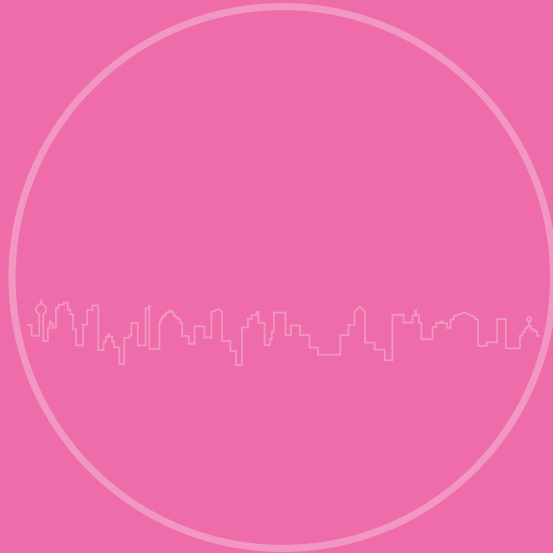


LE PARKOUR



Agility in established organizations


As employees of a large, established organization we have long been fascinated by the topic of agility – especially as exhibited by startup companies. **WITH NO SMALL AMOUNT OF JEALOUSY WE WONDERED TIME AND AGAIN HOW WE COULD FOSTER THIS TYPE OF SPIRIT WITHIN OUR OWN ORGANIZATION.**

Aware that we would not be able answer this question through abstract reasoning alone, we decided to conduct our own experiments. Along the way we took many false turns and encountered a variety of dead ends, all

of which lead our own organization, with its well regulated, clearly defined processes, to regard us as strange, almost quixotic figures. But we also had our share of successes that lead to increases in speed, efficiency, and job satisfaction. As a result we decided that our experiences were worth sharing in the form of this guide.

When we started out, it took us no time at all to compile pages upon pages of content – but one thing kept eluding us: the title. No matter how much we racked our brains, we could not come up with a something that

captured the essence of our findings. But rather than become discouraged, we decided that this was the perfect opportunity for yet another experiment in agile workflow. And so we looked for an owner — all technical terms are explained in the guide — and tasked him with writing a customer backlog and deriving a product backlog from it. Together with an agile team of four people and one master, we had eight working hours over the course of two days to deliver a marketing concept for the “sketchbook” — which was the working title of our presentation. At the



For better readability, we have foregone using masculine and feminine word forms simultaneously. All male descriptors apply to both sexes.

product presentation, the team showed us only the title page, accompanied by a video of Parkours athletes moving through a cityscape set to cool music. While the video played, they handed out bound guides that consisted of a cover and the aforementioned pages. The cover also adorned one of the walls, printed in three different color-variations. And while the approach didn't match our customer's original request, it was received with great enthusiasm because, finally, we had found our title. Parkours is a sport that got its start in the suburbs of France's metro areas. **IT INVOLVES DEVISING THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES LIKE WALLS, FENCES OR DITCHES.** The athlete moves through urban spaces free from the restrictions of architecture, planning or culture. **HE INDEPENDENTLY**

CHARTS HIS OWN PATH. IN FRENCH, A PARKOUR RUNNER IS CALLED A "TRA-CEUR", WHICH LITERALLY TRANSLATES INTO "SOMEONE WHO TRACES A LINE". THE EMPHASIS LIES ON MAINTAINING SPEED AND A CONSTANT FLOW OF MOVEMENT. Above all, Parkours is about letting go of established rules and strictures by intelligently surmounting obstacles in novel ways – which struck us as the perfect analogy to the way we were thinking about agility in established organizations. These definitions also helped us get a better grasp on the term "agility" and come to an important conclusion: **THE SPIRIT OF AGILITY THAT PERMEATES STARTUP COMPANIES CAN ONLY BE TRANSFERRED TO ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE USE OF THE RIGHT "CONCEPTUAL BRIDGE".** The result of this

thought-process is our guide, which is designed to assist all those who want to introduce agility into established organizations and/or understand the issue better.

ABOVE ALL, WE HOPE YOU WILL HAVE FUN EXPERIMENTING WITH AGILITY ON YOUR OWN — EVEN IN AN ESTABLISHED ENVIRONMENT!



As we took our first baby steps toward introducing agility into our own organization, we soon realized that there was an inherent bias for the stronger, more established system to prevail. Thus we advise those striving for agility to break out of pre-established patterns — just as Parkour athletes do when they learn various jumping, climbing and holding techniques to traverse established structures in new ways.

**IN THE CONTEXT
OF AGILITY, NEW
“TECHNIQUES”
INVOLVE VARIOUS**

PRINCIPLES



ELEMENTS



AND

ASPECTS





HOW CAN WE BECOME AGILE?

Based on our own experiences, experiments with practical implementations, and observations, we will describe the phenomenon of agility. **OUR FINDINGS ARE MEANT TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR INTRODUCING AGILITY INTO ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS:**

We will begin by describing the six principles on which agility is based in order to illustrate the mindset underlying our approach. This will be followed by six elements that clarify the necessary preconditions to creating agility. We will finish off with six aspects that pragmatically illustrate possible first steps for implementing agility. **BASED ON THIS, OUR GUIDE WILL REVEAL THE CHANGE IN MINDSET NECESSARY FOR CREATING A NEW, CONCRETE FRAMEWORK FOR INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION.**

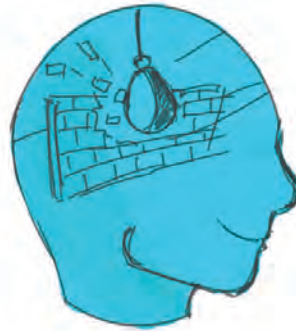
Agile processes oftentimes contradict current approaches in established organizations. This is one of the main reasons why their introduction can sometimes encounter massive resistance and prove to be difficult. **THE EXISTING ORGANIZATION FEELS CHALLENGED BY THE AGILE WAY OF WORKING.** Feelings of resistance within the establishment are oftentimes based on a perception that their behavior is being questioned in ways that may come across as overly critical and smart-alecky, especially when suggestions of new, more efficient ways of doing business implicitly point out the establishment's inefficiency. Succinctly put, the process of change can be very uncomfortable, hurtful, and lead to conflicts. In practice, when agility is introduced, established organizations exhibit massive, so-

metimes extremely creative resistance. Even after putting in almost a year's work, one agility team found its mandate more or less withdrawn when people stopped acknowledging them and consistently ignored their recommendations.

Below we will generally talk about products (= oftentimes projects) or business models that were created by using agile process models. In the context of an established organization, whose staff is mostly organized functionally or in a matrix, it is therefore important to first define the actual product or business model that will be affected by the new, agile procedures. And, to make it perfectly clear, this is not about, for instance, a single contract of the sales department with one customer, but the entire marketing strategy as it affects all customers.

PRINCIPLES

Established organizations often exhibit a high degree of trust in their process, which leads to agile projects being approached with the very same trust in their process. Unfortunately, this approach is highly counterproductive. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY FOCUSED ON WHAT'S ESSENTIAL: THE PRINCIPLES, ELEMENTS AND ASPECTS THAT DEFINE THE APPROACH.**



LIMITED
RESOURCES



PROPOSED
PRINCIPLES



MINIMAL
VIABLE
PRODUCT



CO-CREATION



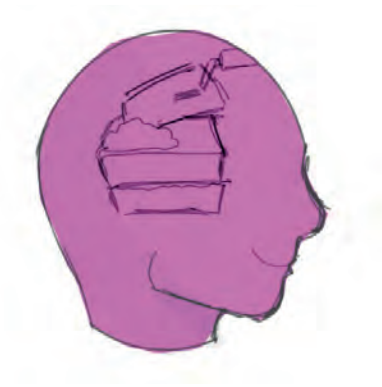
PIVOTING



NON-POSSESSIVE
LEADERSHIP



ELEMENTS



USERSTORY



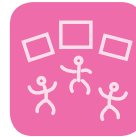
NO SPLITHEADS

ONE PLACE



FUNCTIONAL
DISSOLVEMENT

CLEAR MANDAT



SELF-
ORGANIZATION



ASPECTS



ROLES



STAND UP



BACKLOG



REVIEW &
RETRO



SPRINT



BURN DOWN
CHART

