About Me

Katrina Novakovic
Business Architect
Red Hat EMEA Office of Technology

Works with organisations to strategically use Open Source software and methodologies and to establish communities.

Passionate about sharing best practices around the people, process and cultural aspects of Open Source.

linkedin.com/in/katrina-novakovic/

@KatNovakovic
Agenda

01
What is a distributed team?

02
Common challenges distributed teams face

03
Applying Open Source principles

@KatNovakovic
What is a distributed team?

Different Office

Home

Outsourced Company

Same or Different Country
Common Challenges Distributed Teams Face

- Productivity
- Changing Priorities
- Goals
- Technical Connectivity
- Shared Environments
- (Mis)Communication
- Knowledge Sharing
- Transparency / Visibility
- Accessibility
- Silos
- Accountability
- Culture + Language
- Control
- Isolation
- Balance + Burnout

@KatNovakovic
“People are looking for solutions without asking, why do I have the problem in the first place?”

Peter Crone
A group of people form certain **Mindsets, behaviours, habits and values**, which influence how we act, including how we communicate and collaborate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values of Open source Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Automation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Meritocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Open Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Release Early &amp; Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Types of Communication

**Synchronous**
- Real-time, immediate response
  - Eg. phone/video call & face-to-face
- For complex discussions & socialising
- Quick feedback
- Constant interruptions
- Hard to focus & context switching

**Asynchronous**
- Non-real-time, intermittent response
  - Eg. email & GoogleDoc comments
- Control when communicate
- Thoughtful & high quality (vs reactive)
- Misinterpretation

@KatNovakovic
TIMEZONES

- 40 timezones [1]
- Is there bias toward one time zone? Is it causing an issue?
  - Change or rotate meeting times
  - Host several meeting at different times/dates
  - Seek input prior to meeting & record meetings
- Plan ahead & avoid single point of failures
  - It's an issue when something is needed now and the people who can help aren't available

[1] https://forbrains.co.uk/international_tools/earth_timezones
Wellbeing and Inclusion

Isolation

Burnout
Wellbeing and Inclusion

Is SYNCHRONOUS working necessary?
Share your online calendar. Set your working hours and indicate when you’re busy and available.

Isolation  Burnout
Community - Do You Know Everyone?

Org Chart
- Name
- Job role
- Expertise
- Location / timezone / working hours

Personal
- Hobbies
- Pets
- Holiday plans
- Workplace setup

Goals
- Common
- Shared Purpose
- Individual Goals

Socialise
- Virtual coffee break
- Book club
- 30 day fitness challenge

@KatNovakovic
Video Calls

**Benefits**
- Explain purpose & benefits
  - Friendlier
  - Builds connection
  - Interaction
  - Observe body language

**Comfort**
- Ask in advance for a specific call
  - Eg. first 15 mins
- On is preferred
- Consider circumstances

**Colocation + Remote**
- Everyone dial in & use own equipment?
  - Depends
  - Are there any issues?

@KatNovakovic
Over Communicate

**Document**
Share drafts (not just final version)

**Details + Context**
Don't assume

**Regular Updates**
Know people's workloads

**Set Expectations**
Provide deadlines & response times to ensure progress

**Self-Service**
Know where to look

**Structure**
Eg. meeting agenda & outcome

@KatNovakovic
TRANSPARENCY

**Decision Making**
- Clarify how decisions are made
- When to seek input
- Document along the way
- Trust the decision

Open Decision Framework: opensource.com/open-organization/resources/open-decision-framework

**Meritocracy & Career Development**
- Participate
- Share input
- Seek input
- Let others know of your ambitions

@KatNovakovic
How to Implement Changes
- Fail Fast Culture

**Safety**
- Blame free environment
- No fear of negative consequences

**Structure**
- Ways to improve

**Mindset**
- Perceive failure as fine-tuning

**Just Start**
- Work in iterations
- Fail fast & fail small

@KatNovakovic
THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

linkedin.com/in/katrina-novakovic/

@KatNovakovic