

# Notes For Conducting An **XP Change Readiness Assessment**



by Joshua Kerievsky

Duration: 2-4 days.

Goal: Discover if a team and organization can adopt XP and will benefit from such adoption

Deliverable: A document describing what you discovered.

## **Questions**

There are two vital questions to answer during the assessment:

1. Are people interested in change or willing to give it a try?
2. Will the organization allow for change?

You'll get the best answer by talking to the right people. Arrange to meet with *all* of the key players on a team – the programmers, customers (domain experts, QA staff, sales and marketing, technical support folks, documentation people) and management (especially executive management). During your meetings with each subgroup, introduce yourself and ask

- Why do you think I'm here doing this assessment?

Once you get past that one, you can begin asking non-threatening, technical questions like:

- Is Continuous Integration possible here?
- Do you have a Coding Standard?
- Who writes the tests for your code?
- Do you Refactor?
- How is database programming handled? Is there a central group that controls the database?
- Can you create test environments for your team? Do they have to be shared?
- How long does it take to do a build?
- How long does it take to run your tests?
- (add more questions here)

Take brief notes as you hear the answers to the above questions – some of them could point out serious challenges to implement XP.

Now ask whether the folks you're talking to know about the XP practices and values. Whether or not they say they do, give a brief summary of each practice, asking them how they feel about the practice and whether or not they feel the practice could be implemented in their organization.

Next, go deeper with your questioning, asking things like:

- How do you grow within your organization?
- How are you measured for performance reviews?
- Do you have a software process and if so, are there any problems with it?
- Are there any problems with your current code base?
- How does knowledge transfer happen in your organization? Is it even important?
- What do you know about the Agile Methodologies?
- When was the last time you left your comfort zone?
- (add more questions here)

Thank them for their time and move on to your meeting with the next group.

## **Tour**

At some point during your assessment, see if you can get a tour of the organization's building or working area, visiting the team(s) you'll be talking to. On your tour, ask questions about the environment – especially how willing people would be to change their environment and working within an open workspace.

## **Final Report**

Your final change readiness assessment report should be honest, clear and concise. It should contain the following items:

- An overall summary of the team's readiness to adopt each of the XP practices
- A list of which practices will be most challenging or impossible to adopt
- A list of the physical (environmental) hurdles, if any, that will stand in the way of doing XP

Complete the report by documenting your reason for suggesting that the organization proceed or not proceed with an exploration of XP.

## **Follow Up**

After submitting your change readiness assessment (which confirmed for you that the organization could substantially benefit from adopting XP and is capable of such adoption), you may suggest the following next steps:

- Choose a suitable XP Pilot Project – perhaps a project that is somewhere between being extremely important and not very important to the organization.
- Do a Project Charter & Release Planning
- Teach a 1-week intensive XP Workshop
- Provide x weeks/months of full- or part-time XP Coaching
- Perform a Project Retrospective on the XP Pilot