

# Improving Agility in Organizations with a Hierarchical Culture: Leadership Strategies

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## *Abstract*

*Embracing agile values and principles is no longer limited to software development projects, but has become a strategic priority for many organizations. To adjust to a rapidly changing environment and improve overall agility, many organizations with hierarchical cultures, which many believe hinder the acceptance of agile values and practices, need to embrace agile practices and principles, while balancing them with their cultures. Leadership strategies play an important role in this journey. Interviews with agile leaders in two large organizations revealed three organizational challenges and identified leadership strategies that addressed these challenges during the organizations' agile journeys.*

## **Being Agile in a Hierarchical Culture**

Agile principles and practices were initially introduced in software development but have increasingly been used in other industries such as financial services, consulting, and even traditional industries such as metal manufacturing and defense.<sup>1,2</sup> Within organizations, the use of agile practices and principles has also outgrown IT departments and spread to other business functions such as operations, marketing, human resources, and sales.<sup>3-5</sup> With the prevalence of agile practices in various industries and business functions, achieving agility and embracing agile principles are no longer just for managing IT projects, but have become a strategic priority in many organizations.<sup>6,7</sup>

Agility, which is considered a significant business capability in today's dynamic business environment, helps organizations to move fast and respond to environmental changes and seize novel opportunities.<sup>8-10</sup> Organizations adopting agile practices and principles report many benefits including enhancing the ability to manage changing priorities, increasing team productivity, improving project visibility, and responding better to volatile market conditions.

Despite these benefits, recent surveys reveal that organizations still face significant challenges and barriers, such as culture clashes and lack of leadership, in their agile journeys.<sup>11,12</sup> A common theme that has emerged from the research is that organizational culture plays a critical role in an agile journey. Certain types of organizational culture are less compatible with agile principles and values than other types.<sup>13-16</sup> For example, hierarchical cultures, which still prevail in many organizations, have been identified as a culture type that hinders the acceptance of agile values and practices.<sup>17</sup> A hierarchical culture emphasizes order, rules, formal structures, and regulations.<sup>18</sup> Organizations with a hierarchy culture value stability, control, predictability, and efficiency, as well as defined roles and responsibilities. Thus, individual activities are governed by procedures and routines. These characteristics conflict with agile principles and values that emphasize process flexibility, embracing change, quick turnarounds, and self-management.<sup>19-21</sup> As a result, achieving agility and embracing agile values are especially challenging in organizations with hierarchical cultures.

To adjust to a rapidly changing environment and improve overall agility, many organizations with hierarchical cultures need to explore how to embrace agile practices and principles. Facing the challenge of aligning organizational culture with agile values, while organizations with hierarchical cultures can opt to shift their culture within a short of time to fit agile, the risk of turmoil is very high.<sup>22-24</sup> A more practical approach is to adopt agile principles and values incrementally and find a balance between being agile and a hierarchical culture.<sup>25-27</sup> The existing research has mainly taken the perspective of software development agile teams, addressing specific concerns and challenges in software development.<sup>28-30</sup> Few studies have focused on examining how agile principles and values can be adopted in organizations with a hierarchical culture.

In this study, we focus on leadership strategies that can help organizations continuously improve agility in a hierarchical culture. While leadership is crucial for achieving agility and coping changes in general,<sup>31-33</sup> it plays an especially critical role in balancing agile values with a hierarchical culture. Without proper leadership, organizations face challenges stemming from hierarchical cultures, such as conflicting priorities in deliverables,

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inconsistency between agile values and a non-agile management environment, and maintaining the right balance of oversight and autonomy.<sup>34-36</sup> These challenges call for a nuanced understanding of agile leadership strategies. In an agile context, due to the increased involvement of self-managing teams in organizational activities, the role and responsibilities of traditional managers are now shared with others.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, leaders in an agile environment are not just those who have leadership job titles and/or official authority. Agile leaders are those who understand and grasp agile values and principles, at the same time, teach, promote, implement, and defend them, and foster overall agile performance at different organizational levels.<sup>38</sup> Examples of agile leaders include, but are not limited to, business manager, team lead, product manager, or any team member that takes the initiative to be a leader for specific tasks.

In this study, we draw from the experiences of two organizations, both with a dominant hierarchical culture, that adopted agile principles and values in the last five years. We focus on leadership strategies that helped both organizations continuously improve agility, despite each having a hierarchical culture. In the rest of this paper, we first introduce the companies in our case study and our research method. We then identify the challenges of being agile in a hierarchical culture and discuss leadership strategies that can address these challenges.

### **Cases in Two Organizations**

We conducted interviews in two large organizations. In the first organization (FinOrg), a Fortune 500 financial institution, we studied FinOrg's application development division. The division mainly develops financial application systems for internal clients. It started introducing agile practices, values, and principles about four years ago. Agile practices and principles were initially only explored by one team. Senior management then initiated a program to introduce agile principles and practices to the whole division. A consulting firm was hired to provide initial training. Our second organization (DataOrg) is a subsidiary of a Fortune 100 institution that sells data storage, analytics, and cloud-computing products and services to clients. Most of their product-related decisions are market-driven. DataOrg started to adopt agile principles and practices organization-wide about five years ago. A consulting team was brought on-site to provide intensive training at the beginning.

Prior to adopting agile principles and values, a hierarchical culture played a dominant role in both FinOrg and DataOrg. Both organizations primarily relied on command-and-control management styles, strictly followed formal rules and procedures to achieve predictability and smooth operation, and did

not welcome changing requirements and uncertainty. For example, both FinOrg and DataOrg used traditional, plan-driven product line approaches where each phase of product development is carefully planned and strictly controlled. Managers imposed the development plans on teams without much input from members, who were expected to just follow instructions. Teams had to follow the standard documents and processes and the rigidity of the processes did not allow for flexibility; any deviation from the plan was not welcomed and considered “bad.” Team progress was assessed by managers using formal reports. In both organizations, the hierarchical culture raised tremendous obstacles that prevented them from responding rapidly to changing customer and client needs. This motivated both FinOrg and DataOrg to adopt agile principles and values firm-wide.

At the time of our data collection, even though hierarchical culture still played a role in both organizations’ daily management practices due to their sizes and the industries in which they operate, they had transitioned from a dominant command-and-control management style to a style that widely embraces agile principles and values. By the time of our interviews, both FinOrg and DataOrg had recognized the value of being agile. At the organizational level, managers were more open to soliciting input from teams while making decisions and planning product delivery via newly designed communication channels. More decisions were made by the teams instead of managers. At the team level, team members started to take more proactive roles to respond to changes on their own instead of waiting for instructions from managers, which increased efficiency and improved performance. Both organizations have continued to explore new agile practices and try to find a fine balance between agile principles and organizational culture, aiming to build a more open culture and self-managing teams, and further remove communication barriers between units and teams while still complying with industry rules and standards.

Analysis of the data collected from nine agile leaders from the two organizations revealed challenges they faced while trying to embed agility in their organizations and move them up the agility ladder in a hierarchical culture setting. We also identified leadership strategies that they deployed to address these challenges along this journey. We summarize these challenges and distill their experiences into lessons learned and recommendations that can be applied by organizations struggling to improve agility in a hierarchical culture.

### **Challenges and Leadership Strategies in A Hierarchical Culture**

Organizational culture shapes an organization’s business processes, management styles, routines, and employee attitudes and beliefs about how

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the organization ought to operate over time. Organizational culture affects many aspects of an organization such as basic assumptions, shared values, models of behaviors, and common practices.<sup>39</sup> The embedded values and assumptions in hierarchical cultures are quite distinct from the values and principles of being agile.

Organizations with a hierarchical culture value control, order, routine, and formality.<sup>40</sup> Individual activities and decisions are governed by strictly defined procedures and roles. Leaders are granted formal authority and employees are expected to follow their leaders. Organizations with a hierarchical culture place strategic emphasis on smooth operations, efficiency, stability, and predictability,<sup>41</sup> and are unwilling to accept high risks and frequent change.<sup>42,43</sup> Conversely, an agile culture values individuals and interactions over processes; timely responses to change over following plans; and motivated individuals over managerial control.<sup>44</sup> Teams are expected to be self-managing and self-organizing.<sup>45</sup> The ideal agile culture tends to be people-centered, collaborative, democratic, and less formal.<sup>46</sup> Leaders are expected to facilitate and serve, not to command.

The drastic differences of the two cultures pose huge obstacles for organizations with a hierarchy culture to move up the agility ladder. Therefore, agile leadership faces challenges in balancing agile principles and practices with the established routines and behaviors of a hierarchical culture.<sup>47-49</sup> In our study, we identified three major challenges that arose due to inevitable conflicts between the two.

### **Challenge #1: Tensions in decision-making styles**

Relying on collective wisdom, agile practices advocate bottom-up, collaborative decision-making processes and styles. Inviting everyone, especially frontline workers, to participate in this process plays a key role. Collaborative decision-making processes can help bring everyone on board and obtain commitments from frontline workers. Such processes also help frontline workers understand the rationale behind a decision so that they can self-adjust and take quick, appropriate actions on their own when quick responses are necessary.<sup>50</sup> The collaborative decision-making processes can also help identify potential hurdles and generate more creative ideas.

In contrast, hierarchical cultures rely on top-down, command-control decision-making processes where critical decisions are driven by management assessment, without soliciting input from other participants, especially from frontline workers. When organizations with a dominant hierarchical culture attempt to adopt agile principles and values, the two decision-making processes and styles collide, inevitably causing tensions

between those who practice agile and their collaborating partners/supervisors who do not.

For example, agile teams in FinOrg struggled with project scope, deadlines, budget, and resources imposed by product management and complained about a lack of team input on such important decisions. Agile practices expect agile teams to follow iterative processes and work out their own progress. However, the teams at FinOrg were asked to follow the plans made by their supervisors, giving the teams little flexibility/agility to operate and adjust. Further, product management relied on formal reports to monitor progress while being agile emphasizes informal, frequent, and open communications. Agile teams struggled to adhere to project plans and formal reporting schedules imposed by their supervisors, which conflicted with the agile practices that they embraced. When this conflict arose, product management became concerned about the progress made by agile teams and started doubting their performance. These tensions in decision-making hurt the agile teams' morale and management's confidence in its agile teams.

### **Leadership Strategies for Tensions in Decision-Making Styles**

#### ***Leadership Strategy: Link agile values with business values***

The tensions caused by two different decision-making processes and styles can cause confusion, hurt the progress of improving agility at both the team and management levels, and challenge the usefulness of being agile at different levels. Therefore, agile leaders' first priority is to convince all stakeholders of the importance of being agile and the necessity of balancing and optimizing the processes within the current organizational environment. Hence, agile leaders can focus on linking agile values with the extant business values of their organization. By doing so, agile leaders can regain stakeholders' confidence in continuing to improve agility at different levels, obtain continuous support from management and non-agile business units, and motivate management to continue to explore the balance between extant culture and agile values. It helps instill agile culture and incorporate agile practices into daily processes without rocking the boat.

In FinOrg, one of the leading business values is "customer first." It has served as one of the main drivers for many decisions at different levels of the organization. This business value is in perfect alignment with agile principles. Realizing this alignment, agile leaders explained to product management how agile practices can achieve "customer first" business value and improve business performance. They then worked collaboratively with product management to explore which agile practices can deliver business value and how to incorporate these agile practices into their management and decision-making processes. Agile leaders also introduced some of the agile tools and

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practices to product management, which not only helped product management better understand the agile vocabulary but also gave the management an opportunity to experiment with the management version of being agile. Product management started to understand the discrepancies between two different decision-making processes. They also eliminated duplicative formal progress reports that agile teams found unhelpful in improving productivity. By explicitly aligning agile practices with the “customer first” business value, agile leaders at FinOrg helped all stakeholders appreciate the necessity of overcoming the differences between a hierarchical culture and agile values and continuously improving agile processes collaboratively. With these efforts, agile leaders were able to ask people to continue their commitment to becoming more agile and to adjust their strategies to overcome hurdles, including negotiating with product management. Such leadership strategies kept faith in agile methods and obtained support among all stakeholders for incorporating agile practices into their daily processes.

### ***Leadership Strategy: Restructure communication channels***

One main reason behind tensions in decision-making is that agile culture and hierarchical culture value different communication channels. Agile culture appraises open, informal, frequent, horizontal communications, while hierarchical culture values top-down, formal reporting, and vertical communications. Agile leaders need to restructure communication channels to find a fine balance between these two communication styles. The goal is to support open communications within the defined organizational hierarchy and streamline the coordination processes. It may not be practical to remove different layers of communication in the hope of having open communications across different levels and units right away, but it is feasible to re-design communication channels to bridge different levels in the organizational hierarchy.

Both FinOrg and DataOrg tried to address communication gaps in their decision-making processes by creating structured communication channels that bridged agile team members and top decision-makers. Managed by agile leaders who understood both agile demands and organizational climate, such structured channels, welcomed by management who otherwise felt overwhelmed by the demand of open communications, fit with the hierarchical environments and at the same time provided effective mechanisms for agile team members to express their opinions and for management to listen. At FinOrg, agile leaders helped form a response team that consisted of various stakeholders such as product managers, business managers, agile coaches, and technical staff. The process was laid out for agile

teams to escalate concerns to product management such as budget overruns, failure to meet a deadline, and scope creep. Similarly, DataOrg created a hierarchy of liaison roles (which can be taken by product managers, project leads, project managers, etc.) who worked in close collaboration with both agile teams and product management and helped them coordinate with various stakeholders. By restructuring communication channels and streamlining coordination processes, agile leaders helped alleviate anxieties and struggles that agile teams had towards product management, allowing them to focus on product delivery. It also improved the overall agility of the product delivery process.

### **Challenge #2: Lack of Ownership**

Being agile requires a new mindset, not just a few new agile routines and practices.<sup>51</sup> An essential part of an agile mindset is for everyone to take ownership of what they are doing and to be willing to take initiatives, formulate their own action plans, and leverage available resources to respond to new dynamics and opportunities in a timely manner.<sup>52</sup> A sense of ownership is the key to motivating individuals as well as teams to be proactive, to continuously innovate, and to explore opportunities and solutions.<sup>53</sup>

However, the sense of ownership does not come naturally, especially in a hierarchical culture that appreciates a top-down management style. In a hierarchical environment, each person's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.<sup>54</sup> People are used to following a predetermined plan approved by their superiors.<sup>55</sup> Subordinates tend to wait for commands and instructions instead of actively exploring on their own.

At both FinOrg and DataOrg, people's mindsets and habits were greatly influenced by their organization's cultures where command-and-control structures played an important role and inhibited teams from taking ownership. For example, agile leaders at FinOrg asked their teams to create actionable items to improve their own agile processes and performance, but many were very reluctant to do so because they were still used to waiting for instructions. In DataOrg, development processes were slowed down due to a technical bottleneck that prevented a team from sufficiently testing and deploying their products. The initial reaction of the team members was to wait for solutions from leaders instead of trying to solve it by themselves. These examples illustrate that the lack of a sense of ownership inhibits agile teams from taking initiatives and exploring solutions.



### **Leadership Strategies for Lack of Ownership**

#### ***Leadership Strategy: Challenge the status quo***

Mindsets are usually shaped over time. Those working in hierarchical cultures are accustomed to hierarchical thinking, which cannot be expected to change overnight. Thus, it is necessary for agile leaders to keep challenging the status quo and help people overcome their own inertia and transform their extant mindsets. It is important for agile leaders to continue to inspire people to act on their own and explore solutions when problems arise, and restrain themselves from giving orders directly. Such support and encouragement can help cultivate a sense of ownership by fostering people's independent thinking capabilities and reshaping their habits, showing how they can control their own working processes and products.

Agile leaders in DataOrg set expectations for teams to identify problems and explore solutions by themselves. They reaffirmed to the teams that by taking ownership, they could control their own solution exploration and product delivery processes. The agile leaders in FinOrg clarified that the responsibility of the leaders was to initiate the process, provide guidance and resources along the way, and encourage innovative thinking, instead of providing solutions. At FinOrg, even when a team presented a solution, agile leaders still often challenged the team and encouraged them to find a better solution and experiment with various alternatives for further improvement. By repeating such practices and continuing to push the teams, agile leaders in both organizations helped their teams overcome their own inertia, disrupt their extant thinking patterns, and prevent team members from slipping back into the mode of waiting for solutions. Although hierarchical culture still influenced people's daily work, these efforts cultivated the mindset that teams need to own their problems and solutions. Teams came to realize that although the solution exploration processes were not easy initially, such processes usually led to team autonomy, improved operations, better products, and more productive team collaboration.

#### ***Leadership Strategy: Construct platforms to leverage peer influences***

While agile leaders can encourage people to take ownership of their tasks, it is also important to let people know how to effectively take ownership. Lecturing and coaching from agile leaders might be one approach, but many times such "formal training" may have limited impact. Another effective leadership strategy used to foster ownership was to construct effective platforms so that people could influence one another and demonstrate through examples what it meant to take ownership and how to take

ownership. This strategy used peer influence to complement formal lecturing and coaching from agile leaders.

Agile leaders at FinOrg used regular town hall meetings to publicly recognize the achievements of agile teams. During these meetings, “star” teams and/or team members would be invited to share their journeys and stories. Their journeys contained not only “success” stories but also “failures” describing how they overcame initial inertia, navigated the complex solution exploration processes, and found their own solutions. The achievements were recognized by certificates. In addition, other less formal platforms such as blogs on an internal website were also provided for people to discuss their thoughts and experiences with various challenges they faced and solutions they developed. With these efforts, agile leaders created a peer support platform to help agile teams understand why they needed to take ownership and how to take ownership. This also allowed peers to exert their influence on one another, creating a space for teams to grow and improve with the help of peers. Such efforts helped teams gradually foster a shared mindset about their ownership.

### **Challenge #3: Lack of Psychological Safety**

Agility relies on open communication and transparency among team members and other stakeholders. Becoming agile is a journey that requires continuous and collaborative efforts. Thus, it is imperative that all members feel safe to actively engage in the process, share information, report their progress, seek help when needed, and provide feedback and suggestions, including constructive criticisms when mistakes are made. Work and tasks information must be widely available to everyone so that members can make informed decisions on their own, contribute to the collective wisdom, and take appropriate joint actions to respond to challenges. Thus, psychological safety, defined as “a shared assumption that everyone in a group can take personal risks and speak up without being rejected or punished,”<sup>56</sup> is critical in maintaining open and transparent relationships in achieving agility.<sup>57</sup>

However, open and transparent relationships may not be the norm in an organization with a hierarchical culture. People in hierarchical cultures are used to receiving and following orders from their managers instead of voicing opinions and actively exploring alternative approaches to improve on their own. Employees may have concerns about how disagreement and criticisms are taken by others, especially by their managers. Being open and transparent may also be uncomfortable for many who want to be seen as performing well individually and are afraid of exposing their weaknesses. Such clashes between agile principles and hierarchical cultures can create hesitancy and doubts about the requests for openness and transparency, thus posing

threats to employees' psychological safety. Such threats to psychological safety hinder progress in moving up the agility ladder. We observed this challenge in both organizations.

For example, to promote transparency, DataOrg management asked teams to post their project progress in a public space. This request generated a lot of stress and anxiety among team members because they felt that they would be judged harshly or even penalized if they did not show "perfect" progress. Similarly, at FinOrg, people were very hesitant to report impediments or even use the word impediment in their communications because they felt that reporting impediments and not being able to solve impediments by themselves would make others doubt their abilities. In both organizations, agile leaders faced the challenge of fostering psychological safety for agile teams, which prevented agile leaders from effectively establishing transparency and facilitating open communication.

### **Leadership Strategies for Fostering Psychological Safety**

#### ***Leadership Strategy: Clarify misconceptions through conversations***

The power of leaders' language has been recognized as a tool to change leader-follower dyadic behavior. For example, leadership language that motivates and provides direction to followers, advocates for followers' efforts, and recognizes a follower's contributions have been proven to influence many critical follower behaviors including psychological safety.<sup>58, 59</sup> When the clash between agile values and hierarchical cultures causes team members to feel that their psychological safety is threatened, effective conversations that clarify misconceptions about agile practices and remove anxiety caused by the clash is a key leadership approach. This requires agile leaders to form an effective communication strategy and construct a series of talks to help people understand the rationale behind these practices and cultivate psychological safety.

In both organizations, agile leaders developed a series of constructive conversations that reinforced the idea that achieving agility is a process, which is not expected to work in the first iteration. As a crucial step to collectively improving agile processes and achieving faster delivery of high-quality products, openly discussing and reporting issues was encouraged and welcomed because they are part of the group learning process. At DataOrg, a product manager clarified that the objective of showing burndown charts (a project progress chart) was to understand team progress, such that all teams could learn from the process and make improvements in planning, estimation, and execution. The teams were assured that a perfect burn down chart was rare and was not expected by management or agile leaders; imperfect burn down charts were normal and would not hurt anyone. At

FinOrg, agile leaders attempted to clear the misperceptions about agile vocabulary, such as “impediment” by explicitly discussing the impediments they had in their own work. The leaders reiterated that sharing impediments would not reflect negatively on team members themselves; rather, it allowed agile leaders to remove obstacles for the team. Thus, it is a necessary and good agile practice. In both organizations, using well-thought out language and communication strategies to remove doubts and anxiety helped team members open up and share things that they had not previously reported in daily standup meetings. Agile leaders took on the role of fostering psychological safety by clearing team members’ misperceptions about performance expectations.

### ***Leadership Strategy: Strengthen messages through action***

Although leaders’ language can help clear up misperceptions and deliver the right message, it needs to be reinforced by actions to further protect psychological safety. Words can be powerful, but words themselves might not be strong enough to fully address teams’ concerns about psychological safety due to conflicts between the agile and hierarchical cultures. People who work in organizations with a strong hierarchical culture are accustomed to well-defined rules, procedures, and routines. The different expectations of two cultures prevent people from fully engaging in open communication and transparency, posing threats to psychological safety. To eliminate this concern, agile leaders need to use actions to strengthen their messages and create a safe environment in which people feel secure to have honest discussions, admit mistakes, take risks, expose any issues, and seek help.

In DataOrg, the product manager worked with management to make sure that there were no negative consequences to teams that had imperfect burn-down charts. The agile leaders in FinOrg would use the word “impediment” themselves when sharing, worked hard to help teams remove impediments, and did not use “impediments” in any assessment. Further, when team members experimented with a new idea but “failed,” agile leaders would publicly embrace “failure” by being supportive, thanking them for taking the risk, and acknowledging their efforts. These actions significantly removed team members’ concerns about negative consequences for any issues that they would report. In both organizations, agile leaders used consistent messages and actions to eliminate agile team concerns and anxiety, thus creating a context with psychological safety.

### **Discussion**

Organizations need to improve their agility to accommodate more dynamic, unpredictable changes in the marketplace and in the business

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environment. Though not all organizational cultures are a natural fit with agile values, many organizations can find a suitable balance between these two. As one agile leader at FinOrg pointed out, “Agile is not necessarily the goal, company success is the ultimate goal. [Being] agile is a means for us to get there.” Though agile methods and principles were first developed specifically for software development, they can be generalized to other business functions and domains. As a matter of fact, several organizations have introduced agile principles and experimented with various agile practices in non-software development settings.<sup>60,61</sup>

The FinOrg and DataOrg experiences suggest that when organizations with a hierarchical culture strive to improve agility, they face three major challenges: tensions in decision-making styles, lack of ownership, and lack of psychological safety. These challenges call for a better understanding of leadership strategies that can help find a balance between agility and organizational culture. The leadership strategies that can address these challenges are summarized in Table 1.

To mitigate the conflicts between agile principles and hierarchical cultures, agile leaders need to manage tensions by linking agile values with business values to gain widespread support from all stakeholders to resolve the tensions, explore the balance, and re-structure communication channels to accommodate the needs of both the established business processes and agile practices. To motivate people so that they can take initiative and act responsibly, agile leaders need to cultivate a sense of ownership by continuously challenging the status quo and providing platforms where peers can influence one another and demonstrate through examples what taking on ownership means and how to do it. The last, but not the least, agile leadership strategy is to foster people’s psychological safety by constructing communication strategies that clarify misconceptions and reinforce positive messages through actions. Every organization needs to define what “being agile” means. In the process, these agile leadership strategies can help address the challenges that arise from the clash between agile practices and organizational culture.

**Table 1.** Summary of Challenges and Leadership Strategies

<b>Challenge: Improving agility in a hierarchical culture</b>	<b>Leadership strategies to address the challenge</b>
#1 Tensions in Decision Making Styles	<p><b>Managing Tension</b></p> <p><b>Link Agile Values with Business Values:</b> Demonstrate the business value of being agile to gain continuous support from all stakeholders in resolving the tensions</p> <p><b>Restructure Communication Channels:</b> Re-design communication channels to support open communications within the defined organizational hierarchy and streamline coordination processes</p>
#2 Lack of Ownership	<p><b>Cultivating Ownership</b></p> <p><b>Challenge the status quo:</b> Challenge hierarchical thinking and inspire people to always strive for better results, and encourage them to explore and act on their own</p> <p><b>Construct platforms to leverage peer influences:</b> Create platforms such as internal blog sites or town hall meetings where peers can influence one another and demonstrate through examples what taking ownership means and how to take ownership</p>
#3 Lack of Psychological Safety	<p><b>Fostering Psychological Safety</b></p> <p><b>Clarify misperceptions through conversation:</b> Clarify the true intention of agile practices to help people feel safe when following these practices</p> <p><b>Strengthen messages through actions:</b> Use actions to reinforce messages and create a safe environment in which members feel secure having honest discussions that help them speak up about mistakes and concerns, come up with innovative ideas, take risks, and seek help</p>

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