Andrea is one of the founder of agile42 and works as an advisor, consultant and coach with various organizations worldwide. His primary focus has been helping entire organizations to become more resilient through agility. He has over 15 years of experience with organizational design, change management, leadership and culture shift. Through experience sharing with other thought leaders he lead an effort to develop ORGANIC agility...
At any given moment in time, when something new is presented to a community, this community will tend to split in 5 different groups, which identify specific market behaviors: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority, Laggards. As markets become more volatile, their cycles tend to shorten more and more, which leads to instability and more rapid changes. Moreover there isn’t much value left in investing in efficiency and optimization because the tail of the market can be shorter than we think. There is of course more pressure to enter into the Early Majority in a leading position and being able to conquer more market shares than the competition. Given the behavior of the early market (see Geoffrey Moore) to address that part of the audience companies need to be fast at collecting and implementing feedback from their customers. Early adopters value more responsiveness than quality. Crossing the chasm becomes harder and needs to happen faster than before, to be able to be ahead of the pack when entering the early majority. It’s important because Early Majority behavior suggests that people tend to copy what market leaders do. Late majority are interested in staying relevant and see adoption of new things more as a stressful situation than an advantage. Therefore represents a cost for them. This leads to pressure on lowering prices, and drives organization to improve efficiency to keep sustainable margins. Behind the scenes it means organization needs to be able to adapt and change often and faster than before...
Organizations typically approach governance by defining common goals, and enforcing alignment towards those goals. This allows to create KPIs and measure them in the process. This approach, based on system thinking, used to work well for decades, as long as market behaviors was fairly predictable, and it allowed to make long term plans. In extremely volatile market conditions, there are a lot more of exceptions to normal flows, that require escalation to be tackled. Escalating is generally very ineffective, because it creates disruptions and waiting states. Structure is what helps keeping consistency, at the top of the pyramid. Given that what separates the two part is the line between Beliefs and Actions which is represented by decision making process, we need to reflect on the importance of having coherent behaviors within an organization. What we call organization culture is in fact observable in terms of behaviors, habits, stories of success and failure, rituals, approaches to work... all these things allow us to measure the culture, but doesn’t mean we can design the one we want. Culture is there whether we want it or not, and it is going to either support or hinder our businesses in difficult times. The more people will have to make decisions outside of the defined structure, because of rapid changes, the more the coherence of that culture will become relevant. Working on increasing cultural coherence and autonomy is a better approach towards resilience, than trying to define the perfect organization, which will withstand all changes happening... as it isn’t possible to predict the future...
There is a strong need to think about organizations in a different way, abandon the metaphor of the *Machine* in favor of something more natural *Organic*. This allows to explore new possibilities in terms of coherence and resilience, because natural systems are more resilient than mechanical ones. This is because in a natural system the reorganization of connections between elements is possible and it is part of the evolution, while a machine will never be able to extend itself or change its own parts. Organizations are ultimately networks of individuals, who get things done, by leveraging their relationships of trust. As individuals are very resilient and curious, they are able to shift their attention to different relationships depending on what is needed at any moment in time to solve a specific problem. It is nothing new, people get things done by supporting each other and doing each other favors, rather than by following processes. Let’s make it official then, and stop pretending. Working on establishing better relationships and more coherent culture though, isn’t an easy treat, but requires multiple small interventions, and many diverse feedback loops. Right! Those are complexity thinking techniques to manage a system, which we will have to learn if we want to grow organizational resilience. It isn’t only about learning new techniques but rather about thinking in different ways, which leads to viewing leadership as an organizational capability, structures as temporary and purpose driven aids to support people work (and not to constrain it) which will dissolve as soon as the purpose is achieved... and this can happen many times during a single year...
ORGANIC agility is an evolutionary approach to increase organizational resilience through agility, based on complexity thinking. It provides a scaffolding approach to organizational design and leadership, which allow to start from whatever is already in place, or eventually integrate with different models or frameworks and then evolve continuously to a higher level of resilience. In order to support the continuous journey of change and learning, ORGANIC agility also provide a large toolkit which supports both collecting information in near-real-time and act rapidly within a safe-to-fail environment. Grown out of more than 7 years of multiple projects experience around the world, with the contribution of thought leaders in the areas of agility, complexity and leadership, ORGANIC agility represent a novel approach to resilience, which is aware of cultural differences as much as market trends and rapid changes. It allows to start from wherever you are - by measuring your existing organization capabilities - and evolve to higher level of autonomies and resilience. This requires to be able to react to changes very quickly and recover from failures faster than the competition, because in an ever changing market place, it is necessary to experiment and learn quickly, which in turns requires accepting failures... and make those experiment safe-to-fail to lower the impact of the risk... for more information have a look at https://www.organic-agility.com and come and visit an accredited trainer at one of our foundation classes, which will provide you with a lot more insights and examples. ORGANIC agility is an open framework, we want partners to embrace and contribute to its development!