Getting to the Next Level:
Practicing Leadership Agility for Effective Agile Management

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Session Overview

• Setting the Context for Leadership Agility
• Living Case: Three levels of leadership agility
• Application of leadership agility levels to an Agile scenario
• Take-aways
Why do we need Agile Leadership?
Agile Delivery Challenges

Current "organizational agility ceiling" is created by organizational structures, culture and leadership styles
Missed Opportunities?

1. Lack of adaptive capacity to **sense** potential opportunities

2. Lack of adaptive capacity to **respond** to potential opportunities

Limitations in these capacities come from the structures, culture and leadership styles that determine the current “organizational agility ceiling”
Becoming an Agile Organization

• Increased *organizational agility* is the goal of any organization that wants to overcome agile delivery challenges and better respond to critical opportunities

• The effectiveness with which this is accomplished is a function of your capacity for *leadership agility*
Current Conceptions of Agile Leadership

- Upholding Agile principles & values
- Using and supporting Agile practices at team or program level
- **Not** being a “traditional manager”
Multi-Year Research Project

- Do today’s conditions require new leadership capacities and skills?
- How do highly agile leaders think and behave?
- How does leadership agility develop?
What is Agility in the Broader Sense?

The ability to achieve sustained success in an environment of accelerating change and increasing inter-dependence
What is Leadership Agility?
Essence of Agility

Focus

Step back

Gain a broader, deeper view

Re-engage, take action
Stages of Development

**Adult Stages**
- Conformer
- Expert
- Achiever

**Pre-Adult Stages**
- Operator
- Enthusiast
- Explorer

**Co-Creator**
- Catalyst
- Synergist

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Leadership Agility Capacities

- **10% Catalyst**
- **35% Achiever**
- **45% Expert**
- **10% Pre-Expert**
The Research Shows that ...

• You don’t skip stages/levels
• You retain capacities you develop at previous levels
• Your agility level can vary throughout the day
• “Downshifting” to previous levels can be intentional or unintentional
• It’s about expanding your repertoire!

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Overmyer AMT’s Strategic Challenge

• Family business. Former leader in AMT industry

• Lost innovative edge. Just breaking even.

• Founder’s daughter now Chair. Search for new CEO

• Mandate for new CEO: Restore profitability in 2 years and reclaim market leadership in 3-5

• Challenges: Complex business. Fierce competition. Rapid change in customer requirements
Four Questions for Ed or Edna

1. Well, you’ve been at it for seven months. How is it going? (Approach to leadership)

2. How did you get started (changing the organization)?

3. What has it been like working with your executive team?

4. Have you had any conversations so far that have been especially challenging?
An Agile Scenario

• As part of strategy for Overmeyer AMT, it was decided to move development to Agile; you are Senior Manager leading this adoption

• Started with across-the-board agile training within technology group

• Stood up one team 3 months ago; started second team 1 month ago

• Team #1 hit a wall starting 6 weeks ago:
  • Can’t complete even half of committed stories
  • Defects escaping sprints
  • Friction growing between UX and developers
An Agile Scenario, cont’d

How would you “frame” this issue ...

- At the Expert level
- At the Achiever level
- At the Catalyst level