HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE

- Tanushree Saikia elaborates on the role of leaders in the new business paradigm
- Smriti Sharma emphasizes on the importance of agile leadership as against leadership
- Niket Karajagi shares the competencies required for becoming an agile leader
- Rajat Gupta gives insights on 'Developing Agile Leaders', the workshop way

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

Deeksha Jawa

Deeksha Jawa, Head – Project Management, Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited, is a post graduate in Management HR and Green Belt in Six Sigma with a background in Psychology. She has a passion for behavioural sciences and combines her knowledge of psychometric testing with her management expertise to manage projects end to end and design & develop workshops in order to meet the changing needs of businesses.

Agility is the new master skill of leadership. Agile Leadership is an exceptional and extraordinarily significant competency to succeed in a world of brisk revolutions and increasing intricacies. This edition of Knowledge Beans focuses on the development of the necessary competencies of leadership necessary for becoming an agile leader.

EDITOR'S BEAN TIP

Agile Leadership guidelines:
- *Address culture and values foremost*
- *Practices will generally follow*
- *Work in ways that embrace change*
- *Alter processes and methods to fit the project*

Characteristics of an Agile Leader:
- *Creates a safe environment and protects the team*
- *Removes obstacles*
- *Provides information rather than instructions*
- *Coaches subordinates as against directing them*
- *Asks as against telling*
- *Allows the team to fail*

OD CONNOISSEUR'S ORATE
Tanushree Saikia

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP

Tanushree Saikia has seven years of work experience most of which has been spent in the area of training and development. Her pertinent experience and skills are in the areas of behavioural trainings, ability to manage training as a function, designing and developing e-learning content, delivering online trainings through virtual classroom tools and project management.

We have predominantly been a rule based society wherein we have pre defined procedures for connecting with God (called rituals), we are conditioned to believe that a secure education and career path like engineering, medical, CA is the only way to success & happiness much before we even had an opportunity to explore our calling in life. Most of our working life too we spent with our managers who tell us what to do.

But somewhere along the way new business paradigms have been forced to evolve due to the dynamics in world economy, shift in nation powers, information rich new age consumers and technology innovations which have fostered the culture of shortest TAT (turnaround time).

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Businesses and business managers have had to take a hard look at what they considered best business practices in the past decade. For e.g. Is it essential to always follow processes, pre defined codes for optimum outcome? Or will gut level decisions and implementations as per the ground situation become more of a norm? Is adaptability, flexibility and going by the spirit rather than letter of the word more important for sustenance?

When I say a gut level decision I do not mean a random decision based on the whims and fancies of the individual manager but a decision borne out of alignment of individual, team and organizational goals; shared values, principles and ethics.

To follow this path a very deep understanding and internalization of the organizations values, principles, goals, and service offerings is essential. Then, the decision taken in the light of the above would be the right one.

However, for effective demonstration of this behaviour the eco-system would have to support the individual. Organizations have to create a culture of empowerment, individual accountability along with a spirit of team work, embracing change with enthusiasm and seeing it as a window of opportunity rather than with fear and apprehension.

Leaders would play a critical role in shaping this culture. Leaders would have to become facilitators and guides rather than bosses and create an environment of trust wherein one is not scared to take the first step in a new direction.

Inertia is our natural state of being. To constantly being challenged to change from one state of being to another (in this case one state of mind to another, one way of functioning to another) in itself is the biggest hurdle to overcome. However deep within our hearts we know that only when old boundaries, self imposed limitations are crossed can new horizons be discovered… ■

OD ENTHUSIAST'S ORATE
Smriti Sharma

IMPORTANCE OF AGILE IN THE NEW ERA

Smriti Sharma is a science graduate from University of Delhi and a post graduate in computer applications. She carries with herself almost 8 years of experience in the areas of technical writing, content development, instructional design, and training. She is passionate about people and training, and seeks opportunities to establish innovative and successful learning environments that best meet the needs of all stakeholders. An instructional designer by profession, she is presently working with BMC Software as an Enablement Manager with the WW ESM Technical Enablement team.

All during my formative years, I heard the term "leadership". It's only recently that I heard this term "Agile Leadership". I often wonder if innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. Then what distinguishes an "Agile Leader" from a leader? Is it the agile attitude of a leader or his ability to create agile teams? Well, guess both.

In today's corporate world driven by the pursuit of success, one needs to be not only fit but fast too, to be able to survive. Therefore, agile leadership is the need of the hour. Thus, we have this constant need of leaders who can drive teams and projects towards success and also be in sync with the dynamic rapid changes around them.

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A leader, who has the ability to be swift in his ways of thinking, will always have a motivated team under him. With his agile attitude, he can create an atmosphere brimming with high expectations thus ensuring higher individual performance without the underlying fear of failure. He will be able to drive a team to deliver successful projects and produce agile teams working on agile projects. Such agile teams will always be innovative, ready to take up new challenges, and deliver under most adverse situations.

I believe an organization is as good or bad as its people and so is a team as good or as bad as its leader. So my vote goes for the agile leader who is going to be the creator of a new breed of curious and thinking individuals who are always ready for the challenge under his leadership. I would like to conclude by saying that we definitely need to wake up to a whole new dawn with renewed vigour and alertness lest we stagnate in the tardiness of yesterday. ■

FOUNDER'S NOTE

Niket Karajagi

BUILDING AGILE COMPETENCIES

As Agile leadership is all about adapting to different situations and getting the results through the team, the leadership basics have to be very clear. However, before I talk about leadership essentials for Agile I would like to discuss the traps that will not permit the Manager to act as an Agile Leader:

Trap 1: Things cannot happen without me: This is a classic situation all well groomed technical managers get into. They love control and want to be hands on. They are driven by distrust and insecurity and are therefore involved in all activities.

Trap 2: Ineffective delegation: Responsibilities are defined and limited authority is given to team. This results in teams depending on the manager. Agile process thus fails.
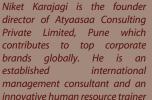
Trap 3: Personal insecurity: Sees personal status diminishing.

It is thus important to overcome the above through leadership competence that needs to be developed. The competencies are listed below.

1. **Altering leadership style based on situations:**
   a   Hands on: Only during crisis
   b. Collaborative: During grooming for critical objectives and induction
   c. Non Directive Coach: For all controlled challenges and routine work
   d. Reviewer: A very strong attribute to keep the project in control

Niket Karajagi is the founder director of Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited, Pune which contributes to top corporate brands globally. He is an established international management consultant and an innovative human resource trainer with niche areas of expertise & contributions. Niket is an authority on creativity & innovation, emotional intelligence and statistical methodologies apart from his operations background in understanding of management processes.

2.   **People Leadership:**
   a.   Develop and deploy people strategically
   b.   Focus on development of right competencies for projects success
   c.   Create motivation through improved probability of success through directive and non-directive coaching

3.   **Ownership & Accountability:**
   a.   Complete personal ownership for overall success
   b.   Vision driven leadership for group ownership
   c.   Being aware of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards expected

4.   **Innovation:**
   a.   Creative thinking for getting task done
   b.   Focus on performance and process improvement at all times

5.   **Critical thinking:**
   a.   Logical goal setting and dealing with assumptions that may hamper accomplishment of goals
   b.   Decision making only based on facts and figures and not allowing emotions to intervene

If one loves control and has insecurity of becoming obsolete agile will fail. Agile leadership is easy provided the leader has established his own credibility in the organization and believes strongly in aiding and supporting performance.

My experience is, agile is beautiful and effective. Choice of agile managers is crucial. Create the competency in managers before going agile. ■

THE WORKSHOP WAY
Rajat Gupta

DEVELOPING AGILE LEADERS

Rajat Gupta Senior Executive - Training, Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited, is post graduate in Management HR and Masters in Labour Laws & Labour Welfare with a background in Business Administration. He loves to follow his passion for bringing a creative edge to the designing of training programmes. He also believes in the mantra of exploring through continuous learning.

Leadership has undergone a big transformation with time. It has moved from the old concept of authoritarian leadership to emerging concept of agile leadership. The rapid changing work environment brings lots of ambiguity in the processes, marking the need of a leader who can act with agility in the tough times. The agile leadership workshop focuses on developing agile leadership traits in the employees for better & efficient management in the organization.

The one day workshop starts with a group work where participants list down the characteristics of their favourite leader, to self-realize what is expected of them at leadership positions. Next through the simulation Pyramid Building, the participants learn the characteristics of agile leader and how agile leader sets world class processes for its team to deliver results. The workshop makes the participants conversant about how an agile leader shows his/her leadership qualities in different work environments through situational leadership model.

The model shows the direction/path in which the participants should move in order to become what they 'should be' from what 'they are'. Coaching is an important characteristic of an agile leader as people development is the top priority for any organization. The participants understand the exact meaning of coaching and how to use coaching conversation by learning about the six caps of coaching conversations. Multimedia tool Jamie's Kitchen, helps in energizing and motivating the leaders in tough situations. Participants learn the art of taking and delivering feedback, important for realizing deviated behavior and

fostering change in unaccepted behavior of team members. In the end, workshop helps the participants to understand the purpose and ingredients of effective performance management. Agile leadership and performance management are inseparable because a leader needs to act as a coach to improve effectiveness of the team and simultaneously ensure individual goals and expectations are met. Learning in the workshop is facilitated by simulations, multimedia tools, group work and facilitator's input. ■

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BEANSTATEMENT

"Empowerment is the only way out for developing superior performance."