Teal Enough: Tales from a small company trying to grow, retain culture and be agile

#TealPOPS

Bob Payne
@AgileToolkit
#AgileDC

Amanda Geary
@MGWhoNo1Follows
About Me

Bob Payne

• Change Agent
• Experience: 25 years industry, 18+ years of Agile/Lean
• Specialties: Agile, Lean, Innovation
• Practitioner, consultant, trainer, author, speaker and community organizer
• Host AgileToolkit Podcast
• AgileDC is October 15th this year!
• @AgileToolkit
About Me

Amanda Geary

• Joined LitheSpeed in 2012 to test Sensei, our retrospective tool
• And then I began...
  • Helping with Finance shortly after...
  • Coordinating LitheSpeed events in 2014
  • Leading Operations team in 2016
  • Co-leading the training practice in 2017
  • Thinking about People Operations in 2018
• On my days off I lead a school garden curriculum program
• @MGWhoNo1Follows
LitheSpeed's mission is to make peoples’ work more productive, valued and fulfilling
Morningstar Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvs_pgpykmc
## Laloux’s Organizational Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Key Breakthroughs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEAL</td>
<td>Self Management, Wholeness, Evolutionary Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolutionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>Empowerment, Value Driven Culture, Stakeholder Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Driven Organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>Innovation, Accountability, Meritocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Corporations, Charter Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>Formal Roles, Hierarchies, Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governments, Churches, Public Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>Division of Labor, Command Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs, Mafias, Mercenaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laloux Model from *Reinventing Organizations*, Image from Philippe Bailleur
“Your system is perfectly designed to give you the results you’re getting.”

-W.E. Deming
We are changing the system
Employees Want…. 

• To be appreciated
• Opportunities to grow
• A workplace that has integrity
• Trust and respect
• Freedom (not micromanagement)

• Easy right? We thought so…..
Because of LitheSpeed’s Teal Culture We Have:

- Open workspace
- Flexible work hours
- Flexible vacation
- Autonomy in consulting style with clients (w/transparency)
- Profit Share, Founders Bonus
- Widespread decision making ability
- Ability to grow your personal brand/abilities
New Organizing Principles for our “New” Teal

**Wholeness**: Yes we are individuals, but we are also part of a larger community. Need to integrate both the needs of the self and the needs of the group.

**Distributed Decision Making**: Decisions do not come from the top, but they aren’t made by individuals in isolation either. We need multiple inputs into our decisions (advice process).

**Fiscal responsibility**: Work on providing Slack/flexible off time with billability in mind.
Self Management

Giving Voice to the Organization and People... but what does that mean?
Self Management

As members of a small Teal organization without strong job boundaries and it is critical that individuals collaborate in good faith and take on responsibilities and work that may be outside our comfort zone.

This is a difficult transition since it requires people to take responsibility for aspects of the work that have usually been someone else's responsibility.

We want partners not employees.

“Autonomy without Accountability is just vacation.”

- Kent Beck
Teal Responsibilities: Increasing Brand Recognition

• Attending Meetups
• Speaking at conferences
• Podcasting
• Writing blogs, articles and presenting webinars
• Collaboration with industry players (Agile Alliance, SAFe, Scrum Alliance, Scrum at Scale etc)
Teal Responsibilities: Growing Knowledge Base

- **Staying abreast** of the latest relevant trends
- Growing / maintaining **thought leadership**
- **Sharing knowledge**, tools, and experience with others
- Mentoring Colleagues and Clients
Teal Responsibilities: Contribution to Company Culture

- Adhering to and **manifesting Teal** in all of our interactions and with our conduct
- **Professionalism in our interactions** with clients, partners, and each other
- **Helpful and respectful** to each other
- **Contribution across the entire value chain** from sales, to delivery, to operational support
Mentoring vs Managing

Mentoring Vs Managing
We are moving to a peer to peer based structure for self management based on the Morningstar Colleague Letter of Understanding (CLOU). People work with a Mentor to craft the CLOU and periodically review with whole company. Lists all people that the person is working with and their explicit decision authority. Goal – Self Management and Transparency

Delegated Authority
Decision Authority
Advisement From _____
Advisement from Founders
Direction and advisement from ___
Decisions, Conflict

Distributed Decision Making
We use the Advisement Process within the organization. You can make any decision as long as you have sought advice from anyone that will be affected.

We have instituted a Decision Log to try to capture decisions over time to improve our organizational and individual decision making.

Conflict Resolution
We are not your parents, Work it out or ask for help. We have an internal policy of asking people to give direct feedback and not channel through the founders or People Operations.
Holistic Agile Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Designer</th>
<th>Learner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trusted Advisor</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Manager</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master Craftsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dynamic Facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FRONT STAGE

- Manage Client Accounts
- Hire/Transition
- Grow Skills
- Mentor People
- Manage Finance
- Clean the Sink if Needed
- Schedule Trainings and Subs

BACK STAGE

- Pitch In with Operations
- Give Honest Feedback
- Sell Work For Others
- Contribute to company culture

LitheSpeed Culture & Values

- Superior Agile Expertise
- Professional
- Self Management
- Responsive
- TRANSPARENT
- Respectful
- FUN
- Nimbly
- Innovative
- Open
- Evolving
- Shared

Holistic Agile Consultant
Organizational Structure
Take 1: Self Organizing Units

Tribe Structure

We began using self organizing tribes as our internal structure. They were a mix of delivery and operations. Collaboration between tribes was needed to get things done. Minimum 3 people and a mix of delivery and operations was needed for each tribe.
Take 2: Welcome to Flatland

• No titles

• Self management

• Financial transparency

• Open salary ranges

Source: Valve Employee Handbook
Take 3: Practices and Experiences

Our latest experiment is focused around aligning our organizational structure around Customer Experiences and Practices. This has simplified communication and decision making.

• Experiences
  • Lithespeed
  • Customer
  • Partner
  • Brand

• Practices
  • Training
  • Government
  • Digital Transformation
Common themes?

• Governance
  • Each Tribe decided how it would run internally.
  • Each Practice/Experience has a Practice Lead or Leads.

• Leadership
  • If no true leader emerged, tribes struggled.
  • For Practices and Experiences, leadership is usually nominated and supported by Founders, but not always. Most decisions can be made locally with Advisement. Leadership is expected to be handed off.

• Two Feet
  • Anyone could move to another tribe or start their own.
  • People work with practices and participate in them based on their interests and the type of work they are interested in. Fluidity in practice participation is the norm.
People Operations
Hiring/Firing, Advancement, Peer to Peer Feedback/Reviews
Creation of People Operations

• Not HR
• What is the appropriate balance between leadership, management and individual autonomy at LS?
• How do we create a healthy company culture?
People Operations: Hiring

We believe that **Hiring** is the most important thing we can do. We understand that Great People will do great things and bad fit people will kill morale, cause drama and cost money. Founders are asked but do not override decisions. **Employees Hire** but we need to go to founders for **Salary**.

- Interviews
- Skills Demonstration
- Mentor and Shephard Roles

“Your purpose in life is to find your purpose, and then give your whole heart and soul to it.”
- Buddha
Peer Onboarding

“Leadership is earned through trust, communication and respect”

Doug Kirkpatrick
Morningstar
Help from Menlo Innovations

• Lets get on the same page!
• New hires and consultants on the bench will be pairing
  • Training, consulting but also...
  • Back office:
    • Scheduling,
    • Sales,
    • Financial analysis
Feedback: Recognition

Recognized@LitheSpeed.com

- We are expected to seek/give immediate feedback.
- People can give recognition at any time for great work
- Acts as a micro-bonus when we have profit share
Constructive Feedback

• We have experimented with giving/receiving constructive feedback
  • Surveys
    • Personal Feedback Radar: This worked for a while but employees tired of the time it took to fill out
    • OfficeVibe: Quick, easy but anonymous so follow up is not possible
  • Face 2 Face
    • We struggled to get anything other than sunshine and rainbows
    • We are experimenting and working on getting this right.
• Focus on Improvement
• Promote Radical Candor
• Decouple from firing and advancement
Advancement
- Focus on raising capabilities and understanding desired growth trajectory
- Work with mentors on ways of advancing in career
- Raises and promotions are still driven by leadership

Parting Ways
- Improvement plans when needed
- Part Ways (Us and Them)
  - Subcontractor conversion
  - Package Out
  - Fire when Needed
Company Culture

• Blue boxes
• Gratitude every hour
• All hands celebrations
  • Friendsgiving
  • Birthdays
  • Chinese new year
Financial Transparency and Managing the Business
Teal Responsibilities: Individual Financial Contribution

- **Personal billability** through training, consulting and/or coaching delivery
- **Sales leadership**, making client contacts, following through & closing on sales
- **Client growth**, expanding footprint at client sites
- **Customer service** and engagement
- **Billing, invoicing, expense management**

* This has been perceived as **Orange**.
Open Financials

We are moving to transparent financials across the company
• Open Books
• Open Billability
• Open Profit
• Open Profit Share
• Open Salary Ranges (Sort of)
Innovation, Sustainment

Innovation
Innovation is crucial to keep our products fresh and to achieve our Evolutionary purpose. Our newest experiment is called Micro Innovation. Any experiment needs some level of advisement and support from others.

Sustainment
We struggle try to balance innovation with sustainment. If we don’t keep the lights on we lose the game.
Contact Us

Bob Payne
LitheSpeeder
Bob.Payne@lithespeed.com
@agiletoolkit

Amanda Geary
Finance and People Operations
Amanda.Geary@lithespeed.com

www.lithespeed.com
Resources


• TedX, Beyond empowerment - are we ready for the self-managed organization? Doug Kirkpatrick at TEDxChico: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ej4n3w4kMa4

• The Future of Management is Teal: https://www.strategy-business.com/article/00344?gko=10921

• Work Rules: Laszlo Bock

• Radical Candor: Kim Scott

• This is How Effective Leaders Move Beyond Blame: http://firstround.com/review/this-is-how-effective-leaders-move-beyond-blame/