Secret ingredients of sustainable Agile transformations

Lightning talk for transformation leaders

Piotr Trojanowski
Piotr.Trojanowski@gmail.com
Enterprise Agile Coach

Lightning talk, AgileAlliance 2019,
Washington, Aug 7th 2019

DISCLAIMER

The content of this lightning talk represents in its entirety my personal views based on what I experienced and observed during my whole professional career as well as is rooted in broad legacy knowledge of global Agile community.
We understand the strengths & weaknesses of Agile while adoption encounters significant obstacles.
**Systemic residual constraints** of Orange organizations that Agile Transformation cannot remove

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evolutionary level of Orange</th>
<th>Evolutionary level of Teal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Your company is a machine</td>
<td>• Your company is a living organism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It needs management as its central brain</td>
<td>• It can self-manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Performance is key</td>
<td>• Wholeness is key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are here to provide highest ROI to investors</td>
<td>• Evolutionary purpose is a reason for investment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operational obstacles can be removed by switching focus of Agile Transformations to Being Agile

Follow the herd – Doing Agile

Following the herd is tempting!
→ given where Agile is in terms of its maturity and market adoption
→ while creates a risk of introducing Cargo Cult based on generic solutions that do not fit your specific case

Courage to explore alternatives – Being Agile

Courage to explore alternatives contributes to switching to Agile intrapreneurial mindset as it:
→ challenges blueprints
→ invites employees to co-author
→ establishes a Design Thinking like process for discussing the WHAT & HOW questions.
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow the herd</th>
<th>Courage to explore alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start with a negative motivation</td>
<td>Start with defining aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise your employees</td>
<td>Invite employees from day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install Agile top-down as a gift to your employees.</td>
<td>Collaborate on the ways of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achieving the desired future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing goals with tasks</td>
<td>Focus on delighters while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>keeping hygiene under control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk, sell, try to change others</td>
<td>Define direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hide in your room</td>
<td>Role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send employees to training programs</td>
<td>Learning comes form doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short iterations of cross-functional teams with end-2-end responsibility</td>
<td>Design flow to work based on Value Chain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

Follow the herd

Start with a negative motivation

▪ “Escape from…” mental framework

▪ Current problems, e.g.
  — EBITDA
  — Legacy IT systems
  — Work efficiency
  — …

Courage to explore alternatives

Start with defining aspiration

▪ “Aspiration for…” mental framework

  — Frame of desired future state
  — Answer the WHY and WHAT questions with clarity
  — What will be possible in my desired future state?
Surprise your employees

- By surprising employees you:
  - lose creditability & trust
  - introduce trauma, fear and chaos
  - lose time
    - for upfront planning
    - for employees to go through the change

- Imagine your employees would surprise you with an unexpected change!

Invite employees from day 1

- Introduce dialogue
- Build trust
- Invite to co-author
- Avoid disruptions
- Protect what works well
- Apologize for poor management practices in past

Rule of Thumb:

*Agile Transformation needs to be your first Agile endeavor!*
Agile transformations achieve sustainable change in visible behaviours by rebuilding invisible principles, values and mindsets.
The Leader’s dilemma:

*If you want to go fast – go by yourself, if you want to get far – go together*

**Total Enrolment Time = Decision Time + Alignment Time**

Legend:

- **Decision making time**
- **Aligning time**
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

Follow the herd

Install Agile top-down as a gift to employees

- You answered the wrong question! HOW.
- You ask to implement your solution
- Agile transformation is not a project

Courage to explore alternatives

Collaborate on how to achieve desired future state

- Define clear WHAT and delegate the HOW question
- Build environment with more degrees of freedom and
- Empower intrapreneurship

Rule of Thumb:

*Agile Transformation needs to be your first Agile endeavor!*
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

Follow the herd

Mixing goals with tasks

Typical Agile maturity dimensions:
- Process
- Structure
- Technology
- People
- Customers
- Products

Challenges:
- Dimensions treated as a flat list
- Focused on what we are able to measure
- Focused what can be modelled
- Focused on what is logical

Courage to explore alternatives

Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

- Prioritize actions by distinguishing apples from oranges – Kano model
- Start iterating towards desired future state from Day 1
- Implement just-enough Hygiene factors to keep hygiene under control
- Limit efforts on hygiene factors by implementing mocks

Follow the herd

Courage to explore alternatives

Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

- Prioritize actions by distinguishing apples from oranges – Kano model
- Start iterating towards desired future state from Day 1
- Implement just-enough Hygiene factors to keep hygiene under control
- Limit efforts on hygiene factors by implementing mocks

Follow the herd

Courage to explore alternatives

Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

- Prioritize actions by distinguishing apples from oranges – Kano model
- Start iterating towards desired future state from Day 1
- Implement just-enough Hygiene factors to keep hygiene under control
- Limit efforts on hygiene factors by implementing mocks
David Hussman showed how thinking evolved from **PROJECT** (90’s) → **PROCESS** (2000’s) → **PRODUCT** (2010’s)
Agile Manifesto’s claim to value People and Interactions over Processes and Tools has been proven in action for decades

“Talent density trumps process density - a great person will fix a bad process, a weak person will screw up a good one”

Jeff Smith, Chief Information Officer, IBM
Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

Over time delightful innovation becomes another basic need

Products & Customers,
Employees, Leadership

Satisfied
Performance needs

Delighters
Not implemented
Fully implemented
Basic needs
Technology,
Structure,
Processes

Dissatisfied
Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

Where impact is produced

Supporting Internal organizational mechanics

Products & Customers

Employees

Leadership

Structure  Process  Technology

Conceptually corresponds to

WHAT and WHY: Epic, Feature, Story

HOW: Task, subtask
Focus on delighters while keeping hygiene under control

Implement just-enough Hygiene factors to keep hygiene under control

Limit efforts on hygiene factors by implementing mocks
Leadership 1: Talk, sell, change others

▪ When you talk, you lose opportunity to listen
▪ You must not sell – selling does not stick
▪ You cannot change others

Leadership 1: Define direction

▪ Answer the WHY question clearly
▪ Let people internalize the challenge
▪ Change yourself
▪ Listen, observe, sense

Follow the herd

Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

Courage to explore alternatives
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

**Follow the herd**

**Leadership 2: Hide in your room**
- One of survival strategies
- Demonstrates your traumatic past
- You are still visible to and observed by colleagues looking for someone to show them direction

**Courage to explore alternatives**

**Leadership 2: Role model**
- Enable
- Listen, observe, sense, respond
- Support teams hands on in the trenches
- Help resolving obstacles
Follow the herd

Everything needs to be done in short iterations by cross-functional teams with end-to-end responsibility

- This is suitable approach in IT due to the nature of value stream

- Nature of work may not be the same in other areas

Courage to explore alternatives

Design flow to work based on Value Chain

- Understand the nature of work
- Choose best fitting team setup
- Choose best fitting process
Operational obstacles can be removed by focusing on being Agile

Follow the herd

Sponsor big training programs

- Learning is limited based on generic examples and unrelated content
- Learning is limited in unknown external environment
- Significant percentage of training content is forgotten in weeks
- Employees do not have a chance to apply new knowledge

Courage to explore alternatives

Learning is doing

- Value contextual and tailored hands-on learning
- Embed learning in daily work
- Help learning meet employees in their natural environment

Follow the herd

Courage to explore alternatives

Learning is doing