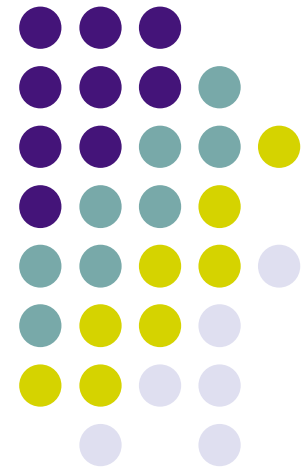# Managers - *What are they good for?*

Allan Kelly

ACCU Conference

April 2008

# Allan Kelly

- Ex-developer
  - BSc - Computing
- Manager
  - MBA - Management
  - Project Management
  - Product Management
- Sometime consultant
- Author
  - *Changing Software Development*
  - *Encapsulated Context* pattern

Changing Software
Development

LEARNING TO BECOME AGILE

Allan Kelly

# Fred Brooks says

"In many ways, managing a large computer programming project is like managing any other large undertaking - in more ways than most programmers believe.

But in many other ways it is different - in more ways than most professional managers expect."

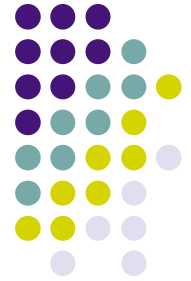Frederick P. Brooks, The Mythical Man Month 1975

# Fred Brooks

"Some readers have found it curious that *The Mythical Man Month* devotes most of the essays to the managerial aspects of software engineering, rather than the many technical issues. This bias ... sprang from [my] conviction that the quality of the people on a project, and their organization and management, are much more important factors in the success than are the tools they use or the technical approaches they take."

Frederick P. Brooks, The Mythical Man Month 1995

# Suffering managers

- Divide the audience

# Exercise 1

- Group exercise
  - Teams of managers, 3-4 people
  - Teams of developers, 3-4 people
  - Developers: make a list of things you don't like about managers
  - Managers: make a list of things you don't like about developers
- 5 minutes
- Compare and contrast

# Title inflation

- Too many people have *Manager* in their title
- What do they manager?
- Real managers now called *Director*

# Manager = Expert

- Title inflation - Makes things confusing
- Examples
  - 'Network Manager' -> Expert in network operations
  - 'Sales Manager' -> Expert in selling
  - 'User Interface Manager' -> Expert in UI design

# Types of Manager

- Software Development Manager
  - Catch all title
  - Does what?

# Types of Manager

- Project Manager
  - Manages the schedule?
  - Cracks the whip
  - Business Analyst in disguise
    - Training and attitude are different
  - Microsoft Project fetish?
  - Manage schedules or people?
- Programme Manager
  - Senior Project Manager
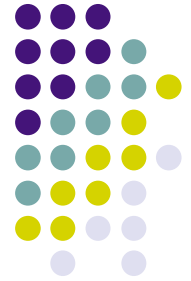  - But… Project != Programme

# Types of Manager

- Product Manager
  - Watches the market
  - Talk to customers
  - Decides what should be in project
  - Implement and influence business strategy
- Product Director
  - Manages Product Managers
  - Perhaps managed developers

# Types of Manager

- Build manager
  - Or build engineer?
- Test manager
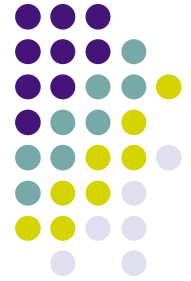  - Why is test separated from development?

# HR Manager & departments

- If HR Manager manages people…
  - … what do other managers manage?
- Need HR for: admin, legal, etc.
- Good HR is excellent, but…
  - 73% admit not the best to recruit IT people
  - 17% unable to identify IT qualifications

    (FT, 14 February 2007)
- New role: Technical <u>Personnel</u> Manager

# Other types of manager?

- Audience participation…

# Types of Manager

- Software Architect is a manager
  - Manages software design
  - Creates shared understanding of design
  - Examines future technologies
  - Interviews candidates
  - Helps develop technical skills

# Agile community don't help

- Coach
  - Project Manager?
  - Senior Developer?
  - Architect?
- Product Owner
  - Product Manager? Business Analyst?
  - Project Manager?
- Agile community scared of M-word?
  - Rename the roles

# Manager object

```
class SecurityManager : public Manager {
    public:
        SecurityManager();
        IsAllowed(const User&, const Access&);
        ReadDb();
        …
```

- In code *Manager* object implies poor understanding
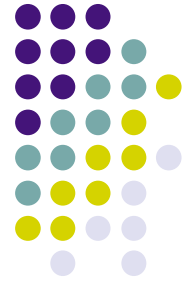- Is the same true in organizations?
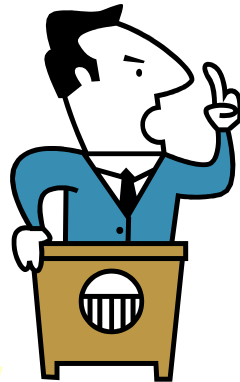
# Managers manage what?

# Exercise 2

- Same teams as before
- Developers
  - Make a list of what you want your managers to do
- Managers
  - Make a list of what you want to do
- 5 minutes
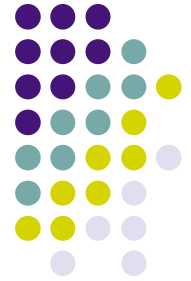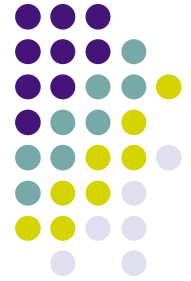- Compare and contrast

# What do managers do?

- Theory…

- Practice…

# What should managers do?

- No right or wrong answer
- Depends on your environment
- Here are some suggestions…

# Managers should…

- Help the team grow
  - In size
    - Recruit the right people
    - Team players, not solo virtuosos
  - In maturity
    - Arrange training & coaching
    - Facilitate collective learning
  - Help employees get the most from work
    - Learning, satisfaction, rewards

# Manager should…
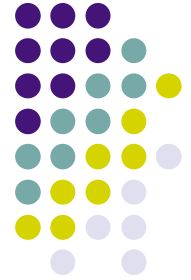
- Explain the company to the team
- Protect the team from the company
  - Firewall
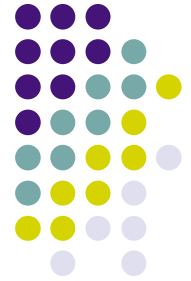- Feed back team opinions to company

# Manager should…

- Manage change
- Status quo doesn't need managing
- Delegate routine decisions

# Short-term / Long-term

- Short term goals: ship next month
- Long term goals: improve platform
- Pursue both goals
  - One eye on the now
  - One eye on the future

# Managers should…

- Spend time thinking
  - Work is often reactive
  - Make time to think
  - Take time away form the office, e.g. home
  - Think through: Why? What if? What would I do?
- Understand people
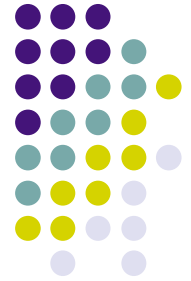  - Take time to listen to people
  - Ask

# Exercise 3

- Where do managers come from?
- Managers team
  - How do you get to be a manager?
  - Few minutes to think
- Developers team
  - How do you think your manager got to be a manager?

# IT is badly managed

- Management as an activity is not bad
  - But a lot of management is poor
- Cannot manage IT work like other work
  - But we can still learn from other work
  - No need to reinvent the wheel
- Lack of IT management qualifications
  - Japanese MOT: *Management of Technology*

# If you are an IT manager

- Concentrate on people
  - Keeping good people
  - Recruit good people
  - Help them learn and grow
  - They know the answers - *not you!*
- Take time to think
- Make an effort to educate HR

# If you want to be an IT manager

- Easier to teach management to developer
  - Than development to a manager
- Accept
  - Management is not evil
  - Pursuit of profit is not all bad
- Learn about
  - Business world
  - People

# Becoming a manager

- Need to stop coding
- Cannot do both jobs well
- Cannot jump in and fix it
- Identify change

# Thank you

allan kelly

http://allankellynet.blogspot.com

http://www.allankelly.net

*Changing Software Development*
Wiley, 2008