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7 Differences Between Agile Leader And Traditional Leader

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The difference between the Agile approach from traditional management approach requires different skills and characteristics for leadership positions.

The Agile approach *has become one of the most important pillars that help companies keep up with the conditions of the rapidly changing world. Both small and large-scale companies that want to carry out their business processes smoothly choose* ***Agile*** *and they change their way of doing business and thinking.*

The switch from traditional management approach to the Agile approach brings many changes. ***The Agile leadership roles*** *emerging in the companies make the Agile transformation happen. Just as traditional management and the Agile approach are different, there are also important differences between traditional leaders and Agile leaders.*

What are the characteristics and skills that Agile leaders should have? Why are they different from traditional leaders?



The Differences Between Agile Leadership and Traditional Leadership

1. Agile Leader Determines Goals

The Agile leader sets a common goal for the team and guides them towards it. In other words, s/he involves the team in the decision-making process, even mostly leaving decision-making to them. The Agile leader also helps the company to find **the value-added goals,** clearly define their framework and s/he trusts that the team will achieve these business goals. The integration of these goals into daily processes is also one of the tasks of the Agile leaders. In this way, these goals **become meaningful** for the team.

2. Agile Leader Manages Teams Not Individuals

The most important feature of Agile companies is **having multi-disciplinary and self-organizing teams.** The agile leader also creates an environment that helps individuals form functional teams. The work is assigned not to the individuals, but to the whole team. S/he ensures a feeling of trust within the team thus encourages efficient teamwork.

3. Agile Leader Focuses on Added-Value

Traditional leaders rely on data and metrics. The agile leader also focuses on another important point: creating added value for everyone. Agile leaders know that performance increase depends on **employee and customer loyalty,**therefore the most important criteria for them are productivity, motivation at the workplace and customer satisfaction. In traditional management, all processes are constantly documented, while Agile leaders do not limit processes to documents; they focus on the **improvement of these processes.**

4. Agile Leader Gives Feedback

In traditional management methods, annual performance assessments are done for each employee. But in the Agile approach, there is **continuous feedback.** Thus, good efforts are rewarded instantaneously. On the other

hand, when they are not good enough it can be noticed at early stages and can be corrected more quickly.

5. Agile Leader Distributes Responsibilities

The management structure in Agile companies is different from that of traditional companies. Those who play a key role in the establishment of this structure are the Agile Leaders. Decision-makers in traditional companies tend to impose these decisions on people working under them. Meanwhile, in the Agile approach, new roles emerge because Agile leaders **eliminate job classification.** Hence, they create engagement by spreading responsibilities to the whole organization.

6. Agile Leader Establishes Open Communication

Agile leaders establish **open and transparent relationships based on trust** both within the teams and among all stakeholders. Since the responsibilities in traditional companies are individual and the management style is based on a subordinate relationship, trust cannot be easily achieved. On the other hand, the Agile leaders create the necessary environment to improve the processes through constructive discussions and make decisions together with the teams. Considering the customer as a team member, they include them in the processes and ensure their trust.

7. Agile Leader Does Not Seek Perfection

In traditional forms of management, it is necessary to choose the 'best' when hiring. A perfect candidate with a perfect resumé and perfect work experience is sought. Agile leadership means adopting **Agile HR approach.** This focuses on the strengths of a candidate and how they can be an added value for the company. Agile leaders allow the company to benefit from these strengths of employees.

If your company didn't adopt the Agile approach yet you may consider getting an Agile training and start to experience the advantages of Agile leader and teams in your company.

Comment & Questions

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About

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