Transformational Leadership

Four Competencies for Successful Organizational Change
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The Challenge of Change
Change is hard
Most common barriers to Agile adoption

- Organizational culture at odds with agile values (53%)
- General organization resistance to change (46%)
- Inadequate management support and sponsorship (42%)
- Lack of skills/experience with agile methods (41%)
- Insufficient training and education (35%)
- Inconsistent processes and practices across teams (34%)
- Lack of business/customer/product owner availability (31%)
- Pervasiveness of traditional development methods (30%)
- Fragmented tooling and project-related data/measurements (24%)
- Minimal collaboration and knowledge sharing (21%)
- Regulatory compliance or government issue (14%)
Lean-Agile & DevOps with SAFe

Organizational Change
Why is organizational change hard?

- Resistance to change
- Low readiness for change
- Inadequate communications
- Poor planning
- Lack of training
- Institutional inertia (process, structure)
- Technology gaps
- Lack of organizational alignment
- History of change failures
- Lack of employee involvement
- Bureaucracy, politics, conflict
- Poor strategy / wrong change
- Unrealistic expectations
- Low transparency and trust

- Decker, Durand, Mayfield, McCormack, Skinner & Purdue, 2012
The Solution
Leaders hold the key to successful change

People are already doing their best; the problems are with the system.

Only \textit{management} can change the system.

—W. Edwards Deming
Introducing Transformational Leadership

- A model in which leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve higher performance by:
  - Building on values and a sense of purpose
  - Encouraging teams to work toward a common goal through vision, values, communication, example-setting, and evident caring about followers’ personal goals and needs
  - Aligning organization and personal vision for the larger good

- Burn’s seminal work has evolved thanks to subsequent researchers such as Bass, Avolio, Riggio, and others
  - More peer reviewed research as been published on transformational leadership than any other leadership model
Leader competencies for guiding successful change

- **Vision** – has the ability to inspire and motivate others to a common goal.

- **Authenticity** – serves as a role model, ‘walks the talk.’

- **Growth** – show genuine concern for the needs and feelings of others, bringing out their very best efforts.

- **Innovation** - challenges teams to be innovative and creative, to achieve higher levels of performance and execution.

Transformational leadership and organizational change

Research shows that Transformational Leadership:

- Predicts high team performance and employee engagement\(^1\)
- Increases positive attitudes of employees during change
- More effective at improving organizational change outcomes than specific change management practices\(^2\)
- Can be learned!

Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up...

James Belasco and Ralph Stayer, authors of *Flight of the Buffalo*

\(^1\) *The Science Behind DevOps.* Nicole Forsgren, Jez Humble, Gene Kim. 2017
\(^2\) Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu. 2008.
Experiencing Transformational Leadership
Conceptualizing Vision

The ability to inspire and motivate followers by communicating a clear and compelling vision of the future

- Simple, brief, sensible, appealing... answers “why”

- Communicating the vision
  - Repetition
  - Multiple forums and channels
  - Two-way engagement
  - Stories, metaphors, examples
Think of a “why” related to your organization that you are personally passionate about.

Craft a one minute elevator speech communicating the vision of the organization in a way that is simple, compelling, and answers “why”.

Share your elevator speech with a pairing partner.
Conceptualizing Authenticity

The ability to “walk the talk” by being a role model of desired professional and ethical behaviors; acting with honesty, integrity, and transparency

Key attributes of authentic leadership

- Self-aware
- Takes ownership of mistakes
- Transparent about their learning journey
- Behaviors consistent with stated values
- Does the right thing even when no one is watching

“Authenticity is the alignment of head, mouth, heart, and feet - thinking, saying, feeling, and doing the same thing - consistently. This builds trust, and followers love leaders they can trust.”

Dr. Lance Secretan
Activity: Transparency through life experiences

- Think of real life experience such an embarrassing moment, mistake, or failure.
- Using a sheet of paper and a sharpie, sketch out a picture that illustrates this event.
- Share your story with a pairing partner.
Conceptualizing Growth

The ability to develop leaders by growing their competence and their confidence supported by organizational clarity

- Build competence
  - Specify goals, not methods (intent)
  - Continuously repeat the message
  - Create a learning environment where it is safe to fail
  - Develop guiding principles for use in decision making
  - Offer personalized support, coaching, and encouragement

David Marquet, Captain, US Navy (Retired)
Author of “Turn the Ship Around”
Providing organizational clarity

- Begin with the end in mind
- Focus on excellence over simply avoiding errors
- Exhibit genuine care and concern – build trust and take care of your people
- Offer immediate recognition for individual and team contributions
- Use active listening, open ended questions, and “how can I help?”

“It’s not about taking control and attracting followers, it’s about giving control and growing leaders.”

– Captain David Marquet (USN Retired)
Activity: Practice growing leaders

SCENARIO: A team member comes to you with a situation they are “escalating” for a decision (“tell me what to do”). You know this person has the *technical competence* to make the decision on their own.

With your pairing partner, brainstorm ways you as a leader could use this as an opportunity to build clarity and confidence in this team member so they can make this decision on their own.

*Tip: Don’t just say “you make the call”!*
Conceptualizing Innovation

*The ability to foster innovation through high performing teams that challenge the status quo and create differentiating solutions*

- Create an environment that builds high performing teams
- Create the space for learning, creativity, exploring new ways of doing things, and relentless improvement
- Decentralize decision making (emancipate vs. empower)
- Encourage a questioning attitude over blind obedience
- Focus innovation on solving real problems
Discussion: Practice fostering innovation

- Think about your own organizational context and the degree to which it fosters innovation (or not).

- Using the suggestions on the previous slide, brainstorm with your pairing partner at least one practical action you can take immediately to encourage and enable greater innovation in your teams.