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**The influence of managerial and leadership
practices
on organizational agility**

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ABSTRACT

Organizations in all their forms are more and more vulnerable to the fast-changing environment they have to operate in. Regardless of the geographic area or the sector, it has become an imperative nowadays to take proactive actions in order to survive and succeed.

One key to success lies in the capacity of the organization to be agile. Agility is improved through several dimensions. This thesis focuses, on one hand, on the managerial practices that need to be adopted in order to become more agile. On the other hand, it identifies the type of leadership required to mobilize these managerial practices in such a context.

For an organization to become agile, it is necessary to forget about the principles of traditional management. New managerial practices take place (e.g. deconstruction, elimination of the hierarchy, transparency of information, etc.) and replace the former established rules and procedures. Fourteen managerial practices were identified through the analysis of case studies. These organizations are either born like this or they were transformed to become more agile. This was possible thanks to the mobilization of these managerial practices by a liberating leader.

In any organization, every manager has the opportunity and the responsibility to have an impact on the level of agility. However, this requires from him to evolve from a managing to a leadership role. In order to do so, he is advised to follow the six actions lines of a leader in agile organizations that were identified in this thesis (e.g. self-management, purpose statement, talent management and people's development, etc.)

By applying effectively and efficiently those recommendations, a manager should be able to bring an added value to the organization through his unique leadership. At the same time making his employees happier, he will manage to increase the agility of the entire organization and improve the performance.

Key words: Management – Leadership – Practices – Agility – Liberation

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THEME PRESENTATION

A worldwide statistic measured in the Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report (2013) - the most widely recognized association exploring employee engagement - has found that, among organizations from 142 countries analyzed, only 13% of the total number of employees are engaged at work (Gallup, Inc., 2013). The Gallup organization defines engaged employees as the ones who are "emotionally invested in and focused on creating value for their organizations every day" (Gallup, Inc., 2013, p.6). This suggests that one out of eight employees do not associate their job with any passion or purpose (Laloux, 2014) and therefore do not perform as well as desired. For that reason, companies should focus on leading their employees toward a meaningful purpose, in a way that will drive productivity and improve business outcomes.

The current global environment brings tough competition on the market and organizations feel more and more the need to be more reactive and proactive to change, in order to survive (Boyer, 2014).

Current organizations have tried social plans, mergers, decentralizations, scorecards, etc. But it seems that they have reached their limits (Laloux, 2014). The old principles of Taylorism are not relevant anymore (Boyer, 2014) and a new concept is emerging in the business world : agility.

The agile organization is mainly characterized by the ability to adapt, to be fast, integrated and flexible. Also the pyramidal hierarchy changes to an open structure in which employees' creativity and innovation are encouraged and valued (Sherehiy, Karwowski & Layer, 2007). But such a change needs to be executed at all levels of the organization.

Therefore, a few authors and companies have asked themselves if nowadays' successful organizations did not forget to include the human in this change.

Therefore, those latters decided to suggest a new approach that puts the human at the core, by giving the employees a real meaning to work and share together the same purpose and beliefs (Laloux, 2014a).

This thesis focuses on the role of a leader in the process of evolution of any organization to go agile, and the managerial practices he will mobilize to do so. Based on the main writings existing in the literature and the analysis of actual case studies, the aim is to develop a set of best managerial practices and leadership for the managers of organizations that want to go agile.

Agility has a lot to do with relationships and personal dimensions. It is a whole new mindset to be implemented into the business culture (Alonso, 2012). The role of the manager in this transition is to create the right conditions that allow employee's engagement and enthusiasm toward a project that has a real sense and purpose they can relate with (Boyer, 2014). The principal actions an agile leader needs to take start with a bottom-up way of working that favorises team's self-management. This latter is adopting a temporary role of project manager where he progressively decreases control and gives responsibility to the teams instead, promoting communication and listening (Devarenne, 2012).

1.2. SCIENTIFIC STRUCTURE

The general problematic leads to two main research questions to be studied.

Problematic: What is the influence of management and leadership practices on organizational agility?

- *Research question 1:* What managerial practices support organizational agility?
- *Research question 2:* What type of leadership is needed to mobilize these practices in agile organizations?

These represent the spine of the work, and will be questioned again at the end of the thesis in order to provide them with answers.

1.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

This thesis aims at bringing a contribution at three levels: the scientific, managerial and societal level.

The first scientific contribution has to do with the fact that a little amount of writings already exist about the topic of leadership in the development of agile organizations. In order to produce a new theory about that area of interest, several papers, books and articles have been analyzed. However, those latters were most of the time treating about one element of the concept, either leadership or organizational agility, but not often both of them linked. This paper groups these two concepts to create a new leadership theory for managers who want to lead a better, faster and more efficient transition of a company or an organization to become agile.

The second contribution is for the management community. This thesis is firstly targeting the top managers of companies or organizations who are thinking about adopting the agile configuration. This decision can be taken because the company is experiencing a recession and bad results, or it can also be simply the desire to continue growing but in a more meaningful way. It can be a reaction or a proactive decision for the organization to evolve in today's changing environment. Those managers who do not know how to proceed during this transition should find in this thesis the basic principles to start, in order to become a leader and give their employees a real motivation to follow them and perform better. The desired outcome is both the employees' higher satisfaction and enjoyment at work on one hand, and better results and business competitiveness for the organization on the other.

Finally, the last contribution of the thesis lies in the societal sphere. Going agile does not concern only companies, but also non-profit organizations. Both are encouraged to value the human potential of every person, by giving her responsibility and giving room to creativity and innovation through the possibility to express, share and discuss one's opinion about any topic. Enabling the people to develop personally and professionally can only improve the general wellbeing in society. On the other hand, organizational agility through an appropriate leadership leads to better results of the companies. This leads to more activity on the market, which is benefiting companies, consumers, and intermediaries.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

The thesis aims at identifying the specific managerial practices that support organizational agility and the type of leadership that is necessary to mobilize these practices.

The literature review is divided in three parts. First, the context is set with a summary of the theories of organizations and the emergence of organizational agility. Second, the main theories about leadership were researched. Given the wide literature already existing on this topic, articles and theories were rather easy to find. However, it was necessary to select the most relevant ones among the large quantity of information available.

The third part, which is about finding some writings explaining the link between both concepts, was rather difficult to find. Some mentioned general leadership recommendations for organizations that want to give more importance to the human at the core.

Therefore, after being read and analyzed, all the information combined from the first and second part was gathered in order to create six guiding action lines of a leader in agile organizations.

The next step after writing the literature review is the practical analysis of case studies. Twelve organizations spread around the world have been explored. Those were chosen because they are successful examples of organizations who's CEO, either has per nature a type of leadership that supports agility, or it was decided to change the management in order evolve toward an agile configuration.

Since very few cases already switched to organizational agility, the organizations analyzed were not filtered according to the geographical area nor the sector. Indeed, these come from three continents, seven countries, from many sectors such as business or non-profit, federal, service, retailing, manufacturing, car, health or education.

Although they were sometimes tackling the overall transition of the organization to agility, the focus was most of the time on the specific managerial and leadership actions taken by the decision-makers. Some employees' opinions towards the change were exposed as well. This is interesting in order to have both opinions towards the change and compare them: CEO's and managers versus employees and workers.

The number of twelve cases is justified by several reasons. First of all, practically speaking, it would take too much time and travel expenses in the scope of a Master thesis to analyze more of them. Besides, the maximum length allowed for the thesis restrains the possibilities to expose further information. Secondly, the leaders desired for interviews were rather unavailable or busy to meet. Thirdly, the twelve cases were selected since they were judged as being the most advanced and rich in information for the area of research concerned by this thesis. Finally, although every case is different, there might be a theoretical saturation beyond this number of case studies, and no more new information would be found.

Since the leaders of those organizations were also spread in different countries and rather busy, the information was collected through different channels.

First of all, indirect primary resources were investigated: interviews were selected from documentaries, national and international TV shows, podcasts and official websites. Then, presentations and conferences brought additional information.

Secondary data was taken from the organization's websites and their annual reports. Articles written by the leaders themselves were used as well. Some were also written by journalists but including interviews of the leaders. And finally, scientific books – also used in the literature review – included the visit of a few organizations. Some of their observations were used as additional examples of practices in the analysis.

The next chapter is the discussion. A first part structures in a table the managerial practices identified in the organizations and discusses the similarities and differences of each case. A second part verifies in what ways do these practices comply with the literature review (including the six action lines). The third part is a critical view of the information provided through the theoretical and practical parts.

Finally, the conclusion comes with the answer to the initial problematic. It answers the two main research questions raised in the scientific structure and gives recommendations for future agile leaders on how to mobilize the managerial practices identified. On the other hand, it also poses the limits of the thesis and suggests future related research topics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some authors have worked on the concepts of agility and leadership already. This literature review aims to demonstrate the current knowledge about the topic of leadership in agile organizations from different authors and points of views. Therefore, the major scientific and scholar writings have been reviewed.

2.1. CONTEXT OF THE ORGANIZATIONS

First of all, it is important to understand the context in which agility emerged, since this concept is quiet recent.

2.1.1. Changing environment

Nowadays, organization are playing against their competitors in an open system where they have to interact within an uncertain and unpredictable environment, characterized by constant change and therefore very dynamic. Those organizations need to deal with it in order to achieve success. Therefore, the notions of “adaptive”, “flexible” or “agile organization” emerged as similar terms all used to illustrate one possible way for organizations to deal with this changing environment. Those concepts all have in common the features of being able to adjust and respond to change (Sherehiy et al., 2007).

2.1.2. Theories of organizations

Until the 1970s, three main classical theories of organizations existed: the Scientific Management (or Taylorism) from Taylor; the Administrative Theory from Fayol; and the Bureaucracy Theory from Weber. The human dimension in the organizations was first explored by the Human Relations School and his main author, Mayo. Later, Lawrence and Lorsch were the main authors to talk about the importance of the environment in the organization, namely in their Structural Contingency Theory.

In her book, Linda Rouleau (2007) describes Taylor as the creator of the Scientific Management. This system is based on the principles of work and tasks division, which leads to the dequalification of the workers since every one of them is linked to one specific task

according to his capabilities. Execution is separated from conception, which is reserved to the top level. Taylor strongly believes that the worker is naturally lazy, therefore he needs to be strongly supervised and his remuneration is fixed according to the productivity of the worker, to motivate them to do more and faster in order to increase profits (Rouleau, 2007). As a result, he believes this is the best way to maximize both workers and the organization's satisfaction (Rouleau, 2007).

Henry Ford was the first one to apply those principles on a large scale and therefore gave birth to the doctrine named Fordism (Rouleau, 2007). He also installed a system of assembly-lines production and standardization of products in order to reach economies of scale (Plane, 2012).

The Administrative Theory of Fayol describes the way organizations should be administratively managed (Rouleau, 2007). He believes in the principles of tasks division, authority, hierarchy and discipline. But on top of that, he defines clear procedures and responsibilities for each one, and namely for the directors (Rouleau, 2007).

In the 1920s, the scientific and administrative organizations of work are criticized given their harmful social effects. The crisis of 1930 emphasizes this and the directors of organizations realize the need to react. This leads to the appearance of the Human Relations (Rouleau, 2007).

The researcher Mayo is one of the main authors of this school. Thanks to the results of his experience in the Hawthorne factory of the Western Electric company, he concluded that improving the working conditions supports the increase the productivity. Later, he added that the social relationships and interaction presented an even stronger relation to satisfaction and productivity (Rouleau, 2007).

During the 1940-1950s neoclassical era, more and more knowledge is developed in the area of social sciences and human organizational behaviour. Management schools emerge and university researchers show a strong interest in the topic of Bureaucracy (Rouleau, 2007).

Weber is the most famous influencer of this period. He first analyzed the role of a leader in an organization and asked how and why do people react to different forms of authority (Plane, 2012). Three notions are key to him: Rationality; Domination; Bureaucracy (Rouleau, 2007). Every worker is hired with a rational contract that separates his own person from the job. Every job has a specific area of competency. The hierarchy is clear and well-defined, and the authority, power and remuneration evolve with it (Rouleau, 2007).

In the 1960s, the organizations become larger but also more complex, and researchers are looking for models to formalize the complexities of organizations. Two modern theories of organizations emerge at that time (Rouleau, 2007).

The first one is the Systemic Analysis, which assumes that the organization is part of a system – open or closed – composed of many elements interacting and exchanging with each other in the environment (Rouleau, 2007).

The second one is the several Theories of Contingency. There are several forms of theories of contingency but all believe that the organizations are different and that there is no ideal formal structures. Nevertheless, there are elements of the context which have a determinant influence on the structure and internal processes of the organization. Therefore, the challenge is to find the adequacy between those elements (Rouleau, 2007).

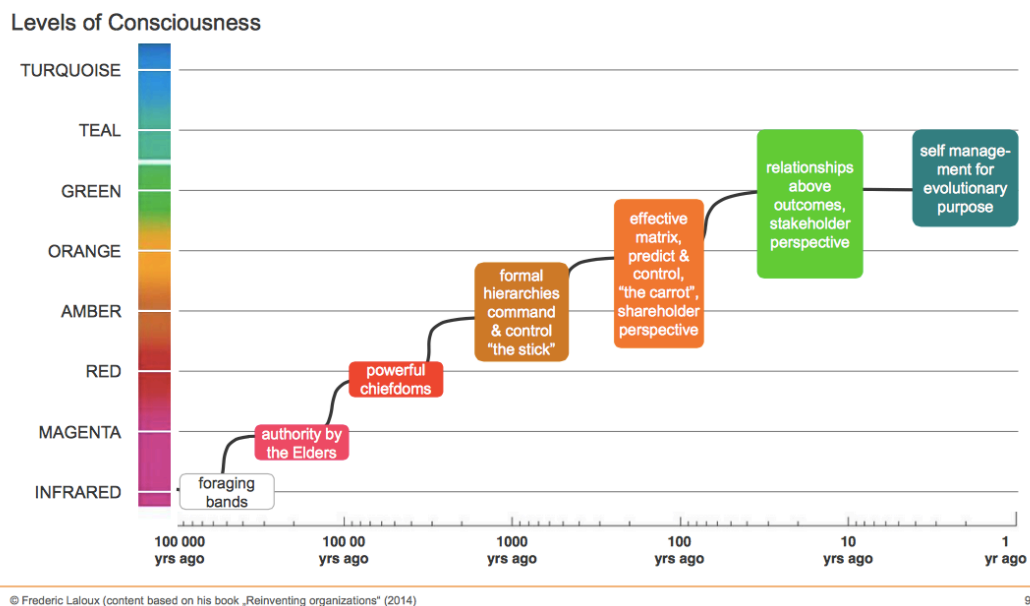
Lorsch and Lawrence are at the center of the writings regarding Structural Contingency. Their works treat of the causal relations between the environment, the structure and the performance of the organization. After many experiences, they conclude that the most efficient organizations are the ones that are able to adapt to the level of uncertainty of their environment.

This model is already a first premise of the theories of agility.

According to Frédéric Laloux (2014a), despite this facade of pride that corporate leaders like to show, they are nowadays also suffering from a sense of emptiness created by power games, politics, bureaucracy, stress and burnout. At the top or bottom of the hierarchy, both types of people see and notice the same problems implying no sense of soul or consciousness in the daily work. The traditional conception of the organization where the leader has the entire responsibility for everything, Laloux (2014a) believes it is over. According to him, organizations are like living beings, changing, moving, to whom you have to listen to, adapt and align.

The author (2014a) analyzed many different types of organizations from diverse sectors and came up with a model (figure 1). This model illustrates the different types of organizations that existed development through the past thousands of years until nowadays, and related it to the human development.

Figure 1: Overview of the main organizational paradigms



Source : Strategy+Business, 2015.

http://www.reinventingorganizations.com/uploads/2/1/9/8/21988088/140305_laloux_reinventing_organizations.pdf

As showed on the graph, the level of consciousness of the humans increased through the time, until nowadays. And organizations changed with them as well.

From the very first red model, described by a constant exercise of power by the boss, to the fourth orange one characterized a management by objective and the first human resources department, the managerial practices changed and evolved.

This evolution in organizations has brought spectacular increase in levels of prosperity in the world. However, it also encourages short-term thinking and has led to overconsumption in general, including the resources of the planet, which has led to the current problems of climate change (Gerndt, 2014).

Nowadays, pluralistic (green) organizations have emerged with the recent era of ecology, solidarity and cooperation, equality. Many of those organizations are non-profits and they do not aim at serving the shareholder's profits but all the stakeholders' benefits. Everyone has the right to share their opinions or values and merits to be listened to and respected. The focus is on on culture and people's empowerment to achieve results through the employee's and stakeholders' motivation and well-being at work (Gerndt, 2014).

Today, some leaders are slowly emerging with the aspiration to go even beyond the Green level. This last and emerging model is what Laloux calls the "Evolutionary" or "Teal" organizations (Gerndt, 2014). For the first time, the organization is considered as a living organism that eliminates the hierarchical pyramid to replace it with self-management. Every employee is believed to have a creative potential to serve the evolutionary purpose of the company he works in (Gerndt, 2014).

This is the type of organizations that is going to be analyzed through this thesis.

As a conclusion, "the general rule seems to be that the level of consciousness of an organization cannot exceed the level of consciousness of its leader" (Gerndt, 2014, p.17). This illustrates the determinant importance of the leadership used to mobilize the new managerial practices, for an organization that wants to go teal or agile.

2.1.3. Agility definition and characteristics

Many definitions of agility exist. One of them is defined by Kidd (1994) as the “rapid and proactive adaptation of enterprise elements to unexpected and unpredicted changes” (Sherehiy et al., 2007, p.456)¹.

Yusuf and al. (1999) wrote about researchers from Leihgh University (USA) who defined agility as “a manufacturing system with capabilities (hard and soft technologies, human resources, educated management, information) to meet the rapidly changing needs of the marketplace (speed, flexibility, customers, competitors, suppliers, infrastructure, responsiveness)” (Sherehiy et al., 2007, p.445)².

Those same authors also came up themselves with another possible definition: “Agility is the successful application of competitive bases such as speed, flexibility, innovation, and quality by the means of the integration of reconfigurable resources and best practices of knowledge-rich environment to provide customer-driven products and services in a fast changing environment” (Sherehiy et al., 2007, p.446)³.

No matter how many and how different definitions might exist, they all mention speed and flexibility as most important attributes (Sherehiy et al., 2007).⁴

Finally, according to Jackson and Johansson (2003), “agility is not a goal in itself but the necessary means to maintain the competitiveness in the market characterized by uncertainty and change” (Sherehiy et al., 2007, p.448)⁵.

¹ Kidd, P.T. (1994). *Agile Manufacturing: Forging New Frontiers*. Addison- Wesley, Reading, MA.

² Yusuf, Y., Sarhadi, M., Gunasekaran, A. (1999). Agile manufacturing: the drivers, concepts and attributes. *International Journal of Production Economics* 62(1-2), 33-43.

³ Yusuf, Y., Sarhadi, M., Gunasekaran, A. (1999). Agile manufacturing: the drivers, concepts and attributes. *International Journal of Production Economics* 62(1-2), 33-43.

⁴ Gunasekaran, A., (1999). Agile manufacturing: a framework for research and development. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 62, 87-105.

Sharifi, H., Zhang, Z., 1999. A methodology for achieving agility in manufacturing organisations: an introduction. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 62(1-2), 7-22.

Yusuf, Y., Sarhadi, M., Gunasekaran, A. (1999). Agile manufacturing: the drivers, concepts and attributes. *International Journal of Production Economics* 62(1-2), 33-43.

⁵ Jackson, M., Johansson, C. (2003). Agility analysis from a production system perspective. *Intergarted Manufacturing Systems*, 14(6), 482–488.

As mentioned earlier, the primary attributes of agility are speed and flexibility. However, once applied to the whole organization and on a global basis, many additional characteristics can be identified: flexibility, responsiveness, speed, culture of change, integration and low complexity, high quality and customized products, and mobilization of core competencies (Sherehiy et al., 2007).

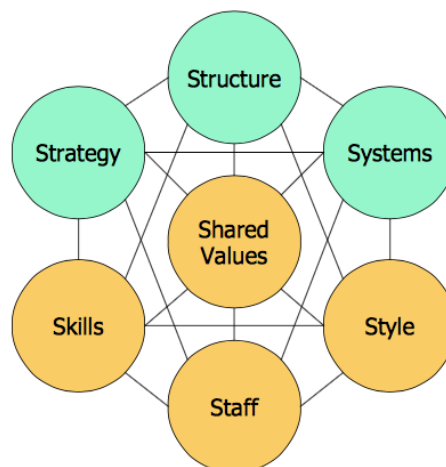
2.2. MAJOR WRITINGS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

2.2.1. The 7-S model

The idea to focus on the leadership style comes from a model created by two consultants from McKinsey & Company (figure 2).

According to the model, a business can be analyzed through seven aspects of the organization. Three elements form of the hard system (in green): Structure, Strategy and Systems. Three other elements constitute the soft system, which are more complicated to diagnose since they mainly depend on the people (in orange): Skills, Staff, and Style. Finally, those six values are all surrounding one common together of shared values.

Figure 2: McKinsey 7-S model



Source: Dagmar Recklies. (2001)

<http://www.themanager.org/pdf/7smodel.pdf>

Hereunder is an explanation for each dimension in order to understand what it is about (McKinsey Quarterly, 2008).

- Strategy : the goals and actions taken by the company to deal with the changes in the environment (e.g. competitors, business world, etc.) in order to be and remain competitive.
- Structure: the authority relationships and the hierarchy.
- System: the general processes and procedures of the company (e.g. HR, client management, financial reports, etc.)
- Style: this dimension can be either the management or leadership style existing in the company, or more generally, the informal culture.
- Staff: this refers to the people in the company from the first day of introduction to the development of their talents through their career path. It treats also of their number and turnover, the diversity, etc.
- Skills: Have to do with the distinctive competences of the whole organizations and their individual people. That helps them to become more specialized in one area or to expand or shift competences.
- Shared values: Guiding values with a real meaning, which define what the organization is trying to achieve (e.g.profits or social mission, etc.).

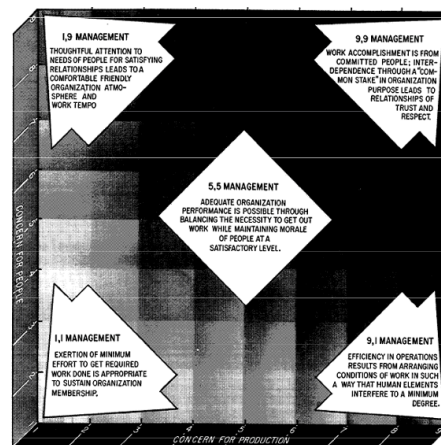
In this thesis, it was decided to focus especially on one of these dimensions, which is the Leadership Style. The aim is to analyse and understand in which way does a certain type of leadership influence, and more especially support an organization to go agile. In order to get there, a few best practices and behaviours are recommended to evolve from a simple directive manager to an inspirational leader.

2.2.2. Leadership theories

2.2.2.1. Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid

Blake and Mouton (1964) created the Managerial Grid in order to assess leadership effectiveness. According to them, an effective leadership is measured according to two variables: the concern for production and profit; the concern for people. On a graph built with these two axes (concern for production in horizontal and concern for people in vertical), the authors gave values going from 1 to 9 for the two variables, where a 5 corresponds to the basic style usually adopted by managers. Depending on where the managers position themselves, the authors identified five possible styles of leadership (or also called theories of managerial behaviour) (figure 3) (Blake, Mouton, Barnes, Greiner, 1964)

Figure 3: The Blake & Mouton Managerial Grid



Source: Blake et al. (1964)

<https://hbr.org/1964/11/breakthrough-in-organization-development>

- *Impoverished Management (1,1):* the bottom-left box shows a minimal concern for both production and people. The manager is indifferent and mostly ineffective (Mind Tools, 2016).
- *Produce-or-Perish Management (9,1):* on the bottom-right box, the manager has a strong concern for results but with a minimum interference of the human factor. The people are a means to an end and controlled by an autocratic manager with strict rules, rules and procedures. There might be good results in the short-term but the team's

morale and motivation will be affected in the long-term, therefore also affecting the performance (Mind Tools, 2016).

- *Country Club Management (1,9)*: the top-left box shows a manager strongly oriented on people but not on production at all. He assumes that the happiness of workers will be a sufficient motivation for good performance. However, the lack of direction and control leads to chaos and disorganization, resulting in a loss of productivity (Mind Tools, 2016).
- *Team Management (9,9)*: this style is reflected in the top-right box where the leader is passionate about his job and empowers his workers at the same time. He reunites everyone around the same purpose to do his best and achieve good results (Mind Tools, 2016).
- *Middle-of-the-road Management (5,5)*: in the middle of the grid, the manager tries to balance his concern for results and people, but as a result, he does not fully achieve none of them (Mind Tools, 2016).

The Blake & Mouton theory states that there is one most effective style regardless of the situation, which is the Team Management (9,9), since it maximises both of the categories. Therefore, they established a questionnaire for managers to understand where they stand with respect to their concern for production and for people, the aim being to reach the level (9,9) (Mind Tools, 2016).

2.2.2.2. *Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership*

In 1967, Fred Fiedler developed the Contingency Theory of Leadership. This theory explains that the performance of an organization is the result of the interaction of the leader with the environment, and how certain situational factors alter the efficiency of a manager's leadership style (Utecht & Heier, 1976).

According to his theory, Fiedler (1967) (cited by Utecht & Heier, 1976) identified three variables that determine whether the situation is favourable or not to the leader.

- (1) The leader-member relations : depending on the personality of the leader, his relationships with the members of the group involves a high or low tension.
- (2) The task structure: the level of structure that will be required to execute a task.
- (3) The leader position power: to what extent does the position itself of the leader enable him to exercise direction on the members of the group.

On a graph, the vertical axis reuses the measures of task or relationship-oriented concern. The horizontal axis classes the three other variables from very favourable to very unfavourable (Utecht & Heier, 1976).

The median correlations between the two axes draw a bow-shaped curve. The points above the midline (correlation of .00) indicate a positive correlation between the leadership style and the performance. This enables to understand whether the elements of the situation are favourable or not to his leadership style, in order to maximize the group performance (Utecht & Heier, 1976).

The difference with the previous Blake and Mouton theory is that Fiedler does not consider that there is only one best leadership style to be applied in any situation and being the most effective. According to him, different leadership styles can be the more efficient, depending on the situation.

2.2.2.3. Hersey & Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model

Finally, Hersey & Blanchard (1988) created later the situational leadership model (figure 4). This model also suggests that the leadership style can be adapted according to the faced situation, but in a different way.

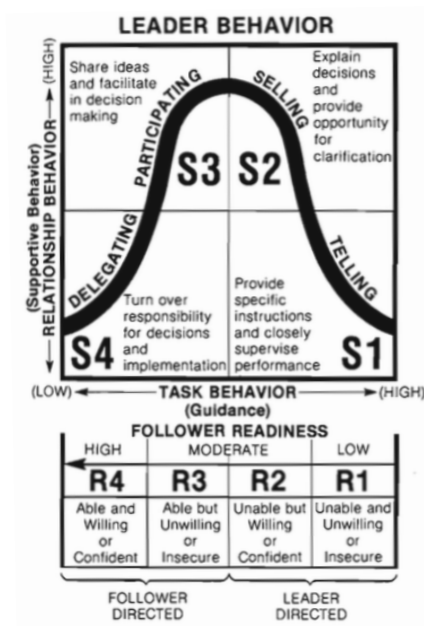
The difference with the previous model is that Friedler believed that, although the environment changes, a leader's style was fixed. Therefore the leader would need to be changed and replaced by another with the right leadership style in order for the organization to go on and perform better (Mind tools, 2016b).

For Hersey & Blanchard, the leader is not supposed to run away, he needs to be able to adapt to the situation. This ability to adapt is the key to successful leaders and for the organization to become agile (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

As appearing on the matrix, four leadership styles are possible, still depending on the two variables Task and Relationship.

However, the authors added one factor that needs to be taken into account in the adaptation of the leadership style. The followers' maturity is considered here, on basis of their level of willingness to take action, and ability to do so (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

Figure 3: Leadership styles



Source : Hersey & Blanchard. (1988), p. 171.

<https://ess220.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/hersey-blanchard-1988.pdf>

- *Telling/Directing* Style : in this situation, the task behaviour is high and the followers do not feel neither confident nor able to take action. Here, the leader has no other choice than taking the decisions and give specific instructions to the workers and supervising them closely.

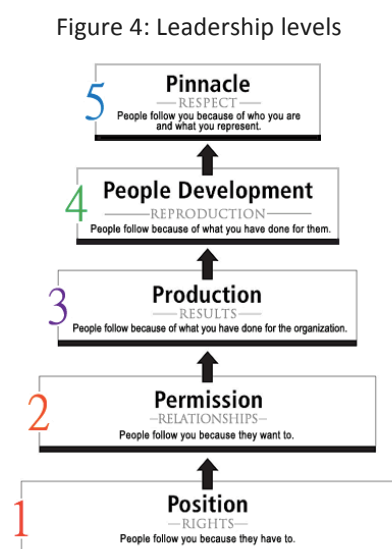
- *Selling/Coaching Style* : this is in a high-task context where the followers have the willingness and confidence to take action but do not have the necessary competences. Therefore, the leader explains the decision taken in a supportive and persuasive way. This is a high-relationship situation.
- *Participating/Supporting Style* : in this situation, the followers have the competences and abilities but they are not confident enough to take action. Therefore, they need the leader's support to push them by sharing ideas and encouraging participative decision-making regarding task-oriented issues.
- *Delegating Style* : in that situation, the followers have both the willingness and ability to act. They do not need a strong support from the leader. Therefore, this latter allows the group to take responsibility for the task-based decisions.

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) believe that the most successful managers should be flexible, and able to adapt their leadership style and apply it according to the situation faced.

2.2.2.4. Leadership levels – from Manager to Leader

The author John Maxwell (2013) describes every stage a leader can go through during his career and shows readers how they can move to the next level to become more influential, respected, and successful leaders (figure 4).

1. **Level 1: Position** - People follow because they have to.
2. **Level 2: Permission** - People follow because they want to.
3. **Level 3: Production** - People follow because of what you have done for the organization.
4. **Level 4: People Development** - People follow because of what you have done for them personally.
5. **Level 5: The Pinnacle** - People follow because of who you are and what you represent.



Source: Maxwell, J. (2013)

2.3. ACTION LINES OF THE LEADER IN AGILE ORGANIZATIONS

Making your organization going teal and becoming a successful agile leader is possible. Several authors identified key breakthroughs to follow in order to reach that purpose. However, it is important to keep in mind that going agile is not only a question of processes and procedures. Being an agile leader is first of all a human mission. It is a way of thinking that encourages a good life, to bring success and profit, and not the opposite. There are no mistakes but only opportunities to learn and become stronger (Laloux, 2014a).

2.3.1. Self-management

According to Laloux (2014a; 2014b) and Gerndt (2014), self-management is based on a system conducted by peer relationships, with no need of hierarch. Practically speaking, self-managment implies from the leader to let his team self-organize, optionally coached fromtime to time when it is necessary. The project management should be simplified with minimum plans and budgets. Besides, the staff has almost no function and the roles are fluid. The decision-making is not the responsibility of only the leader anymore; it is up to the whole team to take part of the decision-making process that is fully decentralized. Of course, being decentralized implies coordination and meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page. Furthermore, transparence is a must as well as constant information sharing (e.g. about financials). The ultimate goal of the team is to achieve collective performance. The salaries would be set self-set with peer calibration, no bonus and profit sharing (Laloux, 2014a; Laloux, 2014b; Gerndt 2014).

However, this first guiding breakthrough of course relies on some assumptions made about each one's behaviour as a member of the organization. Self-management cannot be achieved without trust as a prerequisite. Freedom and accountability go together. Information sharing and transparency are part of it, as well as responsibility for the organization. Every potential organizational issue is ours and we have a duty to address it. Disagreements can happen but it should be solved through respectful confrontation. Finally, it is needed to believe in the power of collective intelligence, guided through an advice process (Laloux, 2014a; Laloux, 2014b; Gerndt 2014).

Isaac Getz (2013) is another author who worked for years on a concept very close to the agile organization. It is called the *Freedom Incorporation*. This new concept tackles the importance of the role of a leader in the transition to agility. In these “free organizations”, the majority of employees and workers have the total responsibility and freedom for entrepreneurship.

According to Getz (2013), what makes it an efficient way of doing business and succeed, is that both the employees and employer are happy. The employees feel much better having the possibility to take actions and decisions without always having to get the authorization from the boss or going through any process or procedure. On the other hand, for the company, giving freedom to the employees offers main advantages (Getz & Carney, 2016): all the employees now act for the company’s success and not just to obey their boss and apply the defined procedures. Therefore, we can talk about happiness for bosses and shareholders since the workers are totally involved in the promotion of the company’s vision and its growth.

In order to reach that way of working, several changes are made compared to a traditional - not agile - company. Processes, KPI’s (key performance indicators), hierarchy, control are deleted. Of course to avoid it becoming anarchy, it is necessary for the leader to establish an exciting common and shared vision for all, set some social behavioural rules, and more importantly, decrease his ego (Getz & Carney, 2016).

On the employee’s side, it has been proven by the famous Gallup study “State of the Global Workplace” (2013) that a happy worker is twice less sick, six times less absent and fifty-five percent more innovative. Those results emphasize the importance of happiness and well being at work, as a driver for performance and innovation.

The CEO of the Brazilian company Semco, Ricardo Semler, wrote that the best management of all is self-management (Semler, 2001). He is the author of the famous international bestsellers *Maverick* and *The Seven-Day Weekend*, where he explains how he transformed his business into a successful company, using three applied principles: employee participation, profit-sharing and open information systems.

He argues that in order to reach that self-management applied by all, it is necessary to have an adapted system that makes it feasible. More specifically, there must be no policies, procedures and rules. Everyone should have access to all and the same information. Decision-making is shared with equal enthusiasm and commitment, for small or bigger issues. The second requirement to allow self-management is to let the followers evaluate the leaders in order to apply a bilateral and not only top-down feedback anymore (Semler, 2001).

2.3.2. Purpose statement

According to Laloux (2014a; 2014b) and Gerndt (2014), every organization is a living entity with a specific purpose instead of only objectives and goals. Its members should stop trying to predict and control the future, but rather understand, listen and follow what this entity has as evolutionary purpose. Then, through the collective intelligence of self-managed employees, a strategy should naturally emerge and lead to the decision-making. Competition, growth and market share are important, but only as far as they help achieving the purpose. Profit is assumed to be an indicator, expected to grow naturally if doing the right thing to follow the organization's purpose. Therefore, profits and purpose is not supposed to be a trade-off. Purpose should always have priority, and profits should naturally follow (Laloux, 2014a; Laloux, 2014b; Gerndt 2014).

In his previous book *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, Simon Sinek (2009) created a new concept of leadership, called *The Golden Circle* (figure 5). Very inspiration-minded, Sinek has been working for several years on the idea of *I love my job*, which is sadly not a majority case in our societies nowadays. He has been looking for the actions a leader should take to make his employees know why they are waking up every morning, and be happy to go to work. As work is a big part of our life, it is almost posing the question of the *Why* of our life. It is about what motivates us, drives us, makes us inspired and fulfils us in what we do everyday until the rest of our lifes (Sinek, 2009).

He created the Golden Circle to illustrate the three dimensions of our lifes, in relation to organizations, to find out how to reach fulfilment and happiness in both of them.

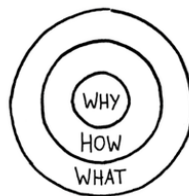
He first states the dimension of the *What*. Every organization knows what they do. They basically sell a product or offer a service to customers (Sinek, 2009).

The second middle dimension is the *How*. Some organizations, but not all of them, know how to perform their job correctly. This is often what builds their competitive advantage and set them apart from the competition (Sinek, 2009).

Finally, the third but deeper dimension is the *Why*. Very few organizations know why they are doing what they do. Consequently, it applies to the employees as well who do not find any deep motivation or reason to provide so much effort every day of their life. And *Why* is a result, but we are not talking about money. It is about the common belief that brings everyone together and pushes them to do their best for the company's good because they like it (Sinek, 2009).

Figure 5 : The Golden Circle

The Golden Circle



Source : Sinek (2009)

<https://www.startwithwhy.com>

That whole theory of the Golden Circle with the 3W's brings us to this statement: people do not buy what you do; people buy why you do it (Sinek, 2009).

That is also the reason why, for example, we do not only buy Appel's computers, but we would also buy their MP3 player or their phones. Because we are buying the reason why they sell it, not only what they are doing. Otherwise they would not be that different from any other competitor.

"The goal is not to do business with everybody who needs what you have. The goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe" (De la Maza & Benz, 2016, p.63)⁶.

⁶ Sinek, S. (2009, September). *How great leaders inspire action*. Communication presented at TEDxPuget Sound, USA.

2.3.3. Talent management

According to Laloux (2014a), the whole process of selection of new associates has to focus on the fit of the applicant with the organization, the recruitment being namely culture-based. Sinek (2009) argues that for a company's recruiter, the goal is not to hire people just because we have a vacancy and they need a job with the required competences. It is important to create a team composed of people who believe in what you believe. In the first case, people will work for your money. In the other, they will work with blood and sweat and tears because it is not only about the company and the boss and the job, it will also be their own concern to be successful. This shows the importance of people and relationships and common shared beliefs in business.

Getz and Carney (2012) use the metaphor of a gardener to illustrate the leader of freedom incorporation. A flower has three essential needs: light, water and minerals. The humans work according to the same principle. The leader has to create an environment in the company where people's physiologic needs are satisfied in order to allow them to develop and grow their talent in the best possible way.

The first need of employees is **intrinsic equality**. No one should especially be treated better than the others, but more importantly, no one should be treated better than the others. This implies respect and consideration for each one's work and intellectual capability. Intrinsic equality also involves taking decisions based on the public opinion. Finally, it is necessary to understand the workers as capable people who know what they are doing in their job. But as far as there will be a pyramidal hierarchy, this principle won't be achieved (Getz & Carney, 2012).

The second need is about **personal development**. It is important for the employees to feel that they are trusted and they trust themselves to improve and gain efficiency. Some companies have even created a position of Chief Happiness Officer, who's role is to ensure the employees feel good, free to take initiatives, to ask questions, to give their opinion, etc. (Getz & Carney, 2012).

Finally, the third need is about **auto-direction**. This principle is based on the thought that the human being was naturally not created to be told what to do, and even less how to do it (Getz & Carney, 2012). This idea is related to the concept of self-management evoked by Laloux (2014a).

In the business world, success is usually measured in terms of money. However, the agile organization emphasizes on the human in the center of everything first. For a human being though, in a professional context, the real success is not associated with money but rather with the exploration of talents and personal interests. Therefore, Semler (2003) argues that companies should stop measuring success by cash reserves, revenues and profit. Instead, a company success should be assessed with the amount of employee's creativity deployed. And this is feasible only by offering them the possibility to tap as much as possible into their reservoir of talents and abilities.

In order to develop its employee's potential, Semler (2001) suggests first creating the opportunity to change job assignments, and this in an easy way. The CEO thinks that employees should work not only because they need to pay the bills, but mainly because they should be offered the opportunity to enjoy what they do. If a project fits with the employee's interests, it is much likely also to bring better results since the willingness to work on it and provide its best is present.

2.3.4. Work-life balance and workplace rules

Ricardo Semler is the CEO of Brazil's Semco S.A., a 50-year old company with annual revenues exceeding \$160 million. He is one of the world's most respected champions of organizational change. Mr. Semler is also the author of the business best seller *Maverick!*, which tells the story of Semco's transition from paternalistic, command-oriented management to a highly democratic, participative management structure (Semler, 2003).

The main idea of his book, *the Seven-Day Weekend*, is a metaphor for the fact that it is now time to do things differently and better in the business world. Most of the practices automatically accepted and unquestioned (such as the dress code, the set work hours,

agreeing with what the boss says rather than what your instincts tell you...) are not as absolutely essential as they may seem.

Semler (2003) suggests a whole new way of doing business. He believes that a company can still achieve profit and sustainable growth when putting employees' freedom ahead of corporate goals. Practically speaking, he argues that the new way of doing business should lower control, introduce more flexible time, remove job titles and business plans, share the decision-making; generally allow people to manage themselves.

In the same mindset as Laloux (2014), Semler (2003) asked himself why cannot work be fun and why could we not find a better mix between work and leisure and passion and why should those be only reserved for the weekend, as if they were opposed elements. Why can we take work at home, but we cannot take kids at work?

Ricardo Semler then decided to develop his unique answers to those questions, and put them in practice within this own Brazilian company, Semco S.A. This CEO succeeded to transform a small family business into a highly profitable manufacturing and multiplied its size by 40. He achieved that by finding the right balance between work and personal life for himself and his 3000 employees (Semler, 2003).

The new technologies nowadays enable employees to answer their email during the weekend or late at night or during days off, when they are not supposed to work. Since not all the employees are able to manage the balance between personal and working life and end-up with burnout, Semler decided to put an end to the traditional weekend. According to him, long and hard working hours are not necessarily the solution to better results. He rather works with the idea that an employee is more productive when he is motivated and positively challenged. Therefore, Semler took the decision to trust and give his employees the freedom to set their own personal work schedule. According to the Semler (2003), uniformity decreases productivity. As far as the work is done, the way to achieve it is up to them, whether from the office, from home, early in the morning or late night, during the weekend or not.

Semler (2001) exposes a few (non-exhaustive) rules to be followed at the workplace in order to reach success through happiness and freedom: liberty to set working hours, liberty to choose salaries, free access for everyone to all meetings, hiring of superiors by the employees, potential abolishment of the HR function to let the floor to the leader taking care of its employees, twice a year ratings of bosses by the employees and publication of results, team leaders are chosen by the employees, liberty of choice regarding the Semco office they want to work out of, possibility of early retirement (by getting one day per week off in return for working one day a week after they retire).

As a result, it looks like the Semco's management style is close to a *laissez-faire* policy where inaction might be one of the main tools to success.

2.3.5. Stakeholders and community

In his second major essay, *The Institution as Servant*, Greenleaf (2009) mentions that the organizations could also, just like individuals, be servant leaders. According to him, a good society is built on people caring for each other. However nowadays, most institutions and the society in general are becoming more and more large, complex, powerful but also impersonal and sometimes corrupt. According to him, servant institutions, expected to be more just and more loving, might change the world. In all of his works, Greenleaf mentions the need for this new kind of leadership where helping the others is the central pillar. This would apply for all customers, employees, and community in general (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

Servant-leadership as an institution and a guiding philosophy can be applied across boundaries, by a wide variety of people, in companies or non-profit organizations, corporations, churches, universities, foundations, etc. (Spears, 2002).

According to Ricardo Semler (2003), new metrics should be developed in order to measure the success of a company. He cites for example a yearly 360° evaluation, incorporating feedback from suppliers, partners and employees, structured as a customer survey and totally open-ended. Indeed, success should be measured in terms of long-term health for all the actors potentially involved.

Some corporations appear totally healthy from a balance sheet point-of-view but fail within a very short time frame. By encouraging transparency, the CEO wants to publish internally all the employee survey findings, together with the financial reports, to make them accessible to the general public for whoever would like to get the information. That would give the true report of success and health of the company.

2.3.6. Personal traits of the leader of agile organizations

2.3.6.1. Wholeness

According to Laloux (2014a), wholeness implies to bring all of who we are to the workplace, putting on the side our self-estimate, professional/self/masculine part of us. Wholeness from the leaders implies the elimination or limitation of status markers and job titles. Instead, everyone should be made equal to each other and sharing the same values that should be translated into explicit ground rules.

Storytelling is one example of practices that can be applied to support self-disclosure and community building. All of this can be done in quiet and warm spaces for everyone. When some disagreements emerge, an honest discussion needs to take place during specific meeting practices where everyone keeps his ego for himself and favors distributed initiatives (Laloux, 2014a).

However, once again, to achieve wholeness, there is an assumption that has to be set in everyone's mind that we are all of fundamentally equally worth. The community will be richer if all members are able to fully contribute in their distinctive way with their differences in roles, education, backgrounds, interests, skills, points of view, etc. Another assumption of wholeness is a safe and caring workplace. Instead of working by fear, people have to work by love. Emotionally and spiritually safe environments allow each member to behave authentically. Wholeness is allowing oneself to make mistakes, talk about it openly and learn and grow from them or any other problem. Feedback is welcome, and focus has to be on strengths more than weaknesses in order to grow. Finally, relationships are central to everything in life, including in the companies. In order to allow everyone to be fully himself, no rumors should be spread or no talks behind someone's back should be committed. The problems are solved one-on-one and are not blamed on the others (Laloux, 2014a ; Gerndt, 2014).

2.3.6.2. *Communication from the inside out*

According to Sinek (2009), if you have a look at the greatest inspiring leaders in the world, whether it is Steve Jobs or Martin Luther King, they have all acted the same way: opposed to everyone else. The way we communicate is from the outside layer to the deeper one. But those inspired leaders and the organizations they have built, regardless of their size or industry, have always acted the opposite way: from the inside out. To illustrate this with an example everybody knows. If the famous company Apple were thinking like everyone, their marketing slogan would probably be similar to *“we make great computers. They are beautifully designed, simple to use and user-friendly. Want to buy one?”* (Sinek, 2009) This is how people usually communicate and how most marketing and sales actions are done: we say what we do, how we are different or better than the others and we expect a purchase, a vote, a reaction in our favour. Now here is how Apple actually communicates. *“Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently. The way we challenge the status quo is by making our products beautifully designed, simple to use and user-friendly. We just happen to make great computers. Want to buy one?”* (Sinek, 2009) This is already a totally different way to communicate and thus a different message as well. The difference is the order of the information.

They communicate from the inside out, explain why are they doing what they do, why are the employees waking up every morning and enjoying (Sinek, 2009). And this is the real factor that will make your future customers buy, trust and be loyal to your brand and your company.

Human relationship and business work the same way. When we communicate from the outside in, people can understand a lot of complicated information, figures, facts and details. However, it won't necessarily lead to a reaction or behaviour. They will be objectively convinced, but maybe it just won't feel right without being able to provide a logical reason for it.

2.3.6.3. *Servant leader*

These organizations that have reached agility, thanks to their leaders, have strong cultures and values and emphasize on the importance of people, relationships, trust and teamwork as key factors leading to success. However, they are also in a risky position where the cost of failure is bigger than for other traditional companies. Because the true price of this kind of leadership is putting the company and workmates' needs above its own.

As Isaac Getz (2013) mentioned, a great leader takes care of its people as a gardener and puts its ego and self-interest aside. However, the leader is rewarded with trust and loyalty from its people in return. Working with trust and common beliefs makes stronger and better performance.

Semler (2003) mentions the risk of having too much talent in the company being potentially as bad as having too little. Indeed, the problem with talented people is ego. As said Bob David in a TedX Talk (2012), the rarest commodity is leadership without ego. Decision-making becomes a difficult task because everyone's opinion needs to be taken into account. Therefore, Semler (2003) suggests that a more sustainable approach would look for people who are not only good at what they do but who also have strong interpersonal skills in order to decrease their ego and be more enclined to make compromises, discuss and listen to each other.

In 2014, Simon Sinek took us to the next level to understand why are some organizations performing better than others. *Leaders Eat Last*, his new book analyzes the real leadership challenge and what makes a great leader. There is no good or bad leader, you are one or you are not. Otherwise, you are probably a manager, which is something different. Being a manager requires professional management competences. But in order to sustain an organization in the long-term, there is a need for leader who have this additional element compared to the managers : they care about people. Being a leader is a sacrifice, in terms of energy, time... Depending on whether you are a manager or a leader, you will chose to sacrifice the people to make profit or you will sacrifice profit to protect people. Therefore, leadership is a choice (Sinek, 2014).

He suggests five lessons to be a good leader: Seize an opportunity; tell the truth; ask for and accept help (leadership credibility does not come from intelligence); take the risk to trust people; remember who you are (Sinek, 2014).

Robert Greenleaf, a recognized author on leadership topics, wrote: “The servant leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2016). He is the author of *The Servant as Leader*, an essay first published in 1970. In his writings, he defined this concept in the following way: “Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2016).

Greenleaf (2002) argues that a person being leader-first is totally different from a servant-first. They are two extreme types. The difference lies in the care taken by the servant-first towards its people, putting them in priority. Those people, who benefit from the servant-first care, are expected afterwards to grow as persons, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and ultimately more likely to become themselves servant for the others as well.

While the leader-first, who is at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, puts priority on growth and power, at the other extreme the servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth of its people and the community to which they belong. He shares power and erases the pyramidal structure. He makes sure the needs of others are satisfied before his and always tries to help its people to perform while developing well-being. The key tools of a servant-leader include listening, persuasion, intuition, the use of language, and the pragmatic measurements of outcomes (Greenleaf, 2002).

3. CASE STUDIES

Through extensive research about organizations that are starting or have already applied the principles of management and leadership to go agile, I found less than a hundred cases all around the world. Those were identified thanks to the scientific writings of authors such as Isaac Getz and Frédéric Laloux. They were also found through the listening of podcasts and interviews, the visioning of documentaries and the reading of newspaper articles, writings from scientific journals.

This section aims at analyzing, from a practical point of view, twelve case studies of agile organizations that are already operating with success.

The companies as well as non-profit associations have different sizes, come from different countries and act in diverse sectors, which include public services, health care, education, retailing, manufacturing, energy, etc.

The aim is to understand the role taken by these organizations' leaders and how they act to facilitate the process of going agile, to increase performance, and make employees happier.

The information exposed is taken from indirect primary data (e.g. video interviews, documentary movies, conferences, talks, etc.) and secondary data (e.g. articles, annual reports, etc.)

Every case is exposed according to the following structure. First, the organization is described with name, sector of activity and size. Second, a short explanation of the previous situation before agility is explained, followed by the determinant factor that triggered the start of the transformation. Fourth, the whole transformation process is explained and the set up managerial practices are discovered. Finally, the fifth section exposes some facts and figures that show evidence of success of those companies and leaders that decided to adopt the agile configuration with new managerial and leadership practices.

3.1. SPF (SERVICE PUBLIC FEDERAL) DE LA SECURITE SOCIALE – BELGIUM

Organization's description : The first case treats about the Federal Public Service of Social Security in Belgium. This is an organization acting in the sector of public administration, counting about 1.100 employees. The agile leader of this Ministry is the current director, Frank Van Massenhove (SPF Sécurité Sociale, 2016).

Situation before agility : In the words of Frank Van Massenhove, current president of the SPF Sécurité Sociale, this Ministry had the badest reputation in the 2000s. This saying is based on the statistics established by the recruitment teams who found out that the applicants would always list the Ministry as a last possibility of employment if they were not accepted anywhere else. Consequently to the employees' demotivation, the service provided to citizens was of poor quality (Frank Van Massenhove - Président SPF Sécurité Sociale, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015). Besides that, they knew that between 2005 and 2015, 40% of the current employees would leave for retirement. As this is a federal service, besides very important and necessary, they could not assume stopping the activity. It became then a priority to make the organization more attractive to potential applicants. The only way to differentiate from the private sector and other competitors was a culture (Laurence Vanhee – Chief Happiness Officer SPF Sécurité Sociale, 26/08/2014) (Alter Nego, 2014).

Determinant factor : Everything changed in 2002 with the arrival of a new Ministry President, Frank Van Massenhove. Supported by his new team, he established new working methods to improve the processes and provide a better service to the citizens (Getz and Carney, 2013).

Three years later, after few changes, a determining event finally had an impact. An internal survey with the question "what makes you happy or unhappy at work?" was spread among the employees of the Ministry. The agents indicated that they appreciate more time than money. Indeed, the President was not surprised since there was a big issue regarding the transportation and lunchtime that wasted three hours per day per employee on a daily basis (Getz and Carney, 2013). The process of going agile then started to take place.

Transformation : From there came the idea to let the agents chose where and when they wanted to work – at the office or at home. Seventy percents of the agents answered positively and began to work at home up to three days per week – the maximum allowed (Christophe Géonet, Traducteur SPF, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015).

In 2009, the Ministry moved. In order to respect the principle of intrinseque equality of all, many work practices were removed. There were no fixed desks anymore but rather “flex” desks, always cleaned and adaptable in open spaces. Meetings were conducted in semi-open and soundproof locals made available (Messonnier, 2015; Getz & Carney, 2013). Time clocks were removed, supply closets unlocked, the parking spaces were not reserved for the top management anymore, the hierarchical organizational charts disappeared. On the other hand, management practices were also removed. Those include the removal of travel expenses reports, financial and control departments, long-term planning processes. Instead of that, the leaders treated people as responsible and trustful employees (Getz, 2009).

For 80% of the management, this change was accepted. But for the 20% other percent, they did not agree. However, they had no choice. Managers were now evaluated by their employees, who could suggest changes or improvement, to improve teamwork and results (Meissonnier, 2015).

In the annual report (2014), the fourth and last axis of focus, which tackles organizational capabilities, includes as priorities the implication of employees in the definition of objectives, the leadership, and the valorization of the members’ talents. This is lead through lean management, digitalization, mentoring and coaching, self-consciousness, well-being, summer schools to learn, etc.

Quickly, it has been proven that trust actually costs less than control. Following those first results, the President Frank Van Massenhove, supported by other leaders started a whole new radical transformation of the Ministry. All the agents could undertake any action in a free and responsible way in order to improve the service provided to the citizens. That meant no hierarchical bureaucracy anymore. The managers became coaches, they do not have any specific personal desk anymore, and they gave up their external signs of power (Getz & Carney, 2013).

One element mentioned by the Director is that he actually did not announce this future change to the other directors or employees. They would directly reject it because it is too much change in once. Therefore, in order to still evolve in this direction without facing the reluctance of others, he would start slowly showing the example and applying some principles and practices, noticed more and more by the employees. Those would see that it is actually effective and pleasant for everyone, and would therefore slowly start to change themselves. Only after, the announcement can be made and the official new change can start (Frank Van Massenhove, Président SPF, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015).

The leader needs to make people happy, at least because happy people work better and consequently provide a better service to the customers. Basically, the managers are at the service of the employees who know what and how to perform their job. As a result, the Ministry was well performing, citizens were satisfied and the economy of the country works better (Getz & Carney, 2013).

Results : Some results showed that agents worked in average six hours at home instead of seven or eight at the office. However, they were twenty percent more productive. Besides, since seventy percent of the employees chose to work at home up to three days per week, seven flex desks were sufficient for ten agents. As a result, just the economies in rent amounted to six million euros less per year (Messonnier 2015; Getz & Carney, 2013).

The medias talked about this successful transformation a lot. The Ministry has been elected best working environment of the country two consecutive years. Frank Van Massenhove has been elected best manager of the year. And Laurence Vanhee was elected best Human Resource Director, although her official title was “Chief Happiness Officer” (Getz & Carney, 2013).

When this latter was rewarded her prize in 2012, she said her job was to make people happy. In 2013, she created her own consulting firm named Happyformance with the slogan “Freedom + Responsibility = Happiness + Performance” (Noblet, 2014).

Nowadays, thousands of companies in the world come to visit the Ministry in order to initiate their transformation as well.

Figures taken from the official website inform that only 8,97% of the employees continue pointing hours and 88% (about 600 workers end of December 2014) of them telework often. Financial economies are 12 millions per year and the productivity increases per 20% minimum, 50% of energy costs, 50% decrease of maintenance costs, 69% telework, 84% decrease of printing costs, 78% decrease of phone costs (thanks to social medias). In terms of attractiveness, the number of applicants increased by 500% and they became the most attractive Ministry in Belgium. One out of two leaders are women. 88% say they are happy to very happy to work. 84% would recommend it to their friends (Laurence Vanhee – Chief Happiness Officer SPF Sécurité Sociale) (Alter Nego, 2014).

3.2. FAVI – France

Organization's description : Favi is a French foundry under pressure aluminium, brass and copper. About 80% of its activities are the automotive supply through the production of parts according to the constraints of the manufacturers. The company is now counting 400 workers (Favi, 2016). The agile leader that liberated this company is Jean-François Zobrist, ex-director of the company now.

Situation before agility: About thirty years ago, the workers in the company were very demotivated (Elilie Legris – Favi Operator, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015). The structure was very constraining and therefore the workers could do only 50% of what they could be able to. As a consequence, 2 to 3% of the employees do not do anything in companies in general and those are the ones demotivating and for whom we spend the most energy as a manager (Jean-François Zobrist, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015).

Determinant factor: Jean-François Zobrist then got an intuition: workers know how to do their work better than the boss. The value of the company is created by the workers and not by the managers or the bosses. Besides, the cost of control started to be too high. Therefore, we should let them do it in peace. A revalorization of workers imposed itself (Jean-François Zobrist, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015). This is actually the opposite of a restructuration; it is a destructuration (François Dovergne, Favi Sector Responsible, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015).

Transformation: Zobrist started with two basic rules: “The man is good” and “The love of the customer” (Jean-François Zobrist, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messionnier, 2015). The first one implies that there is no control per principle and that all employees are trusted.

The first element to change was to improve the environment: no more smoke, volatile fat, blue uniforms for everybody to be cleaner, etc. (Stéphane Béthouart, Opérateur Favi, Arte, 24/02/2015).

A second element is to create autonomous teams of people getting along well with each other. They form mini-plants, which self-organize themselves, are dedicated to one customer (Renault, Fiat, Ford, PSA...). They are also in charge of the whole process to get the job done right for the client: purchasing, delivery, finance, recruitment, etc. (Getz, 2009). The idea is to keep a small size for the teams to be able to know each other and communicate more easily. As a result, they are happy and consequently more profitable as well. Engineers and scientists chose what they would like to work on in R&D or continuous improvement. And finally, the CEO Jean-François Zobrist, besides taking care of its workers on a daily basis, spends his time looking for new markets to enter (Getz, 2009).

Since the previous organizational chart, the hierarchy changed from 7-8 levels to 2: The director and the workers. And the director is the leader being an integral part of his operating colleagues. The commercial has his office in the middle of the machines and says hello every day to the workers (Jean-François Zobrist, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messionnier, 2015). Other signs of hierarchy such as reserved parking places were removed.

Control of cadences and schedules disappeared; pointers were removed (Jean-François, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messionnier, 2015).

When there is a problem, instead of calling the hierarchy like they used to do before, now the regulation takes place first within the mini-plant since one missing operator is impacting the whole work of the rest of the team. Ninety percent of issues are solved this way, on the field (Dominique Verlant, Favi Director, 24/02/2015) (Messionnier, 2015). If someone is not satisfied or needs to have a boss to be behind them, those persons generally leave by themselves (Michael Bardet, Favi Leader, 24/02/2015) (Messionnier, 2015).

However, freedom has a price. Employees have to accept flexibility, which is for example coming to work on Saturdays sometimes. But there is this notion of collective effort shared by the collaborators supporting each other.

For the well being of workers, in order to be polyvalent and ergonomic, the operators change the machine they work on every hour in order to change the arms' movements (Jean-Luc Daussy, Favi Leader) (Maillart, 2009).

Zobrist admits he used some continuous improvement tools to change the company. One of them is the Kaizen, a concept brought from Japan (Bruno Lovergne, Favi Operator, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015). The first principle of this concept is that "it is the one who knows, that does" (Jean-François Zobrist, 21/07/2014) (Alter Nego, 2014), which explains why the workers are upgraded.

The Kaizen Trophy is a contest for all the workers and employees. An urn is put at the disposal where everyone can add ideas to improve something in the company. Every month, the best two ideas are selected and rewarded with a prize of 1000 euros. At the end of the year, another contest opposes the twelve previous winners. A jury is in charge to elect the best idea that will have the possibility to win a car. From this contest, workers earn a financial gain but also recognition and consideration for their innovative ideas for the company continuous improvement (Maillart, 2009).

Finally, a large part of the company's profits is shared between employees in the form of an annual bonus that might reach the equivalent of 4 to 5 months of additional salary (Getz, 2009).

Results: When Jean-François Zobrist became the new CEO of the foundry in 1983, it was producing sanitary equipment and water meters and was initiating gear forks. Today, the company supplies all the European automotive manufacturers (50% of the European market). They are even competing with the Chinese and already have a share on this market in gear forks. Favi delivered twenty million units without a single quality reject, and they never missed a deadline. (Getz, 2009). Over the years, the process of liberalization and going agile of the company brought exceptional quality with no quality reject, on-time

delivery, impressive growth, competitiveness, double-digit free cash flow, solid margins, and besides that, happiness of every member.

Labour unions do not exist. The employees have been so happy for the past 30 years that they did not judge it necessary (Franck Lecompte, Machine driver Favi, 24/02/2015) (Messonnier, 2015).

Zobrist's goal was the following: not having to make any operational decisions anymore, this goal was reached three years after the transformation of the company (Getz, 2009).

The conclusion of this case is that trust brings more than control (Jean-François Zobrist – CEO Favi) (Becker, 2012). In an interview (Alter Nego, 2014), he said happiness at work is to know why and for whom you work. And be free regarding the How.

3.3. CHRONOFLEX – France

Organization's description: Chronoflex is a French small and medium company, leader in France specialized in the assistance for hydraulic hoses and construction equipment. It counts about 250 employees in 2014 (Chronoflex, 2012). The agile leader that liberated the company is Alexandre Gérard.

Situation before agility: The company felt hard during the 2008 crisis. Turnover collapsed from 22 to 14 millions euros. And the social plan to restructure the company costed the firing of several tens employees, something that the CEO, Alexandre Gérard, really did not feel comfortable with (Messonnier, 2015).

Determinant factor: Given the uncomfortable feeling brought with the social plan, Alexandre Gérard decided to change its method and make everything different. His project is targeting the entire Chronoflex company, and it came to his mind thanks the writings of Jean-François Zobrist, agile and liberating leader of the foundry Favi, and the author and professor Isaac Getz. The 7th of January 2012, he convenes together all the employees to let them decide of the company's future (Messonnier, 2015).

Transformation: After the huge reunion of all the employees, many decisions were made to start changing. First of all, the hierarchical pyramid is replaced with small autonomous teams that he calls the speed boats. The executing committee disappeared, and the previous management team has become coaches for the teams on the field. For example, Arnaud, the commercial director (those titles are still necessary vis-à-vis the external world but do not apply internally) animated the customer service sense. However, his role is to guide, advise and challenge the teams about the subject but not decide what will be the commercial approach of the company (Getz, 2016).

As from then, decisions were taken by them, based on volunteering (Messonnier, 2015; Bensaidi, 2014).

In order to prove that this is very serious, five months later, the CEO decides to quit the company during one year where he will go travelling with his family, and the management of the company is given to the employees (Messonnier, 2015).

Once he left, the first action engaged was to create a well-being workshop, asking employees which topics they would like to work on in order to improve the company. Everybody is free to expose his ideas. This initiative for example revolutionized the remuneration system. The solution: for every collaborator on the field, they built an individual operating account. Beyond its break-even point, he takes 15% of the net margin. In addition to that bonus, the technicians receive a second bonus linked to the success of their team. As a result, everyone has an interest to deliver a good individual performance, but also a contribution to the collective performance of team (Messonnier, 2015). On the other hand, in the headquarter's offices, employees benefit from the profitability bonus: every six months, an operating account of the company is created. They take 15% of the margin and split it in equal parts between all the members of the company. This is beneficial for the employees and for the company (HR Chronoflex, Reportage Arte: Le Bonheur au Travail, 24/02/2015). As from the day this revolutionary system took place, the company's turnover increased by 15% without doing anything (Alexandre Gérard – CEO Chronoflex) (Messonnier, 2015). According to Alain Goutreau, the employees' representative, 99% of them are happy at work. A respectable salary, a feeling of social rise and recognition; those are the keys (Messonnier, 2015).

As far as recruitment is concerned, the recruiters are the teams composed of the applicant's potential future colleagues. They chose at the unanimity. The teams' captains also are chosen by their collaborators for a three years term (Alexandre Gérard – CEO Chronoflex, TEDxRennes, 06/06/2015). Same when it comes to the necessity to fire someone, the decision is collegial (Bensaidi, 2014).

The bosses – there are three of them – are now named animators. Their role is made out of three responsibilities : the first one is to bring back the vision at the heart of the action every day. The second is to create a favourable environment for their employees to grow. And the third is a role of guardian of the company's culture (Alexandre Gérard – CEO Chronoflex, TEDxRennes, 06/06/2015).

A few years later, Alexandre Gérard can now assure that the cornerstone is the culture and the values. At the core of the system is trust, represented through four principles. First, information is not a power issue anymore. Second is the principle of volunteering. Third is the auto-control instead of control. And fourth is to create and encourage a culture of mistake (Alexandre Gérard – CEO, Chronoflex, TEDxRennes, 06/06/2015).

Finally, the four new values of the company also changed and are presented as the following : (1) performance through happiness ; (2) Cultivate the love of the client ; (3) Respectful and responsible teams ; (4) Open-mindedness.

Results : Figures show that the company's turnover increased as from the first year from 15%. The absenteeism rate went down from 4% (Deval, 30/01/2013) and the company is starting to hire again - 60 additional persons in 2014 and 20 in 2015 (Hennebelle, 2015). Besides, the employees' turnover decreased from 25% to 16% (Deval, 30/01/2013).

3.4. SPF (SERVICE PUBLIC FEDERAL) MOBILITE ET TRANSPORTS – BELGIUM

Organization's description : The Mobility and Transport Ministry is a Belgian public administration counting 1265 collaborators in 2014. Its mission is to prepare and execute the federal policy of mobility of the country (Annual Report, 2014). The agile leader that liberated this public service is the current president, Laurent Ledoux.

Situation before agility : The members of the organizations lacked of motivation and happiness at work. They felt too much control and wanted to change the management model to stop being treated like kids. They needed more trust and possibility to decide and take initiatives. Besides that, it was necessary to adapt to the new technologies evolving in the world in order to stay competitive.

Determinant factor : If private companies can go agile, public services can as well. The Ministère des Transports is the second one to do that in Belgium, by following the example of the SPF Sécurité Sociale. Laurent Ledoux arrived in 2013 and volunteered to be the new president of the Ministry (Massonnier, 2015). President of the non-profit organization Philosophy and Management, he read several writings about social entrepreneurship topics for example. However, for the transformation of the Ministry, the man mainly based his ideas on the writings of Isaac Getz and Frédéric Laloux.

Transformation : Jan and Véronique were the first volunteers to start liberalization with the creation of workshops and surveys for employees to get to know their aspirations. Everything started with a giant gathering of all members of the organization to form volunteering groups. From this meeting, it came out that employees ask for more flexibility in their schedules. Being able to work during the weekend instead of the week if it is necessary, take a break to get the kids at school, etc. And before all, change the management style to stop being treated like kids and be trusted like adults who can take initiatives (SPF Mobilité et Transports, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). As says Pierre Goossens, unions' representative, the decisions were always made without consulting employees and those were systematically presented with the facts once it was too late for them to contest anything (SPF Mobilité et Transports, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

When Laurent Ledoux arrived as the new President of the Ministry, the first step he did was to remove the pointers and replace schedules by objectives. Evaluation was based on presence before but there were no objectives existing. Giving objectives to people is motivating since people know why they come to work. So as from then, the time spent working did not matter anymore, the essential was to reach its objectives (Laurent Ledoux – SPF President, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

In order to get there, employee and employer need to trust each other (Julie Buy - SPF Rail Expert, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). As from that first step, people could go shopping during 15 minutes if they needed to without having to point (Vera Van Och - SPF Management Assistant, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Liberating also implies responsabilization. In the organization, some people work very hard and good. However, some do not and just take advantage of the system. With the new reorganization, the “laissez-faire” is leading and it is not the bosses who are going to control but the colleagues. Those latter will create a solidarity spirit to include everyone at work, and the ones not contributing will naturally leave or be reported (Laurent Ledoux – SPF President, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

The second step tackled the working spaces. Small offices were changed in open spaces. This transformation is based on the Dynamic office principle. Everyone can sit wherever he wants. In order to be as consistent as possible, the directors will also have to abandon their 50m² office with view and all other signs of power and superiority to be equal to the rest (Laurent Ledoux, SPF President, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Laurence Vanhée, responsible for the Human Resources says the worst enemy of the happiness at work culture, it is ego. The former Human Resources Director has changed her title because she believes employees are not resources. She is now named “Chief Happiness Officer”. The aim of the transformation is also to create *ego-less* managers, who consider that the success of the team is more important than their personal achievement and that the collective matters more than the individual (Laurence Vanhée - Chief Happiness Officer, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Besides, all the fix computers have been replaced with portable laptops. Thus, teleworking is expressly encouraged. An employee is allowed to work from home or in a satellite desk up to three days per week. This new evolution made the 1100 fixed desks become 750 flexdesks with about 6 desks for 10 employees (SPF Mobilité et Transports, Annual Report 2014).

Finally, the transformation applied to the entire company with the redefinition of values. Those are three values in line with the liberalization and agility process: Trust, Responsabilization, Service.

Results: In 2015, the SPF Mobilité et Transports was rewarded the prize of the jury "Facility Management Project of the Year".

They saved 4,1 millions euros per year. And 50% of the employees now telework.

3.5. HARLEY DAVIDSON – USA

Organization's description : Harley Davidson is a motorcycle manufacturer based in the United States. Appart from the motorcycles, they also sell independant parts and accessories. It counts 6300 members of the organization (Harley Davidson, 2016). Its emblematic leader is the former CEO, Rich Teerlink.

Situation before agility : When Rich Teerlink took over the company as the new CEO in 1986, it was almost collapsing with a 70 millions dollars debt and \$295 million in sales. The Japanese products swept the markets in the world with their good products (Getz, 2009 ; Massonnier, 2015).

Determinant factor : In order to survive, the charismatic new CEO first decided that although the company needed a new plan, there would be no firing of any member of the personnel. Indeed, according to him, the people were the most valuable asset of a company. Therefore, he introduced new practices in the organization inspired by the principles of the Japanese lean management : participation of all the employees, flattening of the hierarchy, ideas' box, etc. He asked a rethink of all the behaviours inside of the company (Rich Teerlink - Former CEO Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Transformation : Since the human was the most important to Rich Teerlink, he first started to let them define some very simple values such as telling the truth, be fair, keep your promises, respect each other, encourage intellectual curiosity...(Rich Teerlink, Former CEO - Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). These values even spread until the car seller (Kirk Topel - President Hal's - Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

As from then, the entire decision-making process changed. The human factor was put at the heart of the company and to the satisfaction of the unions. Teerlink created a system without barriers between the workers, the bosses and the unions. There was much more communication, exchange and exploration of new ideas (Greg Palmer- Union's representative Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Employees were surprised to be able to talk to the bosses without taking the risk to be fired (Robert Scott Michel – Former Sales Director Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). The hardest part was to make that understood by the highest managers (Rich Teerlink – Former CEO Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). They finally managed to convince 99,9% of people that it was a good thing (Greg Palmer – Union's representative Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Since then, employees could suggest revolutionary innovative ideas to improve the product. Sales increased and salaries quickly went up as well (Kirk Topel - Président Hal's Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). What made the real big success and the legend of the Davidson motorcycles simply came at the beginning from an employee's idea to create a group, a brotherhood gathering all the employees who liked to ride the motorcycle during week-ends. This is how many clubs and communities were created. The seller thus had more arguments and possibility to build a relationship with potential buyers. That was good for the company's business, and employees had fun, were happy and made friends for life. The workers thus are the ones that made possible the recovery of the company and growth (Rich Teerlink – Former CEO Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Results : Despite a gel of salaries during two years, the employees accepted to give a try to the experience, and they were right because productivity and performance directly started to increase after the start of the transformation. Trust became the pillar (Massonnier, 2015).

Only four years after Rich Teerlink arrived in 1986, he brought the sales from \$290 to \$940 million in 1990. When he retired in 1999, Harley had a 50% market share with \$2.5 billion in sales, and 17% profits. Today, Harley-Davidson is the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer. It reached \$5.7 billion in sales and \$1 billion in profits. Besides, it was added to the list of the "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" (Getz, 2009).

However, when the emblematic CEO left, drastic changes happened. Money rather than personnel became the most important thing and hierarchy took place again (Greg Palmer, Syndicat Harley Davidson, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). That shows evidence also that the leader, his personality and his values are determinant in the success of the implementation of such management practices.

3.6. POULT – FRANCE

Organization's description : The group Poulth is a French major actor on the market of sweet biscuits and became even leader (Group Poulth, n.d.). With 400 workers, the company supplies 20% of biscuits for the French mass distribution (Vergne et al., 2015).

Situation before agility : According to Nicole Bosquet, who has been working in the company during 30 years, things have changed a lot. In the former traditional company, they had staff bosses, line managers, and foremen in the plant, with a hierarchical culture that was very directive (Nicole Bosquet, Poulth Operator, 24/02/2015; Laurence Hubben, Machinist) (Massonnier, 2015; Vergne et al., 2015).

Employees and workers were complaining about being robots, very much directed and controlled, who had to apply what they were told without asking or searching to understand (Redouane Bouzidi, Poulth Operator, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

The former line managers managed the personnel, the days off, conflicts and ensured the good run of the lines such as quality, etc (Florent Corbella, Former line manager - Poulth, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Determinant factor : In 2001, the company was in a bad situation. But Carlos Verkoren, a Belgian entrepreneur who worked in investment funds, decided to join and help the company to go back up the slope (Massonnier, 2015).

Transformation : In 2006, Carlos Verkaeren gathers employees, workers, bosses, all different jobs and positions together. He organizes a giant brainstorming and asks how do they see the future of the company and their job? And how would you like it to change? (Nicole Bosque, Poult Operator, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

After a few meetings and scepticism, it was decided to remove any intermediary hierarchy (Carlos Verkaeren, Poult Director, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). This is something that you accept or not. The majority of line managers left after the reform because they felt undervalued (Florent Corbella, former line manager - Poult, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Later, all the control time that was released could be used for other more interesting tasks. The former director is now "site animator". The former senior managers were given new functions called "technicians for progress", devoted to support, help and pass the knowledge (Dider Hirtzig, site animator - Poult, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). It is about accompanying the operators to make them feel good about their job (Florent Corbella, former line manager - Poult, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Nowadays, small groups take decisions, representative of the company, there is no more executive committee (Charly Guillou; Céline Vialars, Poult Operators, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Every member is heard, respected and can share his ideas during the mini meetings (Catherine Bascoul – Quality Expert, 17/01/2015) (Vergne et al., 2015).

In order to allow this decision-making by the employees, it is necessary to give access to figures and financials of the company for everyone. Transparency is thus a new must. Employees are trained to the required skills to understand and evolve to take the right decisions. As a result, workers are happy not having to use only their arms and legs, but now also their brain and a professional conscious (Dider Hirtzig, Poult site animator; Nicole Bousque, Poult Operator, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Results : To the general surprise, it worked. The company Poult is now hiring and shows a growth of 12%. Big companies are even sending human resources teams to Poult in order to understand how did the group reach this success.

One issue still remains : profit sharing. This is a topic still in discussion and to be improved (Florent Corbella, former line manager Poult, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

3.7. GORE-TEX – GERMANY

Organization's description : Founded in 1958 by Bill Gore with no product, the 8.400 workers company is specialized in the manufacturing of products with synthetic fibre, going from implants in the human body, to clothing worn on expeditions to Mt. Everest, filtration solutions, medical devices, sealants, to electronic cables transmitting signals from Mars, etc. (Gore-Tex, 2016).

Situation before agility : This is the first example of a company that was founded already according to principles that were close to agility.

Determinant factor: Bill Gore was formerly employed as a chemist for DuPontNemours in a textile factory. Many times, he wanted to suggest his ideas, but the hierarchy stopped him. Following this negative experience where he ended up being a frustrated man, he found the way to make money while having fun (Massonnier, 2015). Fed up of not being heard, just like all the others, he decided to create his own company. Bill Gore was convinced that people aspire to do their work well, to invent product, but that the traditional organizations who did not trust them, create hierarchies and procedures to control them. Then, why thinking and trying to innovate when only the boss has the right to take decisions ? In his company, Bill Gore decided that there will be no managers nor bureaucracy (Lorin, 2013).

Transformation : At Gore, all the employees are associates and have shares in the company not listed. Nobody should feel restrained in his creativity and everyone has to give himself the opportunity to take initiative, without boss to stop him, and develop his talents (Volker Gronauer - Gore Associate, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Bill Gore encourages self-direction to his employees by asking “have you made any mistakes lately?” When the answer was no, he replied, “you haven’t taken enough risks” (Getz, 2009).

Decisions are based on a consensus between groups formed by employees and one leader per group. The leader is not necessarily going to take the final decision, but he is present to guide and remind the common vision to everyone (Frédéric Amariutei – Gore Associate,

24/02/2015). Those are sometimes naturally emerging because they inspire the group who wants to follow the proposed vision. Or they are selected per vote based on propositions brought by the colleagues (Kartza Goetze - Gore Associate, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

The working units are composed of maximum 250 persons to enable everybody to know each other and talk with no shame (Pascal Mueller, Gore Associate, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

Regarding recruitment, we do not look at the diploma but we pay attention to the capacity to evolve and to suggest new ideas that will be rewarded of course.

Every employee has a mentor, called “sponsor” in the company. This latter trains and helps the employee to evolve, answers his questions, guides him and opens to him his network (Volker Gronauer; Norbert Schmidt, Pascal Mueller, Associés Gore, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015).

A responsible for diversity organizes workshops for personal development (Mira Czutka, Gore Associate, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Besides, another invention made in Gore is the Sweet Spot. This is a meeting point between the competences, the interests of an associate and the needs of the company. Every employee has to work on his own personal project to make it heard in the company while having pleasure to do so. This is how to work and have fun at the same time (Mira Czutka, Gore Associate, 24/02/2015) (Massonnier, 2015). Thanks to the Sweet Spot, several innovative ideas were proposed by the employees and this is how the company today expanded its activities in many different areas.

At Gore, you also have the possibility to change job or function to find the best fit. Frédéric Amaruitei explains the case of an accountant who wanted to go to the sales department. The conditions of the Sweet Spot were reunited. He was trained, and today, he is a happy and performing sales representative (Lorin, 2013).

Evaluations and salaries are fixed according to a ranking established by a committee composed of a tens leaders. The first one in the ranking will get the highest salary. This bonus is adaptable and reviewed every year. As a consequence, Frédéric Amaruitei argues that it might happen that a worker will be paid more than his leader. At the end, the

employees' salaries are in the average of the market. They could maybe earn 20% more somewhere else, but they would lose so much in terms of work quality that they do not think about it. Besides, every employee receives an additional 13% of his annual salary in the form of Gore shares (Lorin, 2013).

Results : The capacity to innovate, to create synthetic fibres always more intelligent, and creativity are strongly encouraged. At the beginning, every associate had to dedicate 10% of his time to the « dabble time », meaning the experimentation. It is during its dabble time that an engineer specialized in cardiac implants had the idea to add a layer of Gore-Tex on the guitar cords to avoid the song to be modified by the sweating of fingers. He formed a small team that worked on this project during three years. Gore then had no product in the industry of music. It was afterwards decided to test the cords to 15.000 professional guitar players before commercializing it. Nowadays, the quality of the Elixir cords are recognized by the best guitarists : Eric Clapton and Carlos Santana only use those (Lorin, 2013).

Today, the 10.000-strong company takes in over \$2.1 billion a year in revenue and is still growing at 15%. Since the ranking of the “100 Best Companies to Work for in America” existed, it has always been part of it (Getz, 2009).

3.8. BUURTZORG – THE NETHERLANDS

Organization's description: Buurtzorg is a Dutch not-for-profit personal and professional homecare organization (Buurtzorg, 2016). It strongly differentiates itself from the other traditional and commercial healthcare industry characterized by costs, fragmentation, overwork, administration, protocols and dissatisfaction of the customer. Buurtzorg follows their mantra “humanity beyond bureaucracy” and shifted from production to real care and interest in the human (National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), 2015).

Situation before agility: Through the time, the health and home care industry started to be directed by the management principles with administration, managers, protocols, cost imperative, etc. There were different nurses for one patient. Then they decomposed nurses according to their experience, more expensive or not, simple injection or not. They calculated the average time for each task. Thanks to that, they could plan the nurses' days in

advance to maximize it. They were economies of scale. But the patients hated that because they could not take any time to talk or explain or create any kind of relationship with the care-givers. The nurses themselves also did not like it since they lost what their real vocation was (Laloux, 2014b).

Determinant factor: Jos de Blok was himself originally a district nurse who worked for a regular homecare organization. He was observing the slow death of his profession and passion, and wanted to prevent that. In 2006, he made an agreement with himself to reintroduce the social value of a district nurse. He decided to start his own homecare organization, at a small scale (10 persons). He established his business plan and secured a 250.000 euros loan from a bank, in addition to some of his own money. It was a risk, for the first six months he did not take any salary, but it did not fail (Kuiken, 2011).

Transformation: The Buurtzorg company was founded with a few principles respecting their mantra of the human beyond bureaucracy.

First of all, empowerment of the client and relationship at the core. The client can have only one or maximum two nurses. The first thing to do is to sit down and talk with the old person to get to know more about their lives, try to build a network with the family, the neighbours, etc. The nurses are not interested only in the physical needs, but also to the life circumstances, the environment, their spirituality and social needs. Humanely speaking, they bring much more to the patient and serve as an intermediary to improve the old people's lives (Laloux, 2014b).

Jos de Blok denounced the traditional system that over-pays managers and commercials of homecare organizations. According to him, it is even unethical since the people who really provide the care to the clients are the most important pillars of the organization, they should be the ones well paid. By eliminating all the middle management, the lines of communication are much shorter and teams operate according to their own judgement (Laloux, 2014b).

The objective of Jos de Blok was to erase this product-oriented approach that appeared in the home care sector through the years. In the traditional and commercial organizations, care is seen as product that you can divide in several tasks performed by different people to

try to make it more efficient and as a consequence cheaper thanks to economies of scale. However, Jos believes is that this subdivision actually leads to many coordination moments, which is why coordinators were hired, and managers on top to follow the entire process.

As a consequence, the districts nurses have the authority and the responsibility. Every team composed of about 12 nurses manages itself and the work to perform and provide all the necessary tasks to take care of 50 to 60 patients (NCBI, 2016). There is a supporting office in Almelo but the financial results and outcomes are under the responsibility of the teams (Laloux, 2014b).

Next step was to remove a maximum of administrative tasks from the nurses' schedule to let them apply their real skills and expertise directly for the client. Buurtzorg is also in line with their time. The teams are interconnected through an intranet that enables to share information and communicate efficiently, through a desktop or a mobile application. In addition, they also use the web to manage business processes for online scheduling, billing and documentation. Financial reports are also available for all, which allows the teams to self-manage their productivity and the budgets. With this IT platform, Buurtzorg saves 20% of the costs of a typical home care agency regarding the administrative functions (NCBI, 2015).

The billing in the traditional industry is based on the level of experience of the care-giver, the time taken to perform and the task done. Buurtzorg simplified this. Rather than this former billing process that requires a lot of processes and administration, the organization proposed to use only one rate, which is 57 euros per hour (in 2013) for any visit, regardless of the time spent (NCBI, 2015).

Later, they expanded their activities on one hand to prevention and on the other to the help for spouses or partners. Buurtzorg organized sessions with patients to teach them the right technical gestures to prevent any harm and they went to their houses to change and optimize the layout. The second initiative was to launch a retirement pension aimed at taking the patient for a few days in order to enable the spouse or partner to have some rest for a few days in order to recover (Laloux, 2014b).

Results : The Buurtzorg work methods brought remarkable results in terms of employee's fulfillment, patients' satisfaction, and organizational performance and even for the Dutch state. Indeed, according to a study from Ernst&Young, medically and financially, Buurtzorg uses only 40% of the hours prescribed by the doctors (while the other organizations use all of them) since they teach the patients to become autonomous, and thus make the state save thousands of euros (Laloux, 2014b).

By September 2010, there were 250 teams, with only 14 staff members at the head office and 10 coaches who each manage 25 teams (NCBI, 2015). The annual turnover reached 90 million euros. By the end of 2013, they were 630 teams employing 7188 nurses, providing care to about 55.000 clients (NCBI, 2015).

This spectacular growth is due to the shift of thousands of nurses from other homecare organizations coming and desiring to work for Buurtzorg (Kuiken, 2011).

Rapidly, the Buurtzorg model became a global phenomenon since teams were launched in Sweden in 2011, in Minnesota in 2013, and some are expected to come in Japan, Switzerland, and Belgium soon (NCBI, 2015).

3.9. SOL – FINLAND

Organization's description: Sol is the No. 2 cleaning service company in Finland. The company employs about 11.000 professionals and the revenue objective for the group for the year 2014 is 316 million euros. Sol produces diverse cleaning, premises and property maintenance and security services for private customers and businesses (Sol, 2016). The emblematic leader of the company is Liisa Joronen, current director of the company.

Situation before agility: In 1991, Liisa Joronen is working in the old family company of her father, Lindström, which owns 90% of the Finish laundry market. They have less than a hundred employees and the situation is not so good. Liisa really wants to change the methods used in the company, but everyone is reluctant, especially since her father used to control every detail. She finally got to take responsibility of the cleaning branch, that she renames Sol.

Determinant factor: Sol City is the name given to the company headquarters. It was an old cinema studio that needed to be reconverted. Then she thought, "Why does it need to be me deciding this?" And this is how the hundred of people in the company were gathered in seminar and life room to expose their ideas. More than a thousand proposals were made, also for an open space to link all services together. Those should also be flex desks where every employee can choose where he would like to sit in the morning and next to whom he would like to work for the day (Getz, 2012).

Besides, she believes the ones creating the real economic value are the first line people in the company; and the people at the headquarters offer support to create more value but they are a source of costs. So the farrest ones from the first line, those who create the less economic value are the bosses. So she argued she is not that special, so she does not need an office (Getz, 2012).

Transformation: According to Liisa Joronen, if you are really interest in the performance of your company, then you are interested in the ones who create it, and you have to respect them.

Based on this principle, the lady started to engage the employees in every decision she made. After the reconversion of the headquarter's offices, she asked them as well about the name they would like to give to the company, the latter previously chosen by the father. Then, she asked the new Sol employees about the working uniform they were wearing, that is how they changed the dull grey in a bright yellow representing the sun, missing in winter. These little things might seem insignificant but this was the start to build the future environment. She removed a set of procedures and rules that were interpreted as a "stop thinking" for some workers. By doing so, she liberated people's initiatives (Getz, 2009).

Next step was to remove titles and functions. When a new comer joined the company and asked what is my function, they answered him "find it ! ". This can take one day, one week or one year, but the essential is for him to find what he wants to do, what motivates him the most. In order to get there, every worker benefits from a "sponsor" who accompanies him in his thinking. Team leaders are not elected but they emerge naturally or are chosen by a group of people. As a result, the company was composed of several auto-directed teams and with co-opted leaders (Getz, 2009).

However, despite the level of respect within the company, her workers seemed condemned never receiving the esteem they deserved. Because as a cleaning personnel, working during the night and never seeing the clients you do the work for, they never got any "thank you" and were feeling invisible. As a consequence to that, the leader decided to clean during the day, in order to create interaction with the clients. By communicating with them, they also optimized the performance, for example by not cleaning the unoccupied rooms but focusing more on the possible lacks somewhere else (Getz, 2009).

Step by step, the workers replaced the commercials of the company since they knew about the demand and requests. Liisa Joronen listened to them, accompanied and trained them. As a result, today, an important part of the margin is the contracts brought by the former cleaning ladies, renamed service agents (Getz, 2009).

In conclusion, what the CEO simply believes that the man is, per nature, generous and good, you need to encourage him. What she did was just liberating the good people from the harmful environments (Getz, 2009).

Results : As from the first year, the Sol company was profitable, and it remained until now with an average annual profit of 8-9%. Besides, the company was rewarded prizes for innovation in the country (Getz, 2009).

3.10. ESBZ – GERMANY

Organization's description: The Evangelische Schule Berlin Zentrum (ESBZ) is a publicly financed German school that is different from the other ones. The ESBZ opened its doors in 2007 in almost total improvisation, guided by Margret Rasfeld, the director. The city council gave a prefabricated building from communist times to a group of parents who believed in another method of education. The first school year counted 16 students only. A few months later, they were 30, mostly troublemakers rejected from their former school (Laloux, 2014a).

Situation before agility: Traditional schools present the problem that students are taught things that have no relevance in real life. Besides, young people have so much life in them, but schools beat this with structured learning and strict rules. They end up like widgets in a factory, filled with the same knowledge as a uniform curriculum. And still, there always are defective units (Frédéric Laloux, 2015).

Determinant factor: The factory or industrial system for school is increasingly denounced by some people crying out for innovation in education. If it is assumed that children cannot be trusted to learn by themselves, teachers cannot either since they are also supervised by principals and districts and experts. And they have to stick to mandatory standard programs and tests (Laloux, 2014a). Therefore, some people tried to break this old mindset and try to let every student self-manage himself and his learning and progress at school. At the ESBZ, children contribute, collaborate, they are valued and trusted (Frédéric Laloux, 2015).

Transformation : The founding principle of the school is that all children are unique. They all have talents which are valuable and valued. They are encouraged to use them to contribute to the society, which needs them, and their own development (Laloux, 2014a).

Those principles are translated in the school in many ways. First of all, students are given total responsibility regarding their learning. They are at the same time learners and teachers to themselves and the others. Besides, every classroom welcomes students with light or severe disabilities instead of sending them to special schools. It works since they can self-manage their learning at their own rhythm as well, with the support of the other kids (Laloux, 2014a).

Self-management also applies to teachers. Every class is tutored by two teachers working in tandem to make the profession less lonely. Three classes form a mini-school able to make all its own decisions with no need of approval by any superior. As a consequence, adults are like mentors or coaches who challenge, encourage and give feedback. When children have questions, they question each other first, and only if there is a need or a requirement, they would ask the teachers who might have to act like traditional (Laloux, 2014a).

And finally, even parents also take part to the school and the kids' development in self-management. Since the city provides funds only for the teacher's salaries, nothing is planned for the building and other expenses. Therefore, parents bring their financial

support with a contribution based on their income level. In addition, in order to minimize this cost, the parents volunteered to give three hours per month to the development of the school (building renovation). (Laloux, 2014a).

A second practice is the called “responsibility” class. The idea is for every kid to find himself an activity where they can learn but also make a meaningful contribution with. As an example, a 10-year old boy, in order to overcome his shyness, had the idea to teach chess to other kids. Some others chose to contribute in a retirement home, in kindergartens, etc. Every one has to find his place, but the most important is that students learn to take initiative, they appreciate the feeling of being needed and enjoy making a difference in people’s lives (Frédéric Laloux, 2015).

Another class called “Challenge” invites the children to put their inner potential in application. During the year, the students plan and prepare a three-week event where they will have to take part to activities, alone or in small groups, to step out of their comfort zone. It can be a survival camp or a stay in a monastery, sport, volunteering; as long as they find a personal growth out of the experience (Frédéric Laloux, 2015).

Finally, on a weekly basis, the teachers plan a one-to-one meeting with every child in order to discuss about the progress of the week and the plans for the next one. Also, emotional or relational topics can be mentioned and discussed, to build a deep relationship between the teacher and his student that goes beyond the traditional one (Laloux, 2014a).

Results: This very unique school until now did not show a promising future given the initial conditions during the launch. And yet, in 2014, the school counts 500 students from diverse social backgrounds – also privileged - and became attractive to professionals (teachers, education specialists) who come from all over the country to understand the ESBZ model. (Laloux, 2014a).

With the contribution of the parents, the school even has a lower budget than public schools (Laloux, 2014a).

Finally, one can see the engagement and dynamism of the students, and saw the attitudes towards issues such as violence and drugs almost disappear (Frédéric Laloux, 2015).

3.11. SEMCO – BRAZIL

Organization's description: In the 1950s, Antonio Semler founded the Semco Group, a centrifuge manufacturer. 30 years later, his son, Ricardo Semler took over the company, named it Semco Partner, and transformed it totally with new management practices and expanded plus diversified the activities to the service sector, consultancy services in environment, facilities management, inventory support, etc. All of the Semco activities are characterized by innovation and creativity (Semco, 2016).

Situation before agility: Before the son took over the company, his father was running Semler & Company with a traditional autocratic management style.

Determinant factor: At the end of his studies, Ricardo Semler joined the company of his father, but they had strong disagreements regarding the way to lead. When Ricardo threatened to leave Semco, his father decided to appoint him new CEO. At 21 years, the young man took over the management in 1985 and worked a lot to try to save the company from bankruptcy (Kuiken, 2010). However, at 25 years old, he is victim of a heart attack. This was the time of his life when became conscious that, just like many family members of him, he could die of that or cancer. As a consequence, he decided to change his management style to improve his own and the employee's work-life balance (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

Transformation: Ricardo Semler believes in two main principles, first that you need to know why your are doing what you are doing and second that you should devolve power to employees. By following this, compansies are simultaneoulsy more productive and have happier workers (Ricardo Semler website, 2016).

Semler started with the idea of "terminal days" : every Mondays and Thursdays would be dedicated to do whatever you would do if a doctor announced you you have 6 months to one year left to live (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014). From twelve levels of management, he reduced it to three Nobody would have his own room anymore. Any employee has his word to say in the decision-making, and the right to express his opinion without fear, regardless of his position (Kuiken, 2010).

Meetings are held every month at the department level, every two months with all the different managers, and every two months as well with everyone in the company. All the meetings are open to any person who would like to attend it (Kuiken, 2010). They usually have two additional seats aimed for the two first people who show up. And it might even be cleaning ladies. Information is transparent, available and accessible to everyone (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

Evaluations are not anymore aimed only at discussing the employees' performance. Managers now also get evaluated by their subordinates once a year, and if they are not approved, they should leave. This is done through Internet survey and a conversation about the results afterwards with a feedback and explanation so that the manager can improve his score on the particular areas where he underperformed (Kuiken, 2010 ; Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

Employees are not only evaluated on their performance but also on their happiness at work. Therefore, every year, an annual survey of employee satisfaction is launched. This survey asks the staff about how they feel in the company, but also what they would suggest as an improvement (Kuiken, 2010).

Regarding recruitment, Semler has an entirely different vision from the former CEO, his father. Hiring now is not an new joiner accepted by the manager or the HR. The applicant is interviewed by the people he will have to work with (Kuiken, 2010). Whoever is interested to get to know the applicant can join the interview. The decision is more based on intuition than standardized criteria to be crossed. Then the applicant is invited to come to the company and hang out during one afternoon for example to get to know how the company works, he can talk to whoever he wants. This is for the potential new comer to make sure that he will like it and see if it is as nice as it is presented on the website etc. (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014). Besides, the contract is not like a rule setting the hour when you arrive at work and when you leave, it is more like the company buying some kind of work from the employee (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

In relation to the contract is the salary issue. At Semco, people can fix their own salary. How ? Because they were given all the information needed to do so in a fair way. Besides

getting access to all the financial information such as profits and margins, Semler believes there are three things to know to be able to set the salary : how much people make inside the company ; how much they make in a similar company and position ; and how much people make in general. By giving people this piece of information, nothing else was asked to the employees (expenses report, number of days off), it was up to them to set this (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

Finally, in order to develop further employees' responsibility, Semler introduced a bonus program that offers several months of additional salary when the company performs well during the year. In other companies, managers receive a bonus even when the results are poor. At Semco, this is not the case. It is the same for everyone and therefore motivates them to all be responsible and contribute to the company's growth (Kuiken, 2010).

Regarding project management, Semco differentiates herself from the traditional companies with the short-term vision they adopt. No project or business plan goes beyond 6 months. Indeed, according to Semler, short deadlines encourage and motivate more the employees to start working directly and be productive. As an example, Semler told his salesmen, let's assume the objective for the week is to sell 57 widgets. If you reached this objective by Wednesday, "please go to the beach and come back on Monday". And then you can increase the objective step by step but people stay motivated and happy about their job and performance and are glad to do more (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

As a conclusion, developed about 30 years ago by Ricardo Semler, the Semco Style prioritizes humans instead of structures and procedures and puts people above organizational modes. By putting the quality of life first, results such as productivity and profits will follow naturally (The Semco Style official website, 2016).

Results: In 1982, the company's turnover was around \$2.7 million. In 1994, it increased to \$24 million. In 2003, Semco's turnover reached \$143 million. In terms of employees and workers, from 90 people in 1990, they were 3000 in 2003. And the turnover rate is under 1%, nobody wants to leave Semco (Getz, 2011b).

Today, Ricardo Semler is thinking about applying those same principles to schools. And he did ; Lumia is a school that he created and redesigned from scratch. Teachers become tutors, interested in the children's life and not only teaching them. Semler wanted to bring people with two things : passion and expertise. That is why old people were brought for example, also because they have wisdom. They are asked to teach the kids about what really matters in life (i.e. love, life, death...) ; to teach them what we do not know instead of the classical maths and physics and geography classes. For example a violonist could come to teach the kids how to express yourself through music.

Other classes are for instance "Building a bike". No one really cares about the fact that $\pi=3.14$. However, with a final goal of building a bike, everyone will need and want to know about it. Once again, one question is the core: what for? When you have a purpose and you know the why of your actions, people are motivated, happier and perform better to reach the final goal (Ricardo Semler – CEO Semco, TedX, 09/10/2014).

3.12. ZAPPOS – USA

Organization's description: Zappos is an Internet shoe seller. It was founded in 1999 by Nick Swinmurn, after a shopping experience in a mall. Nick was looking for a certain pair of shoes ; one store had the right style and the other had the right color, but none had both together. Back home frustrated, he could not find satisfaction either on the online shoes selling stores. Seeing both a need and an opportunity in this situation, he quit his job and launched the online shoe retailer. He called Zappos in reference to the word *zapatitos* which means "shoes" in Spanish (Zappos, 2016).

Tony Hsieh participated partly with his venture capital. Gradually, he became more involved in the company until he was elected CEO. (Getz, 2009).

Situation before agility: Before Tony Hsieh became CEO, Zappos was a traditional hierarchical company. The call center performance was based on the time spent on the phone with customers and how many of them did they make in a day. Besides, most call centers have scripts sales representatives are forced to stick to during the conversation (Reingold, 2016).

Determinant factor: The founder Nick Swinmurn convinced Tony Hsieh by explaining the potential of the idea to sell shoes on internet: The shoes market is worth \$40 million in the U.S. And 5% of them were sold by mail order. Hsieh became full-time by 2000 (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

At the origin of the liberation of the company, Tony Hsieh did not necessarily mean to become agile. His goal was to introduce a business culture in the company that is based on *the exceptional*. This means he wanted to give his sales representatives the willingness to provide such an exceptional service that customers would say *Wow!* As a consequence, he believed that in order to provide an exceptional service, he should provide first an exceptional environment to work in (Imatech, 2014).

In January 2000, a conversation with a customer changed everything. She could not find the appropriate pair of shoes she needed. As a reply, the customer service sent her in a fast and courteous way, both a gift certificate and a t-shirt to apologize for the inconvenience. She was just *Wowed*. As from then, Tony Hsieh thought what if the company was not solely focusing on selling shoes, but also on how they sell it? And what if their main goal was actually to *Wow* their customers. Tony Hsieh says himself “I wasn’t even into shoes – but I was passionate about customer service”, that is how the transformation started (Zappos, 2016).

Transformation: Zappos is using the thousands of phone calls and e-mails received every day as an opportunity to build the brand image through an excellent customer service. Instead of investing the money in advertising, it is invested in customer service, and the marketing will be done by the customers themselves thanks to word of mouth (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010). You have to act as if the customer was your friend and you really want to make him happy and satisfied (Tony Hsieh – The CEO TV Show, n.d.)

In the late 2014, Hsieh read the book of Frédéric Laloux "Reinventing organizations". Zappos was a Green organization (in Laloux’s terms) that focuses on culture and empowers employees but is still operating with a pyramidal hierarchy. After reading the book, Hsieh was determined to make Zappos become a Teal organization (Feloni, 2015).

Therefore, Hsieh decided to adopt the Holacracy system. This is a new management style that removes traditional job titles and allows the employees to switch tasks and jobs instead

of being static. Every one has “roles” now and not functions anymore. For example, an employee who is not a marketer could take the role of an accountant or an HR, and others. Tactical meetings help every member to catch up and be on the same page with the others. Several roles working together form a circle (as named in the Holacracy model) and every circle must coordinate with the others. There are no managers anymore but “lead links” who have the responsibility to assign roles to employees and represent their circle. Finally, the authority does not belong to superior positions, it is distributed and decisions are made by a committee (Feloni, 2015).

As the company grew, culture focus became a priority maintained by every member. In January 2005, Hsieh gathered all the employees to define together the core values of Zappos. This is where the Zappo’s 10 Core Values are from today (Zappos website, 2016). New joiners should be hired with feeling and intuition, only if they are people the Zapponians would enjoy to hang out with after work. Indeed, many of the best ideas came up at afterwork bars while having a drink (Feloni, 2015). The CEO wanted to keep only the ones who truly shared the Zappo’s vision and culture, even if it had to cost him real money (Zappos website, 2016). The 24th of March 2010, Hsieh sent a memo to all the employees and offered an ultimatum: embrace the Holacracy system and self-management or leave with a financial package. 14% of the company took the offer and left (Feloni, 2015).

Many elements changed in the company since the transformation started.

The office is designed in open spaces to encourage interaction between employees to keep everyone connected. The offices are so creative and extravagant that the company offers free daily tours open to the public to come and see this unusual workplace (Zappos, 2016).

Unlike most of the traditional call centers, the time spent on the phone with the customer is not relevant anymore to assess the performance at Zappos. Quality overcomes quantity and the important is to take good care of the customer. Therefore, it is even encouraged to take long calls. An anecdote tells about the longest call that Zappos gave, it lasted 10h29! However, this costed only \$500 for an exceptional opportunity for media coverage and communication (Imatech, 2014). There are also no scripts because they prefer employees to show their real personality through the phone call to develop an emotional connection with

each customer. For example, one day one of the representatives learned about a death in the family of a loyal customer who forgot to mail back a pair of shoes she had to return. The employee sent her flowers and made of her a customer for life (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

In the United States, the shipping is free both ways to ease the customer experience as much as possible whether he likes the product or not and would like to send it back, or if he wants to try several and send back the ones he did not like, etc. This is a considerable expense for the company, but they consider it as a marketing expense, once again, to gain customers' trust and loyalty and count on their word of mouth (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

They also offer a 365-day return policy instead of the traditional 30 days for people who would have trouble to make up their minds. The rate of return is high (more than a third of the gross revenue) but it allows removing the risk from shopping at Zappos and therefore increases the long-term loyalty of customers (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

The customer service orientation is also present on the website. For most of traditional companies, the contact details are found in the last tab, not always directly accessible (i.e. form or email address) because the companies do not really want to hear from their customers. Zappos did the opposite and puts its phone number on every single page of the website, because they actually want to talk with the customers. Besides, there is a call center available 24/7 (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

Finally, remuneration is fixed according to a unique method from Zappos. Unlike traditional companies, salary won't be related to financial results. People are awarded badges (just like Scouts) according to their skills, every time they fulfill certain requirements. For each skill, the company pays at the market rate. The more skills you learn, the more you get (Reingold, 2016). This is a way to encourage employees to continuously learn and develop new competences.

Results: Over the past months, Zappos managed to move beyond Holacracy to go Teal, as wished (Reingold, 2016).

When Tony Hsieh joined in 2000, sales were at \$1.6 million. In 2008, it reached \$1 billion. Over 1.600 people are employed. And the company received many awards as a sign of achievement: ranked #7 for Customer Service by Business Week in 2009 and recognized among the “100 Best Companies to Work for in America” by Fortune six years in a row (Getz, 2009; Zappos, 2016).

Besides selling shoes, Zappos.com now expanded and offers also clothing, accessories, housewares and more (Zappos, 2016).

The company has no shortage of applicants: 25.000 applications for 250 jobs. Someone told the CEO one day that it is harder to get a job at Zappos then it is to get admission to Harvard. This says a lot about the value of the culture they created (Tony Hsieh – CEO Zappos, 2010).

The 10 Core Values, so unique, have even been celebrated with the creation of a department devoted to provide consulting services for other companies to follow the Zappos way (Reingold, 2016).

Finally, Tony Hsieh wrote a book called “Delivering Happiness” where he explains why and how employee satisfaction is the key to business success (Reingold, 2016).

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Best managerial practices in agile organizations

The following table summarizes the best management practices applied among the twelve organizations studied. They are fourteen, structured according to seven categories corresponding to the 7-S model of McKinsey, exposed earlier in the literature review.

This configuration was chosen to show that, although we primarily focused on the dimension *Style*, the organization is a whole entity in which every element impact each other. Indeed, this table illustrates that the management practices identified and mobilized by a leader, have an impact on all the dimensions of the organization.

The 7 dimensions were explained one by one in the literature review. These explanations justify why each managerial practice can be associated to one of those dimensions.

		SPF Sécurité Sociale	Favi	Chronoflex	SPF Mobilité et Transports	Harley Davidson	Poult	Gore- Tex	Buurtzorg	Sol	ESBZ	Semco	Zappos
Strategy	Reaction to a crisis			✓		✓	✓						
	General brainstorming			✓	✓		✓						✓
Structure	Destructuration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Autonomous teams		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
System	Freedom of organization	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	360° and bilateral evaluation	✓										✓	
	Recruitment by the colleagues			✓								✓	✓
	New salary policy		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Skills	Innovation		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Staff	Reaction to employees' demotivation	✓	✓		✓								
Style	Arrival of a new leader	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Leaders coaches and guides	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Shared values	(Re) definition of values	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
	Transparency and open information		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	

A detailed explanation of each practice is also explained in the table of Appendix 7.1.

Based on this table, we can make several observations.

First of all, the strategy dimension shows that the strategy adopted by each organization at the moment of starting the transformation can be different in every case. Chronoflex, Harley Davidson and Poult had to react towards the economic downturn they were facing. The two Belgian SPF's and Favi's main reason to change were the general demotivation of the employees and the necessity to react in order to avoid negative effects from that factor. For Gore-Tex, Sol, and Semco, it was the willingness to lead their own way after an older negative experience with strong control and hierarchy. ESBZ and Buurtzorg acted with a social cause at the core. And finally, Zappos is the specific case of a man who had the customer service as a passion and used it as a pillar to become agile.

The way to react and build a new strategy depends on the cases. Some leaders decided to start the transformation from the bottom with a brainstorming of all the employees (e.g. Poult). Others think it might be too risky and preferred to show the example first on the top-level (e.g. SPF Sécurité Sociale).

Regarding the structure, we can observe one strong similarity between all the cases : all the organizations have initiated a deconstruction by eliminating the middle management and the levels of hierarchy. More than half of them have introduced autonomous teams. Poult and Harley Davidson did not, although they could since manufacturing companies such as Favi did it with success. The two SPF did not introduce autonomous teams yet either. However, this might be explained by the fact that their process of transformation is still recent (2009 and 2013) and they did not reach that level of progress yet.

Regarding the systems, every organization has applied at least one of the practices mentioned in the table. However, except for Semco and Zappos, it is still rare that the organizations execute many or all of them.

Some organizations have started to try to find a new salary policy, but as explained in the cases, this is often the most complicated topic. Almost none of the organizations use the recruitment by the colleagues and the 360° and bilateral feedback. These are typical HR-related issues. One reason for this might be that many leaders decided to remove the HR departments since they were not part of the primary line that really produces the money. Besides, they were considered costly. Finally, they did not want to consider the people as resources anymore. Therefore, this might be the reason for a lack of commitment regarding those topics.

Unlike the others, Harley Davidson, Poult and Chronoflex did not introduce the freedom of organization practices (e.g. flex desks, teleworking, etc.). This might be justified by the fact that they are rather manufacturing companies which have a strong dependency with their suppliers and clients. Therefore, it might be more complicated to introduce this flexibility at work where only the results matter and not the time when it is done.

The organization's unique distinctive competences that made them successful and/or leader in their sector, are due to the innovation brought by their employees. The innovation is possible because the employees are allowed to change roles and departments, trained to other areas of competences and able to liberate their creativity. This is how Gore-Tex created the guitar chords, Harley Davidson created the legend of the motorbikers, Favi became leader in its industry, Buurtzorg came up with preventive and supportive initiatives for the patients' spouses, etc.

The staff is also a measure of performance of the organization in good or bad times. Employees' surveys were the trigger for Favi and the two SPF to realize that their organization was sinking.

However, after the transformation, in all the cases, the results showed a decrease in the turnover and increase in the employees' satisfaction and willingness to stay. This demonstrates that staff factors are good indicators of the organization's health and performance.

Regarding the management style, except for Favi and Chronoflex, all the organizations started to transform and go agile thanks to the arrival of a new leader. This point reflects the difficulty for a top-level manager to give up all the work he did to climb the hierarchy in his own company. It is probably psychologically easier to do so with a fresh new start in a new organization where you do not have to give up all the advantages previously acquired. Nevertheless, Jean-François Zobrist (Favi) and Alexandre Gérard (Chronoflex) managed to make sacrifices and change for their company, and they did not regret that.

Finally, regarding the shared values, most of the organizations decided to redefine their values (e.g. Zappos) while some others did not need to do so, but rather tackled the processes (e.g. Semco).

Less than half of the organizations analyzed decided to be totally transparent to their employees. The two SPF's for example do not give access to all the financial data to the employees. This might be explained by the fact that it is a federal service and its objective is to provide a good service to the citizens, not to make profits. Therefore, the most important focus is on the service provided and not on the money made which implies the non-need for a spread financial information to all. Another example is for the ESBZ, which is a public school. Once again, the aim here is not to make profit, but to teach students and accompany them in their life. Only the teachers are remunerated by the city, the rest needs to be taken care of through the help and support of the parents. Passionate experts in their area of competence also come for free to teach the student about their experience.

Although there are some common management and leadership practices to go agile, several leaders remind that there is no proper *model* to apply or replicate to every organization in order to achieve success.

Every organization is different since in its people are as well. Besides, the purpose and vision, the leaders, the sector, the values, etc. are also factors which differ according to every organization. Each one needs to adapt these recommended practices to their own personality. This is rather a *philosophy* to be adapted at first by the top and to be spread afterwards and adopted by all the organization.

4.2. Compliance with the literature review

In the introduction, a study from Gallup (2013) mentioned the lack of engagement of employees in the corporate world. Looking at the results in every case, we can see that the initiative of an organization to go agile participates to solve the issue. Besides, by focusing on one of the elements of the 7-S model by McKinsey (2008), it was proved that adopting a *liberating leadership* improves the engagement of the employees.

Based on the model of organizational paradigms of Laloux (cited by Gerndt, 2014), it can be confirmed that all the cases studied reached at least the Green level. Indeed, the human have been put at the core, relationships above outcomes and stakeholder, and with a unique culture. The ultimate goal now, as the case of Zappos mentions it, is to go teal, promote self-management, trust, no more control and an evolutionary purpose.

Although there exist many definitions of agility, the literature review emphasized the common features they all had. The case studies analyzed proved to be in compliance with those. Indeed, every organization created small autonomous teams acting almost as mini-companies who had in charge one client. Thanks to this way of working, they are able to communicate more easily and take decisions faster, without having to go through all the levels of the hierarchy anymore. Therefore, they have more speed, flexibility and provide high-quality and customer-driven products and services.

Besides, in order to remain competitive through the years, employees are encouraged to deploy their creative potential to constantly bring new innovative ideas, and therefore surpass the competition. Indeed, these successful examples show that the definition of Jackson and Johanson (2003) is right since "agility is not a goal in itself but the necessary means to maintain the competitiveness in the market (...)".

The three evolutive leadership theories exposed in the literature review have a link with the case studies.

- The first Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid With assumed that the Team Management style is the best one with regards to the group performance. This perfectly matches the leadership style of Jean-François Zobrsit, the leader at Favi, who has two main beliefs forming the pillars of the company : "The man is good" and "The love for the client" that requires a high-quality work to satisfy the client and reach a good performance. Those perfectly represent the high concern for both the people and the production.
- The second model of Fiedler's Contingency Leadership Theory assumes that there are many best leadership styles according to the situation, but those depend on elements of the environment that makes the manager's leadership style favourable to the organization's performance or not. Many of the organizations analyzed started to transform after the arrival of a new leader. This probably means that the leadership style of the previous director or CEO was not appropriate and favourable given the situation of the organization. Since this latter was not able to adapt, he had to leave and be replaced by a new leader who's leadership style was more appropriate.
- With regards to the Hersey & Blanchard model, we can say that the leadership style indeed evolves and leaders are able to adapt and change according to the followers' maturity and capabilities. In the organizations analyzed, the leadership mostly starts with a supporting style. Workers are desoriented and not sure about their ability to take responsibility, therefore the leader needs to show high support and encourage them to share their ideas and take decisions. After a few years, with committed and capable workers, the leader is able to move to the delegating style where he does not even need to be highly supportive anymore ; the teams are totally autonomous and confident.
- Finally, the case of Favi illustrates well the levels of leadership by Maxwell (2003). Indeed, according to the interviews of employees, in my opinion it seems that Jean-François Zobrist reached at least the level 4 of the model. Indeed, people follow him because of what he has done for the organization, for what he has done for them, and also because of what he represents. In none of the cases, a leader was appointed because of a position or a contract. All of them at least reached the level 3.

A confrontation of the six action lines identified in the literature review with the cases analyzed, shows a strong compliance between both.

- The first best practice was self-management. Indeed, all of the organizations removed the hierarchy and encouraged the creation of smaller teams that are autonomous and auto-directed.
- The second best practice is the purpose statement. All of the companies understood the need to set the *why* of the organization (Sinek, 2009). Zappos wanted to provide the best customer-service ever ; Buurtzorg wanted to bring back the social sphere in health care, ESBZ wanted to teach kids what is really important in life, etc. And this is what employees of each respective organization identified themselves to and found a reason to wake up every morning to come to work.
- The third practice is talent management. As Getz & Carney mention it (2012), the leader needs to act as a gardener who is taking care of his flowers to make them grow. In order to do so, three principles need to be followed : intrinseque equality, auto-direction, and personal development. In every case, intrinseque equality was established thanks to the elimination of the hierarchy and the right for everyone to express himself and his ideas with any fear to be judged or ignored by the superiors. Auto-direction is reflected in the creation of autonomous small teams. And finally personal development is illustrated for example at Gore-Tex where every employee needs to find his own *sweet spot* – meeting point between competences, interests of the associate and needs of the company. By doing so, every employee contributes to the creation of innovative ideas for the company while working on something he chose and he likes. The result is a development of professional skills, and at the same time, a personal pleasure. Some organizations such as the SPF Sécurité Sociale have even appointed a Chief Happiness Officer who's job is mainly to make sure employees are happy at work.
- The fourth practice concerns the work-life balance. Semco is probably the best example illustrating freedom in employees' organization at work. The leader Semler allows all his employees to set their own working schedule and manage themselves

according to the objectives instead of the time spent in the office. Another example is the Belgian SPF's, which removed the pointers and introduced teleworking, flex desks, open-spaces, etc.

- The fifth practice is about the attention given to the stakeholders and the community. Not only the employees have access to all financial and other type of information, but also the general public, or the partners. Zappos for example organizes these free visits in the offices for anyone who would be curious about it. At Semco, the CEO recommends to the potential applicants a free afternoon and freedom to talk to whoever he wants in the company before making his decision to join the company or not. Harley Davidson managed to convey their value of riding in groups during the weekends until the car seller to create the legend that created the boom of the brand image and sales.
- Finally, the last dimension tackles the general personal traits an agile or liberated leader should have. Of course, there are many of them, but summarized into three points in the literature review, they were : wholeness, communication from the inside-out, and servant leadership. The first one, wholeness, is about being totally oneself at work, including emotionally and spiritually. This implies namely to remove the ego of the top levels and accept feedback. Therefore, leaders such as Alexandre Gérard (Chronoflex), Laurent Ledoux (SPF Mobilité et Transports) or Liisa Joronen (Sol) decided to abandon all signs of superiority or power such as big offices, reserved parking spots, etc. The second characteristic is the communication from the inside-out. This point is related to the purpose statement since it implies to take actions for a certain reason that makes sense. The third trait is servant leadership. Managers become leaders, who do not talk anymore, but rather listen. They become guides, coaches for the teams when they require some help or opinion about an issue. At Poulton, former directors became site animators who are devoted to the support and help of workers on one hand, and pass the knowledge on the other. At Gore-Tex for example, every employee has a sponsor who is dedicated to guide him in his personal and professional life within the company.

4.3. Critical view

During the analysis of the cases, I could think about potentially opposed views in the leadership practices applied in the workplace.

The first remark is about the workplace rules that are supposed to create a pleasant **working environment** for all.

- The open space policy might be interpreted in different negative ways that might result in deproductivity. Some employees might feel pressured to have their computer screen exposed to any other employee or even visitor passing through the corridor. It might also reduce the ability to focus because of the constant noise and external elements happening around. There is no moment of privacy for someone who would need to make a personal phone call for a medical appointment. Also if you arrive a bit late, you might not have the seat that you usually like or be sitting next to a colleague you need to collaborate with during the day. Some employees also prefer to have a minimum of personalization on their desk with pictures of their family. But it can also be a question of folders classification or post-its that need to stay there as reminders.
- Another example is the evaluation by the peers. While some could see the team as a reflect of solidarity, some might perceive it as an environment of competition where you might need to denounce or lie about someone to get a better evaluation.
- It is important not to associate two types of employee's care. It is nice to offer kickers, and massage, and nap rooms and fitness centers, etc. Many companies from the Silicon Valley offer them to their employees. However, according to me, this is superficial with regards to leadership and agility. Despite all these entertaining and relaxing infrastructures, many employees from those companies overwork, have burnouts, etc. In our case, the leaders look to touch the employee deeper in his soul, to make sure if he stays in the company and he is happy. There should be a real match and passion for the values, the vision, the colleagues and the job itself.

Second point argues about the **decision-making** for leaders and subordinates.

- First, there is a paradox in the process itself of *liberating* the organization, according to me. Indeed, the leader needs at the very start to be the decision-maker of this big change, but this is opposed to the next idea that the top-level should not be the one mainly taking decisions anymore.
- According to me, there is a paradox in the approach of agility itself given the current business environment in which organizations operate nowadays. Indeed, companies need to be reactive to act quickly and appropriately to the conditions of the market. However, this whole agility philosophy suggests a total delegation of decision-making to the operational teams instead of the top-level management. In a way, this is risky because every wrong decision might be very costly or could potentially put the company in a dangerous position.

Third, what is not said in the theory of the literature review is that, in practice, when an organization needs to change to go agile, the leader won't make the **announcement** directly. This would be too risky and very likely to face rejection. Therefore, he needs to start adapting himself first by showing the example and applying the new values and principles. Once he will be able to actually show and proof that this is working and helping everyone to feel better and happier at work, employees and directors will also be ready to adopt this new change. It is therefore needed to be patient and strategic as a leader.

Fourth remark tackles the **challenges** to go agile. Although the idea is to ease and facilitate the processes, it takes a lot of time for a company to change. A start-up founded with those principles from the beginning might be pretty quick. On the opposite, the larger or older the company is, the harder and the longer it will take to change.

Among the people who chose to stay despite the change, the levels of personal engagement or the rapidity of adaptation might be different. It is therefore necessary to keep in mind that the transformation could take more or less time, depending on the case, to become homogenous among all the employees.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Recommendations

The initial problematic exposed at the introduction of this thesis was : What is the influence of managerial and leadership practices on organizational agility ? The first general answer to this question is the following : managerial practices, when chosen according to the circumstances and mobilized by an appropriate leader, increase and support organizational agility.

The first research question asked what managerial practices support organizational agility. Through the analysis of the twelve case studies, it was found that some specific managerial practices are applied in the entire agile organization. They are fourteen in this thesis and were classified according to the seven categories of the 7-S model of McKinsey : reaction to a crisis ; general brainstorming ; destructure ; autonomous teams ; freedom of organization ; 360° and bilateral evaluation ; recruitment by the colleagues ; new salary policy ; innovation ; reaction to employees' demotivation ; arrival of a new leader ; leaders coaches and guides ; (re) definition of values ; transparency and open information.

The second research question asked which type of leadership is necessary to mobilize all managerial practices in an agile organization.

Although it was said that no proper model exists to be exactly replicated, there is one recommended type of leadership which is assumed to be more effective in order to increase and support organizational agility. Indeed, this thesis showed, through the literature review and the analysis of cases, that *liberating leadership* aspires on one hand to create organizations where employees are really happy and fulfilled at work. On the other hand, it leads the organization to be more agile and thus performing. This liberating leadership requires a leader who is going to stop to properly *manage* to rather start *leading*. The six action lines (self-management ; purpose statement ; talent management ; work-life balance and work place rules ; stakeholders and community ; personal traits of the leader) identified in the literature review give direction to the leader to understand his new role in the agile organization.

5.2. Limits

This thesis presents two main limits. As mentioned earlier, there are about less than a hundred organizations identified around the world, which are currently into the process of going agile. Within the scope of this thesis, it was not possible to analyze all of them for this main reason : practically speaking, it would take too much time and travel expenses in the scope of a Master thesis to analyze more than those twelve organizations.

A second limitation is that, since the organizations and their respective leaders are spread around the world and busy, it was not possible to interview them directly on a face-to-face interview. Therefore, indirect tools were used such as documentaries, conferences and interviews made by other professional organisms were used instead.

5.3. Future research opportunities

Many questions remain and would deserve additional research related to this topic.

One area of investigation could treat of the teaching and learning of agility to future leaders. Nowadays, universities are starting to offer more and more courses related to corporate social responsibility, advanced human resources management, innovation, etc. However, agility is not a common topic yet, neither is leadership. In my opinion, it could be a great idea to simulate companies or organization's real situations and put the students into the shoes of CEO's. Their duty would be to act with only two constraints: Maintain or improve the performance of the company on one hand, and the wellbeing and happiness of their employees and workers on the other. Another suggestion would be to follow the examples of the case ESBZ and start teaching this philosophy at a very young age with kids at school.

A second area of investigation would be to analyze the cases of organizations, which tried to follow the same logic to go agile, but failed. It would be interesting as well to know what are the mistakes they did and how to avoid them.

Finally, it is necessary to explore the other parts of the 7-S model by McKinsey in order to enable the entire organizations to become agile on all dimensions.

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