

Scott Sid 0:03

Welcome to the sunrise podcast powered by sunrise labs.

Hey, everyone, welcome to the sunrise podcast brought to you by sunrise labs. I'm your host, Scott Sid way look from a program managers perspective, part of a project success comes from team member commitment to the project and taking personal ownership. And that's what we're going to talk about today with Joe McCluskey is the program manager at sunrise labs. And Joe, I guess let's start with this define personal ownership when it comes to a project.

Joe McCluskey 0:39

So within a project, you have what's your task, and you have what you have to do to complete that task and deliverables. Personal ownership becomes that where you really feel involved and you take responsibility for, for your deliverables on personal ownership means that you really take pride in it and and you want to deliver the best you can on it.

Scott Sid 1:03

And that doesn't always come in some of these group projects per se, right? Because sometimes it's not always your individual thing. That's, that's it's a combined effort. So it might be hard to find that personal ownership.

Joe McCluskey 1:15

Yeah, it is. But then as you become a team, you realize that my individual contribution or my individual deliverable helps the team, you know, in the team builds upon that. So it's sort of like the building blocks, or the Legos, as you say, you're going to build a greater thing, a stronger bridge a, a better widget, when you combine all those personal ownership items that everybody brings to the team and delivers.

Scott Sid 1:42

So there's an approach that you've talked about before called the scrum approach. So explain kind of what that is, and why it's so valuable when you're, you're taking on a team task, like like what we're talking about.

Joe McCluskey 1:56

So there's the scrum, it has, it's been around in various forms, but it's very popular due to agile but, but it's a very strong tool that's used within teams, project work. And what it is, it's the people that are delivering the product or working on the product. Gather, usually as every morning, can be every other day. And basically you go around to the individual person on the eve say, Okay, this is what I worked on yesterday. That's what I'm gonna work on today, is there anything blocking me, but if when you expand on that, it becomes an interplay of, Okay, I'm working on this today to help this person, it gives the visibility to the person, everybody on the team, you know that that person's working on something that I'm going to need, or I'm working on something that he or she is going to need. So basically, the scrum is an exchange of that now, it's not supposed to be problem solving, it's really is just to let everybody know what, what I did, and what I'm going to do, and what may be in the way.

Scott Sid 3:00

So it's basically essentially just keeping your team members up to speed with what's going on.

Joe McCluskey 3:05

Exactly. But what it also does is, it's not just that it's a time that you can develop a relationship with your team members, it's a, it's a time where they're an interchange becomes important. It's a time where the personalities of the team members will come out and, and it's where you will have to do your best to try to manage that in a positive way, you know, each person has their own personality, each person will take on a point where they need to shine or where they want to sit back. And that's really, that team coalesce and into knowing each other and functioning,

Scott Sid 3:43

you seem to you're stressing the whole idea of selflessness and caring about the team members, it seems like an obvious thing. But why is that so important when you're when it comes to projects like this.

Joe McCluskey 3:55

So the projects are growing, they can be successful without it, but those that are more successful, and they're able to weather the storm of the ups and downs of product development are those where there's an appreciation, and there's an understanding of what is going on. And there's also a feeling of humanization to it, you know that I am part of this team and, and this team needs me. And there's that that is the ownership that we develop. And that is what pushes a project through. Now anybody can make a document and check a list. But it's that the dynamics of product development that needs or excels on a little bit more, whether there was personal ownership, there's stimulation, so to say to the team members,

Scott Sid 4:45

well, in the end, we're all humans, right? I think every human being likes being feeling important or feel like they're contributing or acknowledged in a group project. So I imagine, you know, just the human element when it comes to this is probably what we're talking about here is making sure everyone feels like they're equally contributing and being a part of the same idea.

Joe McCluskey 5:04

That's absolutely right. It is, in fact, the humanization. But also the tear, the truth is also the humanization of the project itself. It is seen as more than just me checking the box and delivering, it becomes something that I'm working on a bigger hole. And one thing I like to do is try to make the project more humanized. Either. There's some creative ways of doing that, if it's a pilot bill, personalize the name of the pilot project or or deliverable that you're, you're working on. Everybody can connect to a name, not so much when it's a list of, you know, x one y y, versus, you know, Freddie, that's a humanization to the project. With that humanization comes, okay, I'm working on something, quote, human, I have to be human too. And you get the larger like communal feeling. And I've seen teams actually develop, I wouldn't say overprotectiveness, but they really take pride in it and call it their baby.

Scott Sid 6:06

So get Can you give me an example, maybe of a time this has worked for you, just to kind of put it in perspective, because I think we're talking about something here, that makes a lot of sense. But maybe someone listening might not understand or know, see the results of how this works. Do you have an example of maybe a time you've seen this, you know, make a night and days difference?

Joe McCluskey 6:27

Sure. A matter of fact, we're working on a program at at sunrise, it's a piece of capital equipment. We inherited it from from another group, and they had gone down one path, and we decided to go down another and we were helping the client develop the project. At that point, they had a pilot build, and it was called alpha. And they were going to be working on beta. We decided at that point, or I decided with the team that it really was more than that. So we came up with a cute little name for it. I wouldn't be it would was known as a Wally basically. And everybody knows who Wally is. The little Disney Yeah,

Scott Sid 7:11

the robot Molly.

Joe McCluskey 7:13

Exactly. So now we have that. And so now we have something in our mind. The team now no longer calls it the alpha beta. But it's while he won, while he needs this while he's not doing well today. And

there is that connection to it now. So now we have the name of it. Well, you feel obligated when there's a name to something you feel ownership, you feel you have to do it right. Because it's named right that's that's fascinating.

Scott Sid 7:40

It's It's It's almost like you're playing a psychological game. You know, not not that sounds bad. It sounds like you're manipulating people. I don't mean it like that. But you're you're you're training your mind to take it more seriously, is that a good way to put it?

Joe McCluskey 7:55

I would call it that. That's right. tricks, maybe call tricks, but maybe encouragement and letting people think differently. No longer is it a checklist that I'm coming in at eight o'clock in the morning to work on this checklist. But it's coming in, I'm working on a tangible item that we have a plan for you know that we're going to celebrate its birthday, and it's going to go out there in the big world and save people's lives ultimately, is what a lot of products work on. So it really does put in that humanization call it a trick if you want. But it helps people make that connection to what ultimately we're going to deliver.

Scott Sid 8:35

Now reading up about your background and it says you're licensed you're a licensed agile Scrum Master, can you explain what agile is? So agile

Joe McCluskey 8:45

is a product development process. And we use a lot of that here. At sunrise, it's also used throughout the world, I would call it a buzzword Satan, sort of. It competes with a waterfall method. But basically it's a method of product development where you work in short sprints, you divide up the work and break it down into units that the team can work on the scrum meeting is where that team meets and Okay, we're working on this sprint, and there's short iterative cycles where you you continuously are working on the program and developing developing it. It lends itself very well to software. And we have developed the way at sunrise where we apply it to the mechanical and electrical aspect and develop those sprints where everybody's connected together. So what it is, it's an agile method, a quick method of developing outputs for the person that the owner to take a look at and give us feedback on

Scott Sid 9:49

and I imagine that makes it a large project feel a lot less daunting when you break it into what you call short sprints and as opposed to a long marathon.

Joe McCluskey 9:58

Alright and that that is key to the development of, particularly like I was saying that the capital equipment, you're looking at longer timeframes, you know, frankly, that they're a year or more. And you have, you have to break it down into tangible bites, you know, the journey of 1000 miles starts with the first step. So that's really what you have to do. And you have to make sure the team realizes that that they're, you know, we're not going to get that breakthrough, that's going to move us three months ahead. If you do great, but more than likely, you're not. So you have to do these these iterative steps. One good thing you can do with a team and I'm what I like to do is, when you're first starting that that journey, it's always good. If the team can have success in you should celebrate that. But I wouldn't say you set them up for an easy victory. But once you have that first, okay, we really did something here, that really does encourage the team that makes them more tuned, you're a little bit wider awake?

Scott Sid 11:03

Yeah, I think we all respond positively. When we accomplish something, even if it's a small step into a process. It's like, it's like a toddler learning to walk, you know, they don't take that first step successfully. But then they take one, and then they, oh, I could do this, you know, they take another step, and then they fail. And then they take a few more steps. And then gradually, it becomes an

achievable task. I did not compare a project to toddlers. But I think just as from a human perspective, that having those successes, it really matters.

Joe McCluskey 11:32

Well, yeah. And you're absolutely right, the anthology actually does fit with product development, there's going to be the learning curve, you know, as with a toddler, they make mistakes, teams make mistakes, nobody's perfect. It's how you deal with that mistakes that make you as a stronger person, or the toddler, you know, eventually they will learn to walk through persistence. Now, whether they learn to walk with a smile on their face, or whether they're crying, it really depends. But but it is, you're absolutely right. It is sort of like being a toddler and taking that first step. So you get that first one. And, and we've all seen that. Same with riding a bike, that's miles great, right? That's in fashion, right? And it just spreads.

Scott Sid 12:15

Yeah, and we're talking a lot about, you know, team spirit here and making sure everyone's on the same page and feeling like they're all part of this, I'll leave you with this is sometimes, you know, we're, again, we're human beings. And sometimes human beings naturally don't get along, you know, based off of personality types, or this, that whatever. So, you've kind of described why this method works. But what are the best ways to organically create that if it may be is, you know, a group of people that don't necessarily like each other, is there a good organic way to make that team spirit, you know, flourish.

Joe McCluskey 12:54

So there's always the team chemistry and your goal is going to end up you know, work, like you said, we're humans. Each one of us is different and unique. Part of the role of Scrum masters is to understand that the personalities and come up with ways to to make sure that they're heard or make sure that they're, they're valued, make sure there's not one person taking over make sure that the person in the back of the room, His voice is heard, because a lot of times, they have a lot to say, they're just not given the opportunity. So what it requires in particularly in the scrum, but really in the team, gentlemen meetings, and everything would be the act of management of those personalities. Again, within within a project, everybody on the team has a deliverable. And everybody at some point needs to be the center or the what they have is the center of, of the project, where you have to do is make everybody aware that everybody is contributing, and then everybody's going to have time, everybody's going to have that time to be on stage. Not everybody likes to be on the stage. So therefore, you have to come up with the encouragement behind them or group that helps help say that, okay, this person delivered this or great job. It really is that self and couraging of the team that that has to take over. And like I said, not everybody is going to always get along. That's where you have to play the dynamics, you have to make sure that everybody sees the big picture. There are tricks you can I wouldn't call them tricks, but there's opportunities to spend time together outside of work, or within work. Have somebody do a presentation on something they like. The Scrum can be about crocheting or something like that. And the off time that people have just so they understand, everybody has interest. Everybody does something different. But we're all together.

Scott Sid 14:49

And in your experience, how much of a difference does this make when the project is complete, just in terms of how good the final result and how everybody feels about it.

Joe McCluskey 14:58

So that's why Again, the humanization aspect of it, I come to that a lot here. You're proud, you know, your baby's been born, everybody will sit back and laugh at the struggles that we've had, they have a personal connection to it. You know, remember when I did this, remember that it makes it stronger in your mind, what you did and the feeling of accomplishment. And again, you have to celebrate some of the failures you had to and that that's important too. And there's nothing like a good lessons learned. What do we do wrong? What can we do to improve? That's always important, too. So I always like it

when Oh, remember when we did this, however, look, what we ended up with isn't that great. So you have that connection, in the fact that Yep, I worked hard on this. So did this person so that that person, you follow it, you tend you tend to follow that product. Once it's left the dock and sailed off, you'll be falling in it forever, you have a vested interest in it,

Scott Sid 16:00  
and then everybody wins.

Joe McCluskey 16:02  
Abs. Absolutely. And that's one of the keys everybody wins on. In, in our method to hear our clients are actually embedded in our scrims too. So it's very important to remember that the clients are active parts in this too. And what's great about the way we run the scrum, and one of my things I like to do is to make sure that we get rid of the pronoun day and change it to we so it's not this company doing this for us. But it's we we are working together on that, you know, we are extending the bench of their, their team, we're all on the same page. And that's where it's not just a strong team dynamic that you develop within your team developing it, it's with the client as well. There's a strong connection there. That to the point that oftentimes I'll say, I kind of think you guys is as my team, also, as my company. Also, I have a hard time telling the difference. And I find myself telling other people about oh, this person did this, and then realize no net person work for sunrise,

Scott Sid 17:07  
but I feel like they work for me. It's all those little things, man. All those little things really make a difference.

So how does this apply to sunrise? You know, you've obviously you've said you've seen this work before, but how does it fall in line with with the company work? Yeah,

Joe McCluskey 17:23  
so one of the key tenants at sunrise is the belief that you always should have positive intent. And you should believe that the person that you're working with, they have the best intent meant they're always positive in it, nobody's negative. And so therefore, when you're working with them, you're not thinking, Oh, why did you do that? I was like, No, they were trying to help. You have to go in with that mindset. Okay, they were trying to help. Let's see, can you explain to me what it was? Oh, that's great. No, I understand. So that really is one of the tenants here. As well as Speaker mind, let the person know. It's always face forward. That makes a stronger team when everybody feels that they're valued, that they're viewed as moving forward or trying to move forward. Though, there's no I don't want to be talking in the scrum today. I made a mistake, or afraid that's when you don't want to come to work. Right, you know, oh, I messed up on and then what happens is you folks that won't take that chance and like, I think if we did this, No, you know what, I'm not gonna do that because I might be wrong and they're going to get mad at me. So that's what's kind of unique about sunrise. It's one it's a very positive intent, focus place. It's where we, we encourage everybody to talk and everybody's always working hard towards the right goal.

Scott Sid 18:52  
Alright, Joe, great stuff as always, and don't forget you can hear more episodes of the sunrise podcast by searching for us on iTunes or Spotify. Please don't hesitate to check us out. Download subscribe, all that good stuff. That'll do it for this episode for Joe McCluskey and sunrise labs. I'm your host Scott segway. This has been the sunrise podcast.