

How to ensure effective Coaching?

Senior Leadership needs to understand what organizational adaptiveness (agility) really means. What systemic implications of “going agile” really are? Leadership needs to be ready and comfortable to take a close look at an existing organizational design, norms, values, principles. There should be willingness not only to “bless others, in spirit” and delegate an entire effort to organizational layers beneath but get really involved, do real Gemba (“Go See”) – go, where real action is.

Once senior leadership is properly informed and has all necessary information to make a conscious and responsible decision – they give an “informed consent” (of course, it is a figure of speech) to one another, their respective organizational verticals and organizational design consultants that were hired to assist an organization in its journey. There must be an explicit agreement that everyone agrees 😊.

Properly crafted and consistent messages are communicated directly from the top of an organization, all throughout organizational layers and domains of control. Messages must include reasons, purpose/goals and desirable outcomes. Not just ‘what’ but ‘why’. People throughout an entire organization need to clear understanding what upcoming changes mean to them, career-wise and personally. Inappropriate messages may cause confusion and misalignment among people, as well as introduce an element of unsafety.

All organizational functions (ideally, whole departments) should be involved, without exception. For example, agile development is best to be done, based on flexible budgeting and rolling wave forecasts. Therefore, Finance needs to get involved. Organizational re-design, team-based performance, abolishing some old/outdated evaluation methods of individuals may require involvement of HR.

Everything that an organization (or organizational unit) works on has to be assessed: products, services, applications, platforms. This has to be done from a standpoint of a ‘buying customer’ and along the lines of business value flow. This means that existing, projects, programs and portfolios should be looked at from a stand-point of “what would a customer want to carve out for herself, if she was given a scalpel”. Frequently, it means that existing components, sub-components or sub-product centric containers of work are challenged.

Corollary to the above, Teams should be structured (or re-structured) in ways that best supports customer-centric work. It means that existing groups, ‘teams’ and organizational spheres of control (e.g. by line manager or team lead) are reassessed and possibly changed

Once teams are properly structured, they are put through comprehensive, structured training that best supports their future needs. Ideally, Teams should be trained alongside with their business counterparts. If multiple Teams are to be working closely together (e.g. scaled scrum, for the same product owner, on the same widely defined product), they should be also trained together. Training is typically superseded by mandatory self-study (reading) and other preparatory work. “Not compromised training – means that training content is not ‘weakened’ to fit organizational “uniqueness”

This is a prolonged phase that consists of on-going support by a coach who uses various coaching tools, techniques and methods to enable Team(s) become efficient and independent. This includes Team coaching, individual coaching and role playing (especially, at the beginning), etc. In more complex environments, if access to senior leadership is granted, it also includes organizational coaching.

Gradually, a coach will strive to ‘coach himself out of a job’ and give autonomy and control back to Team(s). Coaching intensity usually changes over time (is lowered, as time goes by and team(s) become more mature).

Senior Leadership – educated and intimately engaged

Senior Leadership gives an “informed consent”

Proper messages sent: from top to bottom of Organization

Organization understands reasons, goals, implications of changes

Entire Body of Work (BoW) by Organization is assessed

Teams –built from existing pool of people, to effectively support BOW

Impactful, structured, “not compromised” training – delivered to real Teams

Continuous coaching – delivered to real Teams

Gradual disengagement of Coaches and giving autonomy back to Teams