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Agility in Business

Irrespective of the nature of your business, the way the world is moving every industry will have a software wing or a part of software managed in-house to support the daily operations within the enterprise and may be for the customers as well based on the nature of the business. With the volatile markets and fast changing customer needs, the only way for the enterprises is to be agile in the ways of operating so that it can not only survive but thrive in this world.

Business Agility is the key but what does it mean ? Does it mean that no processes should be there and you can change your direction quick and respond to market events asap?But then what about stability ? How will you assess the risk? How will you manage these changes at scale?

That's where the Agile framework comes into picture, it provides the appropriate structure along with processes and tools sufficient enough to harness the change in an organisation in its leanest form. These Lean Techniques are widely used in the software industry but its origination is from Toyota. Taiichi Ohno is considered the father of Toyota Production System which became Lean manufacturing under his guidance. Leaders of large organisations need a lean thinking mindset to operate at portfolio level and teams should use agile principles as their guide.

Teams in agile are self- organised, cross-functional and independent. They are arranged around the value rather than various functions in the organisation which is the traditional way of team structure. The mindset of the team leaders should be focussed on products rather than projects as famous author Mik Kersten has described in his book. These teams are

long lived and sees the product as a whole not just the development aspect rather thinks from the operations aspect as well. Customer is at the heart and the design thinking process is used to understand customers needs and behaviour. Empathy Map is an important tool which is used in this arena.

To realise the whole product delivery, multiple agile teams can work together if it's on a larger scale. Building alignment across different aspects becomes the key here and it is achieved by regular cadence and sync events which are defined by all the teams together not just be the leaders. In agile Leaders work on servant leadership theory which means they don't take control rather they build the autonomy and strive to serve their team or customers.

Leadership and business owners are also participants of cross-functional sync events so that transparency is there across the board and any impediments can be managed or communicated to everyone involved. An environment of trust and psychological safety is created so that individual team members can put their issues forward to be resolved rather than the fear of getting punished.

Time and space is created for them to sow the seeds of innovation and relentless improvement becomes the backbone of the organisation.