THE SECRETS OF AGILITY

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CRACKING THE AGILITY CODE

The 5 Myths of Agility

Learning Guide

Dale Carnegie of Orange County has formed a strategic alliance with Mike Richardson, who is a thought-leading expert, author, and speaker on enterprise agility, agile leadership, and adaptive management.

We are surrounded by an expanding universe of inspiration and insights about Agility these days, yet enterprise agility can remain as elusive as it has ever been. It can remain an unbroken code, often because of 5 misconceptions.

1. Agile is just for Software/IT Companies, Project Management & Soft ware Development, started with Software Development Companies and only applies to Digital Transformation.

This is a common misconception, not least of all because people think that Agile started with software companies and the Agile Manifesto (2001) as a project management approach for Agile Software Development. For sure that's when it was popularized and started going mainstream, but it started well before that in the 1980s with hardware companies not software companies. It's that software companies were going big with "Agile" in the 90s, 2000s, and 2010s while hardware companies were going big with "Lean". Now hardware companies are realizing that "Lean" is not enough and they also need to go big with "Agile". In fact, all companies of all types in all industries are embracing Agile, not just for digital transformation but for the bigger challenge of enterprise agility and organizational agility. The accelerating world of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) demands it.

2. Agility is Simple, it is just about being Flexible and Adapting.

This is another very common myth. Agility is an and-proposition of being flexible and inflexible, unstructured and structured, engineered and artful all at the same time. Agility is not an or-proposition of one or the other, it is an and-proposition of one and the other. One or the other results in the disorganized chaos of being too flexible and unstructured, shooting from the hip and chasing shiny things, or being too structured and inflexible, unable to keep up with the warp speed of the world. Resulting in disorganized chaos either way around, which invites fragility. Agility is about finding the middle as a design proposition of one and the other, which is the flow of organized chaos … business is fast-moving and chaotic, but it is well organized and flows. Plus, agility is not just about whether we adapt, as we always adapt to disruption sooner or later, in some way shape of form. Even consolidation is a form of adaption. The question is,

are we post-adaptive (behind the curve as a laggard), adaptive (on the curve as a follower) or pre-adaptive (ahead of the curve as a leader), disruptor or a disruptee?

3. Startups and Small-to-Medium Sized Businesses are just Naturally Agile.

Actually no, that is a mental trap. Startups and small-to-medium-sized businesses are not naturally agile, they are naturally frenetic, hair-on-fire and seat-of-the-pants! It can feel like a disorganized stampede in the flow of disorganized chaos, which is fragile not agile. Many are realizing that and are making their way to the agile middle. The transformation journey has its challenges of course, but those that stay the course and go the distance can reap the rewards.

4. Larger Companies are Naturally Not Agile

Indeed, large corporates are often the definition of bureaucracy, overly structured and inflexible, easily finding themselves on the wrong side of disruptive change driven by VUCA. Fragile not agile. But many are now realizing that and are making their way to the agile middle. The transformation journey has its challenges of course, but those that stay the course and go the distance can reap the rewards.

5. Agile is just a Fad and New Spin on Old Stuff, We Already do_____ (fill in the blank), so we don't need to do this as well do we?

Actually, as explained above, agile is not new. It has been around since the 1980s, so it's hard to call something a fad when it's been around that long! What is new is that all businesses in all industries are waking up to the realization that agile is not just for Software/IT Companies, it is not just for project management of software but also hardware and services, it is not just for startups but also for large corporations and companies of all sizes. But it is old stuff, like DNA or gravity or the theory of evolution, it's a back-to-basics, first-principles foundation of understanding the underlying organizing concept of things in a new and pivotal way. Traditional approaches don't work well anymore in an accelerating VUCA world in which Agility is essential to surviving, thriving and being future-proofed.