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COMPETENCIES OF AN  
**AGILE LEADER**

By Agile Cockpit

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# INTRODUCTION

Agile Leaders have an inclusive and a collaborative mindset. They understand the needs of their employees and colleagues to effectively perform their responsibilities and acknowledge the individuality of people. Agile Leaders appreciate constant change and use it as an opportunity to learn and grow. The basic difference that sets apart an Agile Leader from a traditional leader is that an Agile Leader does not, in any sense, control or manage their employees. They have an 'Agile' mindset. Agile Leaders must have a specific set of competencies in order to stand out in their role and be a leader par excellence.

Competency Framework basically defines the behaviors for successful and excellent performance in a role. Each competency is defined and a set of 'behavioral indicators' are identified in order to understand what each competency actually means and what it is that one needs to do to develop or improve on a given competency.

## What is Agile Leadership Competency Framework?

Our Agile Leadership Competency Framework strives to articulate the expected behavioral patterns that are required to be a successful Agile leader. It comprises of specific definitions and the exact behavioral indicators which provides a standard to identify, develop and improve the Agile Leaders' competencies for successful performance and to holistically develop their Agility.



# OVERVIEW OF THE COMPETENCIES

## Personal Agility

The ability to be self-aware and have a realistic view of one's own strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement.

## People Agility

The ability to understand and relate to other people and collaboratively work with them in dynamic situations to harness and multiply collective performance.

## Stakeholder Agility

The ability to leverage data to understand and validate stakeholder's/customer's assumptions and hypotheses and ensure complete stakeholder/ customer satisfaction.

## Results Agility

The ability to deliver valuable results in short iterations by inspiring teams and enabling the organization to execute long-range strategic plans.

## Change Agility

The ability to identify and seize opportunities in a consistently changing environment and enabling teams to contribute to change.

## Mental Agility

The ability to think critically to deal with complex problems and expand possibilities.

## Innovation Agility

The ability to focus on untested hypotheses and validate their relevance through continuous experimentation to trigger creative discovery and innovation.

## Systems Agility

The ability to embrace, encourage and follow systems thinking, agile values, principles and practices.



# PERSONAL AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader constantly works towards reflecting on, recognizing and self-challenging personal assumptions and perceptions. The Agile Leader gives people the power of vision instead of instructions, even while working in less known or untested business environments. The Agile Leader creates a culture in their organization where there is time and space for reflection, and where it is “safe to fail”. The Agile Leader establishes this by using short iterations, and thus creates an environment in which learning from experiences and early validation of business needs, solutions and ways of working is established.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Reflects upon, recognizes and self-challenges one’s personal assumptions and perceptions and how it impacts the employees and teams.
- ▶ Empowers the teams towards the vision rather than giving instructions while working towards untested hypotheses.
- ▶ Creates a “safe to fail” environment by looking for learnings and future improvements.
- ▶ Reflects on improving iterative discovery while learning through experiences and ensuring early validation of business needs, solutions, and ways of working.





# PEOPLE AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader has a people-oriented approach which focuses on developing the teams and employees by helping and empowering them to enhance their personal talents. The Agile Leader fosters multi-disciplinarity by striving towards T-Shaped (Specialist in one area, but collaborates to other fields also), Pi-Shaped (broad knowledge of all areas, but expert in 2 areas) and M-Shaped (high-performance cross functional) personal profiles. The Agile Leader encourages and coaches people to take up a team-oriented mindset in which talents are valued and handicaps are accepted.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Establishes high performing teams which are cross-functional and capable of end-to-end delivery.
- ▶ Encourages team focus so that there are dedicated team members to accomplish the goals.
- ▶ Empowers people to enhance their personal abilities by striving towards T-shaped, Pi-shaped and M-shaped personal profiles.
- ▶ Shapes the Agile environment by focusing on removing organizational impediments like, interdependencies between teams, functional silos, unrealistic deadlines, over or under allocation of teams' capacities.
- ▶ Coaches team members to take up a team-oriented mindset.



# STAKEHOLDER/CUSTOMER AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader is constantly in search of iterative validation of early business results and discovery of emerging value opportunities. The Agile Leader is able to critically reflect upon, evaluate assumptions and hypotheses of stakeholders/customers while leveraging and validating with data to understand and predict stakeholder/customer needs. The Agile Leader ensures value flow to the stakeholder/customer in short iterations thereby decreasing the time to market and time to learn.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Ensures iterative validation of early business results based on stakeholder/customer feedback.
- ▶ Critically reflects upon and evaluates assumptions and hypotheses of stakeholder/customer.
- ▶ Validates stakeholders'/customers' assumptions with data to understand and predict their needs.
- ▶ Focuses on innovations and improvements that will drive the stakeholder/customer experience forward.
- ▶ Ensures quick response based on stakeholder/customer feedback to provide value to them.
- ▶ Enables value flow to the stakeholder/customer in short iterations thereby decreasing the time to market and time to learn and validate.



# CHANGE AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader identifies and seizes opportunities in the business environment faster than the competitors through rapid iterative delivery of early results and continuously improving and validating why's, what's and how's. The Agile Leader also evaluates and anticipates future possibilities and challenges and enables continuous testing of hypotheses.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Anticipates emerging challenges and opportunities through fast iterative delivery of results.
- ▶ Strives and empowers the employees and teams to continuously improve and validate the why's, what's and how's.
- ▶ Views the challenges with fresh perspective with a willingness to rethink past assumptions and enabling testing of hypotheses in short iterations.
- ▶ Energises and enables employees and teams to take responsibilities and contribute to change.





# RESULTS AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader ensures establishing and maintaining a rigorous and short cyclic rhythm in the organization that is focused on fast delivery of working and valuable results, especially in dynamically changing business scenarios. The Agile Leader does this by inspiring employees and teams, and enabling the organization to maintain momentum on the execution of long-range strategic plans through shorter, iterative implementation cycles, validating and meeting both immediate and long-term needs. The Agile Leader has an almost obsessive strive for fast and frequent delivery of value and creating customer impact.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Follows business objective setting approach with stretched goals.
- ▶ Quickly deduces who and what it will take to get valuable results for stakeholders/ customers.
- ▶ Reduces the time to tangible value and expected results achieved.
- ▶ Helps the organization maintain momentum on the execution of long-range strategic plans through shorter, iterative implementation cycles, meeting both immediate and long-term needs.
- ▶ Enables the ability to pivot or adjust course proactively and reactively to adapt to frequent changes in both internal and external environments.



# MENTAL AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader embraces unpredictability and unexpectedness while anticipating, validating and expanding possibilities. Rather than striving for the creation of predictable plans, the Agile Leader always focuses on the goals and the outcomes and turning them into realistic short-term opportunities through iterative discovery and fast delivery of results. The Agile Leader embraces continuous change and starts to become suspicious when things are running stable, smoothly and predictably according to plan.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Anticipates and acts on situations that don't always have clear-cut answers.
- ▶ Accepts failures as feedback signals, quickly iterate and validate the assumptions.
- ▶ Focuses on goals and outcomes to turn them into realistic opportunities.
- ▶ Enables business outcomes through iterative discovery and faster delivery of results.
- ▶ Embraces unpredictability and unexpectedness as opportunities for fast delivery of results and early learning.



# INNOVATION AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader focuses on untested hypotheses and validating their relevance through experimentation. The Agile Leader continuously strives to embrace and exponentially increase and encourage experimentation to trigger creative discovery and innovation. The Agile Leader knows that innovation and creativity cannot be planned, but can be stimulated through experimentation, fast delivery of results, and continuous customer feedback.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Actively engages diverse stakeholders/customers, influencing and learning from them at the same time.
- ▶ Examines situations from multiple perspectives and to “connect the dots” between seemingly disparate issues allows them to generate novel strategic insights.
- ▶ Embraces design thinking and business model innovation by viewing each team as a value creating unit or as a “business”.
- ▶ Encourages short-cyclic experimentation to trigger creative discovery and innovation.



# SYSTEMS AGILITY

Definition: The Agile Leader embraces and encourages systems thinking and Agile values, principles and practices by reflecting upon and validating the assumptions and hypotheses and applying root-cause analysis and corrective action measures. The Agile Leader takes a long-term view, investing in enabling capabilities such as infrastructure, practices, and tools and training that lead to faster value delivery and higher quality and productivity.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Exhibits and encourages systems thinking and Agile values, principles, and practices.
- ▶ Engages in solving problems and eliminating roadblocks and ineffective internal systems.
- ▶ Reflects upon, validates and applies root-cause analysis and corrective action techniques.
- ▶ Collaborates with the employees and teams to reflect at key milestones and identify and address shortcomings.
- ▶ Takes a long-term view, investing in enabling capabilities such as infrastructure, practices, and tools and training that lead to faster value delivery and higher quality and productivity.



## ABOUT US

Agile Cockpit is a Dutch Software & Consulting firm with its offices in the Netherlands, UK, US and India and provides its services across the globe. Our mission is to create high performing digital enterprises and to achieve this, we offer - Software, Consulting and Training services. Discover our global data-driven experience and increase the impact of your Agile journey today!

For questions or more information you can contact us at [info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)

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