Agile
TODAY

Humanity Over Bureaucracy:

In Conversation with Buurtzorg's Stephan Dyckerhoff

Ellen Broad
Explores the Ethics of AI

Feminist Revisionist Agile
with Sarah Kaur

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
ANNA CREWS

COVER IMAGE

Proving that the nation's Agile community is continuing to grow, more than 1200 delegates joined us in June for the tenth annual AgileAus Conference. Thanks to all those who made our anniversary one to remember – relive the highlights in our **AgileAus18 recap** (p.14-17).

In the reflective state brought on by reaching a major milestone, we – along with some of Australia's leading Agile thinkers (p.22) – have been wondering: **what's next**? From dialogue sprouting out of the Conference and in broader community discussion, we observed a strong appetite amongst Agilists for using their toolkits to make a tangible social difference.

To further stir up this appetite, we've cooked up a brand new event: **Better Worlds 2018**, held in Sydney on 19 September. It's a chance to hear speakers from a range of complex organisations explain how they're using Agile to deliver value and effect change. Head to the Better Worlds site to learn more [betterworlds.com.au].

This issue, we're bringing you a taste of Better Worlds 2018, as presenter **Ellen Broad** considers the AI condition (p.4) – a subject she'll be exploring at the event. Plus, we sit down with Better Worlds 2018 keynote and the President and CEO of Buurtzorg Asia and China, **Stephan Dyckerhoff** (p.24), to chat autonomous teams, leadership in flat organisations and more.

Continuing to look to the future, **Sarah Kaur** offers a feminist revisionist analysis of Agile (p.7), while **Steve Denning** touches on the evolution of the Agile mindset (p.10).

We've also commenced our community consultation process for AgileAus19. This year's Conference saw many community ideas come to life, and the AgileAus experience was all the richer as a result. Drop us a line at the email below if you'd like to take part in the conversations that shape the next Conference.

Of course, don't forget to save the date for **AgileAus19**: Tuesday 25 – Wednesday 26 June 2019 at The Hilton, Sydney. We hope to see you there!

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P.S. View the online edition here: agileaus.com.au

Made by Humans: The AI Condition

ELLEN BROAD

Ellen Broad is an independent data consultant and author. This article is an edited extract from Ellen's book, *Made by Humans: The AI Condition*, available now through MUP.

At the 2017 Neural Information Processing Systems (NIPS) conference in Long Beach, California, Google scientist Ali Rahimi used his keynote slot to issue a warning to the machine learning community. Machine learning, which had made promising advances over the last decade, Rahimi argued, was not the new electricity. In 2017, machine learning practices looked more like alchemy: opaque, brittle,

mysterious. Practitioners were playing with complex techniques that they didn't understand.

Rahimi was presenting as one of the recipients of NIPS's Test of Time Award alongside UC Berkeley Professor Ben Recht. They wrote their paper about random kitchen sinks, a method for speeding up optimisation problems, over a decade earlier. If you watch Rahimi's NIPS talk online, you will miss Recht, who was standing next to Rahimi on the stage in a T-shirt that read: 'Corporate Conferences Still Suck'— an echo of Kurt Cobain on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine more than twenty years earlier with the tagline 'Corporate Magazines Still Suck' scrawled across his T-shirt in black marker.

"I would like to live in a world whose systems are built on rigorous, reliable, verifiable knowledge, and not alchemy," Rahimi said. Alchemists, Rahimi acknowledged, did have some amazing achievements—they invented metallurgy, glassmaking, dying techniques for textiles. But

alchemists also believed that they could transmute base metals into gold and that leeches could cure diseases. Advances in physics and chemistry centuries later ended up dismantling two thousand years of alchemists' theories.

"If you're building photo sharing services, alchemy is fine. But we're now building systems that govern health care and our participation in civil debate," Rahimi said. Some machine learning practitioners were jumping ahead, deploying systems using complex techniques that weren't yet fully understood, even by the experts within the field.

Machine learning is often described as being a 'black box': precisely how it works and how decisions are made are impenetrable. What happens between practitioners inputting lots of data and getting their results can be unclear. This is not true of all machine learning models; some are more intelligible— that is, it is easier to trace through their decision-making process and understand them—than others. The problem is, the least intelligible
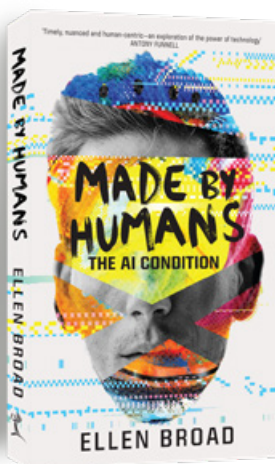
Ellen Broad's book
Made by Humans: The AI Condition

> "Machine learning is moving from experimental research to widespread application in ways that intimately affect people's lives. Some of these applications are going to be robust, effective, rigorous... Some will cause harm. "

methods tend to be more accurate. More intelligible methods, like linear regression, sometimes produce less accurate results.

Some machine learning practitioners talk about 'black box' machine learning with a kind of acceptance. This has the unsettling effect of making black box issues around some machine learning models seem innate, unchangeable—shortcomings to be tolerated in order to make progress. Rahimi argued that practitioners weren't interested enough in trying to understand the black box. He called for more simple experiments and simple theorems, more focus on uncovering the reasons for puzzling bugs and strange machine learning phenomena. More rigour, basically—less alchemy.

Rahimi—and Recht, who co-wrote the acceptance talk—created a sensation across NIPS. Facebook's Director of AI Research, Yann LeCun, came out the next day calling Rahimi's alchemy metaphor "insulting" and "wrong". LeCun was worried that describing machine learning as "alchemy"—dangerous and mysterious magic practised by unscientific people—could precipitate yet another AI winter: the cessation of funding and general support for AI-related research.

The argument between Rahimi and LeCun is an old one. Whether technological progress is measured in experimental breakthroughs, in the implementation of those breakthroughs in products, or in unpacking, understanding and theorising those breakthroughs, has

long been debated. The relationship between risk-taking and responsibility has been examined by mathematicians, scientists and philosophers throughout history. Russian American mathematician and popular author Lillian Lieber, who counted Albert Einstein and Eric Temple Bell among her fans, wrote about the capacity of mathematics to "shed light on both the CAPABILITIES and the LIMITATIONS of the human mind". Engineers who mistook licence (to take risk) for absolute freedom to do so, Lieber wrote, often resulted in "juvenile delinquency".

Science needs breakthroughs and science needs caution. There are brilliant innovations that change our lives. Useless applications also get traction in the hype. And sometimes there are applications that are so imaginatively cruel as to leave us stunned, shaken by what the human mind is capable of dreaming up and what humans—as researchers, designers, funders and institutions—are willing to carry out.

The discovery of electricity, for example—to which AI is so frequently compared—took over two hundred years to move from novel discovery to practical, widespread application. It unlocked profoundly modernising forces like streetlights, safe forms of internal heating, home appliances, computers. It also unleashed the electric chair. Electric baths, shocks and massages were thought by the medical profession to be effective treatments for everything from blindness to rheumatism, from hysteria to headaches, for nearly a century. The utility—and harm—of electroconvulsive therapies is still debated in psychiatry today.

In his response to Rahimi's alchemy metaphor at NIPS, LeCun argued that engineering artefacts had always preceded theoretical understanding, using examples like the steam engine and aeroplane. It's also true that engineering breakthroughs that preceded theoretical understanding of those breakthroughs have occasionally been terrible failures. In the 1950s, the British Overseas Airways Corporation launched the world's first commercial jet airliner, the de Havilland Comet, and looked poised to kick-start the modern jet age. But then three Comets broke up in mid-air within twelve months, killing everyone on board. Production of the British jet

was halted. The investigations that followed transformed aviation safety, improving construction techniques, and resulting in the transition of design features like square windows on planes to round ones (corners concentrate stresses while curves distribute them). The history of the aviation industry is one of technical innovation, of devastating failure, and of lessons learned from failure. A complex ecosystem of laws, standards, best practices and institutions have grown up around the aviation industry along the way.

In describing practices in machine learning in 2017 as alchemy, Rahimi wasn't calling for a stop to machine learning. He also wasn't saying alchemy was bad: there were incredible, enduring discoveries alongside completely misplaced ones. He was asking for less complacency within the machine learning community in the face of its mysteries.

Machine learning is moving from experimental research to widespread application in ways that intimately affect people's lives. Some of these applications are going to be robust, effective, rigorous. And some are going to be a waste of money. Some will turn out to be the equivalent of treating blindness with electric shocks. Some will cause harm.

LeCun was right to be concerned that a general perception of machine learning as alchemy—mysterious, dangerous, misdirected—could result in AI research losing funding again. But he didn't dispute that aspects of machine learning aren't currently understood by the people building the systems. It's in the industry's interests to change that. The machine learning industry will benefit greatly from investing as heavily in AI safety, fairness and transparency as it does in 'new tricks'.

Ellen will speak on the relationship between humans and AI at Better Worlds 2018 in Sydney on Wednesday 19 September.

#fragile: Feminist Revisionist Agile

WITH SARAH KAUR

In talks presented in Melbourne and Sydney this August, Portable COO Sarah Kaur presented a feminist revisionist interpretation of Agile. In Twitter discussion following the talks, the hashtag '#fragile' (for 'feminist revisionist Agile') was swiftly adopted by attendees inspired by Kaur's timely analysis. Here, we catch up with Kaur to learn why the future of Agile looks to be #fragile.

"Put your hand up if 100% of your Agile projects have landed on time, on budget, and with all stakeholders and project team happy with the results," Sarah Kaur asks audiences as she begins her presentation. The response makes one thing clear: Agile is by no means perfect.

Kaur considers why the promise of Agile — a methodology the Harvard Business Review had hailed as "the competitive advantage for a digital age"[1] — now appears to be breaking. "It's not enough for us to say that Agile is 'wrong,'" Kaur explains. "In order for Agile to be healthy in 10-20 years' time, it must be worked on to ensure its great aspects remain."

"If Agile is broken, let's interrogate its structures," continues Kaur. Using the lens of intersectional feminism, Kaur deconstructs the foundations of the Agile Manifesto. "Agile is influencing how the corporate world runs its projects. The time is now to unpack it and see how we can make it better!"

WHY FEMINISM?

Intersectional feminism is built on the premise of interrogating established structures and unpicking their inherent assumptions — making it a useful tool to uncover why Agile isn't working for everyone. This mode of analysis also accounts for the complex intersections that make up a contemporary workplace, where greater diversity exists in our staff, in our working hours and in the channels of communication available to us.

As Kaur points out, much has changed since the Agile Manifesto was written back in 2001. While those who wrote the Manifesto "would have had some differences — some were Scottish, some were American, some were Vietnam vets, some were aeronautical engineers — they were all pretty privileged, and kind of homogenic in comparison to today's workforce."

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1   "Agile Practice: The Competitive Advantage for a Digital Age," *Harvard Business Review*, 24 April 2016. https://hbr.org/sponsored/2016/04/agile-practice-the-competitive-advantage-for-a-digital-age

Portable's all-women production team stands in stark contrast. Half the team is non-Caucasian, half are migrants to Australia. All are feminists. "The Agile Manifesto asks us to embrace that things change," Kaur tells us. The Portable team believes feminism can effect this change, as "feminist thinkers have been remodelling the world around us… for a long, long time."

Central to Kaur's analysis is the unpacking of the binary oppositions contained within the Agile Manifesto (as outlined in Figure 1). Kaur doesn't demand that we totally discard the items on the left. Indeed, she accepts that 'responding to change' is a far better way of working than 'following a plan'. Yet, informed by feminism's call to question opinions purporting to be objective truths, Kaur examines the often-overlooked value of the items on the right.

PROCESSES AND TOOLS *BEFORE* INDIVIDUALS AND INTERACTIONS

Individuals and interactions are important but, Kaur notes, we need defined processes. "As the casualisation of the workplace increases, we rely more on a shared understanding of processes and tools to keep us aligned over remote and part-time work arrangements. How does your mum participate in a sprint when she's working part-time?" Kaur asks. "It's hard!"

The Agile Manifesto

Individuals & interactions	over	Processes and tools
Working product	over	Comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration	over	Contract negotiation
Responding to change	over	Following a plan

"That is, while there is more value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more."

Figure 1. *The Agile Manifesto*

As we've learned from cultural feminism, women are often responsible for maintaining social processes and tools; many of which are informal and, as such, are usually taken for granted. Women can be seen to act as a 'gel' or 'social lubricant', ensuring things like communication and relationship building run smoothly. This soft work is, in its own way, a process. "It's always the little things," Kaur explains, "comforting a colleague, remembering the birthdays, soothing an ego, showing a new employee the ropes. But these little things add up — and, for many women at work, they're fed up."

Kaur contends that tools and processes necessarily pave the way for interactions between individuals. Their role in the smooth functioning of a workplace can no longer be downplayed.

COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTATION *FOR* WORKING SOFTWARE

"Documentation is a form of democratising knowledge sharing," says Kaur. "In tech especially, knowledge is power."

The authors of the Agile Manifesto were pair programmers, meaning working code was easily comprehensible to them. But – fast forward to the present day – what happens when your developer goes on holiday? Work doesn't stop. Your client asks you a question, and only your developer holds the answer. At the time the Manifesto was written, Kaur explains, "no one really had to understand these answers, bar those who were thinking the same. Why slow down and document stuff?"

As the above scenario illustrates, this rejection of comprehensive documentation doesn't 'work' for everyone. It creates and maintains gaps in knowledge. It makes daily tasks needlessly complicated, particularly as the tech industry grows to encompass a broad spectrum of roles and skill levels. For Kaur, the question is raised: "*who* defines what 'working' means, and *for whom* does it 'work'?"

Kaur argues that "knowledge shouldn't be held in pockets of individuals' heads." Instead, we should document our processes in a shareable, easily comprehensible and

teachable manner. Not only will this documentation simplify client communication; it could also serve as a valuable learning resource, allowing more people to access and contribute to these gated areas of discussion.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATION *TO PAVE THE WAY FOR* CUSTOMER COLLABORATION

"Contracts don't work well with Agile," Kaur tells us. Regardless of your work environment, there will always be someone (a client, a stakeholder, a third party provider, anyone!) who will require *something*.

Here, contract negotiation becomes critical. Kaur frames contract negotiation as an invaluable way to find out more about your partner: their expectations, their approaches and their non-negotiables. Trust is also built during the negotiation stage. "We've all heard that women are 'good at compromising,'" Kaur laughs, referencing the "barbed compliment" that so many women receive. "Well, let's turn this to our advantage!"

Kaur urges us to "reject the perception that women cannot negotiate." Rather, she suggests that the negotiation process *itself* is flawed. Kaur draws on a Sheryl Sandberg quote: "People think that women don't negotiate because they're not good negotiators, but that's not it. Women don't negotiate because it doesn't work as well for them."

Kaur proposes that we make an effort to include women in contract negotiation from the outset, rather than merely having them step in when a 'skilled compromiser' is needed. Further, Kaur stresses the importance of women's participation in the negotiation stage "so that we're not bound to what someone else has decided are the rules." If women are in the room when these negotiations take place, they can minimise harm and

dismiss unreasonable conditions. Focusing solely on customer collaboration can exclude too many voices from the discussions that shape a project.

By framing negotiation as underserved by the Agile Manifesto – and as a forum that women can contribute to and reshape – Kaur blurs the binary between contract negotiation and customer collaboration. In Kaur's words, we then have space to "make collaboration a deliverable with equal work from both parties."

A #FRAGILE FUTURE

This isn't about gender. For Kaur, #fragile is about challenging the cultural power structures that make Agile messy and difficult for *everyone*. Power structures and binaries are inevitable in all aspects of business; be it a client-agency binary or a founder-investor binary. So long as equal negotiation is prioritised, Kaur believes Agile can be a helpful future method of both dealing with and disrupting these power structures.

Kaur has noticed that too much emphasis can be placed on "doing Agile 'right'. This shuts down discussion and stops people from wanting to give Agile a go." Rather than treating Agile as a Bible, Kaur encourages us to adopt a mix of whatever Agile flavours meet our tastes and needs. In Kaur's opinion, the only truly universal keys to making Agile work are trust and open communication.

Kaur leaves us with words from Agile Manifesto author Bob Martin: "Think of the Manifesto as a call to action in a point of time, and not a script of how to behave. It was a moment, not an era."[2] As this moment passes and we move to the next, the philosophy of Kaur and her team guides us in creating an inclusive, future-proof Agile. **Ω**

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2   "Uncle Bob Martin: The Agile Manifesto, 15 years later," *TechBeacon*, 9 March 2016. https://techbeacon.com/uncle-bob-martin-agile-manifesto-15-years-later

Why Mindset is Driving the Age Of Agile

STEVE DENNING

Steve Denning was a keynote speaker at AgileAus18 and is the author of *The Age of Agile*. This article was first published by Forbes on 20 August 2018.

As noted in my recent Forbes article, Agile management, after living in the shadows from general management for 15 years, is now "eating the world" and even heralding a new age. A new age? I first heard the phrase "The Age of Agile" as the title of a talk by Professor Julian Birkinshaw of the London Business School in November 2016 at the Drucker Forum in Vienna, Austria.

In his brilliant talk, Professor Birkinshaw said that the older forms of organisation—bureaucracy and meritocracy—were failing through their inability to cope with today's fast pace and complexity of change. Organisations are entering a new era, he said: the age of adhocracy and Agile.

What does it mean to enter a new era, a new age? Some insights flow from earlier epochal shifts and the pivotal role played by mindset in each of them.

1. THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The Protestant Reformation was a reform movement in Christianity initiated by Martin Luther. It's usually said to have begun on October 31, 1517, when Luther sent "Ninety-Five Theses" to the Archbishop of Mainz. Legend has it that he nailed the theses to a church door in Wittenberg, Saxony, though there's no contemporary evidence of that.

The theses criticised certain practices of the Roman Catholic Church, such as selling salvation for money ("indulgences"), and challenged the authority of the Pope, suggesting in effect that the Church was corrupt. But Luther's central theme was that that salvation came, not from the blessing of the Pope, but by individual faith alone—a notion akin to the modern term,
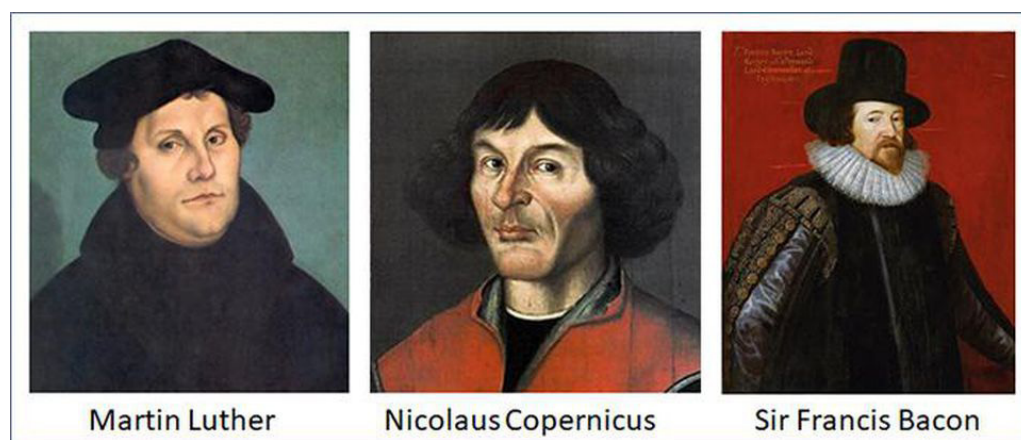
Martin Luther, Nicolaus Copernicus and Francis Bacon
Wikipedia Creative Commons

Steve Denning in conversation with Nigel Dalton at AgileAus18.

"mindset." The ceremonies and financial transactions of the Church were irrelevant. What mattered was how you viewed your life in relation to God. People could only be saved by having the right mindset.

At the time, the prospects of change looked remote, as the Church, most governments, the ruling classes and civil society supported the continuance of the status quo. The Church fought back and in 1520, Luther was excommunicated. But change was under way. The recently-introduced printing press helped spread Luther's ideas rapidly across Europe. A vast reform movement began, eventually leading to reform within the Church itself.

Although the Protestant Reformation in due course changed many religious practices, what gave it staying power was the emphasis on mindset. Because Protestants viewed themselves and their lives differently, the world itself changed. If the Reformation had simply been about changes in practices, it would never have had enduring impact. It was mindset that drove the change. By changing the way people looked at things, the world itself changed.

2. THE COPERNICAN REVOLUTION IN ASTRONOMY

In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus, an amateur scientist and astrologer in Poland, published his thesis defying the evidence of our senses: the Sun didn't revolve around the Earth. The Earth revolved around the Sun.

On the surface, Copernicus's thesis seemed to be no more than a different way of looking at the world and a simpler way of calculating the paths of the planets.

Yet looking at the world in a different way changed everything. Copernicus's thesis undermined the plausibility of established religion and the divine right of kings. Thus began a process of inquiry into the entire organisation of society, including the rights and privileges of monarchies. Kings and queens still continued to exist, but they occupied a diminishing role in society. When they became a bit uppity, they found their heads being chopped off. Here again, a different mindset led to huge changes in the world itself.

3. THE REVOLUTION IN SCIENCE

Although Aristotle had long been regarded as the father of science and knowledge, it was Sir Francis Bacon who in the early 17th Century laid the foundations of modern science by articulating the idea that science is based on a *mindset* of doubt.

Science and experiments existed before Bacon, but they were rather like the "scientific" experiments that I was required to do in high school, in which I was asked to reproduce a known phenomenon with an experiment. Real science is about finding phenomena that don't correspond to what we expect. They are carried out with a mindset of doubt.

"If a man will begin with certainties," Bacon wrote in *The Advancement Of Learning* (1603), "he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties."

Bacon went on, in *Novum Organum* (1620), to spell out the rudiments of a scientific method centered on experimentation. Although modern science does not follow Bacon's methods in its details, it is still based on his mindset of doubt. In fact, there is still no agreement on the scientific method in terms of a fixed sequence of steps, since not all steps take place in every scientific inquiry (nor to the same degree), and they are not always done in the same order.

Bacon was also much concerned with forms of fake knowledge or idols (*idola*). He pointed out that things are often not what they seem (*idola tribu*). Things are not what people say they are (*idola specus*). Things are not what is implied by some terminology (*idola fori*). Things

are not always what supposedly learned people tell you (*idola theatri*). To overcome these human weaknesses, we needed to instill in ourselves a *mindset of continuous doubt*.

Bacon's thinking was upsetting to his contemporaries. As the English poet, John Donne, wrote in 1611:

> [The] new Philosophy calls all in doubt,
> The Element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.

Donne's concerns were misplaced. Bacon was vindicated by four centuries of amazing scientific progress: a *mindset of doubt* ended in extraordinary certainties.

LESSONS FROM THESE EPOCHAL SHIFTS

Several lessons flow from these examples:
- Big, deep, epochal changes can be driven by mindset.
- Processes and practices may vary, but change is driven by a constant mindset.
- Change is initially resisted.
- Deep changes can take a long time.
- Fake versions of the change are a continuing problem.

It is also instructive to look at recent efforts at deep change that was less successful: Business Process Reengineering (BPR) movement of the 1990s.

THE PARABLE OF BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

In the early 1990s, BPR was presented as a transformational business management strategy. It focused on the analysis and design of workflows within an organisation, working backwards from the customer so as to add value to customers. If BPR had been implemented in this spirit, it could have led to deep organisational change.

Initially, there was huge enthusiasm. It was *the* management fashion of the day. However, it soon became apparent that most companies were not using BPR as its founders had intended. Instead they were implementing BPR within the prevailing mindset

of efficiency and using BPR as a pretext to reduce headcount. BPR quickly earned a reputation for being synonymous with downsizing and layoffs. Despite the underlying good idea of "working back from the *customer*" it was absorbed by the prevailing cost-cutting mindset. As a result, BPR fell into disrepute, much to the chagrin of its founders, Tom Davenport, Michael Hammer and James Champy.

A key aspect of BPR is that it offered no explicit change in mindset. It merely suggested a different set of processes. It was therefore easily subsumed and subverted by the prevailing cost-cutting mindset.

WILL AGILE BE DIFFERENT FROM BPR?

There are at least five differences between Agile and BPR.

Agile entails an mindset that is explicitly different from the prevailing mindset of bureaucracy and efficiency.

Agile is a more comprehensive and coherent set of ideas than any of the 20th-century fads.

Agile has the advantage of being grounded in software development for fifteen years before general management "discovered" it and so was validated by a huge amount of experimentation before becoming popular.

Agile is continuing to evolve and grow in ways that the 20th-century management fads didn't. Agile has welcomed and incorporated other ideas like Lean and Design Thinking, and continues to evolve and grow; for example with DevOps.

Agile is deeply rooted in the human dimension of how work actually gets done. It emphasises what's involved in generating value for customers and creating workplaces that are genuinely stimulating and frequently inspiring. "Fake Agile" is much easier to spot than "fake BPR" because the human dimension in that movement was much less explicit than in Agile.

As a result, Agile organisations, as Professor Birkinshaw suggested in 2016, are leaving behind both "the industrial age" with its emphasis on efficiency, based on finding the right answer through planning and rational analysis. A new kind of management is emerging, in which "adhocracies" emphasise searching out opportunities, finding solutions through rapid experimentation, and achieving agility through decisiveness. By drawing on the full talents of those doing the work, firms generate continuous new value for customers, thus creating a virtuous circle of value creation, always driven by the Agile mindset. ⦵

A Decade Doing It! Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of the AgileAus Conference.

The tenth AgileAus18 was held on 18-19 June – thanks for making our anniversary one that we'll never forget. Here, we take a look back at some of the highlights of this year's Conference. Enjoy the trip down memory lane! And, for those who weren't able to make it this year, we hope you'll be able to join us at AgileAus19 on 25-26 June in Sydney.

A SHARED EXPERIENCE

Although it was the tenth time the team had run the Conference, AgileAus18 was an event of many firsts. On Day One of 2018's AgileAus, we took community feedback into account and experimented with the concept of a 'shared experience'. All 1200+ attendees gathered in a single-stream forum in Melbourne's Crown Palladium to collectively witness a knockout lineup of local and international keynotes.

The day kicked off with a presentation from AgileAus09 keynote, Jeff Smith. Smith shared his views on building an Agile company, followed by 'firestarter' Simon Wardley who wowed delegates with his innovative approach to mapping.

By the light of the AgileAus18 hearth, Nigel Dalton led an intriguing conversation with Steve Denning on Strategic Agility. The fireside conversations continued to ignite discussion as ANZ CEO Shayne Elliott and broadcaster Sally Warhaft explored the challenges inherent in a large-scale Agile transformation. Elliott outlined the changes ANZ made to adopt a more Agile mindset: from overhauling their interview process to find candidates who would flourish under collaborative working conditions to learning to embrace the "theatre of Agile" (where standups and sticky notes take centre stage!).

Throughout the day, keynotes stretched our imaginations as they considered the future directions and applications of Agile. Jeff Gothelf provided a set of underlying principles critical to the success of Agile, Design Thinking, Lean or any other methodology, stressing the universal value of exercising radical transparency, working in short cycles and testing high-risk hypotheses. Josh Seiden outlined his philosophy of 'sense and respond', encouraging delegates to continuously learn from customer behaviour and adjust their strategies accordingly. Martin Fowler stirred the crowd with his perspectives on Agile in 2018. "People are at their best when they can choose how they work," Fowler said – a message that surely resonated with most in the room.

Top L to R clockwise: **Jessie Shternshus** *encouraging us to adopt a childlike embrace of play;* **Tim Tam slam;** **Jeff Gothelf** *explaining the universal value of exercising radical transparency, working in short cycles and testing high-risk hypotheses;* **Stephanie 'Hex' Bendixsen** *exploring the evolution of narrative in video games;* **Jirra Lulla Harvey** *exploring how Indigenous Australian values of stewardship, community and resilience can inform and improve contemporary leadership;* **Martin Fowler** *stirring the crowd with his perspectives on Agile in 2018.*

Offering us a glimpse into technology's place in the future of storytelling was Stephanie 'Hex' Bendixsen, who explored the evolution of narrative in video games. Drawing on recent titles like "Heavy Rain" (2010) and "Life is Strange" (2015), Bendixsen shed light on the gaming industry's increasingly sophisticated understanding of narrative. Even more: she inspired delegates to break out their old consoles, dust off their controllers and spend the following weekend deeply immersed in some classic games!

Importantly, keynotes encouraged us to ask not what our Agile toolkit can do for us, but what we can do for the world using our Agile toolkit! Jirra Lulla Harvey of Kalinya Communications explored how Indigenous Australian values of stewardship, community and resilience can inform and improve contemporary leadership. Jessie Shternshus delivered a hands-on session focused on the importance of 'unlearning'. Shternshus outlined how the progress of individuals, groups or organisations can so often be hindered by a failure to discard narrow and outdated ways of thinking, ultimately encouraging us to adopt a childlike embrace of play.

Top L to R clockwise: **Josh Seiden** *encouraging delegates to continuously learn from customer behaviour and adjust their strategies accordingly;* *Food Bank For NYC President* **Margarette Purvis** *motivated many to put their hands up to make a positive social change;* **Shayne Elliott** *outlined the changes ANZ made to adopt a more Agile mindset.*

Aubrey Blanche spoke compellingly on data-informed HR for high-performing teams, proving the need for a real change in recruiting practices and office cultures in order for organisations to recruit and retain diverse teams.

We were delighted to welcome back President of the Food Bank For New York City, Margarette Purvis, who updated us on the progress made by the organisation's Kaizen Food Bank. Since introducing Lean thinking into its operations, the Food Bank has significantly reduced the length of its queues. NYC's hungry, thanks to this experiment in Lean thinking, no longer have to queue up in the face of brutal weather conditions and potential judgement from their neighbours just to get a meal. The work of Margarette and her team at the Food Bank For New York City is a testament to the power of innovative delivery to result in real, measurable social change. The response to her presentation made evident the strong appetite that exists within the Australian Agile community to put their technical skills towards social good.

ThoughtWorks® **ANZ** **elabor8** **AgileCraft** **MICRO FOCUS®**

THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF THE AUSTRALIAN AGILE COMMUNITY

Day Two of AgileAus18 featured a host of speakers that truly represented the depth and breadth of Agile in Australia. Instead of inviting speakers through a submission system, as we had done in previous years, this year we trialled taking expressions of interest from the community.

The presentations were demonstrative of the diverse ways in which Agile is being used across the nation. From ensuring the Royal Australian Air Force can maintain a warfighting advantage in uncertain environments to facilitating the rapid rise of wardrobe startup THE ICONIC; Agile certainly appears to be powering the future of Australia!

Members of the Australian Agile community shared learnings and case studies from their own practices, giving delegates plenty to take back and apply within their workplace. Pat Reed presented a Business Agility playbook, positioning collaboration, having clear and visible priorities and nurturing a learning culture as factors critical to a successful organisational culture change. Peter Moran argued that Agile squads are dead, while Megan Dell made the case for fusing Agile and UX practices.

Adam Boas explored the usefulness of adopting 'people over process' as a blanket rule, Elise Aplin offered 'Safe to Grow' as an alternative mantra to 'Safe to Fail', and Tim Dunlop stretched minds as he pondered the future of work (could it be no work at all?!).

These were, of course, merely a few of the fantastic insights shared by the community on the second day of AgileAus18.

WHY ARE YOU PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF THE AGILEAUS COMMUNITY?

"I am proud to be a member of the Agile community as it keeps me connected to Agile practitioners and professionals Australia-wide. Every issue of *AgileTODAY* has something new that I end up learning or reading about, and there is always something that I try to incorporate into my role. I have always strongly recommended to anyone who is working Agile or delivering Agile projects that they be part of this wonderful community!"

– **Javier Inchausti**

WE'RE SO THANKFUL TO ALL PRESENTERS, VOLUNTEERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, DELEGATES AND SPONSORS WHO MADE THIS TENTH ANNIVERSARY SO VERY SPECIAL

Sketch Crew Students Power Up their Future at AgileAus18 with Sketchnoting

BEN CROTHERS

Let's face it: no matter how inspiring and energising Conferences are (and AgileAus18 was indeed inspiring!), it's always a struggle to absorb all that great content from all those talks. Before you know it, you're back into the flow of your own day-to-day work, and all those brilliant ideas and lessons start to fade.

Thankfully, it doesn't have to be that way. Sketchnoting – or visual note-taking – is an effective way of capturing and distilling notes from talks, in a way that plain written notes (or typing on the keyboard) can't match. Research has shown that we are more engaged and have better information retention and recall when using visuals as well as words. In one 2009 study, a group of people who were drawing in this way recalled 29% more information than another group who weren't.

The good news is that anyone can do sketchnoting. It's about capturing ideas as words and simple images, not great artwork. No matter what you think your drawing ability is, you can use this style of note-taking to get the benefits of engagement and retention right away.

This year at AgileAus, we decided to take sketchnoting to the next level, and invite a group of volunteer students to capture the entire Conference as sketchnotes. And what a visual feast it was! For many of the students, it was the first time they had tried sketchnoting, and it was inspiring for everyone involved to see the group sharing their work and encouraging each other. If you were at the Conference, you might have seen the Sketch Crew around, sporting the (now collector's item) AgileAus18 Sketch Crew t-shirt.

Sketchnoting is a pretty social activity, too. Seeing others sketch is always fun, and this was a great way for people to strike up conversations with the students, and for the students to get familiar with the subject of Agile. Sharing sketchnotes on social media brought out other sketchnoters in the crowd: Samantha Connelly from Campaign Monitor and Zhi Quan Lee from Teamworx Consulting shared their sketchnotes online.

One of the most valuable lessons students learned about sketchnoting is that it's too hard to capture everything you hear; you have to listen hard, synthesise and summarise, and then sketch in a simple, rapid way so you're ready to listen to the next point.

In a world where we are bombarded with more and more information every day, we all need to develop this power

Ben Crothers with the AgileAus18 Sketch Crew

of synthesis. The experience that the Sketch Crew had at AgileAus has given them a solid grounding in this super power, and will help them reach their true potential, no matter what professional future they head into.

If you'd like to know more about sketchnoting and how it can be your superpower at work, take a look at these resources:

- *The Sketchnote Handbook* and *Sketchnote Workbook* – by Mike Rohde
- *Presto Sketching: The Magic of Simple Drawing for Brilliant Product Thinking and Design* – by Ben Crothers
- *Sketchnote Army* – a community site with lots of examples and success stories

Thanks to Cherie Mylordis whose feedback inspired the formation of the Sketch Crew. And, of course, we're very grateful to Ben Crothers for his tireless efforts in facilitating both the Sketch Crew and the Workshop Wall at AgileAus18. It was terrific to have the Conference community so warmly welcome the next generation into the world of Agile!
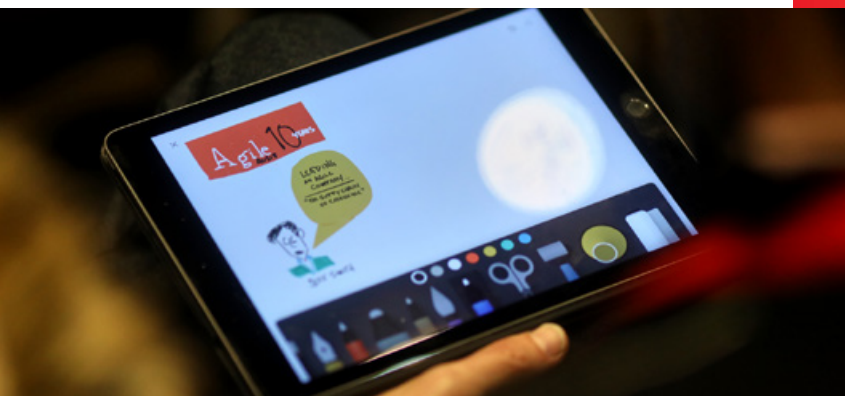
"AgileAus18 is the highlight of my year. Had the opportunity to sketch note for the first time during wonderful talks by seasoned speakers from Microsoft, ANZ, Food Bank For New York City, ThoughtWorks, Atlassian, World Fuel Service, Elabor8, Defence, and many more from around the world on the future of Agile. Thanks Ben Crothers for introducing us to the wonderful world of sketchnoting. Looking forward to an exciting future."

– Eunice Ofosua Abankwa

"Earlier this week, I had an incredible opportunity to be a part of Sketch Crew at AgileAus Conference. Ben Crothers transformed my understanding about note taking and acted as a great mentor throughout the Conference. It was an amazing learning experience! Thank you for all your support Ben Crothers and thank you AgileAus for providing such an amazing opportunity."

– Yoshita Pradhan

Workshop Wall

BEN CROTHERS

The tenth anniversary of the AgileAus Conference was pretty special in a lot of ways. One of the new things we tried this year was to give attendees another mode of interacting with each other with a Workshop Wall.

A Workshop Wall is a set of activities hosted on a whiteboard wall at a conference for people to add their thoughts, feedback and ideas using sketches and sticky notes. It's a great way for an organisation to learn about customers and attendees and for attendees to learn from each other. Conferences can get pretty hectic, and this format gives people a chance to pause and reflect on what they're learning, and what they want to take away back into their own work. After ten different questions and nearly 150 sticky notes, here's what the AgileAus18 attendees collectively had to say.

WHAT PROBLEMS DO WE HAVE THAT JUST WON'T GO AWAY?

Despite Agile going gangbusters in all sorts of organisations across the world for years now, we still struggle to make it work well. We struggle to connect our projects with those great outcomes we all want out of Agile: shipping real value to customers often, continuous learning and improvement, co-ownership of how the work is planned and executed, things like that. The main issues that were top of mind for attendees were:
- Misunderstandings and different expectations amongst team members, stakeholders, clients and management
- Bringing new team members (and new stakeholders/approvers) up to speed with what's going on
- Not setting up a project/team for success at the start
- Not keeping work properly and clearly connected to the strategic intent and business goals
- Dealing with constraints, different timezones, dependencies, and decision-making

HOW DO WE MEASURE WHAT MATTERS IN OUR WORK?

Keeping our eyes on the prize can get tricky, so it's important that we always have a clear idea of what success means and how to measure that success. We know we're getting better when we're delighting and delivering more value to our customers: minimising dependencies, impediments and sign-offs, and being able to respond faster to their customer feedback.

Here's what we actually measure:
- Cycle time, lead time, and customer NPS
- No. patches following planned release
- Time to fix Mean Time to Repair (MTTR)
- The team's vibe: attendance, ideas, participation
- % tickets rolled over into the next sprint
- Take-up of Agile practices and principles in each team
- Tech health, product health, and team health

The main methods for capturing this information is through customer interviews and online surveys. The more advanced organisations amongst our community are also using Agile health radars and maturity matrices.

WHAT DOES AN AGILE MINDSET MEAN TO US?

There was a real 'return to our roots' sentiment during AgileAus18, and this was clear as attendees answered this question. We're aware that we can't cargo cult our way to greatness; simply doing 'Agile things' doesn't necessarily mean we'll get the outcomes we read and hear about. It's all about combining a healthy Agile mindset with Agile practices. But what do we actually mean by 'Agile mindset'? Here are the themes that arose:
- Putting the customer first
- Being flexible and open to change
- Being willing to improve (and actually improving too)
- Being curious
- Being open with each other
- Being responsive and shipping constantly

That's a pretty nice score card of 'Agile mindset' health factors right there!

WHAT DO WE THINK IS THE FUTURE OF AGILE?

The main thread uniting the answers to this question on the Workshop Wall was that in the future the Agile footprint will be much greater, not only in organisations but throughout other domains, such as science and education. Perhaps Agile will just become so familiar that it will cease to be known as a separate thing with a separate name. Imagine that! Here are some other futuristic thoughts:

- The fight to get Agile going throughout the whole organisation will keep going, regardless of 'the establishment'
- We'll need to improve how we onboard leadership teams into the Agile mindset and practice
- We'll have more shared digital workspaces
- Leaders will become true advocates, genuinely wanting to make people awesome
- We'll have better feedback loops linking customers with organisations more closely

WHAT DID WE TAKE AWAY FROM AGILEAUS18?

A lot of attendees were keen to stay in touch with each other to continue building an Agile community of practice in Australia. There was obviously a metric tonne of valuable insights, experiences and lessons for everyone to take away from this year's Conference, but what did it all boil down to? It was insightful to see a really strong sentiment appear on the Wall about connecting more deeply to the Agile values at a personal level, and then doing more to translate this to the team, and helping the team monitor and improve itself. Attendees proposed we can do this by:

- Conducting personal retrospectives
- Maintaining the courage to be true to our values
- Leaving behind our 'industrialised' approach to Agile
- Talking more about what we need to do better as a team
- Co-creating solutions with our team when a practice is not working
- Telling stories to reinforce what matters to us and to our customers

It was gratifying to see so many people engage with the Workshop Wall this year, but what was even better was hearing the depth and honesty of conversations that people struck up with each other near the Wall, as they reflected on what they were taking in around them. Hopefully this experience – as well as all the other aspects of the AgileAus18 Conference experience – stays with us throughout the year to come.

SAVE THE DATE
25 – 26 June 2019 · Hilton Sydney

AGILEAUS.COM.AU

Agile in Australia: Where to Next?

NOW THAT THE DUST HAS SETTLED AND WE'VE CELEBRATED OUR TENTH CONFERENCE ANNIVERSARY, IT'S TIME TO GAZE INTO OUR CRYSTAL BALLS AND CONSIDER WHAT THE FUTURE MAY HOLD FOR AGILE IN AUSTRALIA.

HERE, AGILEAUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS OFFER THEIR PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT DECADE OF AGILE DELIVERY.

Agile will help us move from being a country where the main resources are found in the land to being a country where the main resources are found in the people. It will help us focus on our intellectual capital rather than on what we can take out of the ground. I think that through using Agile, we'll be able to create innovative products that allow the Australian economy to grow.

Micro Hering – AAPAC DevOps and Agile Practice Lead, Accenture.

Every time [I come across a new methodology or approach] I think, "this is going to displace what we've learned and it will be the next big thing," but it just works with Agile. I think Agile is just going to become the way we work in the future.

ALEX STOKES – Founder, Reboot Co.

I attribute the success of the burgeoning startup culture in Australia to Agile. Without Lean, without the Agile principles that underpin building a minimum viable product, taking it out and testing it in the market, iterating and growing an idea, there would be no startup culture.

Waterfall had a million processes. Having a rock solid process does not guarantee success. What Agile really needs to do is double down on those principles that draw in really talented people.

ADAM BOAS – CTO, MyXplor.

Lots of government departments are picking up Agile approaches. This is great to see because as a taxpayer, I like to see our tax money being used in more useful ways to deliver better outcomes and more outcomes.

KIM BALLESTRIN – Principal Consultant, Elabor8.

The pivotal point for the growth of Agile is the growth of the Agile Product Manager. This is a whole new area of professionalism that needs to find a way of working that simultaneously harnesses the power of people, problem solving, technology and code.

Australia has a very long way to go before it has as active a community of Product Managers as it does of Agile developers, Agile business analysts and Agile delivery people.

NIGEL DALTON – Chief Inventor, REA Group.

I'd love to see the next ten years be all about using Agile thinking to break down barriers between enterprises, for-profit organisations and organisations that create social impact.

PAULA BURTON – Principal, DiUS and Co-Founder, Flying Robot School.

At the end of the day, nobody is really going to care if we made the organisation we work for five or ten percent more profitable year-on-year. Nobody is really going to remember anybody who project managed the most efficient project that their company ever saw. They are going to remember the people and the movements that made change and benefited society.

Looking forward, this is what I hope the people involved in the Agile movement can focus on — developing their skills and using this way of working to make sure that society becomes a better place for everybody.

KEITH DODDS – Director, Business Consulting, Asia Pacific Digital.

FUTURE-GAZING AT AGILEAUS18

Presenters and delegates alike contemplated the next age of Agile at AgileAus18. Choctops in hand, we settled in to watch a video of the above AgileAus community figures considering the question: "where to next?".

In response to the video, Cherie Mylordis reflected with us on LinkedIn: "After an amazing decade of Agile in Australia, this video features many Australian Agile pioneers and prompts you to think - where to next? Will Agile become the way we all work and contribute to making society a better place?"

Cherie's comments provided us with much food for thought, and we certainly hope that a mainstream transition to Agile ways of working will result in positive social change.

We're keen to hear your projections on Agile's progression over the coming decade (and beyond!). Drop us a line at editor@agiletoday.com.au so we can chat about your views.

Humanity Over Bureaucracy:

IN CONVERSATION WITH STEPHAN DYCKERHOFF

Stephan Dyckerhoff, a presenter at Better Worlds 2018 and President/CEO of Buurtzorg Asia and Buurtzorg China, speaks with *AgileTODAY* about how the Dutch-based healthcare delivery system is being implemented across the APAC region.

Can you give our readers a little background information about the development of the Buurtzorg model?

To put it bluntly: Buurtzorg was developed by Jos de Blok as his response to the unsatisfying conditions of how home health care was delivered in Holland some 10-20 years ago. Care had been industrialised, forcing nurses to work like factory workers, delivering standard care items to their patients. Patients were receiving standard care instead of individualised care, while costs were exploding due to wrong incentives for the providers.

So, you could say that Jos de Blok's strong trust in people and capabilities, in collaboration, and in keeping things as simple as possible in order to maximise the time nurses can devote to patients drove the development of the Buurtzorg model. And we try to apply these same principles in our roll out of Buurtzorg in APAC!

The cornerstones of the Buurtzorg model include leveraging networks, maximising back office efficiency, maintaining a neighbourhood focus, and Lean management. Can you provide some practical examples of how these cornerstones help you deliver quality healthcare while using minimal resources?

Our core belief is that there are not enough nurses in most countries in the world (the Philippines probably being the only exception) to properly care for all the people in need. So, rather than maximising the nurse hours per patient — which would give us a short-term revenue boost — we strive to do the opposite through minimising scarce nurse hours.

We do this by helping the client to regain as much independence as possible and leveraging informal networks (these could be family, neighbours, volunteers in a neighbourhood etc.). We empower nurses to organise their work by themselves. Nurses are responsible for overseeing quality control — most of our nurses work in the neighbourhood in which they live and thus have a high personal interest in ensuring that their work is perceived positively.

We support nurses with a highly effective back office organisation (50 staff for 14,000 nurses and care workers), in combination with a very user-friendly ICT solution, reducing our administrative burden to a minimum. Every nurse has an iPad which serves as their core working tool and which they can use while they are with the patient. Hence, what could have been 'admin time' can now become quality time with the patient.

When an organisation undergoes an Agile transformation, employees often find the transition to non-hierarchical management and self-organisation difficult. After all, it's very easy to be told precisely what you need to do by your boss (and this way of working can be comfortable for those who've previously worked in a non-Agile workplace). In your experience, do nurses experience similar struggles when they first join a Buurtzorg team? How do you help them overcome this? What other challenges do nurses face when they begin working within a Buurtzorg team?

To be honest, my view is that Dutch nurses are actually the most autonomous working nurses. They love it. In other countries, it is more difficult to convince nurses to accept the idea of working in an environment without a boss telling them what to do. This is especially true in Asian countries, where hierarchical thinking dominates. We learned our lessons: in Japan, for example, our first nurse team left after some months because they were just overwhelmed by the situation of having to manage themselves.

We now work using a 'step by step' approach, encouraging nurses to take more responsibility over time but having a lead nurse and/or general manager in place at the beginning. Plus, we train coaches to guide teams as they adjust to this process.

In the APAC region, we face an additional challenge: home nursing is only an established sector in Australia/ New Zealand and Japan. In most other countries, home nursing did not previously exist, making us a true pioneer. It's been very difficult for us to convince nurses to join this new sector. But, given that there is a huge need for home nursing, this is a route that we have to take.

How do you view the role of a 'leader' or 'CEO' in an organisation like Buurtzorg, where decentralisation and autonomy are the norm?

In Holland, we have two managers for 14,000 people: with Jos de Blok as CEO and Gonny Kronenberg, his wife, as the back office leader. Jos' role is being a leader and facilitator. Gonny's role is more of a typical manager role — ensuring smooth back office processes – but, at the same time, she performs this role in a very collaborative, non-hierarchical way.

In Asia, we strive to do the same. Yet the 'desire for management' here is high, meaning that 'leadership' needs to be a mix of facilitation, guidance and management. Hopefully the role will develop over time to become similar to Jos' role in Holland.

Are there any challenges associated with being the CEO of a flat organisation like Buurtzorg? How do you determine what degree of authority you need to exercise in complex situations or when a dispute arises?

There are daily challenges. When we started in Asia, we tried to roll out the model the same way as in Holland but we failed. My challenge is to try to manage as little as possible while still meeting the degree of management that is culturally expected. People understand the Buurtzorg model intellectually but living it is another ball game. It will take many years until we can come to embrace a model like we see in Holland.

In Holland, even Jos would not take a decision-making role in dispute situations. We have 17 coaches for around 1,000 teams. Teams can call these coaches if they need support in complex situations. But coaches cannot decide for the teams, they just facilitate towards a solution. And this is also Jos' approach.

Undertaking a complete organisational restructure and culture change is a daunting, expensive task. With this in mind, is there anything that leaders of conventional, hierarchically-structured organisations can take away from the Buurtzorg model and easily apply within their own organisations?

I am not an expert in transforming existing organisations towards the Buurtzorg model. Other than in Australia/ New Zealand and Japan, we have had to build our APAC organisations from scratch. Yet, I know from our colleagues in Europe that the transformation is a huge challenge. Most organisations fail because their management cannot give up control or being in control.

Because there are so many requests for support in such transformation processes, we train various consultancies in how to drive and support transformations — with Buurtzorg not having enough resources to do this on our own. The good news is that we have Future Proof as a consulting partner in Australia. We have trained and skilled them based mainly on our experiences implementing Buurtzorg in the UK, Germany and France.

Ard Leferink of Buurtzorg Holland has stated that creating a back office culture that supports independent teams is one thing, but actually maintaining this culture is far more difficult. How do you maintain a culture that supports self-functioning teams?

Over time, people tend to retake more control. It is a key role of the back office leader to maintain a culture of supporting instead of controlling. We have various feedback mechanisms in place where nurse teams can express their experiences with the back office team.

Many would say that Agile involves experimentation, valuing people over processes, accepting the likelihood of failure, and trying things multiple times until you get it right.

At the same time, healthcare requires a level of exactness, precision and procedural adherence that few other sectors demand - mistakes can cost lives (and, at the very least, nurses are dealing with patients who are in a sensitive, vulnerable state). How is Buurtzorg able to embrace an Agile mindset under these conditions?

By placing trust in our people and, consequently, by delegating responsibility. Most nurses have families. They are able to take care of their families in complex situations. So why should they not be able to do this in a professional context? The moment we start to 'micromanage' quality, we take away team members' sense of responsibility and 'invite' them to rely on others. In our organisation, the professional attitude of the nurse and their team is key to quality management. Most nurses live where they work. They don't want any 'black sheep' in their team, as this would create problems in their own environment.

We have to leave behind the dogma that through micromanagement and control we can ensure better quality. Numerous cases across the world show that — even with the most detailed regulations in place — we cannot avoid mistakes! In Holland, there is a government institution where families can file formal complaints against their care provider. The large providers get around 50 complaints per year. Buurtzorg has not received a single one within the past 10 years!

What inspired you to bring the Buurtzorg model to the Asia Pacific region?

I got into elderly care when I was still working for SCA/ TENA, the global market leader for adult diapers. When doing consumer research, my fast conclusion was that many Chinese elderly needed quality diapers but, more urgently, they needed proper care. Hence, in 2011, I founded China's ever first home nursing company as a pilot project for SCA/TENA. When looking for partners and best practices, we came across Buurtzorg.

I met Jos de Blok and together we travelled through various Asian countries. We both concluded that his Buurtzorg model fits well in an Asian context, mainly because of the tradition of home-based filial care and the strong importance of neighbourhoods and communities. We first tried to partner with SCA, but they are a product company with little understanding of the care business. So Jos and I decided to try it on our own — this is how Buurtzorg Asia was born in 2014!

In what ways have you had to adapt the Dutch Buurtzorg model to account for cultural differences in Asia?

There are a lot of adaptations needed, like integrating the care workers into our care process and offering a broader portfolio of services within the communities. In Asia, there is also a greater emphasis placed on facilities (you have to be able to show "something" to stakeholders — a rather virtual organisation, like we have in Holland, does not create credibility). We've also had to adapt our management model to account for a greater need for defined hierarchies, at least at the beginning.

Of course, we also have to adapt to regional payment systems and market practices. The most extreme example is probably in India. Here, the market standard is to send nurse attendants to families for 12 or 24 hour shifts. We cannot change the market before we are in. We follow the same practices, but our nurse attendants are supervised by a lead nurse and they use our care process, ensuring individualised professional care. Over time, we will try to move to four hour shifts and then later to one hour shifts – at higher hourly rates but with a lower cost per patient. But this will take time. Despite this, patient-centricity, nurse-centricity and a focus on neighbourhoods are key elements of the Buurtzorg model that work well everywhere in Asia.

Do you foresee the Buurtzorg model growing in Australia? If so, would it need to be adapted in any way to suit Australian culture, practices or attitudes?

Well, from the outside-in perspective of a foreigner who loves Australia and has lots of experiences in Australia both professionally and privately, I would think that Australians are probably second after the Dutch in their wish for autonomy. So it should work well!

Also, we've recently seen a huge interest in our model from a variety of health and allied health industries. We are just now moving from 'talking to walking' in Australia, together with our Australian representatives at Future Proof. There has been much work undertaken to have the model suit an Australian context from both a delivery and legislative perspective. Excitingly, I am sure we will soon be able to support the first Australian care provider to start working the Buurtzorg way! Ω

We have to leave behind the dogma that through micromanagement and control we can ensure better quality. Numerous cases across the world show that – even with the most detailed regulations in place – we cannot avoid mistakes!
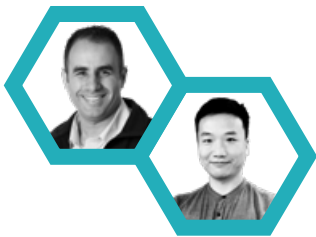
Agile
BETTER WORLDS

19 September 2018 • Sydney

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JULIET FALLACE from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on how an Agile mindset was used to conduct the postal marriage survey.

ELLEN BROAD, Author of *Made by Humans – The AI Condition* on ethics in data.

SHERRI FIELDS Principal Manager, Research, Transport for NSW on embedding a research model into the NSW Transport agency.

ALISON CAMERON from Adaptive Cultures on enabling cultural evolution.

CLARISSA MEFFAN, Product owner, CHOICE on incorporating Human Centred Design.

STEPHAN DYCKERHOFF from Buurtzorg on empowering autonomous teams in this Dutch, non-profit Teal organisation.

ABIGAIL THOMAS, General Manager, SBS On Demand on accelerating Agile at SBS.

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