

# The Agile Coaching Growth Wheel

## Authors and Acknowledgments

The Agile Coaching Growth Wheel is a collaboration between a number of contributors including: **John Barratt, Shannon Carter, Rickard Jones, Martin Lambert, Stacey Louie, Zia Malik, Helen Meek, Rohit Ratan, Tom Reynolds, Andre Rubin, Kubair Shirazee and Mark Summers.**

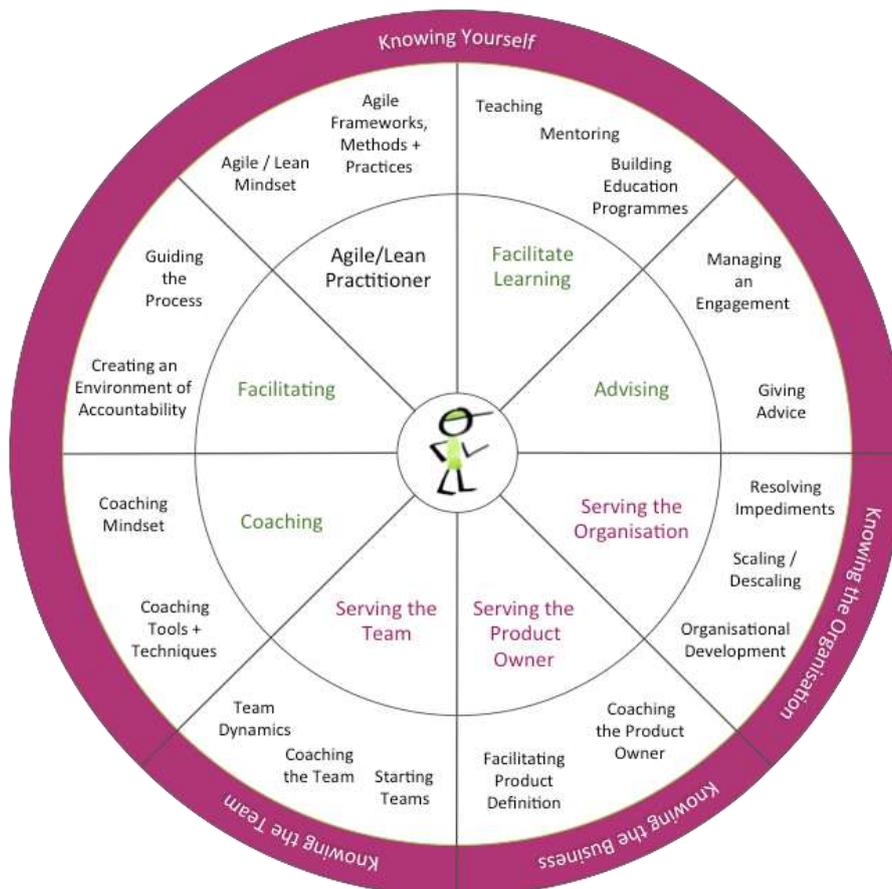
We would also like to thank all the other Agile Coaches who have provided feedback.

## What is Agile Coaching?

Agile Coaching is a collaboration with people in a thought provoking and creative journey using coaching approaches with an agile mindset and principles to help individuals, teams and organisations be the best they can be.

## What is the “Agile Coaching Growth Wheel”?

The “Agile Coaching Growth Wheel” is a tool for Agile Coaches and ScrumMasters to help them reflect and grow themselves on their Agile journey. This tool is also best used with another coach to help support them.



The wheel has 8 segments or spokes which represent main competency areas. Within each competency area, there are one or more competencies that an individual can reflect on. This guidance identifies 5 levels for each of those competencies.

## 5 Levels of assessment

1. Beginner
  - Knows the theory but has no real practical experience of the application
2. Practitioner
  - Has applied in at least one situation and may still require support in the application
3. Journeyperson
  - Can apply in most situations independently
4. Craftsperson
  - Unconscious competence has mastered the application and knows when to bend and when to break the rules
5. Guide/Innovator
  - Capability to change to meet the current situation and innovate to create new techniques

The tread around the outside represents the supporting competencies, these are knowledge areas that in-turn support the skills of the other 8 competency areas.

## Why create this wheel?

Misconceptions exist with clients and Agile Coaches with regards to what Agile Coaching is. This confusion has resulted in unqualified people presenting themselves as Agile Coaches with little experience and low competence. This creates something of a lottery for clients choosing the right Agile Coach for them.

How does one become a great Agile Coach? There is no clear pathway, Agile Coaching is not yet a fully-fledged profession. This Agile Coaching growth wheel lays down some core competencies, that allows an Agile Coach through a reflective process to go from good to great.

In 2011 Lyssa Atkins and Michael Spayed created a competency framework for Agile Coaches. Intentionally this was not a competency model, as it did not define specific behaviours, skills, knowledge or levels of proficiency. However, the creators of [WhatIsAgileCoaching.org](http://WhatIsAgileCoaching.org) and the creators of this Agile Coaching Growth Wheel believe that more definition is required in order to professionalise the world of Agile Coaching.

We believe that defining the Agile Coaching journey will allow educators and other coaches to better support the growth of Agile Coaches by developing learning and development programmes. It will also build confidence in the industry around the

future profession of Agile Coaching. Making it easier for an organisation to select the right coach for them with confidence.

## How to use the wheel and guidance

This part of the guidance is written from the perspective of a coach helping an Agile Coach to reflect. There are many different ways that the wheel could be used in a coaching conversation, but it could go something like this ....

### Step 1: Identify an area of improvement

Talk through each of the competency areas (the 8 spokes and 4 tread areas), use the guidance below to make sure the coachee has a high-level understanding of each area. You can't improve everything at once, so get the coachee to select an initial area of focus to work on.

### Step 2: Reflect on a competency area

For each competency within the competency area, go through the guidance and get the coachee to assess their own competence against the 5 levels of assessment. Some people will sell themselves short, others will overestimate their competence, your job as a coach is to try and hold them accountable to a true representation of themselves, ask for examples and be curious.

### Step 3: Brainstorm options and generate actions

Use the insight generated in the reflection to brainstorm options for growth and then formulate a plan of action.

The rest of the guidance is just that: guidance. The detail against each level for a specific competence is just meant as reflection, not as a checklist. There may be guidance at the practitioner level that you cannot fulfil 100%, perhaps they are not important to you or your context, but as you explore the journey person guidance you might find a better fit for where your coachee is at. Ultimately the coachee (Agile Coach) decides.

# Agile and Lean practitioner

Agile Coaching is coaching in an Agile context. To work as an Agile Coach most clients would expect knowledge and experience here. Most Agile Coaches come from Agile or Lean backgrounds, but reflecting here helps us stay rooted. If you are coming to Agile Coaching from a non-Agile background, then investment in personal growth is likely to start here. There is also a lot of synergy between an Agile/Lean Mindset and a Coaching Mindset, an underlying belief in people, the idea that change is possible and people can be the best that they can be.

## Agile/Lean Mindset

This includes the Agile values and principles, which guide our thinking and actions when approaching new situations. A deep understanding of Agile allows an Agile Coach to apply frameworks and practices in the way they were intended. An Agile Mindset requires belief in yourself and in others, people are the foundation of Agile working. We trust, support and nurture people to unleash their full human potential. Being Agile over doing Agile.

Lean Manufacturing and Lean Product Development provide us with some foundational concepts that underpin the Agile frameworks and methods.

- Focusing on the value that gives the most delight to our customers.
- Optimising our organisations for Flow with small batch sizes with the shortest possible lead time.
- Maximizing quality and minimizing waste.

At its heart Lean is about total respect for the people involved and a continuous improvement mindset.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Able to summarize the Agile values.</li> <li>● Able to describe the Agile Manifesto and principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can contrast an Agile mindset with a non-Agile mindset.</li> <li>● Demonstrate how the values and principles of the Agile Manifesto are present in how their team works.</li> <li>● Able to demonstrate an Agile mindset.</li> <li>● Able to explain the core concepts of Lean Thinking.</li> <li>● Recognizes when decisions help or hinder the adoption of agile principles.</li> <li>● Can help teams apply existing practices in a more Agile way, i.e. collaborative design over design upfront, testing right from the start.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Models the values and principles.</li> <li>● Able to analyse their personal fulfilment of Agile values and identify how they could improve.</li> <li>● Able to help those outside of their immediate area adopt Agile principles.</li> <li>● Can associate Lean principles and Agile approaches.</li> <li>● Can illustrate at least two concrete examples of how they actively applied Agile value(s) in their work.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe an experience in which there is no obvious resolution to an impediment, requiring them to leverage Agile values or principles to help their teams or organisation select possible solutions.</li> <li>● Can judge Agile practices adopted at a team and organisation level that are disconnected from the underlying Agile principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thought leadership through creating their own new values and principles that help people achieve greater levels of agility.</li> </ul>

## Agile approaches - frameworks, methods and practices

There are many flavours of Agile, an Agile Coach understands that there is no one correct way, and therefore has experience with many Agile approaches.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can describe how at least one Agile approach and how it relates to the Agile Manifesto.</li> <li>• Can explain at least 3 Agile practices commonly used by Agile teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to use a prescribed framework or method, applying all of its elements in one situation.</li> <li>• Can describe at least three Lean/Agile development frameworks/methods.</li> <li>• Is aware of changing Agile trends and newer methods in the industry.</li> <li>• Can compare and contrast different Agile approaches and apply where needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can associate at least three Agile engineering practices to Lean practices.</li> <li>• Analyse the benefits of a wide range of Agile practices and can help the team adopt them as appropriate.</li> <li>• Can apply Agile practices beyond the team.</li> <li>• Respected outside of the immediate work environment as somebody who knows about Agile practices.</li> <li>• Applied at least one framework or method in multiple situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to evaluate different practices and evolve them to meet the organisational need.</li> <li>• Helps the team evaluate the process that is most suitable for them.</li> <li>• Can describe a situation in which they might advise a client to apply XP, Lean, or a non--Agile approach to a workflow instead of Scrum. Can describe the reasoning behind their advice.</li> <li>• Applies many frameworks and adapts to different situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invents and modifies practices to match the context.</li> <li>• Active contributor to the Agile community, consistently identifying and developing, sharing existing and emerging Agile approaches.</li> <li>• Helps the organisation evolve the process that is of most value for them.</li> </ul>

## Core Skill Competencies

The core skill areas of Facilitating, Coaching, Advising and Facilitate Learning draw on other existing professions. These are the key skills that a growing Agile Coach will learn.

### Facilitating

Facilitation is the practical neutral craft (an informed blend of techniques and insights) of creating environments of openness, safety and innovation[1].

Facilitation increases the effectiveness of helping everyone align in a collaborative way, to interpret their context and mutually identify the most valuable outcomes desired so that they can be the best they can be.

### Guiding the process

Help individuals and teams set goals and manage their coaching interactions to support the journey in pursuit of their goals.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understands the role that listening plays in facilitation.</li> <li>● Can list at least three ways they may facilitate the process.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plans the content and agenda for a collaborative meeting and can facilitate the meeting.</li> <li>● Able to facilitate a small group towards a goal.</li> <li>● Creates an environment where the whole group are involved.</li> <li>● Prepares well for the meeting.</li> <li>● Facilitates the process over participating in the discussion.</li> <li>● Identifies at least three indicators when a group is engaged in divergent thinking and at least three indicators when a group is engaged in convergent thinking.</li> <li>● Identifies at least three challenges of integrating multiple frames of reference (i.e. the “Groan Zone”).</li> <li>● Describes at least three ways a group could reach their final decision.</li> <li>● Describes at least five facilitative listening techniques (e.g. paraphrasing, mirroring, making space, stacking, etc.) for effective meetings/events and can apply at least two of them.</li> <li>● Understands when conflict is arising and has at least one strategy for dealing with it.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has practised at least two alternatives to open discussion, in multiple contexts (e.g. structured go-arounds, individual writing, listing ideas, dialogue in pairs or small groups, etc.) and can explain when they may be effective.</li> <li>● Identifies at least one action the facilitator can perform to support meeting participants during divergent thinking, integration, convergent thinking, and closure that will support the development of an inclusive solution (e.g. powerful questions).</li> <li>● Can apply five visual facilitation techniques for a collaborative session (e.g. card question, clustering, dot voting, visual note-taking).</li> <li>● Analyses situations where conflict arises and selects an appropriate strategy to deal with the situation.</li> <li>● Can apply gamification techniques.</li> <li>● Able to apply multiple strategies for dealing with conflict, depending on the context.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Able to facilitate in any context.</li> <li>● Can facilitate large events, such as Big Room sessions, Bazaars, organisational change events, Conferences, Fests, Gatherings, Retreats.</li> <li>● Works with other facilitators as a mentor to help them develop.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invents and modifies practices to match the context.</li> <li>● Active contributor to the community consistently identifying, developing, sharing existing and emerging facilitation practices.</li> </ul>

## Creating an environment of accountability

Hold attention on what is important for the individual or team, and leave responsibility with them for action. Hold the team accountable to what they say they will do and their plan.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes three obstacles to clear communication and describes their impacts on both the sender and receiver.</li> <li>• Describes at least four ground rules to foster clear communication in a collaborative meeting and describes how the introduction of the ground rules impacts the interaction.</li> <li>• Understands the importance of the team following up on their actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes, using two concrete examples, when the Coach should not act as the facilitator for the group.</li> <li>• Able to hold the team accountable to the actions that have been agreed.</li> <li>• Has created at least three working agreements to foster clear communication in a collaborative meeting and describes how the working agreements impacted the interaction.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates at least two techniques for raising team accountability.</li> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to maintain unbiased views and leverage collaboration and consensus strategies to identify creative opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to create an environment of trust and respect in any situation.</li> <li>• Works to build accountability within the team to reduce dependence on the coach.</li> <li>• Helps teams create the necessary mechanisms for the team to reach for high-performance.</li> <li>• Holds the team accountable for building and sticking to these behaviours.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates new innovative techniques that enhance facilitated events, growing team ownership mind-set.</li> </ul>

## Coaching

The International Coaching Federation (2013) defines coaching as:

“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential... Coaches honour the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole. Standing on this foundation, the coach's responsibility is to:

- Discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve
- Encourage client self-discovery
- Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies
- Hold the client responsible and accountable”

## Coaching Mindset

Coaching is not about fixing people problems; it is about believing in people and helping them grow to be the best that they want to be.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of coaching principles and ethics.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a coaching stance in an interaction with one or more people (i.e. neutrality, emotional intelligence, client agenda, etc.) and describes how that coaching stance impacted the interaction.</li> <li>• Able to focus on the coachees' agenda and believes the coachee has the answer.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively living the coaching principles.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate coaching stance in multiple situations.</li> <li>• Able to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect, trust, creative self-expression and opportunities for new learning.</li> <li>• Awareness that coachees are the highest priority.</li> <li>• Ability to create a spontaneous relationship with an open, flexible, confident style e.g. dancing in the moment, "goes with the gut", open to not knowing, willing to take some risks, lightness and energy, is confident with strong emotions.</li> <li>• Recognises when the coachee requires specialist support (e.g. counselling).</li> <li>• Has a coach themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can act as a personal coach outside of context.</li> <li>• Skilled in treating people according to their emotional reactions.</li> <li>• Able to be optimistic even in the face of failure.</li> <li>• Works with other coaches to help them develop as coaches.</li> <li>• Able to analyse coaching approach and make adaptation.</li> <li>• Participates in the coaching community.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discovering new coaching principles/concepts and sharing them with the coaching community.</li> </ul>

## Coaching Tools and Techniques

There are a number of different approaches to coaching, each of which may contain different models, practices, and tools that can help a coach given different contexts.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of one coaching tool/technique.</li> <li>• Able to describe the difference between facilitating, teaching, mentoring, consulting, and coaching.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can apply at least three coaching techniques (e.g. active listening, powerful questions, reflection, feedback, GROW model, etc.) and describe how the coaching technique impacted each interaction.</li> <li>• Able to formulate a basic coaching agreement and contract.</li> <li>• Able to actively listen, without trying to solve the coachees' problem some of the time.</li> <li>• Able to help the coachee create opportunities for learning and for taking new actions. Helps them explore alternatives, promotes experimentation and self-discovery, celebrates successes and capabilities, helps “do it now”.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received coaching and coaching supervision.</li> <li>• Received formal training or mentoring on coaching skills.</li> <li>• Describes at least five elements of a fundamental coaching agreement (e.g. role of the coach, duration, expectations, feedback, responsibilities).</li> <li>• Able to actively listen, without trying to solve the coachees' problem most of the time.</li> <li>• Asks questions for maximum benefit, they evoke discovery and insight, challenge assumption, open-ended, forward-looking and pre-supposing success.</li> <li>• Understands when to use a coaching approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaken a coaching education, accredited by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) or equivalent.</li> <li>• Has multiple coaching approaches to bring to bare at any time.</li> <li>• Complete focus on what coachee is/is not saying to understand the meaning of what is said e.g. client's agenda, hear concerns, values, beliefs, summarises and mirrors back without judgement.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invents and modifies practices to match the context and published the result.</li> <li>• Active contributor to the coaching community consistently identifying and sharing existing and emerging coaching practices.</li> </ul>

## Facilitate Learning

Agile is all about learning, as an Agile Coach, you will need to facilitate the learning of other people around you, helping them learn new skills and knowledge.

## Mentoring

As a mentor you are able to use your expertise to show others new skills and/or to develop existing ones, working alongside the mentee as they do their job. As a mentor, you are more experienced than your mentee.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to describe mentoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to give feedback in a way that encourages growth.</li> <li>• Has mentored on at least one Agile practice.</li> <li>• Has been mentored.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives feedback without interpretation or judgement.</li> <li>• Able to mentor in a number of areas.</li> <li>• Called on to act as a mentor outside of current area of work.</li> <li>• Able to use storytelling and metaphors to convey ideas.</li> <li>• Able to identify mentees needs and adopt the approach appropriately.</li> <li>• Fosters an ongoing mentoring relationship with the mentee.</li> <li>• Knows when to stop mentoring.</li> <li>• Learns from mentoring relationship.</li> <li>• Understands the impact they are having on the mentee.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarded as a mentor and leader in developing understanding and awareness of agility, within the organisation.</li> <li>• Able to challenge individuals or teams limiting beliefs and assumptions.</li> <li>• Able to guide/mentor other mentors.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invents and modifies practices to match the context.</li> </ul>

## Teaching

The ability to convey information in a way that is understood and useful to the recipient. You will have to be adept at integrating information to help people gain awareness.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to convey knowledge to a group of people.</li> <li>• Able to describe teaching.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has facilitated at least one training workshop (e.g. half a days introduction to Agile).</li> <li>• Able to present concepts in depth to a group of people.</li> <li>• Applies at least one appropriate teaching style.</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has co-trained with a more experienced trainer.</li> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to create a suitable learning environment making use of the physical space.</li> <li>• Regularly gathers feedback and uses this to adapt their approach to teaching.</li> <li>• Practises with cultural sensitivity and adapts accordingly.</li> <li>• Creates an environment of emotional safety, so that learners feel safe to engage.</li> <li>• Able to create a learning environment where students can learn from each other.</li> <li>• Has applied multiple teaching styles in multiple training workshops.</li> <li>• Able to create an opportunity for different learning styles.</li> <li>• Uses effective storytelling to convey key concepts.</li> <li>• Able to deal with disruptive situations in the training room.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on stabilizing principles and varying practices to situationally align the client's maturity with effective application of agility.</li> <li>• Ability to maintain the required energy level.</li> <li>• Practises effective classroom management.</li> <li>• Identifies and utilises effective instructional techniques (gamification, visual aids, etc.) to impart key concepts.</li> <li>• Has co-trained other aspiring teachers and can give them constructive feedback.</li> <li>• Able to assess audience response and adjust accordingly, to maximise the learning experience.</li> <li>• Understands and can apply the principles of adult learning theory.</li> <li>• Creates own games and activities for their training.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to develop new instructional techniques/styles.</li> <li>• Invents and modifies practices to match the context.</li> <li>• Active contributor to the Teaching community consistently identifying and sharing existing and emerging training practices.</li> <li>• Shares new games/activities with the wider community.</li> </ul>

## Building education programmes

In order to facilitate growth, especially deeper learning there is often a need to support individuals and teams on longer development programmes. This is likely to include working with different parts of an organisation, such as HR and learning & development, to design and deliver suitable programmes.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to describe the learning needs of an individual or team.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines clear learning objectives, which are used to create and execute training for a team and/or stakeholders.</li> <li>• Has demonstrated the ability to integrate learning materials, to meet the need and objectives of at least one training event.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to design learning and capability goals for one individual (or team) and analyse the execution of these goals.</li> <li>• Has demonstrated the ability to integrate learning materials, to meet the need and objectives for multiple training events.</li> <li>• Able to build new learning materials, in a variety of forms to cater to different learning styles.</li> <li>• Able to check for understanding of learning.</li> <li>• Can apply at least 1 model or strategy that promotes lesson stickiness (e.g. 10, 24, 7).</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to design and build a bespoke training and development programme, with multiple learning interventions and can evaluate the success of the programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invents and modifies practices to match the context.</li> </ul>

## Advising

As an advisor or consultant with an individual, team or within the wider organisation you are responsible for setting the workup for success and may also be called on to play the role of a trusted advisor.

## Managing an engagement

A common area of frustration and failure is because Agile Coaches have not agreed to clear goals for their work with an individual, team or organisation. Also as organisations are complex systems any work should be carried out with appropriate inspect points, that allow the client and the coach to adapt the work or even the goals.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the importance of setting goals, boundaries and rules.</li> <li>• Understands that organisations are complex, therefore engagements should be empirical in nature, with effective feedback loops.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to create an agreement with individuals and/or with a team, that defines how they will work together.</li> <li>• Has identified clear goals within at least one engagement and identifies how those goals will be measured.</li> <li>• Can describe an occasion with at least one team/individual that allowed the coach and coachee to inspect and adapt towards the defined goals.</li> <li>• One or more occasion the individual/group is satisfied that the goals have been met or alternate goals have been identified. Either the engagement is at an end, or new goals have been identified.</li> <li>• Is clear and transparent with the engagement stakeholder and has appropriate feedback loops in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a coordinated agreement with a team of teams (multiple teams, e.g. through a coaching plan).</li> <li>• Identifies clear goals and measures that are aligned to organisational outcomes.</li> <li>• Can describe multiple instances that allowed the coach and coachee(s) to inspect and adapt towards the defined goals.</li> <li>• Able to describe the effective closing of multiple coaching relationships.</li> <li>• Able to grow relationships across an organisation.</li> <li>• Champions transparency within the engagement.</li> <li>• Practices that change is not done to people but facilitated, encouraging full participation.</li> <li>• Able to manage engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates agreements with leadership for engagements across an organisation.</li> <li>• Able to manage engagement that involves a number of Agile Coaches.</li> <li>• Able to manage budgets for organisational change.</li> <li>• Able to look after the wellbeing of others involved in change.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thought leadership on such things as organisational change.</li> <li>• Creates and publishes tools and techniques for others to use.</li> </ul>

## Giving advice

As an Agile Coach you may take on the role of a trusted advisor, you have experience which will be invaluable. This can be especially important when the client has low confidence and low competence in something.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands that sometimes advice needs to be given.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to use direct communication with a team, language is clear with feedback, reframes, clearly explains techniques or exercises, and does so in a respectful way.</li> <li>• Creates awareness by presenting hard facts to the team even if difficult – Be the mirror to the team.</li> <li>• Knows the right time to give advice and when not too.</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has examples of using direct communication with multiple teams and can describe examples where this has been used effectively with management.</li> <li>• Creates awareness by presenting hard facts to the organisation.</li> <li>• Had practised multiple techniques to provide feedback.</li> <li>• Aware of the limitations of knowledge and has the courage to say I don't know.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to use multiple styles and techniques to raise awareness within an organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thought leader who is sought out by organisations for their advice.</li> </ul>

## Servant Leadership Competencies

While servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase “servant leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, Greenleaf said:

“The servant-leader is a servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

“The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will, they benefit or at least not be further deprived?”.

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid,” servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

Being a Servant Leader is the very being of an Agile Coach.

## Serving the team

Agile Coaching is focused on helping teams become the best they can be using the core competencies you have already covered. This section covers a more focused view of specifically serving the team through a journey to high performance.

## Team dynamics

A team is more than a collection of individuals, it is a human system with its own characteristics, needs and growth potential. Moments of conflict or collaboration difficulty should be seen as human systems dynamics, rather than solely personal to the individuals involved.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can list at least three different challenges facing a self-organising team.</li> <li>● Can list at least three impediments that can impact a team.</li> <li>● Understand the importance of conflict in a team.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explains the difference between a working group and a team.</li> <li>● Identifies at least three key attributes of effective Agile Teams (e.g. ground rules in place, awareness of capabilities and capacities, effective and efficient collaboration).</li> <li>● Applies at least two methods for improving team performance (e.g. common goals/purpose, shared accountability, working agreement, psychological safety, etc.).</li> <li>● Identifies at least two pitfalls of a homogenous team (i.e. lack of different perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints).</li> <li>● Describes at least one multi-staged model for team formation and development (e.g. the Tuckman model).</li> <li>● Knows how to surface conflict in a positive manner to improve the team's conflict competency.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Able to apply at least two different models for team development (e.g., Tuckman model, team performance curve, etc.) and can adapt the coaching approach based on the outcome.</li> <li>● Appraise the effectiveness of at least two different development frameworks for supporting an Agile team's growth.</li> <li>● Knows when and how to engage leadership in solving organizational impediments that are impacting the team.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contrast the different team dynamics across multiple teams with whom you have worked, and evaluate the effects on team results.</li> <li>● Can demonstrate how to increase the team's capacity for both self-awareness and self-management.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has created/adapted a new model to support team development and published it to the wider community.</li> </ul>

## Coaching the team

Assess the health of an Agile team and adjust one's individual coaching style to facilitate the team's journey to high-performance.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to list three ways in which you serve the team.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies at least two techniques to foster greater self-organisation within teams (e.g., powerful questions, autonomy/mastery/purpose, active listening, etc.).</li> <li>• Applied a countermeasure to reduce the impact of a challenge facing a self-organising team.</li> <li>• Able to describe how a self-organising team approaches at least three challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates at least two tangible examples of how they developed and changed the culture of at least one team.</li> <li>• Identify two team formation and development challenges commonly encountered while introducing Agile. For each, describe a coaching approach to address the challenge.</li> <li>• Applies at least three techniques for addressing team dysfunctions and has used these techniques multiple times.</li> <li>• Applies at least three techniques or activities for building trust in a team, in multiple contexts.</li> <li>• Able to create a coaching agreement with the development team.</li> <li>• Can explain how they have helped a team increase the quality of delivery through technical excellence practices. (e.g Pair Working).</li> <li>• Introduced one or more models for assessing healthy team functioning, especially the ability to identify clearly dysfunctional aspects.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to evaluate different techniques used to increase team effectiveness across multiple teams with whom they have worked, and evaluate the effects on team results.</li> <li>• Ability to adapt leadership approach based on team maturity, and has an awareness to decrease the level of direct involvement as they mature.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has created new coaching tools to support coaching teams, and shared with the wider community.</li> </ul>

## Starting teams

Studies show a team launch/relaunch can represent up to 30% of team performance this should include elements such as helping the team get to know one another, create a culture, align on a vision, setting up their work environment and establishing team agreements and/or ground rules.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the importance of a positive team launch.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrates what is important for a new team.</li> <li>• Explains how purpose, alignment, and context are set and used during the start-up of a team to accelerate teamwork.</li> <li>• Able to organise and facilitate a change of context for an existing team that defines purpose, alignment, and context.</li> <li>• Demonstrate ways to help people get to know each other (e.g. constellations, tribes).</li> <li>• Has experienced a positive team launch.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explains at least three reasons why the start of a new team should be handled differently from a traditional project kick-off/charter (e.g. level of collaboration, lack of experience in agile environments, (the importance of shared understanding).</li> <li>• Explains how seeing the whole system, emphasizing collaborative work, focusing on a good start, continuous learning, and “good enough for now” support the launch of a new Agile team.</li> <li>• Describes at least three responsibilities each for the sponsor (e.g. clarify constraints, context, and stakeholder expectations),</li> <li>• Has organised and facilitated the launch of at least one new Agile team.</li> <li>• Has helped a team create a team vision aligned with the organisation's vision.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has successfully organised and facilitated the launch of a number of new diverse teams.</li> <li>• Has supported an organisation in changing the environment in order to provide the best possible start to a team.</li> <li>• Has supported an organisation in articulating a clear vision and goals (e.g. OKRs) that can support teams in aligning to the vision and goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide/ Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has published a tool or guide to launching teams.</li> </ul>

## Serving the Product Owner

An Agile Coach serves the Product Owner in several ways, including [2]:

- Ensuring those goals, scope, and product domain are understood by everyone on the Team as well as possible;
- Finding techniques for effective product backlog management, that maximises value;
- Helping others to understand product planning in an empirical environment;
- Supports the Product Owner and business stakeholders understanding and practice of agility;

## Facilitating product definition

Customers do not know the exact product they want even if sometimes they think they do. They only know the problem they are trying to solve or the business results they are looking for. It is our job to support the organisation in building the product to provide the customer with the outcome they desire.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has experienced a Product vision being formed</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has facilitated the creation (or refinement) of the product vision between the Product Owner and the development team.</li> <li>• Can explain at least two techniques for moving from product vision to product backlog (e.g., product vision board, business model or Lean canvas, customer journey, impact mapping, user story mapping).</li> <li>• Organises and facilitates a product backlog refinement session with one team and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Can explain two techniques that could be used to create product backlog items that are ready to be taken into the next sprints.</li> <li>• Has an understanding of what a Minimal Viable Product is (the Smallest amount of effort to test a hypothesis).</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organises and facilitates the creation (or refinement) of the product vision between the Product Owner and stakeholders, with multiple teams.</li> <li>• Can apply at least two techniques for moving from product vision to product backlog (e.g. innovation games, user story mapping, user story workshops, brainstorming, etc.).</li> <li>• Can appraise at least three criteria that can be used for structuring a complex or multi-team product backlog (e.g., feature area, team).</li> <li>• Has a customer focus and able to support activities such as user research &amp; testing.</li> <li>• Able to facilitate Lean experiments.</li> <li>• Can express commercial awareness (e.g. funnels, understanding OPEX &amp; CAPEX, action and vanity metrics, types of value)</li> <li>• Can facilitate the agreement of a Minimal Viable Product and support its release and measured outcome.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to support product kick-offs in almost any situation engaging multiple customers, stakeholders, leadership and team members.</li> <li>• Has successfully defined and launched a product they had responsibility for.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has created tools and techniques others can use to define a product.</li> <li>• Speaks at conferences and other community events on Product topics.</li> </ul>

## Coaching the Product Owner

Initially, an Agile Coach may help educate a Product Owner, but in the long term they look to support the Product Owner's learning and growth through Coaching.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can list at least three ways in which you could serve the Product Owner.</li> <li>• Can identify at least three effective collaboration techniques that a Product Owner can use to work with the team.</li> <li>• Able to discuss at least three negative impacts that arise when the Product Owner applies excessive time pressure to the development team.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists three benefits that arise if a Product Owner participates in the retrospective.</li> <li>• Can explain agile to business stakeholders.</li> <li>• Has built a coaching relationship with at least one Product Owner and helped them become more effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has built a coaching relationship with multiple Product Owners and helped them become more effective.</li> <li>• Has worked with the organisation to align around Products using tools such as value stream mapping.</li> <li>• Is able to support the Product Owner in using product data to make an informed decision on what to build next.</li> <li>• Supported the Product owner in sharing ROI information to the team.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to evaluate the effectiveness of previous coaching done with Product Owners and uses this to continually improve how to better serve others.</li> <li>• Able to support a Product Owner community in their growth.</li> <li>• Has changed the focus on Product success to be outcome-focused.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares experiences and tools with the community on coaching the Product Owner.</li> <li>• Creates new tools to help Product Owners grow and/or do their job.</li> </ul>

## Serving the organisation

An Agile Coach serves the organisation in several ways, including [2]:

- Leading and coaching the organisation in its Agile adoption;
- Planning Agile adoption within the organisation;
- Helping employees and stakeholders understand Agile delivery;
- Nurturing change that increases the effectiveness of the teams; and,
- Working with other Agile Coaches to increase the effectiveness of the application of Agile in the organisation.

## Organisational Development

Organisations are complex, and changing them is an even more complex proposition. An empirical and informed approach to the change process improves the chances of success of an Agile transition.

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lists three ways in which you serve the organisation.</li> <li>● Can describe one example of a major organisational design change implied by adopting Agile (e.g. elimination of single-function groups, traditional career paths, or annual appraisals).</li> <li>● Able to list at least three ways that traditional management changes in the Agile workplace.</li> <li>● Can describes at least two stakeholder behaviours that support the team's success and at least two behaviours that do not support the team's success.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has applied at least two techniques to effect change in an organisation in order to help teams be more productive.</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can describe the nature of complex systems (eg. cause-and-effect only visible after the event, high level of uncertainty and disagreement, emerging systems, products and practices).</li> <li>● Able to explain the importance of taking a systemic view (i.e. help a stakeholder understand that the system as a whole needs to be optimized, understand causal loops and delayed effects).</li> <li>● Can describe at least two systematic methods for helping organisations improve their Agile adoption (e.g. causal loop analysis, value stream mapping).</li> <li>● Has applied at least one systematic development approach (e.g. systems thinking).</li> <li>● Can describe at least two frameworks for catalyzing organisational change (e.g., Kotter's 8-Step model, the Grief Cycle, 4D Model/Appreciative Inquiry).</li> <li>● Can demonstrate at least two tangible examples of how they</li> </ul>

	<p>developed and changed the culture of his/her team (or organisation) from a command-and-control to an Agile mindset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to describe an approach to a complex intervention that addresses the root cause(s) of an organisational dysfunction and analyse the long-term impact.</li> <li>• Outside of their team, they are seen as someone who develops the organisation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Craftsperson</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies three factors to introduce and cultivate in an organisation (business unit, department, programme) that can promote improvement in agility and value delivery. Some examples are collaboration tools, technical practices, and structural changes. For each, can describe how it enables and enhances agility and success.</li> <li>• Able to design and facilitate a retrospective with senior leaders and executives to foster improvement at the organisational level.</li> <li>• Able to explain a variety of approaches for creating an organizational change strategy. An effective approach should leverage Agile principles such as co-creation through collaboration, incremental change, transparency, fast feedback, and frequent inspect and adapt cycles. In addition, it should take into consideration that psychological transition happens at different paces for different people and groups, and an overall change process in an organization may take many years.</li> <li>• Can Identify and explain not only the limits of their current skills and leadership maturity but also the boundaries of what they will and will not tolerate with regards to Agile and other personal values.</li> <li>• Has identified their own gaps and can collaborate with other coaches, in order to serve the client organisation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guide / Innovator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has created a new model or approach to support organisations through change.</li> <li>• Has worked with several large organisations and supported them through large changes, furthermore has published the case studies and talks about them regularly.</li> </ul>

## Scaling / Descaling

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of at least two approaches for scaling.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrates, with at least two reasons why scaling might not be such a great idea (e.g. products created by small teams, communication overhead, TCO).</li> <li>• Can identify at least three techniques for visualizing, managing, or reducing dependencies between teams.</li> <li>• Recognize at least three different scaling frameworks or approaches.</li> <li>• Experiment with at least one large-scale, participatory meeting format (Open Space, World Cafe, etc.) to scale meetings/workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Journey person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to differentiate the impact of feature teams versus component teams on the delivery of value.</li> <li>• Describes an organisational design that enables multiple teams to work on the same Product.</li> <li>• Explains the pitfalls of too much or too little prescription (e.g. lack of autonomy, lack of alignment, no slack, integration mess, overly detailed planning, not meeting the Definition of Done, overly slow pace, death by meetings, etc.).</li> <li>• Contrast two patterns for scaling the Product Owner role (e.g., shifting clarification responsibility to the development team, defining feature areas or different sub-products, PO team, Chief Product Owner).</li> <li>• Can describe at least five techniques to improve inter-team collaboration and has experimented with at least two of them.</li> <li>• Able to explain at least three benefits of supporting strong technical practices when working with multiple teams.</li> <li>• Has organised and facilitated multiple large-scale, participatory meeting format (Open Space, World Cafe, etc.) to scale meetings/workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate an experience with supporting the work of multiple teams in an organisation; identify how you would do things differently.</li> <li>• Able to connect interdependencies and impact teams' reflection, learning, and growth.</li> <li>• Knowledge and application of multiple change management frameworks. Demonstrates competency in successfully applying the frameworks.</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has written case studies on multiple large organisations including what did and did not work in their continuous pursuit to agility</li> <li>• Has invented a Scaling / Descaling framework or principles that have been used within multiple organisations</li> </ul>

## Resolving Impediments

Level	Reflection
<b>Beginner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can discuss at least two ways to help the team with responding to impediments (e.g. makes impediments visible, works with the team to resolve impediments).</li> <li>• Can identify and explain at least three common organisational impediments outside the scope of a team that can affect the effectiveness of teams (e.g. geographical distribution, people in multiple project teams, incentives and HR policies, no constructive safe-to-fail culture).</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to identify at least three typical impediments for a team and describe at least one way to address them (e.g. late attendance in meetings, blocked work, supplier issues).</li> <li>• List at least three techniques to evaluate impediments in-depth (e.g. root-cause analysis, fishbone, 5 whys) and describe when they might not be working.</li> <li>• Able to analyse an impediment and identify a root cause(s) and/or underlying issue(s).</li> <li>• Is able to highlight when an impediment is within their or a team's sphere of control</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has demonstrated the ability to remove impediments from multiple teams in multiple contexts.</li> <li>• Has the ability to see impediments that span multiple teams at the same time and facilitate the removal of the impediments including working with leadership</li> <li>• Facilitated large scale retrospectives in order to uncover systemic organisational impediments,</li> </ul>
<b>Craftsperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has demonstrated the ability to remove organisational impediments e.g. (Changing the environment, Organisational Structure)</li> <li>• Is Continually looking to remove bureaucracy, waste and reduce top-down hierarchies in order that teams can operate as an interacting network, all focused on working together to deliver relentless value to customers.</li> <li>• Coached senior leaders to support teams in the removal of systemic impediments</li> </ul>
<b>Guide / Innovator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is specifically brought into an organisation to resolve specific systemic problems</li> </ul>

## Knowledge Areas

The knowledge areas represent your domain expertise. This contextual expertise may help you build trust with the team or organisation with whom you are working. However, the risk is too much domain expertise may make it more difficult to be objective in your coaching. Therefore, it may be valid for an Agile Coach to allow a reduction of expertise in some areas (i.e. choosing not to stay up to date with the latest changes in technology), but still to seek to increase knowledge in other areas.

### Knowing the team

Expertise in the technical work of the team, including:

- Understanding of current technical practices, and practices that could be improved or adopted to increase agility; and
- Technical understanding of the product a team is using or products across the organisation.

### Knowing the business

Expertise in the business domain of the team or organisation, including:

- Understanding of current market place in which business is being conducted; and
- Understanding the needs and concerns of users, customers and other business stakeholders;

### Knowing the organisation

Expertise in how the organisation works, including:

- Knowledge of structures, policies, operating models
- Understanding of relationships between people, teams, departments
- An understanding of the organisational culture

### Knowing Yourself

If you are going to be helping the growth of others then this needs to start with you, knowing and growing yourself. A deep understanding of your drives, beliefs, values and strengths can be valuable to manage your emotions when interacting with others.

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