

**Purpose**  
*Driven*  
**People**

**Creating business agility  
& sustainable growth**

**Alize Hofmeester**

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# Foreword

1779. One thousand, seven hundred, and seventy-nine. That is how many hours an average American works every year<sup>1</sup>. Now add to that another 233 hours spent commuting to and from work<sup>2</sup> plus an uncountable number of hours spent checking email and you understand why we spend more time working than any other activity. Including spending time with our family. This is not a value judgment, merely a statement of fact.

Therefore, it would be uncontroversial to state that work is the biggest part of our life. And if so, it should also be one of the best parts of our life. This means that our work, no matter the job, should be engaging, valuable, and enriching. But most of all, it should bring a sense of purpose and ownership. Anything less is a waste of human potential.

Purpose defines who we are. It's the story of the janitor at NASA who, upon being asked by President Kennedy what his job was, replied 'I'm helping send a man to the moon'. And it's the ancient parable of the bricklayer who, upon being asked by a passing traveller what he was doing, declared that he was 'building a cathedral'.

When Alize asked me to write the foreword for her book, I started writing the first draft with all the statistics on the positive impact that purpose and empowerment have on employee engagement and retention – and ultimately business profitability. But those numbers all missed the fundamental point. Given how much of our lives we invest in our work, 'purpose' is as much a duty of care as it is a business benefit.

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1 OECD: <https://data.oecd.org/emp/hours-worked.htm>

2 US Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

What you hold in your hands is a book that will help you set up a business framework for this. To shift towards the things that really matter and find purpose.

I'd like to close this out by coming full circle to the start of this foreword. 1779 may sound like a lot of hours, but the good news is that the time spent at work has actually decreased since 1959. Down from 1968. That's another 189 hours back in our lives to spend with our family.

Evan Leybourn

Founder and CEO of the Business Agility Institute

# Preface

The waves break with force on the shore. Thick whirls of foam are blown onto the beach. The beach where I, many years ago, held a retrospective with a transition team, and where we concluded our agile transition. We were able to look back on an incredibly exciting year. A transition that was nothing like all the previous change projects. Here on the Dutch coast, in the same place where I am writing this preface now, we marked the end of a period by surfing the waves, charging ourselves up for new adventures ahead.

Successes need celebrating and that is what we as a team and I personally did far too little of during that first transformation. Instead, we just kept going and going and going, while our Agile Coach kept stressing the importance of setting priorities, applying focus, taking a breather, and eating. He taught us the tricks of the trade and what Agile and agility are truly all about. That it is not about being busy 24/7, but rather about working towards a shared goal. That it is about building up trust with your fellow team members, entering a state of flow together, based on the shared knowledge that what you are working on has meaning for others, colleagues and customers. Together, we learnt to change our mindset, abandoning the idea of silos and our blinkered focus on only our respective areas of expertise and replacing it with a broader focus on the bigger picture. If we were to do this, what would happen at the other side of the organisation? How would it affect the system?

With ups and downs, by experimenting and not being afraid to make mistakes, I also learnt to look at myself and think in terms of possibilities and alternative strategies instead of looking only at what is not

possible. And what was perhaps the most important thing I learnt was that I am personally responsible for the things I do or decide not to do. Reflecting on this, I discovered that I regularly avoided doing certain things because they were outside my comfort zone. It was simply a safe bet for me to just keep doing the things I always did. When that is your mindset, the question is how far that is going to take you. Are you working on the things that truly satisfy you and that create value for yourself and for others?

The moment I discovered my personal purpose, it became crystal clear to me what I am actually passionate about and where I want to create value. Having a personal purpose gives me a sense of direction and something to fall back on, because it captures who I am and what I stand for. My purpose and the encouragement from people around me are also factors that have made that this book lies before you now and that you are reading this preface. What it has brought me is courage to make different choices. That can be daunting at times, but overcoming something daunting is very rewarding and a tremendous learning opportunity.

As I was working on this book, I regularly stopped writing, thinking that everything I was writing was common knowledge already. But by now I know better. In my profession I still often encounter organisations that copy the model, structure, working methods of other companies that have already started on their transition towards business agility. What these organisations do not realise is that they actually are a totally different and unique organisation, department, or team, home to different people with an entirely different purpose. Trying to copy what others have done will only lead to their transformation grinding to a halt or failing miserably, which has serious consequences.

The journey to agility is about people and purpose. People are the beating heart of your organisation, of the system, and everyone is part of that system. Everything else is subordinate to that and should facilitate people to deliver value and be relevant. A transition to more agility takes time and may be uncomfortable. Learn from that discomfort and improve. Realising that the questions I keep getting as I lead business

transitions are the same questions I got many years ago, I decided to keep writing and share my story. To help people and organisations on their journey to business agility.

To me, the waves of the sea symbolise this transition. They are in a constant state of flow, continuously moving. Billowing tempestuously sometimes and washing gently against the shore other times. When standing in the sea, you feel the current pull you in. It is a current you cannot see, but it is certainly there. Picking a wave to surf is a voyage of discovery, of falling, getting back up, adapting, and improving. Nature, our ecosystem, and market volatility are unpredictable. The COVID-19 pandemic is a clear example of that. Like the unruly waves, these kinds of fluctuations are difficult to control for us humans. What we can learn, however, is how to deal with new situations, find alternative solutions, and discover new possibilities. Systems thinking and being agile will help us with that.

Leading various agile transitions has benefited me greatly on a personal level. It is the kind of experience I would like everyone to have. Enjoy reading all about Tess's experiences in this book, the insights that the transformation team gains during their journey, and the many stories and experiments from other experts who have lived agile transitions first-hand. Read and learn from the underlying theories and studies. Get started and explore the possibilities that exist in your organisation's system, and then experiment, learn, and improve continuously. Work together in building a unique organisation, network, system, or whatever you want to call it, and achieve agility, meaning, and sustainable growth.

I wish you lots of success and lots of fun during your own journey. I look forward to learning from your stories and experiments!

Alize Hofmeester





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# Introduction

We sometimes know better than the doctor what is wrong with us. We have access to a huge wealth of information and decide for ourselves what is relevant and what is not. We are in contact with people all over the world. We get updates from 'friends' on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and other networks. More than ever before, customers know exactly what they want and where to get it. If your company fails to meet customer demand or is late to the game, customers have countless other companies to choose from. The question is not *if* you are able to adapt, the question is how *quickly* you are able to adapt. How quickly are you able to respond to change to stay relevant and deliver value to your customers? You will be either a winner or a loser. You will be history or the future.

Changing and adapting to the times in which we live is by no means a new phenomenon. Neither is discovering new paths and landscapes. Strategy, tactics, and leadership are of all times, and humans are curious and inquisitive creatures by nature. The zeitgeist, environment, upbringing, group norms, culture, and much more such factors all impact on how we shape strategy, tactics, and leadership on an individual level. The discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus was, at the time, just as significant as the moon landing in 1969 or the discovery of a new potentially habitable planet by NASA (7 January 2020). In Columbus's age, there were undoubtedly people who considered him a hero and people who were sceptical and resisted. This is no different today. There are people who get very excited by the discovery of a new planet that may be hospitable to life, while others have their doubts and show resistance. We have all grown up with the discoveries and changes of the era in which we live, and so that is our frame of reference at that moment.

It is often said that when you are young, you are more flexible and find change easier to handle. Whether that is true remains to be seen. What is a proven fact however, is that the younger you are, the quicker your brain will learn new skills. That being said, even the youngest generations develop certain patterns and behaviour at a young age that end up being barriers to change. The system you grow up in, with its specific values, always influences your behaviour and thought patterns, either consciously or subconsciously. As you get older, it becomes harder to break these patterns, simply because of how our brain works. And so, it will on average take you longer to learn new behaviour. But that does not mean it is impossible.

Or is it just a matter of being patient? Whole generations now grow up surrounded by the latest technology and are used to getting a huge dose of information and triggers every day. In around forty years' time, it will all be second nature to us. We will be agile and respond automatically to whatever is new or changes. If you think that, you can put this book away now. If you do not think that, please keep reading. The thing is that there is something else going on, and to get to the bottom of that we first have to go into the history of how we work.

## **Where we come from**

In most literature, the history of work begins with Frederick Winslow Taylor. Although there were also evolutions in the pre-Taylor era that saw trades, guilds, and industries develop, Taylor's influence is still visible today and reflected in how we work and think. What happened between then and now that makes Taylor's theory so impactful?

In 1911, Taylor publishes his famous work *The Principles of Scientific Management*, arguing for drastic rationalisation and standardisation of production processes. Taylorism takes off in a big way and large factories pop up like mushrooms, ushering in the rise of mass production and production lines at plants such as Ford's - a radical change to our work practices. Organisations are divided up and work processes broken down into separate tasks. Employees are selected and trained for

specific tasks. It all results in mass deployment of poorly qualified and poorly paid workers working long days doing repetitive work. You will probably be familiar with the image of the large factory buildings where the first Fords were built, endless spaces filled with women ironing, or departments where the manager is sat high up on a raised platform.

It is the age of the birth of the manager. The thinking and the doing are separated. Hierarchical relationships become more visible and the gap between manager and employee grows. The figure of the employee is considered selfish, unsociable, someone who prefers to leave the thinking to the management. Any kind of autonomous thinking is removed from the work, depriving workers of development opportunities and giving them little job satisfaction. There is also the belief that workers are lazy by nature, and need extrinsic motivation to perform. The traditional hierarchical job classification system that is still around today at many companies dates back to this early Taylorist era, as does the carrot-and-stick principle of reward and punishment.

In a sense, behaviourism - a form of psychology that studies the perceptible behaviour of humans and animals, which has scientists such as Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, Edward Thorndike, John B. Watson, and Clark Hull as its primary exponents - developed on the back of these principles. Behaviourism assumes that people learn when desired behaviour is rewarded and undesired behaviour is punished or ignored, albeit only perceptible behaviour, as behaviourism does not deal with people's inner self or free will.

Skinner developed learning techniques that are reflected in how parents bring up their children and schools teach their pupils. These techniques are based on the assumption that you can learn different behaviour by reinforcing desired behaviour and punishing undesired behaviour. For example, a reward sticker for neat handwriting in a pupil's exercise book is intended to make sure she will keep up the good work. Digital arithmetic learning programmes also use this principle. As you get more arithmetic operations right, the programme starts to give you more difficult operations. This technique is also used by the gaming

industry. Every time you complete a certain level, you are rewarded with a pass to the next level.

From the days of Taylor through to the 1980s, behaviourism dominated how we thought about people and organisations. Even in today's organisations, there are still processes and bodies that are basically throwbacks to pre-1980s times, such as annual performance and rewarding systems, training and development, clock-in/clock-out systems, or time sheets. We design processes and frameworks that tell people how to do their jobs and how to behave. Based on the worst possible scenarios we can think of to scare people into toeing the line. Based on distrust and control.

## Different views of humanity

Around 1960, Theory X and Theory Y, developed by MIT Sloan School of Management professor Douglas McGregor, enter the scene.

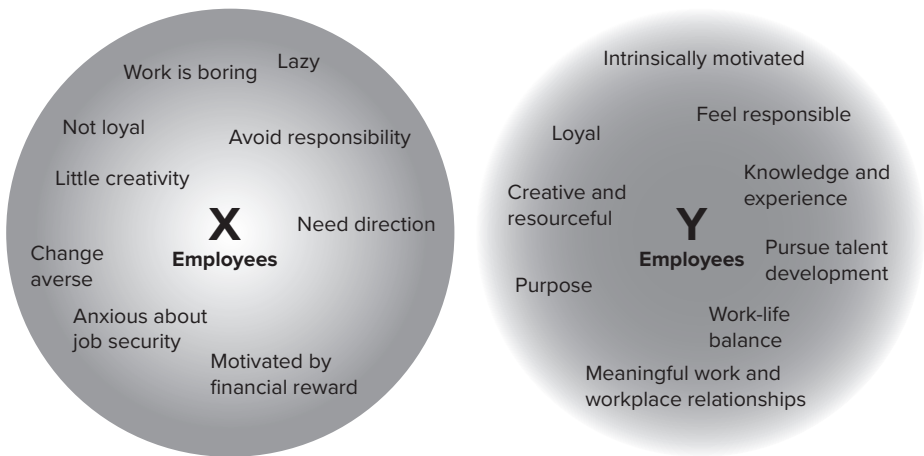


Figure 1. Different views on humanity. Based on Douglas McGregor's Theories X and Y

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are based on two contrasting views of humanity and how humans work in organisations:



Theory X outlines the approach adopted by the management of many an organisation, based on the assumption that people are lazy and essentially work avoidant. Theory X people are risk averse, have little ambition, and prefer not to take any responsibility. At a company that is run based on this principle, managers assume that all workers act only out of self-interest. They have a pessimistic view of workers and suspect that work is only a means of generating income for them. Whenever workers make mistakes, the manager's knee-jerk reaction is to reprimand them without considering that the mistake might have been down to the organisation's system or policy. This theory leads to a more authoritarian management style that assumes that workers can be motivated only through punishment, reward, and strict control.

Theory Y is based on the assumption that people are intrinsically motivated to work, and find enjoyment in work. The basic underlying idea is that everyone has major value-adding potential. People are disciplined and have a high level of self-control. An organisation that gives its workers scope for personal development and values its people's performance is an organisation that will achieve its organisational objectives. This theory reflects McGregor's vision of how people should work together in an organisation.

While Abraham Harold Maslow, an American clinical psychologist, started out as a supporter of behaviourism, he ultimately became the man behind humanistic psychology in the 1960s. Maslow and McGregor inspired each other in those years. As an advocate for Theory Y, Maslow ran an experiment based on this theory at a company, which ended up failing horribly. The experiment required too much of workers in terms of self-discipline and taking responsibility, and the freedom they were given ultimately led to chaos. In order to protect workers against themselves, a certain level of structure and leadership is needed. Maslow subsequently came up with a theory of needs, the famous hierarchy of needs, which is often depicted in the shape of a pyramid. The basic underlying idea of this theory is that needs drive people's motivation to act, and there is a hierarchical link between these needs. Lower-level needs must be met first, before someone can be motivated to meet higher-level needs. According to Maslow, it is pointless to have people

work on personal development, for example, when safety needs have not been met first.

Looking at your own organisation with the above theories in mind, where is it positioned in this arena of different approaches to what drives employees? Is your organisation able to respond to changes in society and changing needs and preferences of customers and employees? Or are there still traces of Taylorism in your organisation, as lingering footsteps in the sand?

## **Where are we headed?**

Now THAT is the big question. But perhaps we should first look at where we are today. With the emergence of all kinds of new technology, it almost seems as if we are shedding our blinkers, broadening our horizons. New forms of communication are not only making the world round, but also infinite. Boundaries fade, information becomes readily accessible and smart. Inventions follow each other in quick succession. Vlogging is a new career option for people. One million followers is nothing. Game after game is released. Racking up 50 million users within eight days is normal. One tweet that goes down badly and you are history.

The current situation pushes us even deeper into the digital revolution. The 'new normal' seems to be a boost for new technologies and different ways of working. Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), Virtual Reality (VR), big data, blockchain, and more such innovations increasingly overlap and are growing exponentially. As humans, we are unable to keep up with all these developments, let alone that organisations can respond quickly enough to the changing needs of customers and employees.

A call for change never comes on the back of just one trigger, and not solely on the back of the exponential growth in new technological possibilities either. Not only are we in the middle of a digital revolution that is forcing us, as humans and companies, to change, we humans are also

changing our approach to life and work, to what is important and what is not, and why. We want to do things that are meaningful. New and more widely accessible communication tools are making it easier for us to get in contact with people on other continents, and they even enable us to explore these continents. We can see with our own eyes what is going on economically, socially, and politically anywhere in the world.

And we are quicker to reach out to people outside our own immediate social circle. When Greta Thunberg attends the World Economic Forum to give a speech about the climate or whenever there are elections somewhere, we no longer depend on what the media want to show and tell us about it. We can find information ourselves, engage with people directly and instantly about things we want to see, and we do not think twice about joining a group, even if it is based on the other side of the world. The system that we are a part of is growing, which creates enormous potential on the one hand, but can also be daunting on the other.

New technologies create new possibilities for all companies, whether they were founded yesterday or a hundred years ago. The arrival of the smartphone and the subsequent development of all kinds of apps have paved the way for new customer contact. Customers can order products as and when they want. Fast, 24/7, and from anywhere in the world. It brings new forms of transport and traffic to shops and to consumers. The downside? Those small independent retailers in your local high street lose custom. If they fail to jump onto the online bandwagon or find another way to stay relevant to their customers, chances are they will have to close the shop.

Companies that are tuned into what matters to their customers and employees and that are agile hold the key to the future. Kodak is a classic example of a company that failed to see the need to change until the very end. Their business model had been successful for many years, and when Kodak did ultimately go digital, it was too little, too late.

We are now seeing companies emerge left, right, and centre that exclusively provide their products or services digitally, such as Picnic, one of the fastest growing online supermarkets that offers free home de-

livery using electric vehicles. Takeaway.com, an online food ordering and delivery marketplace, was the Netherlands' second fastest growing emerging company in 2019. The Slack app was originally intended as an internal email replacement for the company itself. As it turned out, the start-up had solved a problem that other companies also struggled with. They had stumbled on a need that they subsequently cleverly catered their product to.

Being smart and quick in responding to changing customer demand and needs is key for all companies. But it also means being absolutely clear on why you do the things you do, the way you do. Being clear on what you stand for and what you are all about. What is your purpose and what is your vision? And are the things you do actually still aligned with your purpose and vision? This implies that organisations will need to try out new ways of working. The spirit of our current age makes it even more important that we change our mindset on how we want to live and work together. True innovation furthermore requires companies to harness all the brainpower they have available, and not only the brainpower of the manager or director, as Taylor thought one hundred years ago.

It is high time that we took the digital transformation to the next level and created an agile, sustainable economy where wellbeing comes first. Hierarchical, top-down structures, working in silos, self-interest, control-driven management, processes that tell us what to think and how to work are no longer fit for purpose in the modern era. Over the past few years, we have already seen organisations switch to more agile organisational models and methods. System thinking, Lean, Agile, Holocracy, Teal, and Sociocracy 3.0 are introduced at companies here, there, and everywhere. Traditional, hierarchical job category frameworks are making way for so-called 'Spotify' models with tribes, squads, and chapters, the SAFE model with release trains or circles, and squares. Self-organising teams experiment with new ways of working like Scrum, Kanban and other 'Agile' methods.

Companies draw inspiration from each other, checking in to see and hear what others are doing in terms of agility and self-organisation.

What model are they using, and might we be able to implement the same model? Some companies literally copy best practices they saw elsewhere, albeit that they do not call it copying, of course. But what these companies often overlook is that the company they copy the model from may have been of an entirely different order of magnitude or operate in an entirely different market. They put their transition teams to work, either running a pilot first or going for the big-bang waterfall approach. After experimenting for a while, the conclusion that more and more people draw is, 'It doesn't work here,' or, 'We have been working with Agile for years but in actual fact it is just one department or a few teams who use the Scrum methodology.' If you dig deeper, it soon becomes clear that companies often lack a clear idea of their purpose and why agility will help them fulfil that purpose. Others want to change because 'everyone' is going agile and they do not want to be left behind.

## **Going agile... does it work?**

'Doing agile' is not the same as 'being agile'. There is more to agility than merely changing structures, processes, or work methods. Changing your job title from Manager to Lead will not instantly make you agile either. Agility is about sensemaking, equality, fire, passion, motivation, and encouragement, based on a core of trust, respect, and togetherness. At agile organisations, people and their purpose are centre stage. In these networks, thinking and doing are no longer separated, and everyone is part of the ecosystem.

So, does going agile actually work in real life? The Business Agility Institute's annual Business Agility Report gives us a look behind the scenes at 359 companies in different industries across the globe that are all on the path to business agility. Given the drastic changes the world has seen this year, the 2020 report presents several remarkable findings. Year on year, overall maturity has increased by 8%. COVID-19 has acted as a forcing function on organisations around the world that, with the exception of North America, reported an average maturity increase of 15% post COVID-19. While more data is required, companies believe that

improving business agility across the entire organisation made them more able to effectively respond to COVID-19 and therefore to changing circumstances. Factors such as the transformation of Human Resources, a focus on customer centricity, and the length of time spent on their business agility journey play a significant role in this.

Compared to the results of the same survey in the past three years, there are significant and encouraging outcomes at companies with a higher level of business agility. Key benefits of business agility are seen in the following areas:

- **Organisational benefits**  
Collaboration & Communication and Better ways of working
- **Commercial benefits**  
Speed to Market and Customer Satisfaction
- **Workforce-related benefits**  
Motivation, Employee Satisfaction, Ownership & Accountability, Agile Mindset and Adaptive Leadership
- **Faster adaption to COVID-19**

What stands out is the trend towards extending business agility into support functions, such as finance and HR. As you would expect, smaller companies are finding the change relatively easier going than major corporations. Alignment to a shared purpose, including external partners, cross-functional collaboration, and interpersonal communication are areas with the most significant impact on business outcomes. Aside from that, companies where C-level or the board leads the transformation state a higher level of maturity.

Transforming towards business agility is not something you do overnight, it is a journey. Although companies experience the positive outcomes of their Agile transformation, they also face some challenges to become truly business agile. The top 5 biggest challenges that participating companies face on this journey are: 1) the role and style of leadership, 2) mindset, 3) silos, 4) sponsorship and 5) culture. Various other studies and countless articles on the digital transition highlight these very same challenges. The results of the studies, experiences from real life and perhaps even from your own practices, as well as technological

and social developments, show that the question is no longer *why* we have to go agile but rather *how*. Ever since the rise of the world wide web, it has become impossible to imagine our lives without the digital revolution and the knowledge economy. It soon also led to the transition towards organisational or business agility. And the next step we need now is the step towards an economy that revolves around sustainability and wellbeing.

Making this step successful requires that we invest in the whole system, in breaking old patterns, and anchoring new behaviour. It requires that we invest in engaging in meaningful work relationships, in people. Once you experience the energy and flow that this produces in every single fibre of your being, you know that going agile works. And you will not want it any other way ever again, you only want more of it. In the following, I will explain how to get there, guided by the model of the People Journey Circle.





# The People Journey Circle

## What is it?

The People Journey Circle (PJC) is a unique, human approach that revolves around people and purpose that helps your organisation create a differentiating and inclusive journey towards the future of work. Differentiating because the People Journey Circle lets you design a unique change experience and sustainable change approach in your organisation. An approach that closes the gap between thinking and doing. An approach that brings people from all echelons of the organisation together and makes them part of the transition of the system. It is by no means a plan or blueprint that is set in stone, but it is about taking steps in a way that is short cyclical, almost organic, about tweaking and improving where necessary. Differentiating because every organisation, every department, every team, and every individual is different and has different needs on the path to the future of sustainable growth. And so, you want to be able to vary your approach, also because going agile works only when you actively shape and actually take these steps together with all employees across the organisation.

## Why?

Because from day one of the transition to agility, you will experience that things no longer work the way they always used to work. Tried-and-tested methods, structures, reorganisation methodologies, change models and processes fail to bring the change you need. This is why I use the word 'transition' instead of 'change' here, because there is, in my definition, a major difference. Change is forced upon us by an external cause, such as new legislation that requires people to change their

behaviour. This happened, for example, when the smoking ban came into effect. A transition, however, is made up of mutually reinforcing developments. Even though it may be your only option because your survival is at stake, a transition to agility is not forced on an organisation, it is a choice. It is a choice that impacts the whole system. You break the organisation down to its foundation and then rebuild it from scratch.

From my experience supporting organisations in agile transitions, interviews and meetings with employees and managers at a wide range of different companies, stories from people with first-hand involvement in such transitions, and from insights of companies who are on their journey to become agile (see also the above-mentioned 2020 Business Agility Report), we know that the biggest challenges and barriers to overcome are those in the areas of leadership, mindset, culture, sponsorship, and siloed structures and processes. Organisations find it hard to embed and convey all the values, principles, purpose, agreements, and so forth that they have put down on paper. This reality on paper needs to come to life and that is possible only when people at the organisation get behind the transformation and wholeheartedly choose to join in. It is about playing the long game, for which you are going to need the intelligence and brainpower of all of the organisation's employees.

At traditional organisations, we are not very used to teaming up with employees and perhaps even customers in shaping a transition. We are used to having a blueprint with a nice new structure to implement. We schedule an implementation date, switch from A to B, and Bob's your uncle. Experimenting at an organisation is tricky and, more importantly, comes with considerable risks. Teams are originally not self-organising bodies, but rather groups of employees who do what the manager tells them to do. True, this is putting it simplistically, but it is basically the truth. In many cases, the agile transition is indeed initially launched this way, but the cracks soon start to show, as the process begins to grate on people.

The predictable unpredictability means that there are no universal best practices to use as an example. This is when we figure out that what works at one organisation, department, or team, does not work or works differently at another. We build, experiment, and discover what works

along the way. And then we find that certain adjustments are needed after all. And so, it becomes a continuous process of three steps forward and two steps back, as we come up against all the above-mentioned challenges. When the pressure is on, it is extremely hard to stick with it. And when an exceptional threat arises from the ecosystem, such as a pandemic, organisations tend to revert to control and traditional management in a knee-jerk reaction.

In the 2019 Business Agility Report, the institute discovered three significant predictors of business agility based on a multi-year analysis of data. Organisations that report higher ratings in these three maturity measures also report higher overall business agility and associated benefits. Importantly, the 2020 Business Agility Report analysis reinforced that relentless improvement, funding models, and value streams remain the top-3 key predictors of business agility:

- **Relentless Improvement**

By encouraging a culture of learning and experimentation to thrive, organisations will continuously improve both what they do and more importantly how they do it, reducing costs, improving efficiency, and delivering greater value to customers.

- **Funding Models**

By funding business outcomes, rather than specific work outputs or projects, organisations can quickly and easily invest in new products or services as soon as market opportunities arise and, with the right governance, just as quickly stop or change work that is not delivering the expected business value.

- **Value Streams**

By designing flexible work processes that are both efficient and customer-centric, organisations can structure teams at all levels in a way that maximises value creation for the customer.

Working together across departmental and organisational boundaries brings growth. And sharing knowledge within the organisation and sourcing new knowledge from other companies and experts makes sure the growth becomes sustainable. This book and the model presented in it, the People Journey Circle, are based on this principle. The cases, experiences, and real-life examples presented are there to use

and run experiments at your organisation. You will learn to take a different approach to the challenges before you and how to overcome them, with the knowledge and intelligence of the future. This book will have you, not on your own from behind closed doors in an office, but together with employees, create your own unique approach for the journey to the future of work and sustainable growth.

## How to use the elements

The People Journey Circle is made up of seven elements: 1) People & Purpose, 2) Communication & Awareness, 3) Identifying Constraints, 4) Role Modelling, 5) Community Building, 6) Learning Organisation, 7) Ecosystem.

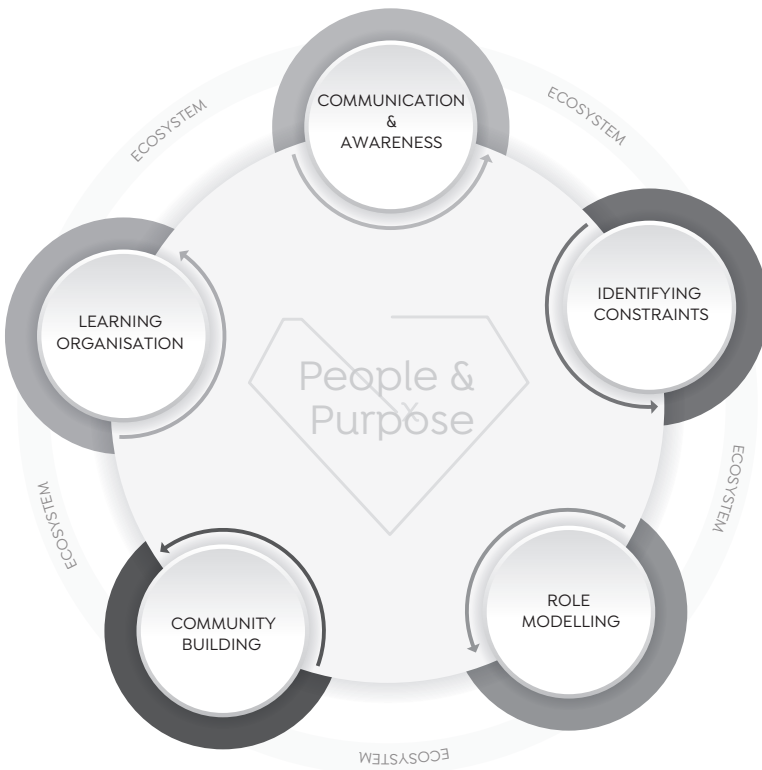


Figure 2. People Journey Circle ®

Each chapter will deal with one of these elements and start with an episode from the fictitious story of Tess, an experienced change agent at a telecommunications company (see Meet the team). At her company, she and her transition team are driving the organisational transformation from traditional top-down management of work practices, towards becoming an agile organisation. Her story illustrates what each element of the PJC entails. In each chapter, there is a section that goes into Tess's case and examples at other companies for a real-life perspective on the PJC element covered in that specific chapter. And there is more. This book is packed with loads of tooling, work methods for you to try out at your organisation. Each chapter closes with a review of a real-life case.

Normally, you start reading a book at the beginning. With this book, that is not really necessary. The PJC is agile in itself. You decide what is relevant to you and/or your organisation. At the end of this section, you will find an overview of subjects and issues by PJC element to help you choose where to start reading. If any one subject also requires knowledge of the other PJC elements, the chapter will refer you to the relevant other elements.

The approach presented in this book is based on people and purpose. Being the foundation of any organisation, network and system, people and purpose are at the centre of the PJC. Even if this is not something you initially wanted to learn more about, I still recommend that you always read the chapter about the People & Purpose element first. As you read and try out new things, always ask yourself this, 'Why am I doing this and why is it important?' And do so until it is completely clear to you that what you are working on actually matters. All other elements ensue from this basis and are closely interconnected.

If you plan on working on multiple elements, make sure you prioritise and define your focus. Chapter 3 provides methods that can help you with that. Determine what energises you and what energises the organisation. Setting priorities does not necessarily mean disregarding certain subjects altogether. It is merely a choice not to address certain subjects right now, but maybe later.

Feel like reading the story about Tess and the transition team first? Go ahead! Tess's story not only chronicles her and her team's journey to agility, it also shows how the transition team itself switches to an agile approach. It is a journey of experiments, pitfalls, challenges, lessons, and growth. Contrary to the book as a whole, the episodes of Tess's story should be read in order.

## **How the People Journey Circle options menu works**

- Below you will find ten statements, subjects, or issues for each element of the PJC. Go through them for your organisation, department, or team
- Rate your performance on each one on a scale of 1 to 10
- Add up your scores for each element to get a total performance score on that element
- Compare this score to the maximum achievable rating of 100
- Based on this score, choose where to begin

Example: let's say you get a perfect score of 100 on element 1, People & Purpose, and element 3, Identifying Constraints, but do less well on the other elements. What you should then do is look at how far apart the scores on the other elements are. If the scores are close together, start reading at Chapter 2, Communication & Awareness and go onwards. If, however, there is a great spread between the scores, start with the element with the lowest score and work your way up from there.

Tip: do this exercise with your whole team or department. Compare whether you all rate your performance on the elements the same and have the same ideas as to what you want to work on. To do this, every team member will need ten cards with the numbers 1 through 10 on them.

- With each question, everyone gives a score by putting one of the cards face-down on the table in front of them. So, at this point, you do not know yet what score everyone has given.

- Next, everyone turns the cards at the same time to make the scores visible for all to see.
- Ask the employees who gave the highest and the lowest score to explain why.
- Try to agree on a joint score through deliberation and explanation of the scores given. If you do not succeed, repeat the exercise.
- In the event that the scores are still far apart the second time, either take the average of the scores or repeat the exercise.

And finally, the PJC elements apply to the organisation, department, and/or team in its entirety. Any references to employees are references to everyone at the organisation, department, or on the team, i.e. including managers or leaders, unless stated otherwise.

**1**

## People & Purpose

**10**

- Our organisation has a clear purpose that exudes passion for customers, employees, and society (sustainable goals).
- All employees were involved in defining this purpose.
- Across the organisation, the purpose has been captured at departmental and team levels.
- Our purpose is what guides us and helps us set priorities in our work.
- We have formulated clear values and principles, and the associated behaviour, to match our purpose and inspire our customers and employees.
- We go further than just putting these values up on our walls, they are an integrated part of how we work together. There is a strong mutual understanding of the perception of these values.
- All employees have a personal purpose, which makes them and their talents more visible within the organisation.
- Activities are set out in roles instead of job profiles, making it easier for employees to assess which job best suits their skills and expertise.
- Employees decide for themselves whether to fulfil these roles for the long term or on a short-term basis.
- Our organisation has a good tool available to provide insight into activities and talents and to actively work on them.

- Our organisation has a clear storyline with a good description of the purpose, strategy, values, principles, and behaviours.
- This storyline also describes in very clear terms the 'WHY' of the need for agility.
- We actively communicate this storyline. Not only top-down, but also bottom-up.
- Our organisation is actively looking for and using other ways of communicating and use of language.
- We use recurring rituals/sessions for internal organisation, department, or team communications.
- We let each other speak and listen to each other to make sure that everyone is heard.
- We actively and regularly discuss what our values and principles mean to us as employees and how they are reflected in the way we serve our customers.
- We have an open mind towards and want to learn about different cultures, values, and standards to forge better mutual understanding.
- We manage collaborations and expectations, regularly evaluate any agreements made in this context, and stick to what we have agreed on.
- Communication is an important area of expertise for the organisation and our teams.

- At our organisation we regularly reflect on our work. We do that at team, departmental, and organisational level.
- Our purpose, values, and principles are a guideline for everything we do.
- Conflicts and resistance are open to discussion at all levels of the organisation.
- We listen with respect when a colleague shares experiences.
- Colleagues across the organisation actively help each other eliminate constraints.
- We evaluate results and discuss them within the organisation.