

Lean/Agile for Leaders: Ask New Questions

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Purpose

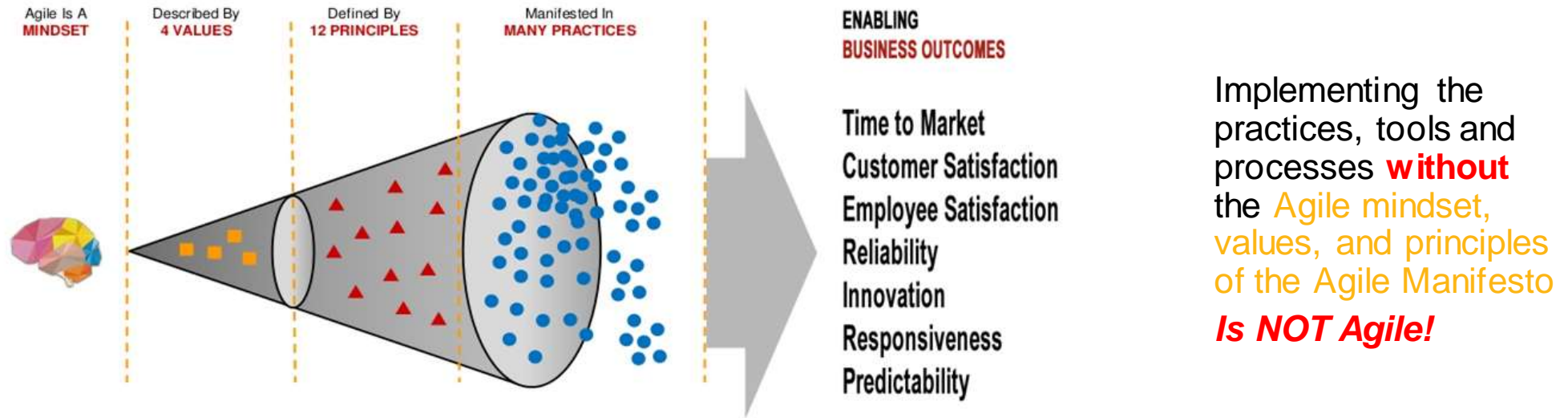
Help NX leaders to bring or reinforce a Lean/Agile mindset within their daily work

- What do leaders do all day long?
 - *Ask questions!*
- HOW a leader asks questions gives their teams a sense of what the leader cares about
 - Ask questions that reinforce your commitment to Agile principles – your team will notice!

Agenda

- Agile mindset reminder
- New questions to consider asking
- Your turn: what do YOU want to know about how your staff is leveraging Lean and Agile principles in their work
- Preview of Sept 29 Lean/Agile Overview for Execs

Agile Mindset



It isn't enough to adopt the practices of a successful team. You must adopt attitudes and a mindset for making decisions to adopt practices that will lead to your success.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/469922542368994649/>

Reinforcing Agile Practices

The questions you ask of your team signals to them what is important to you. Think about moving from asking the questions on the left to the ones on the right, to reinforce Agile mindsets and practices

Instead of...	Try asking...
When will these requirements/this work be “done”?	What requirements are you working on in this quarter? This iteration ? (2 week period)
Where is the project plan and timelines?	Where is your backlog ? How do you prioritize it and decide on what to work on next?
Who is responsible for each step in the work process?	How does the team collaborate to accomplish its goals?
How often do you provide status and to whom?	Where are the roadmaps, burn down charts and when is the next demo I can participate in?
What is the QA process for the team?	How does the team ensure quality throughout their work process and how does the team test or verify its work?

Reinforcing Agile Practices – Part II

More questions to think about moving from asking the questions on the left to the ones on the right, to reinforce Agile mindsets and practices

Instead of...	Try asking...
How does the team handle change requests during their work process?	How does the backlog get prioritized, changed and refined during development?
How does the team handle customer feedback and change requests?	How does the team conduct demo's and retrospectives to identify areas of improvement?
What is the process for identifying and resolving issues?	How does the team manage risks and how does is the team proactively identifying potential issues?
When is the UAT for this block? (for teams with developed products)	How does the team involve customers and stakeholders in product evolution?
When will these priorities be done?	Where are the roadmaps for your work?

Reinforcing Agile Practices – Part III

The questions you ask of your team signals to them what is important to you.
Some questions may not have a direct analogy in the traditional development experience

Agile Team Questions

How do you prioritize technical debt in the **backlog**?

How do you handle dependencies between **user stories**?

What role do stakeholders play in the **sprint review** and **sprint retrospective**?

What is the **acceptance criteria** for a **user story**? **Definition of done**?

How do you handle external dependencies on other teams or vendors, especially ones that are not agile?

How do you ensure that QA and testing/verification activities are integrated into the work process?

Your Turn: What do YOU want to know about your teams' use of Lean/Agile principles in their work?

At your table, discuss questions you think would reinforce your teams' use of Lean/Agile principles in their work

After 5 minutes, write down your favorite/most important question to ask your team (either from tables or from discussion) on provided index cards. Make it legible to others, please!

Chaos Cocktail Party!

Follow instructions of facilitators to rate questions

Chaos Cocktail Party

Stand up and pair off with someone NOT at your table with your index card and a pen/pencil.

Exchange cards with that person and discuss for 1 minute the question and how you might use it productively in your division

Repeat the following cycle 5 times:

When instructor calls beginning of the party, walk around and exchange cards as many times as possible with others, glancing at the question but not discussing it; try to see as many different cards as possible

When instructor calls STOP, find a partner and look at the 2 questions (one on each of your current cards)—you won't have many seconds to do this!

Allocate 7 points between the two cards in terms of your opinion as to the value of each question

At the end of the 5 cycles, sit down in your original seat and count up the points on your final index card. Instructor will count down to find the questions that received the most points.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Preview of Sept 29 Agile Executive Overview

Virtual offering (sorry, no chaos cocktail parties!)

Review of Lean and Agile principles

- As reminder for those who have received other Agile training
- As awareness for those who are new to Lean and Agile in non-product development settings

Review of Sentinel's Lean/Agile implementation

- A bit of history
- Current practices and business rules that keep us aligned
- Ideas for making best use of supporting tools

Questions/Lightweight Consulting to Address Your Implementation Issues

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