Agile Leadership Patterns

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Introductions: You

Show of hands
- How many are doing
  - Lean Startup, XP, Kanban, Scrum, GTD, Inbox Zero?
What is agility?

Chaos Creates Opportunities

Everyone’s ability to predict the future degrades exponentially with time. So create a company that exploits this chaos better than competitors.
Agility Defined

Agile organizations can
  • Sense
  • Adapt
  • Create

greater than chaotic change

Agile Base Patterns: Are we agile?

• Measure economic progress
• Adaptively experiment to improve
• Limit work in process
• Embrace collective responsibility
• Solve systemic problems
Is Scrum Agile?

- Adaptively experiment
- Embrace collective responsibility
- Measure economic progress
- Limit work in progress
- Solve problems systemically

Agile Base Pattern Details
Pattern 1: Plans don’t guarantee success...

- Economics drive everything we do
  - There are other “economies”
  - Creativity is fueled by Mastery, Autonomy, Purpose

- Forces
  - Success metrics lag the work
  - Risk is often unmeasured
  - Creativity generates variation

...therefore, measure economic progress

- Identify top-level goals
- Find leading metrics
- Test with forecasts
- Embrace objectivity

Source: http://systemsthinking.org
Economic metrics have facets

- Balance metrics
  - Reduce perversity
- Evolve metrics
  - Business needs change
- Easy to measure
  - Measure often to adapt

Result (measure economic progress)

- Coherent company
  - Mission, vision and goals
  - Employee, team behavior
- Constant awareness
- Learn more
- Forecast better

Are we agile now?

Source: http://systems-thinking.org
Pattern 2: Reacting is not enough …

- Complacency lulls us
- Loss of control scares us
- Efficiency is not success
- Uncertainty confuses

… therefore, adaptively experiment

- Improvement experiments (Retrospection)
- Evolution vs Revolution
- Brainstorm
- Test a hypothesis
- Control the experiment
- Beware variability control
Scrum Retrospection Redefined

- Assemble metrics
- Validate last hypothesis
- Brainstorm improvements
- Hypothesize effects
- Commit to next experiment

What is ScrumMaster role?

Result (Adaptively Experiment)

- Hyperproductive teams
  - 40% higher quality
  - 100% faster production
    - Jakobsen and Sutherland, “Scrum and CMMI: Going from Good to Great,” 2009 Agile Conference, IEEE.
- Organizations “disrupt themselves”

Are we agile now?
Pattern 3: Planning worsens delay...

- Congestion (slide)
- Cognition (slide)
- Non-fungible assets
- Detailed planning
- Sunk cost fallacy

Congestion
Cognition and Creative Focus

Creative focus
• Consider ≤ 7±2 concepts
• Early-day decisions
• Plenty of sleep
• Few interruptions

Source: Stanford University

...therefore, limit work-in-process

• Forces improvement
• Geometric Backlogs
• Inbox Zero
• Incremental work
Limit WIP: Incremental Production

Result (Limit WIP)

- Rapidly deliver small increments of value
- Possibility of rapid feedback
- Cancellable work (sunk cost is low)
- Learn faster than chaotic economy changes

Are we agile?
4: People create delay by avoiding responsibility...

- Sufficient agency
- Self-perception
- People can learn

Source: Christopher Avery

...therefore, embrace collective responsibility

- Provide autonomy, understanding, authority
  - Information radiators
- Teach Responsibility Process
- Tit-for-Tat trust building
- Root cause mapping
Result (collective responsibility)

- Collaborative problem solving
- Increased teaching and learning
- Greater elasticity

How does this affect our agility?

External factors limit our agility...

- Dependency delays
- Dependency quality
- Handoff interference
...therefore, solve systemic problems

- Leaders: Build collaborative teams of peers
  - Avery, *Team-building is an individual skill*
- Ritualize and celebrate problem solving
- Big room planning
- Convert bosses to (not just support) agile
- Change structural systems: hiring, comp, review…

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**Our Iceberg is Melting: Kotter**

**Set the stage**
- Create sense of urgency
- Pull together guiding team

**Decide what to do**
- Develop change vision, strategy

**Make it happen**
- Communicate
- Empower
- Produce short-term wins
- Don’t let up

**Make it stick**
- Create a new culture
Limit WIP: Value Stream Mapping

Efficiency = 49.5 days / 81 days = 61%
Throughput = 270 story points / 81 days

Exercise (if time): Root Cause Map
Agile Base Patterns: A journey

How do the patterns work together?
## Agile Base Patterns

### fragile agile

**Measure economic progress**
- Well-chosen key performance indicators
- Propagated wisely down the hierarchy

**Adaptively experiment for improvement**
- Use the KPIs to sense, adapt and create
- Process changes tried frequently

**Limit work-in-process**
- To maximize the success of high profit efforts
- Reserving powder for things you might invent

## Agile Base Patterns

### sustained and expansive agile

**Embrace collective responsibility**
- Every person feels personally responsible for team and company results

**Solve systemic problems**
- Broad authority to explore problems impeding agility
- There is a well-understood and respected process
Conclusion: Agile is Fragile

- Walmart
- Yahoo
- Others

• Why?
  - Bottom-up agility is extremely vulnerable

Non-agile executives

• Fighting fires all the time
  - Strategic work (more valuable long-term) gets deferred

• Don’t collaborate on strategic work
  - Doesn’t get done if one person busy

• Don’t run short-term experiments on strategy
  - Recruiting, Business development, Performance management, Product portfolio, marketing
Executives use agile to manage their
• Strategic activities
• Marketing
• Recruiting practices
• Sales processes
• Contract review
• Product Management and Engineering

… from the CEO on down

What is the value of agility?
• Faster, more profitable strategic decisions
• Faster, more profitable delivery
• Better solutions
  • measurement and adaption during strategy development and tactical deployment
• More organizational focus
• How much is that worth?
Corporate Exploration

How does your company?

How do your managers?
• Measure economic progress?
• Adaptively experiment for improvement?
• Limit work-in-process?
• Embrace collective responsibility?
• Solve systemic problems?

Summary, References
Senex Rex
Organizational Agility Research

Making organizations agile and antifragile
http://senexrex.com/blog
  Emerging book content
Senex Rex mindmap (available from Dan)
  All known patterns from all agile practices
Coaching and Training on request
  Dan Greening, PhD, Certified Scrum Coach

References

Scrum, Jeff Sutherland
  • Production team (cost control) management on steroids
Lean Startup, Eric Ries
  • Product Management (value discovery) on steroids
Our Iceberg is Melting, John Kotter
  • Transforming organizations from within
References: Agile Base Patterns

http://senexrex.com/category/agile-base-patterns/

• measure economic progress,
• adaptively experiment,
• limit work in progress,
• embrace collective responsibility, and
• solve systemic problems.

Agile Makes Beauty from Chaos
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