

**Q&A | 2015 Learning Consortium Year in Review Webinar
December 16, 2015**

- 1. What are the better arguments to convince managers into implementing agility?**
A: See: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/01/26/why-do-managers-hate-agile/> and <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/07/22/how-to-make-the-whole-organization-agile/>.
- 2. I notice that your illustrations do not include "grey hairs," i.e., no boomers. Is the progress in Agile a generational issue, helping to manage the transition to new managers . . . and building a firewall against the return of "older" managers?**
A: It's not age; it's mindset, as discussed in the webinar Q&A.
- 3. Did you notice differences between continents? U.S., E.U., Asia. . . .**
A. Listen to the discussion in the webinar Q&A.
- 4. How can we implement Agile in the construction industry? (As we will not be able to provide value to the customer till the end of the project.)**
A: See the example in construction of Quadrant Homes given in chapter 6 of *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling*.
- 5. Have you seen structures evolving toward holacracy-type operating systems, or similar "constitutions"?**
A. No. There was no sign of that in our visits. See also the discussion of holacracy at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2014/01/15/making-sense-of-zappos-and-holacracy/> and <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/05/23/is-holacracy-succeeding-at-zappos/>.
- 6. Do you think that the Scrum certification track (CSM[®], CSPO[®], CSP[®], Certified Enterprise Coach, and Certified Scrum Trainer[®]) is viable for the coming years?**
A. Yes.
- 7. Are there examples in banking, where full organizations transformed to be Agile -- how did they enable compliance without adding a lot of bureaucracy and calling it governance?**

A. Although the financial sector is making substantial investment in FinTech start-ups, its progress toward Agile within their own management has been halting. See discussion

here: <https://uploads.strikinglycdn.com/files/406418/6db49ff1-1b85-47fa-9e3e-45f6fa8ef4c1/Why%20Banks%20Are%20Failing101415.pdf>.

8. **If Agility is for complexity, how do we link non-complex parts of a business with the complex ones? Is it really realistic to have an Agile organization everywhere? Or will we have different parts of a company with both Agile and traditional organization, and clear service level agreements in between?**

A. Anything involving human beings is complex. Every aspect of every organization should be continuously looking for opportunities to improve and innovate. Toyota has demonstrated this, with more than a million proposals for improvement from their workforce every year. There is no such thing as "a non-complex part of a business" -- there are only parts of a business to which intelligence has yet to be applied.

9. **Could you elaborate on what you have found to be the biggest setbacks while transitioning and maintaining Agile practices?**

A. As I mentioned in the webinar, the biggest setback comes from having a manager with a traditional mindset take over an Agile team or unit. That kills Agile very quickly.

10. **Any hints or experiences on implementing it with various suppliers (cross team, DevOps)?**

A. Microsoft practices DevOps, but on a three-week delivery schedule. They found that more frequent deliveries exceed customer capability to handle.

11. **How can we measure an Agile mentality?**

A. That remains territory to be explored. At present, it is measured in the results that the mindset generates, and the lapses that may occur from time to time. See for example:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/01/26/why-do-managers-hate-agile/> and

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/07/22/how-to-make-the-whole-organization-agile/>.

12. **Do you have any techniques you can recommend for introducing and educating C-level management about the Agile methodology, especially to those who are adamantly opposed to Agile?**

A. The best "technique" is leadership storytelling. The stories come from all the books on Agile, and the blogs that I and others write. See

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/07/22/how-to-make-the-whole-organization-agile/>.

13. Can you talk a little about the characteristics of those who have and those who haven't had that lightbulb moment yet?

A. I am not sure it always happens like turning on a lightbulb. In some cases, it may be more like a gradual dawning. It's basically a difference in attitude between instinctively controlling and instinctively enabling.

14. A lot of the examples of businesses adopting Scrum are product based; they are the clients iterating on software or products they own and sell. Have you seen this adopted successfully in an agency model? Meaning servicing all clients and delivering products/software/design for them?

A. I personally haven't seen that, but I am sure it exists.

15. Can you give some examples of how the momentum of Scrum adoption has spread beyond software development?

A. You might look at the webinars in this series on Scrum in manufacturing by Alex Brown and Joe Justice. There are also cases like Zara in fast fashion: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/03/13/how-agile-and-zara-are-transforming-the-us-fashion-industry/>.

16. Has the transition at Microsoft resulted in fewer managers being employed by the firm?

A. No. When Ericsson tried to reduce the number of managers, they found that it didn't work. They had to rehire managers.

17. Have these organizations eliminated management structures, or how have they changed them? How much real self-management occurs?

A. It looked like real self-management to us at Microsoft, Ericsson, Riot Games, and Menlo Innovations. The Learning Consortium report details which practices were implemented and how widely.

18. Has typical performance management gone away in these organizations, and what replaced it?

A. You will see how that works in detail at Microsoft here: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/10/29/microsofts-sixteen-keys-to-becoming-agile-at-scale/>.

19. What are your thoughts on the notion that Agile is to curb offshoring?

A. That's not typically the goal. The goal is to get work done in a better way. Agile is equally applicable to both local teams and offshore teams, for instance at both Ericsson and Microsoft.

20. **How do you approach helping product and executive management teams in becoming more Agile?**
A. See <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/07/22/how-to-make-the-whole-organization-agile/>.
21. **I have visited SAP in Palo Alto and I was very impressed with the flexible and Agile ways of working. Today, with my experience and salary, it is a challenge to enter that type of group due to the salary, perception of old versus young (right out of college). How do I prepare myself for this future organization?**
A. Read, learn, watch videos, attend courses, and gain as much practical experience as you can.
22. **Do you have an example of an organization that has transformed fully to Agile under the constraints of a regulated (government FDA, compliance, etc.) environment?**
A. Menlo Innovations produces software for medical devices that must be fail-safe and that must meet government requirements.
23. **What techniques have been used by Microsoft to help managers transform their role? Have they taken on more of a coaching and mentoring role?**
A. For a detailed discussion, see: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/10/29/microsofts-sixteen-keys-to-becoming-agile-at-scale/>.
24. **How do you think the Microsoft teams using Scrum would answer the tension question?**
A. They would answer, "No tension."
25. **Since the management role needs to change so much in order for a company to survive, should we still call them managers? What would be a better term for the role?**
A. I think finding new labels is a fool's errand. "Agile management" is simply becoming "management." A traditional manager in a controlling role is essentially obsolete. Management is still the art and science of getting things done. That doesn't change. It's just that management evolves. The current way to manage is Agile. It's just that some managers don't realize that they have become obsolete.
26. **It sounded like one of the things managers did was to look forward beyond the next few sprints to drive product change/innovation. Were they then the formal product owners? If not, what were the product owners doing?**
A. For a detailed discussion, see:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/10/29/microsofts-sixteen-keys-to-becoming-agile-at-scale/>

27. How can we measure Agility? I'm thinking of something almost like an Agility barometer.

A. Agility is not the goal. So we don't measure Agility. The goal is to delight the customer. For that, we have measures:

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/SL-08-2014-0057>

28. What is your forecast on the speed of Agile adoption worldwide? What will drive it?

A. My guess is that by 2020, most organizations will be largely Agile. Already today, all big organizations have Agile cells within them. What is driving it is massive disruption. Firms that don't become Agile won't survive.