

Editors' message

Dear Members,

We BCS Sri Lanka Section published a news letter on behalf of the SL Section as a mark of 20th year of BCS Sri Lanka Section. This is with the intention to communicate with the membership periodically, update the members on the activities carried out by the Section and knowledge update for the membership as part of member benefit.

We are currently releasing the 8th volume of the newsletter. Our releases are targeted towards a specific special interest groups. The volume 1 focused on eCommerce & Internet, Volume 2 focused on Application Development & Management, Volume 3 focused on IT Security & Cyber Law, Volume 4 on Management, Volume 5 on GDPR, Volume 6 on Data Science, Volume 7 on Digital Workforce and the Volume 8 on Agile.

Thank you very much for all the encouragement and appreciation extended in this regard through email and in all other means. We hope you will continue to support us on this initiative.

Please send us your feedback to nirmalan@bcssrilanka.org we will try our best to keep up with it.

N Nirmalan
Editor Newsletter, BCS Sri Lanka Section.

Message from the Section Chairman

The month of October is an important month for the BCS Sri Lanka section. There are three key activities that are happening in October, National ICT Awards – NBQSA on the 11th of October, the first ever analytics conference on the 14th of October and the BCS graduation ceremony on the 15th of October. The president of BCS Mr. Michael Grant would be visiting Sri Lanka and would participate in all three events.

The National ICT Awards recognizes the best ICT products in Sri Lanka each year, the BCS Sri Lanka Section has been organizing this on a continuous basis since 1998. Most of the top ICT companies in Sri Lanka have taken part in the competition over the past 21 years. Winners of the competition are selected to take part in the Asia Pacific ICT Awards. In recent times the amount of data collected by enterprises have increased and the need for data analyses keeps improving, with even smaller companies investing in data driven decision making. BCS Sri Lanka section is creating the first ever BCS Sri Lanka data analytics summit. The BCS summit would give participants to hear the thoughts of industry leaders, success stories of analytics implementation and vendor product presentations from multiple vendors.

The final BCS event for the month in my opinion is the most important, the BCS gradation ceremony, where we witness and celebrate new entrants to the field of computing with a solid education qualifications. I do hope some of you would be able to attend these events. The BCS web sites gives the details.

I am happy to see agile as the topic for the 8th edition of the news letter. Agile has its advantages and pitfalls, which are highlighted. I hope you would enjoy the issue.

Mr Ransith Fernando
Chairman – BCS the Chartered Institute for IT Sri Lanka Section

Articles

Beyond Agile: Why Agile Hasn't Fixed Your Problems

By Jurriaan Kamer
Partner, Organizational Design and Transformation Consultant at The Ready, and Author of Formule X.

Most organizations today are slow, bureaucratic and broken. Employees, executives, stakeholders, and customers are unhappy. Agile is seen as the remedy, the magic cure that will solve all the problems. And after all, everyone is doing it, so why shouldn't we?

Adopting Scrum, Kanban or other agile practices is a great way to start fixing the organization: it puts the focus on learning and iterating instead of planning and predicting. It helps you move away from the hierarchical model to a more networked model of autonomous teams. But it is [far from a silver bullet](#).

At The Ready we have learned that a lot more is needed to unlock organization-wide agility and become future-proof. The truth is that most agile transformations fail to deliver what is promised. On several occasions we were asked to repair a failed attempt to bring agility and responsiveness into the organization.

What we often see is that organizations try to adopt agile in a way that is fundamentally at odds with the underlying mindset that it tries to introduce. Here are some of our observations.

Top-down agile doesn't work, it simply creates a new command-and-control structure

The [agile manifesto](#) and its [12 principles](#) provide a lot of wisdom of how to effectively create value in organizations. The manifesto tells us to 'build projects around motivated individuals ... self-organizing teams ... and trust them to get the job done'. However many organizations and leaders end up adopting agile frameworks with the same plan-and-predict mindset they've always had.

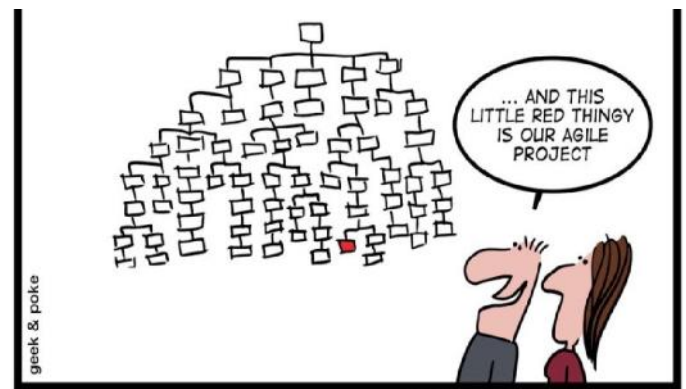
Too frequently, the old, centralized, command-and-control system of management remains in place. When using Scrum, product owners mandate project scope and deadlines, and Scrum Masters assign tasks to team members. Now that backlogs have become transparent, even more time is spent on long-term upfront planning than before. The detailed plans and estimations need to be approved by oversight committees, whose main job is to "align" the agile teams. Time of team members is tracked in detail, and

people are summoned to explain if there is a deviation of the plan. Failure leads to blame, instead of learning and innovation.

Teams suffer from slow decision making processes and policies that are incompatible with agile. Many teams never actually interact with a customer but end up executing whatever management tells them what to do. They are [not empowered](#) to decide what makes most sense for the customer or bottom line. It's almost impossible to get approval for great ideas that originate within the teams themselves.

"I tried to be innovative once, but I got stuck in meetings." — source unknown

We can't deal with the increasing world of complexity and unpredictability by doing more controlling, planning and prediction — even if we're "doing agile." We have to let go of our linear, reductionist mindset and instead aim for self-management enabled by [servant leadership](#). The leader's new job is to work *on* the system, creating a healthy environment in which people can grow and results can happen.



FINALLY WE'RE AGILE!

Comic by [geek & poke](#)

Agile is not a fixed end-state, it's a way of being

The agile manifesto told us to value 'individual and interactions' over 'processes and tools'. And yet, agile has become a jungle of tooling vendors and consulting companies selling frameworks that are implemented as a static blueprint.

Agile becomes the new 'standard process' and the attention shifts to implementing and enforcing the agile practices. Maturity models and reports are created to measure how much of the teams are complying to the new way of working. Doing 'agile right', while ignoring the underlying values and principles, will not lead to agility.

We are often asked “what does the organization look like when the transformation is completed?” That’s the wrong question. If you’re looking for a new fixed end-state, you’re missing the point of agile. To keep up with a fast changing world, the organization needs to change continuously — it needs to be agile everywhere. Successful organizations are like shapeshifters or chameleons. They go beyond agile practices. The organization is being ‘worked on’ every day, with everyone’s input, all the time.

Agile doesn’t fix your problems, it shines a light on them

Agile shines a light on the real problems of the organization but doesn’t necessarily offer a way to fix them. Agile is designed to make teams faster. This additional speed will put more pressure on the system, revealing the leaky pipes which then need to be fixed.

Very often the leaks are so deeply embedded in how the organization works that even the most experienced executive will be unable to fix them. Things that **commonly need to be changed** are decision making, prioritization, resource allocation, policy enforcement, performance management and organizational structure. Chasing such a big org-wide change can pose a risk to the person’s career progression or reputation in the organization even when that person is already at the top.

Scrum, Kanban and other agile methods can help organizations become more agile in pockets. But eventually these efforts plateau, and even stall, as they reach organizational constraints. The problem is not the people or their skillset, but legacy structures, practices, policies and even culture that reinforce old mindsets and patterns. If these stay in place, agility will remain constrained.

	Practices	Practices & Mindset
Whole organization	<p>Top-down agile organization</p> <p>“We are implementing a new agile organization structure. All teams are agile because they must do a daily stand-up and a monthly sprint.”</p>	<p>Responsive organization</p> <p>“Our way of working is always changing and adapting to the market needs. Everyone is always involved in improving the organization.”</p>
IT department	<p>Cargo cult agile IT</p> <p>“The requirements phase will take 3 sprints, and then we will do 10 sprints to execute the project. Putting it to production is another 2 sprints.”</p>	<p>Agile IT in a culture bubble</p> <p>“We refuse to jump to their bureaucratic hoops because we are agile. <i>They</i> just don’t get it so let’s ignore their stupid process.”</p>

Agile lacks the language to go beyond IT

Agile's aim was to "uncover better ways of developing software", and it did. Nowadays, it is successfully applied to other disciplines and other places where people work in teams to achieve a goal together. But because of its origins, it continues to be seen as the latest *tool* that we can use to execute IT projects successfully. The manifesto and its practices lack the language to get what we desperately need: a mindset shift in the way we organize work in the 21st century.

To bridge this gap, we like to articulate agile principles in broadly relatable language. These principles and questions will help you move from 'doing agile' to 'being agile'.

Vulnerability over Professionalism

Bring your whole self, call it like you see it, stay open.
Do we talk about our emotions? How can psychological safety be enhanced?

Trust over Verification

Give your colleagues the benefit of the doubt (or get new colleagues).
Are people told what to do or can people self-organize and decide how to work?

Consent over Consensus

Make decisions "safe to try" and move forward.
What can be done to improve the speed of decision making?

Progress over Perfection

Have a bias for action, learn as you go, iterate.
Do we try to get it right the first time, or have we adopted a mindset of making every step as small as possible?

Doing the Work over Discussing the Work

Go try something, get some data, come back.
How can we make meetings more effective and reduce the time spent on them?

Participation over Power

Seek cognitive diversity, perspective taking, engagement.
Do we ask for everyone's input on how the organization can be improved? Can we let people decide for themselves what to work?

Open over Closed

Embrace transparency, let information flow, work in public.
Does everyone has the information they need? Can we provide clarity and improve transparency of priorities?

Sprints over Big Moves

Take small bites, timebox, steer continuously, commit to a cadence.

Do we steer continuously or are we still making long-term plans?

So as a leader, when I feel 'yes this is true for me', what should I do?

Do small experiments and learn how change happens in your organization. Learn what your people need. Point your agile toolkit at the organization itself. Don't stay stuck in dogmatic agile practices. Let them bend and flex in order to serve you better. Start asking your teams what is holding them back from doing the best work of their lives. Ask them for suggestions to change the organization.

Imagine leading an organization where everyone is engaged in making the organization better every day. I recently saw a quote from a [LinkedIn update](#) that perfectly encapsulates this idea.



Rick Molenaar

Chief Information Officer at Travelstart
4mo · Edited



For the last 2 weeks we have given total control to our engineers to make their own decisions on how to organize themselves as well as what to work on. The only request was that they would try to improve one of our key business performance indicators. The results were amazing... Our App, website and backend tooling have seen some amazing improvements that have a real impact and improve our customers experience as well as our own. Both the team as well as management were really excited about the opportunity of self organizing teams that combine business experience with data analysis and engineering power. The start of a good day and an even brighter future for Travelstart and its customers..

Too often organizations think becoming agile is something that needs to be added on top of what they already do, when in reality, as Rick states above, it's more about unlocking the potential that already exists.

Don't stay stuck in top-down agile. Instead, adopt an agile mindset and start addressing the deeper and more fundamental challenges in your organization.

Activities took place with BCS SL Section

Business Engagement Activities – Business opportunity created for Srilankan companies

BCS Srilanka section gave Srilankan companies an opportunity to participate in the development of APICTA website to all the NBQSA participants and all the members of the BCS Srilanka section community. Nearly 25 companies expressed their interest in participating in the tender process of APICTA. There were 4 Srilankan companies among the shortlisted 6 companies for the initial selection, and one srilankan company came to the final round, out of 2 companies chosen.

BCS Srilanka Section : Congratulate these companies in their achievements.

NBQSA Activities

NBQSA 2019 started with the launch on the 1st of July 2019, with the participation of the minister of IT Infrastructure, at the Hilton Colombo Residencies.





The judges briefing and participant briefing also took place during the first week of August with great participation.

The applications were evaluated and the winners selected and, the NBQSA 2019 awards ceremony is to be held on 11th Oct 2019.