

Agile Management

Leadership in an Agile Environment

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Preface

This book is based on my own experience while working with companies as an external Agile consultant. I have been helping all kinds of companies, from 12 to 500 employees, to successfully implement Agile frameworks, and I have trained several thousands of managers and developers on topics like Scrum, Kanban, Agile management, team coaching or change management. Client profiles include telco, banking, videogames, software factories, mobile applications, government, logistics, retail, dot-coms, on-line services, start-ups or media companies. Although I have met really skeptical people, I have never been at a place where I thought ‘It’s impossible to be Agile here’. That is why I ask you to be open-minded through the reading of this book: remember that the mind is like a parachute; it only works when it is open.

Nevertheless, most of my Agile ‘book of tricks’ is based on other people’s research, books, blogs and other forms of work that I have studied and used myself. I have tried to give credit to all of them, although this may not be always possible, as sometimes I cannot distinguish between my own ideas and the ones I am borrowing from somebody else. Innovation, I believe, is achieved by constant re-combination of ideas, so I just hope I introduce some new approaches to the field of Agile management by combining the several sources I usually integrate on my daily practice. If all I end up with is a list of interesting resources, I really hope I can save you some time and guide you to the useful ones.

This book is aimed at Agile managers, team leaders, change agents, evangelists and anyone trying to push Agile further in his or her organization. Enterprise agility and general resistance to change, both by management and the organization as a whole, are recurrent memes in the Agile community, and I hope to trigger interesting conversations on how to move Agile out of the team’s environment and to the whole system, thus building better companies to work in.

As this is a book about Agile from a management perspective, it has a strong bias to software development – remember that the word Agile comes

from the Manifesto for Agile *Software* Development. Anyway, the methods described are suitable and useful for any company that relies on the talent of their employees and operates on a complex and changing environment. But this is not a book about Agile or Lean. I will dedicate a whole chapter to introduce some basics about these frameworks and recommend a comprehensive list of great resources for readers who want to learn about them. Again, you do not need to be a Lean or Agile expert – or even want to implement Agile at your organization to obtain some benefit from the many ideas proposed in this book.

Management is a fuzzy area. I have tried to be as practical as possible and propose actual things you can try at your workplace, but of course a 5-person start-up will not need the same tools or practices as a Fortune 500. It is up to you to decide how to use the numerous principles enlisted in this book to better suit your environment.

Overall, if you want to change the way you manage, you have to change your paradigm set of what management is about. From an Agile perspective, we have learned that management is not about deciding on your own, telling people what to do and then supervising and controlling them until they achieve the desired results. We live in a different world from the one that most of the management experts of the twentieth century experienced, and companies that strive for success and excellence will need a new kind of managers.

Agile Managers