Inspect and adapt! Introducing Obeya as the next Agile practice

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ING BE+NL today

± 30 Tribes
50-600 people
± 100 Agile Coaches
All contributing to the strategic objectives of ING

TRIBE
A Tribe is a collection of different squads with the same/related purpose. A Tribe facilitates the squads to do their work more easily and supports them in realising their purpose.

SQUAD
Squads are stable teams which form the foundation of our organisation. They are multi-disciplinary and end-to-end responsible for their purpose.

CHAPTER
The Chapter is the hierarchical line to squad members, focusing on craftsmanship, personal development and standardisation.
What we focused on when we launched the Agile WoW
What we missed was alignment..

one of our answers... Obeya!
O(o)beya

Big room (Japanese)
The surprising truth about who we are
Do you suffer from ...?

We are drawn to details that confirm our beliefs
- Confirmation bias

We simplify numbers and probabilities
- Appeal to probability fallacy

We find stories and patterns even in sparse data
- Texas Sharpshooter Fallacy

We notice things already primed in memory or repeated often
- Cue dependent Forgetting

We favor simple-looking options over complex, ambiguous ones
- Belief bias

Visually striking things stick more than ordinary things
- Von Restorff effect

When there is a screen, we tend to look at the screen rather than look at each other
- The “screen bias”

Guess what? We all do!

(...and this is a tiny selection of cognitive biases)
Does this affect us in practice?

*Setting a target is never the issue*

Hitting it is

Why?
Typical traditional management behaviour

What’s the use of working fact-based when we can...

- Jump to conclusions
- Fire from the hip
- Fix it with a patch
- Be a rockstar fire-fighter
So it’s important we avoid the biases in our decision making process

**Without structure**
we only focus on what pops up in our minds (by chance)

**Without simplicity**
our mind can be tricked away from the seeing the truth

**Without standardization**
it’s hard to see what falls out of place

Without **structural support**, we will continue to fall into the pitfalls of our brain.
Two guiding principles for our thinking in an Obeya
Our world is already complex, thus our model should be simple.

4 Obeya principles
1. Obeyas provide a 360° overview (full context) on where we stand and where we are going

2. ...our Performance Wall with the current score on our most important KPIs...

3. ...our Action Board with our immediate actions, e.g. impediments...

4. ...our Strategic Improvement Wall with our improvement storyboards...
2. Obeyas are cascaded to squad level. Squads, Tribe and senior (leadership) Obeyas are connected.
3. Constant and consistent communication by using:

- Visual Management
- Rhythm & Routine
- Catchball & Accountability
Rhythm & Routine

Rhythm Portfolio Wall Session

When: bi-weekly at <day>; <time>

Participants:

- Tribe Lead
- IT Area Lead
- Product Area Lead
- Product Owners

Routine Portfolio Session

Goal:
- Check if we are meeting our (customer) commitments concerning realization of [product] features as determined in the QBR
- Respond to new developments and ideas that may have impact on our portfolio
- Respond to Actual and Potential obstacles we could encounter on the way
- Note: We consider the visuals on the Portfolio Wall to be truth (thus not in mails, SWOW or other documents)

During:

- Check in
- Explain the goal of the meeting
- IT: update on new developments that may have impact on product portfolio
- IT (Area) Lead: update on new IT developments that may have impact on product portfolio
- PO: Update on progress
  - Focus on deviations of planned work;
  - Impediments (signal when delivery ≠ expectations)
  - Any successes to celebrate (what went live for our Customers?)
- All: Discuss and decide on new ideas from the idea-wall / inbox
- PO: Update portfolio based on above information
- All: define next steps for impediments: (communication and/or improvements)
- All: Check any communication to be done based on today's portfolio meeting <specify upstream / downstream direction>
- Flags: all participants verify if we deviated from the way of working of this meeting. If yes, an action is defined to ensure that we are going back to the way of working or change the way of working.
- Check out

After:

Each team member...

- Follow-up actions:
- schedule follow up discussions if needed, and
- communicate decisions up - or downstream
4. Obeyas are learning areas...

...where we discover what we need to improve and...

...validate the steps we take...

...in order to meet our strategic objectives
The Obeya Scaling Approach
Where we were in January 2018

Our challenge

- The need to roll out Obeya in all Tribes was voiced by the joint management team of ING BE & NL
- Overall maturity of existing Obeyas was low
- The Agile Coaches were not ready to provide effective coaching on Obeya

Our approach

- We agreed to structurally improve the capability for Obeya coaching in Agile Coach community
- Three experienced Lean experts kicked off our learning journey
- We co-created the “Obeya Scaling Approach” and provided basic Obeya training to 12 Agile Coaches
Learning by Doing

Intake

Build the Obeya

Kick off

Continuous coaching and improvement

Termination expert coaching

1

2

3

4

5

With the Tribe Lead and with local facilitator(s)

- Design the room
- Add content
- Build Obeya knowledge
- Define rhythm & routine
- Dry run meetings

Session preceding first Obeya meeting, explaining rhythm, routine and walls to all Obeya participants

Dedicated time spent on meeting preparation and debriefing

Obeya coach moves on to next Tribe
What is “good enough”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core principles</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>How do you know?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The tribe has an Obeya which provides a 360° overview (full context) on where they stand on the strategic direction and where they are going</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>E = Exceptionally well implemented; example for surrounding</td>
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Obeya participants are expected to:

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The Tribe Lead is expected to:

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It is time to speak your Truth. Create your community, be good to each other. And do not look outside yourself for the leader. There is a river flowing very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold onto the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its own destination. We must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open and our heads above water. Now, see who is in there with you and celebrate.

MAGIC IS SOMETHING YOU MAKE
7 magic tips for starting an Obeya

1. Make sure you get leadership buy-in from the start
2. Explicitly check and agree on the availability of go-to persons for content and reports
3. Use all elements of the Obeya from the start, but limit the scope / participants where possible
4. Agree on the rhythm & routines as soon as possible
5. Plan a kickoff session with all key participants before starting the agreed rhythm and routines
6. Start single-located, so that meetings take place face-to-face
7. Keep the Obeya open while having effective agreements on how to deal with confidential data
Where we are today

Tribes

Segment Tribes
- NL
  - Tribe A
  - Tribe B
  - Tribe C

Service Tribes
- Tribe J
- Tribe K
- Tribe L
- Tribe M
- Tribe N
- Tribe O
- Tribe P
- Tribe Q
- Tribe R
- Tribe S
- Tribe T
- Tribe U
- Tribe V

Building Blocks Tribes
- Tribe W
- Tribe X
- Tribe Y
- Tribe Z

Cross-border organisation

Channel Tribes
- Tribe I

BE
- Tribe D
- Tribe E
- Tribe F
- Tribe G
- Tribe H

No Tribe Close
- Tribe Close in place - expert coaching required
- Tribe Close in place - no expert coaching required
Thank you

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