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Musings

#63: Go Agile May 25, 2020

In the software development world, a growing number of companies deploy the “agile” process. In the agile process, the overall task of writing the code is broken down into smaller increments or “sprints” versus one huge project. Agile develop then provides optionality as the team steps back after every sprint and evaluates where they are and what adjustments need to be made. Part of agile coding is also the use of a “scrum” where an interdisciplinary team gathers in a brief session and team members report to each other what they did the previous day toward their team's iteration goal, what they intend to do today toward the goal, and any roadblocks or impediments they can see to the goal.

I am seeing a growing use of these practices in general management outside of software coding. In a dynamic world with increasing velocity, it is becoming difficult to develop elaborate longer-term plans. Things move around too much. Look what has happened since the end of January! The premium on business is becoming flexibility and adaptability. Your organization and its leaders must be agile.

To be agile, you must minimize your fixed, long-term commitments. Renting rather than owning real estate. Shorter leases of office space. Heavier use of contractors and outsourcing. Rolling four-quarter forecast with quarterly adjustments rather than just annual budgeting. Real time inventory management rather than warehouses full of product.

Your team must also be agile. Based on what they hear in a morning management scrum, they might need to change their plans for the day. Personally, I find athletes from team sports to be good hires. Especially dynamic team sports where there is a flow and things are moving around with interdependencies like soccer, lacrosse or basketball. You can even test individuals for agility when interviewing my making that an agile experience. For example, you might say “let’s go for a walk while interviewing” rather than sitting in a conference room and see their reaction. You might ask them to go up to the whiteboard unexpectedly and do something. I am certainly bias but I think people who grew up in larger families are more agile as they could not have things their way but had to “go with the flow.”

Be safe. Work hard.

Jml

Second Thoughts

The State of Georgia results I have seen show no noticeable uptick in infections or deaths from Covid 19 following their “opening up” for which the governor was highly criticized. It has been over the 14 day incubation period so you would expect to see it by now. Has the media totally overblown this whole

thing? I just don't know who to trust anymore which is sad. Interesting to read Rahm Emanuel's comments on an Axelrod podcast. From Chicago Tribune: *He's for reopening the economy, and we're sitting there being reluctant and hesitant and hiding behind Dr. Fauci. I think we should be for rebuilding America, and then have McConnell say, 'Not so fast. Let's slow down, etc.,'*" Emanuel said, suggesting a major infrastructure program.