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Project Retrospectives: A Handbook For Team Reviews (Dorset House EBooks)

Project Retrospectives

A HANDBOOK FOR TEAM REVIEWS

THINK

NORMAN L. KERTH

foreword by GERALD M. WEINBERG

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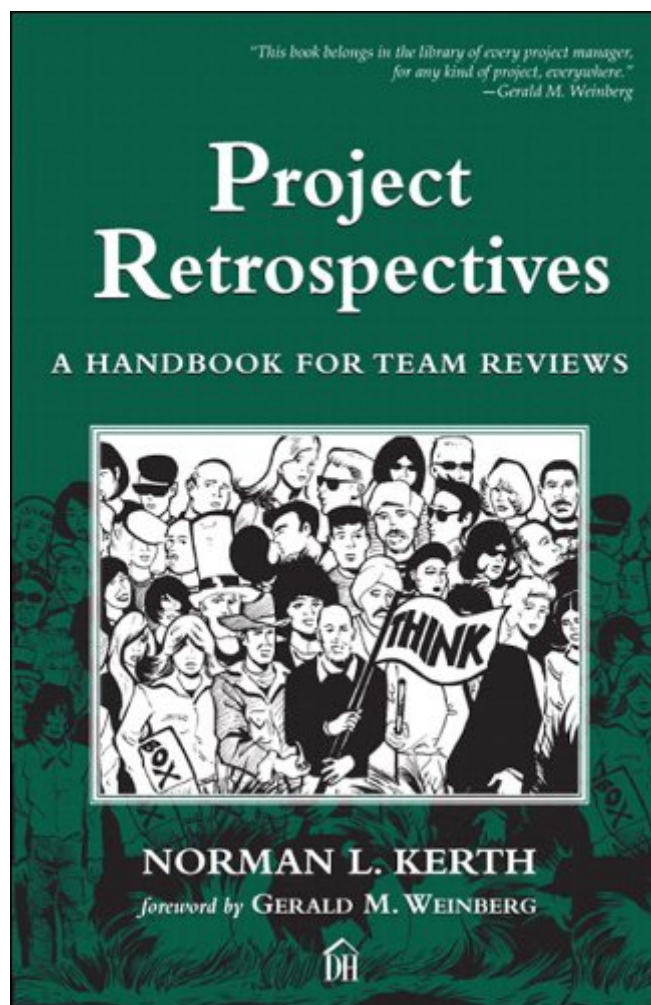
Synopsis

This is the digital copy of the printed booik (Copyright © 2001). With detailed scenarios, imaginative illustrations, and step-by-step instructions, consultant and speaker Norman L. Kerth guides readers through productive, empowering retrospectives of project performance. Whether your shop calls them postmortems or postpartums or something else, project retrospectives offer organizations a formal method for preserving the valuable lessons learned from the successes and failures of every project. These lessons and the changes identified by the community will foster stronger teams and savings on subsequent efforts. For a retrospective to be effective and successful, though, it needs to be safe. Kerth shows facilitators and participants how to defeat the fear of retribution and establish an air of mutual trust. One tool is Kerth's Prime Directive: Regardless of what we discover, we must understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job he or she could, given what was known at the time, his or her skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand. Applying years of experience as a project retrospective facilitator for software organizations, Kerth reveals his secrets for managing the sensitive, often emotionally charged issues that arise as teams relive and learn from each project. Â

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Customer Reviews

Anybody thinking seriously about management should work on introducing retrospectives in their organizations. Without a retrospective, a large body of knowledge in which the organization has already invested throughout the project goes down the drain. Project Retrospectives covers the background material you need to know to understand the mechanics, provides a comprehensive set of exercises for leading a retrospective or a postmortem, and tells you how to become a skilled facilitator.The first part of the book explains the need for ritual, how to tailor a retrospective to various situations, how to make a business case for having a retrospective, and how prepare for it. The case study Norm presents in the second chapter (Anatomy of a Retrospective) provides a holistic picture of the things to follow. The third and fourth chapters tell you how to tailor retrospectives to particular projects (Engineering a Retrospective: Making Choices) and how to talk groups who are interested in improving their processes into having a retrospective (Selling a Retrospective). These are important topics which determine if the people will be given the opportunity to learn from their own experience, and how to focus on the things that will make the retrospective effective. Chapter 5 (Preparing for a Retrospective) covers the groundwork required to have the facts and information for the retrospective, from initiating contact with the managers to arriving at the site. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses a wide array of exercises for the retrospective. Norm presents each exercise in a way that makes it easy to decide whether it is appropriate for a particular project. The pattern includes (among others): Purpose, When to use, Duration, Procedure, Background and theory, and References for further reading.

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