Title: Make the agile transition work! And what HR can do to support it…

Keywords: HR, tools**,** processes, collaboration, leadership, teamwork, management, collaboration, leadership, teamwork, self-organization, management, personal-responsibility-process, self-management,

Abstract:

During an agile transition the change of mindset, leadership behavior and the shift of responsibilities to many are key elements. Usually a company would work very hard on delivering this message, training people and make sure, they understand this new philosophy. But when it comes to daily business, the employee needs to see structural and process changes, too, to receive guidance and boundaries. Furthermore, they need to see that the agile transition is something that not only takes place in mindset but also happens in reality. He needs to feel safe when acting based on the new philosophy. Feeling safe is something that they will only experience when the new definitions, rules, guidelines and boundaries are also made explicit. Quite often those structural and more tangible changes will only follow after a while. During this period confusions and fallback into old habits may arise.

And here the contribution from HR can and needs to start! Become involved and proactive: Understand what agile transition means and immediately start changing old systems and processes. Develop and offer new tools whenever needed to support the new way of working and thinking. Emphasize the wanted behavior and work methodology in guiding the teams through three stages with your new tools.

The speech will describe the benefit of the listed three phases and concrete tools and guidance on how to implement them:

1. **Sharing (feedback) is caring**
    a. Throw away your old manager – employee dialogues
    b. Implement team feedback
    c. Let the teams do their feedback dialogues themselves
        ✓ Team feedback for social competencies
        ✓ Team feedback for technical and skill competencies
    Learn how to and helpful tools

2. **Reduce hierarchical thinking**
    a. Throw away processes that the manager usually owned
    b. Let the team take ownership
    c. Implement team review and team approval processes
        ✓ Vacation planning
        ✓ Team training budget
        ✓ Recruiting and onboarding new employees through the team
    Learn how to and helpful tools

3. **Break with old (or common) rules**
    a. Throw away old processes for salary raises/adjustments
    b. Standardize and objectify salary adjustments procedures
    c. Build them on team feedback and benchmark reviews
        ✓ Team Bonus
        ✓ Merit Money
    Learn how to and helpful tools

Learning Outcomes:

This session is about new systems and processes HR should set up and why they will make a difference. I will explain how you can introduce them step by step and what needs to be considered, based on my experiences.

- At the end the audience should feel value through my report as
  - they have learnt new tools that can be useful for self-managed teams
  - they will include HR into the agile transition and see value in doing so
  - they have learnt that the sooner you change systems, structures and processes, the better and faster the transition will become

Information for Program Team:

This experience report is for people who are interested in the other side of agile transition. How should/could other departments - and in this particular case HR – contribute with their expertise and knowledge to the agile transition and create a real value.

- My session is based on my experiences. This is why I will explain the setting in which I was working. Not all settings and neither are all companies the same
- It is my goal to share real examples so that others can take them away, adjust them to their organization, enhance them or just copy them

How the session will be conducted

- The session starts off with a little exercise on different leadership experiences
- Short theory about why high performing teams should better manage themselves
- Guidance through and explanation of the through the three phases
- The Good, the Bad & the Ugly or - What you really need to consider during implementation

As this is about sharing experiences and help others, it will take me ~ 45 min to deliver my content. The other ~ 30 min is planned for discussions and questions from the audience.

Information about the Experience:

I worked as Global Director of HR at a company that decided to transform their classical working technology teams into agile working and cross-functional business teams. During this transition the CTO decided to take out all manager roles of the newly set up teams. No hierarchical thinking should prevent them from becoming innovative and driving the right decisions. During that time, I became a member of the transition team and learnt a lot about the agile mindset and what needed to be changed regarding our classic set up management systems and how our HR tools would usually work. So I started to invent new tools that helped to solve our problems. I worked parallel to the transition on new processes. I derived my experiences of daily business and in close collaboration with the teams and the Scrum Masters. Whenever we found something not working anymore, we gathered and discussed new ways and ideas.

We as HR wanted to take part in the change process, contribute and create value during this transition. So we came up with different new systems and tools that would not need

manager approval anymore (as our teams didn´t have a manager anymore). Instead we empowered the teams, trained them and helped them to take over more and more responsibilities. This way we contributed to creating transparency, increased collaboration, implemented a new feedback culture but also ensured compliant HR processes for the organization.

As it all started, I tried to research about HR experiences and best practices with agile transitions and found – nothing! Almost everything you will find is from the point of view of an agile coach, team, scrum master or people who are directly involved and affected by the transition. Whenever I went to scrum tables or other agile unconferences/conferences, I almost never met other HR people. I found this kind of scary and this experience frustrated me. Without best practices experience or any further information, I needed to learn everything myself together with the teams. To help others having it easier – especially in the HR departments - and to motivate others to include HR as soon as possible - I would like to share my knowledge and experiences today.

Presentation History:

I shared my insights and best practice experiences in a slightly different format on two other conferences:
- Agile HR Conference 2016, Cologne https://hr-pioneers.com/hrpevent/agile-hr-conference-2016/
- PEp - Personalentwicklung pur, Vienna http://businesscircle.at/human-resources/konferenz/pep-personalentwicklung-pur

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