

**HOW CULTURE THREATENS AGILE:
THE 7 DEADLY DYSFUNCTIONS
OF ORGANIZATIONS
&
HOW TO FIX THEM**

**APARNA SURESH, M.A, M.S, CSM®, CSPO®, CBAP®
LEAD BUSINESS SYSTEMS ANALYST, FIRST AMERICAN TITLE**

WHAT IS CULTURE?

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- **Organizational culture** is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs.
- These shared values influence how people dress, act, and do their jobs.
- Culture dictates **HOW** people **BEHAVE** in organizations.

WHAT IS STRATEGY?

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- An **organizational strategy** is the plan a company intends to execute to achieve long-term goals.
- Organizational behavior should be driven by organizational strategy.

STRATEGY VS. CULTURE: WHO WINS?

Organizational behavior should be driven by organizational strategy.

vs.

Culture dictates HOW people BEHAVE in organizations.

WHY DOES CULTURE MATTER?

“Culture EATS Strategy
for Lunch!”



**#1 BUSINESS
DOES NOT 'GET'
AGILE**

#1 BUSINESS DOES NOT 'GET' AGILE: SYMPTOMS

- Business stakeholders with competing priorities/interests
- Unrealistic expectations
- 'Gotta-have-it-now' Fires

#1 BUSINESS DOES NOT 'GET' AGILE: CONSEQUENCES

- Scope creep every sprint
- Team caught in the middle
- Overworked team/Failure to deliver

#1 BUSINESS DOES NOT 'GET' AGILE: SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#1 BUSINESS DOES NOT 'GET' AGILE: SOLUTION

- Chief product owner with 'teeth'
- Mandatory Agile training/education for business stakeholders
- Scrum Master with 'teeth'



**#2 MANAGEMENT
DOES NOT 'DO'
AGILE**

#2 MANAGEMENT DOES NOT 'DO' AGILE: SYMPTOMS

- Senior Management insists team accept 'side projects'
- PMO tries to 'direct' team
- Prioritizing non-value added work

#2 MANAGEMENT DOES NOT 'DO' AGILE: CONSEQUENCES

- Team has no say in scope of sprint
- Overworked and demoralized team
- Quality of critical work drops

#2 MANAGEMENT DOES NOT 'DO' AGILE : SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#2 MANAGEMENT DOES NOT 'DO' AGILE: SOLUTION

- Each Side Project = Sized Interruption story
- Scrum Master with 'teeth'
- Enlist Top Management Support with ear to the ground



**#3 FOSTERING
UNHEALTHY
COMPETITION**

#3 FOSTERING UNHEALTHY COMPETITION: SYMPTOMS

- Comparing velocities of 2 teams
- Managers playing show-off
- Theory X Managers doubling down on team

#3 FOSTERING UNHEALTHY COMPETITION: CONSEQUENCES

- Lowers team morale
- Ups chances of velocity being gamed
- Reduces collaboration between teams

#3 FOSTERING UNHEALTHY COMPETITION: SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#3 FOSTERING UNHEALTHY COMPETITION: SOLUTION

- Measure and grow 'Agile IQ' of organization
- Recognize and Reward agile-savvy managers
- Refuse to 'play the game'



**#4 MAXING OUT
CAPACITY AT
START OF A
SPRINT**

#4 MAXING OUT CAPACITY AT START OF A SPRINT: SYMPTOMS

- Overworked team
- Disruptive interruptions
- Scrum master ignores Murphy's Law

#4 MAXING OUT TEAM CAPACITY AT START OF SPRINT: CONSEQUENCES

- Sets up team for failure
- Fails to account for real life uncertainties
- Fails to acknowledge nature of agile discovery

#4 MAXING OUT TEAM CAPACITY AT START OF SPRINT : SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#4 MAXING OUT TEAM CAPACITY AT START OF SPRINT : SOLUTION

- Allocate no more than 70% of capacity during iteration planning
- Tie Team Capacity to Project Health Indicators to raise visibility
- Better agile project planning with buffers



#5 TOXIC RETROSPECTIVES

#5 TOXIC RETROSPECTIVES : SYMPTOMS

- Retrospective used to assign blame/pass the buck
- Bucket List of Action Items
- You can cut the tension with a knife

#5 TOXIC RETROSPECTIVES: CONSEQUENCES

- Team dreads retrospectives
- Lower team morale
- People vote with their feet

#5 TOXIC RETROSPECTIVES: SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#5 TOXIC RETROSPECTIVES: SOLUTION

- Get a more effective scrum master
- Enforce no 'A**hole' Rule within team
- Stick to a really short list of action items – even just one and get it done



**#6 BAD POWER
STRUCTURES
WITHIN AGILE
TEAM**

#6 BAD POWER STRUCTURES WITHIN AGILE TEAM: SYMPTOMS

- Scrum Master = Functional Manager
- Development Lead = Functional Manager
- Product Owner = Functional Manager

#6 BAD POWER STRUCTURES WITHIN AGILE TEAM: CONSEQUENCES


- Truth is the first casualty
- Fairness is the next
- Retrospectives are the last nail in the coffin

#6 BAD POWER STRUCTURES WITHIN AGILE TEAM: SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#6 BAD POWER STRUCTURES WITHIN AGILE TEAM : SOLUTION

- Ask for expert help – get an Agile Coach
- Volunteer to rotate Scrum Master role between team members
- Ramp up on negotiation and conflict resolution skills



#7 BLIND BELIEF IN METRICS

#7 BLIND BELIEF IN METRICS: SYMPTOMS

- Excessive time spent on non-value added activities
- Retrospectives focus on metrics, metrics, metrics
- Unexpected and unpleasant side effects

#7 BLIND BELIEF IN METRICS: CONSEQUENCES

- What can be measured can be massaged
- People will focus on what is rewarded – the metrics, not the work
- Can reduce collaboration

#7 BLIND BELIEF IN METRICS: SOLUTIONS?

What worked for you?

#7 BLIND BELIEF IN METRICS: SOLUTION

- Be careful what you measure: “As you measure, so shall you reap!”
- Get an Agile Coach to determine what should be measured and more important what shouldn't
- Decide carefully what metrics should be made visible, to whom and why



Q & A