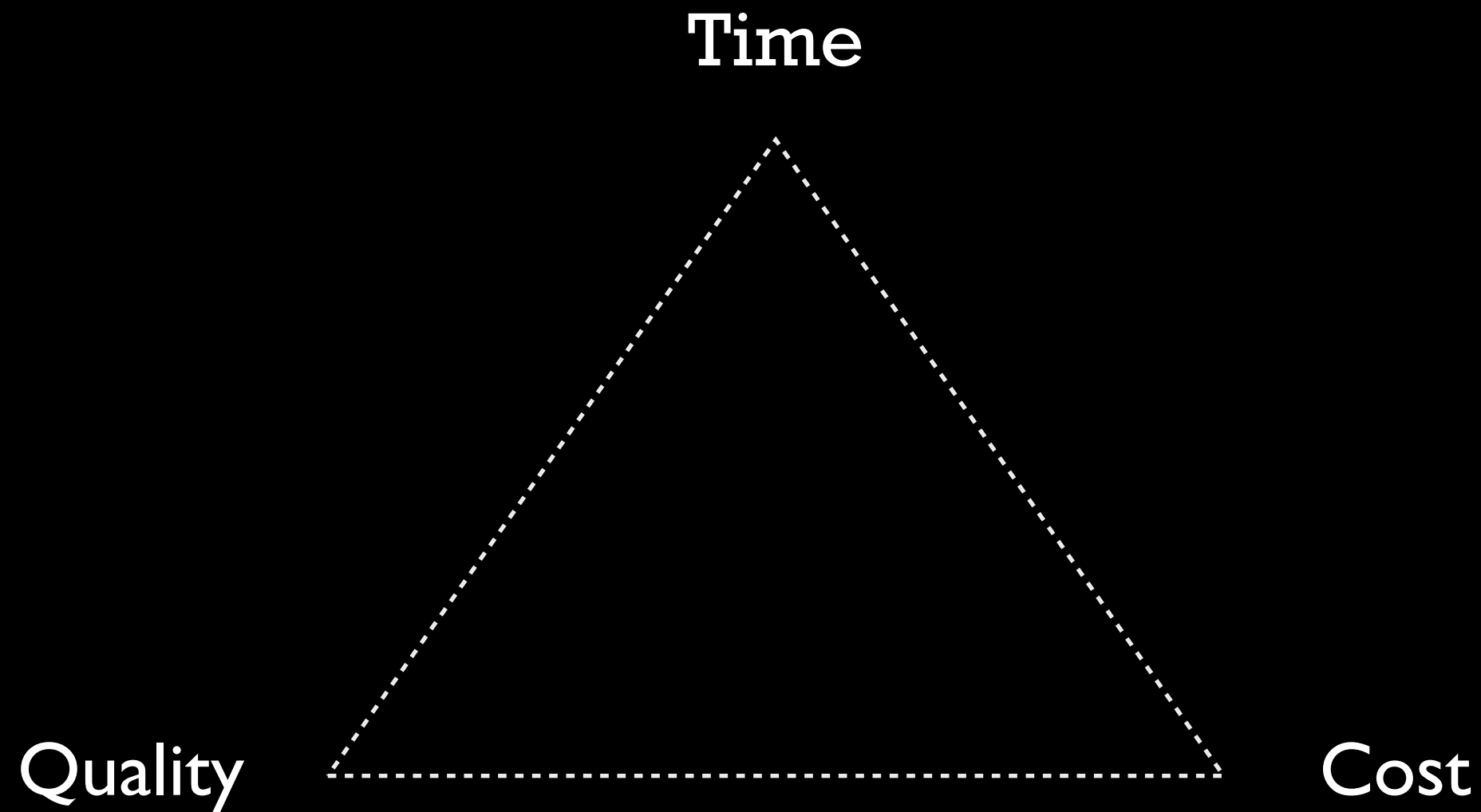Being anarchic will kill you.

Having no process at all will kill you

The Project Triangle

Time

Quality   Cost

Pick any two
- Time: how fast do you need it done?
- Quality: how well does this need to be built?
- Cost: how much money do you want to spend on this?

Work

Designing a workflow/process.

Work

Five steps:
- **Identify problems to fix**
- Identify work systems similar to yours
- Research how those systems solve the same problems
- Implement and measure results
- Repeat

What are your painpoints?
- No clear decision making mechanisms?
- No clear quality metrics?
- No clear task prioritization processes?
- Problematic co-workers?

Work

Five steps:
- Identify problems to fix
- **Identify work systems similar to yours**
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If you are an ad agency, look at other ad agencies
If you do software, look at other software shops

Work

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- Find out what processes they use, what ones don't
- don't be afraid to look outside your space if you are not getting answers that feel right
- I got a lot of insight from business books about microbreweries in the US

Work

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Start small, people hate change
People also hate achievers

Work

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Work

Popular Methodologies

Work

Waterfall, Systems Engineering and its variants

- Frontload the whole process with detailed planning.
    - Design
    - Build build build
    - Test test test
    - Release
- Based on more traditional, physical workflows
- Not really appropriate for modern day digital projects
- OTA updates and web content make the need for "get it right the first time" thinking vanish

Work

Agile and its variants

- Scrum, XP, 37Signals 'Getting Real'
- Core focus on effective, timely, minimal communication
- Key weakness: people have to like to communicate
- You can't force people to share information

Work

Design Thinking

- Pioneered and formalized by IDEO
- Standardized elements of the creative process
- Focus on repeatable innovation

Flow

What is it?

Flow is the whole reason we are having this conversation
It's the state when we are most productive

Flow

How can we create flow?

Go back to our discussion of how you work

Flow

Everybody wants everyone else to change

Flow

Change is n-sided

In developing a workflow, we cannot simply see it as "us" versus "them"

Flow

There must be compromise

compromise comes in many forms

Flow

An example

Flow

Shop type:
-15 person studio

Flow

Staffing:
- Four technical creatives
- Six visual creatives
- Four sales and business development
- One managing director
- Two foreigners, one from Poland, one from

Flow

Office layout:
- Open seating
- Two meeting rooms

Flow

Typical project:
- Two to three month
- Subcontract through ad agency
- Little control over initial project stages (including planning and logistical)

Flow

Common project issues
- No communication control

No communication control = many people have direct client contact

Flow

Common project issues
- No central task management

No way to track when these features changed/added

Flow

Common project issues
- No discrete sequence of tasks

- There is no understanding of who is to do what, when
- Fallback to linear sequence

Flow

Result:
Multiple people pulled in to work overtime as communication deteriorates to panic

No way to track when these features changed/added

Flow

Key problems to fix:
Traffic control

Who is doing what, when, and who is being told to do it

Q&A

Ask 'em if you got 'em...

Who is doing what, when, and who is being told to do it