

Alignment, Trust, Productivity & Outcomes

Creating a Ways of Working Agreement for working with us in the context of Outcome-Based Contracts

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Introduction

The objective of this document is to ensure all parties agree on what attitudes and behaviours we expect from each other, and how to rectify situations where said attitudes and behaviours fall below the desired standards.

This is provided in the context of one of our goals which is to continue to humanise the workplace.

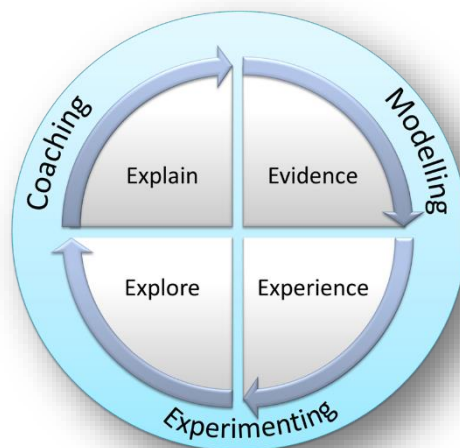
Now in the first quarter of the 21st Century, science unequivocally supports what the self-help gurus have been saying since at least the early 20th Century, which is that if we treat each other properly we can all achieve better outcomes, together.

Getting to Trust faster

Working through this document together in one or more workshops will allow us to move to Trust faster.

This process won't be easy and won't be quick, but it will save everyone a lot of time and heartache in the future as the project and our relationships progress. Done properly this will combine the Forming, Storming and Norming steps of Bruce Tuckman's group development and get us to Performing faster.

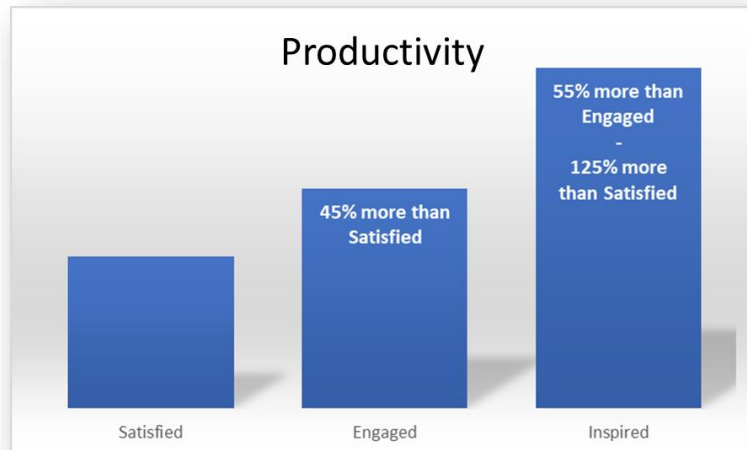
The Corrie Partnership's E4MEC adoption model shows that for some people Explaining these concepts is enough. We believe that most people are hankering after the better ways of working being proposed here. We accept that some people may need Evidence before they can move forward. Still others might need to Experience something before they can adopt it, and for this we recommend low or no risk experience options such as simulations.



Increasing Productivity (the Time/Skills/Energy equation)

An [article in the HBR](#) (Harvard Business Review) in December 2020 explains that engaged colleagues are 45% more productive than satisfied employees, and that inspired team members are 125% more productive than those who simply turn up to work to do their job. See section on Alignment & Productivity.

In a world where most of us are no longer hired for our brawn or dexterity (as was the case during the agricultural and industrial revolutions), but are instead hired for our brains, it is odd that we



humans are still sometimes treated in a way which diminishes our intellectual capacity.

Hardware / Software / Peopleware

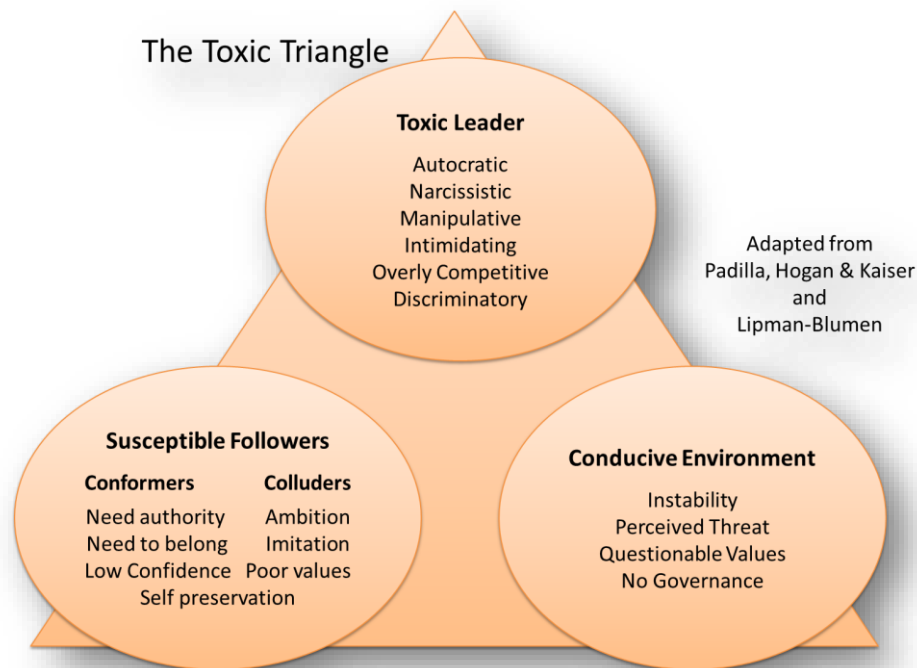
A company will spend money on Hardware and then will spend money to look after the hardware to ensure it is giving the best return on investment. This is the same with Software. But when it comes to people, often the largest cost line-item on an organisations profit and loss statement, we regularly, mostly inadvertently, reduce our colleagues productivity capacity through emotional interference.

It is unfortunate that in the 21st Century we are still having to talk about this, but there are too many situations where an individual, a team or organisation is beholden to an individual or group of people who exhibit toxic behaviour, and, in doing so, infringe on the teams' intellectual capacity by triggering their amygdalae's fight, flight or freeze responses.

A moment on Toxic Leaders & Environments

Toxic leaders usually come from a small pool of humans who lack empathy, known as sociopaths or psychopaths. Whereas they make up only around 2% of the population they make up more than 20% of senior positions in organisations. Toxic leaders have a very damaging impact on the health and mental wellbeing of those in the organisation, and as such negatively impact the financial success of their company. It is therefore important that the rest of us (known as empaths) have a way to deal these colleagues. Not all toxic leaders are sociopaths. Those who aren't are exhibiting inherited attitudes or learned behaviours. As we are promoted to positions of authority we look to

examples as to how to behave. If most of those examples are of top-down, command and control, autocratic leadership, without any interventions we are destined to copy that poor behaviour.



Using this document as a guide

The main driver for producing this document is to create a “space” in which we can deal with those individuals or groups who fail to abide by the values and principles which support psychologically safe human interactions.

To support our outcome of optimal ways of working we can, for example, use these headings to kick off the workshops, as we work towards a consensus.

These subjects, examples and matrixes are meant as a guide to help drive the discussion rather than being a pre-defined proposed list we will stick up on a wall somewhere. If the words selected to represent the values and principles we decide to adopt are the same as the ones in this document that should be seen only as a coincidence after they have been properly discussed.

As new people join the team or organisation it is important to review the agreed set of behaviours and attitudes so that we can come to a consensus on how will work together going forward. This is particularly important when the new person is in a position of leadership or influence.

Using other Value Sets

We are keen to include in this discussion any Value Sets which any of the parties involved may already have.

For example, when working with UK Government we ought to include the Civil Service Code of Conduct values set in this work.

Emotional Intelligence

What is Emotional Intelligence?

[Link to article from Institute for Health and Human Potential](#)

We define Emotional Intelligence (or EI) as the ability to:

- Recognize, understand and manage our own emotions and;
- Recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others.

In practical terms, this means being aware that emotions can drive our behaviour and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage those emotions – both our own and others.

Managing emotions is especially important in situations when we are under pressure. For example, when we are...

- Giving and receiving feedback
- Meeting tight deadlines
- Dealing with challenging relationships
- Not having enough resources
- Navigating change
- Working through setbacks and failure

Why Emotional Intelligence is Important

It's a scientific fact that emotions precede thought. When emotions run high, they change the way our brains function...diminishing our cognitive abilities, decision-making powers, and even interpersonal skills. Understanding and managing our emotions (and the emotions of others) helps us to be more successful in both our personal and professional lives.

At a personal level, emotional intelligence helps us:

- Have uncomfortable conversations without hurting feelings
- Manage our emotions when stressed or feeling overwhelmed
- Improve relationships with the people we care about

At work, emotional intelligence can help us:

- Resolve conflicts
- Coach and motivate others
- Create a culture of collaboration
- Build psychological safety within teams

What are the Emotional Intelligence Competencies?

Self Management

1. **Self-awareness** – the ability to know one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals and recognize their impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

2. **Self-regulation** – involves controlling or redirecting one's disruptive emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.

Relationship Management

3. **Social skill** – managing relationships to get along with others
4. **Empathy** – considering other people's feelings especially when making decisions
5. **Motivation** – being aware of what motivates them.



Here is a free quiz which can get us started on this...

<https://www.ihhp.com/free-eq-quiz/>

Alignment & Productivity

As mentioned elsewhere in this document, we often resort to attitudes and behaviours which we have observed in others, unless we have an intervention. Knowledge of something else, of an alternative way, that has worked, is a great form of intervention. This section aims to provide these.

Intent-based Leadership & the Santa Fe Case Study

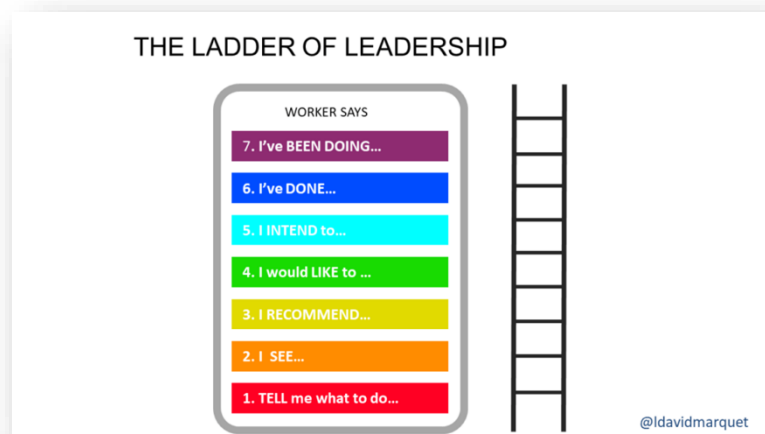
Intent-based leadership is leading without giving orders. It is about removing the command and control mindset and replacing it with moving decision-making down the organisation, leaving the leadership to focus on their primary roles of Strategy, Vision and Culture.

The best start is to read the Case Study “Turn the Ship Around!” by David Marquet

This is one of the videos which summarises the concepts <https://youtu.be/pYKH2uSax8U>

Leadership Ladder – reaching level 5, Intent

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zOqFe1nTZc>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h25znxZEL3g&t=3s>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1vFkAQF3P4>



5 Frameworks for Leaders – from David Marquet <https://youtu.be/CQfao96j1fo>

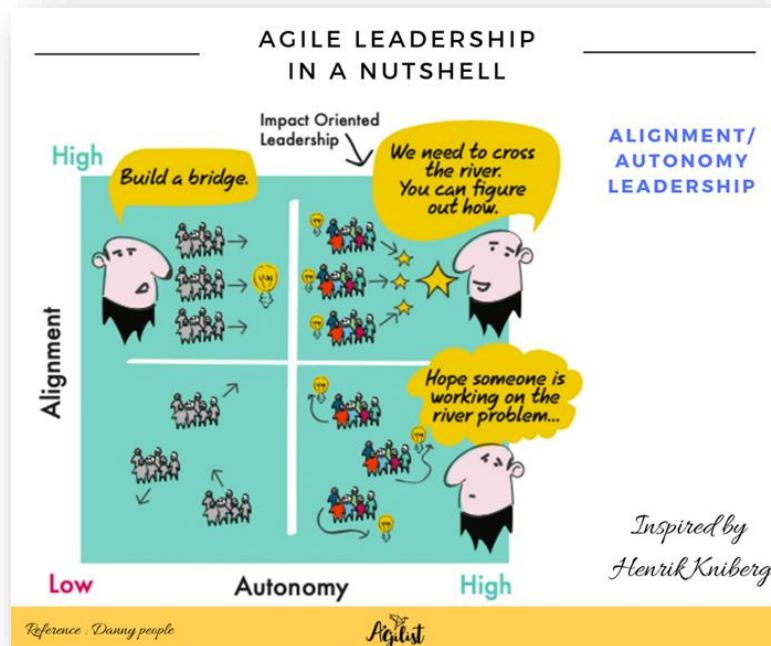
Achieving both Alignment and Autonomy

This concept is fundamental to our ways of working, and also to the outcomes-based contracts. If we want to get the best from each other we must ensure that we are not telling people what to do or how to do it. Instead we must involve their intelligence and intellectual curiosity in the entire process of achieving our agreed outcomes.

We do this by first stating the Outcome, the What. Then providing Clarity and Context, the Why. Once we are sure that the team has Competency, we hand over to them why How. And by “them”

we mean “all of us”, because we all will work together as a self-organised team, with leadership involved in much of the doing, and team members involved in much of the leading.

We intend to move away from the master/slave relationship between a customer and a supplier to a collaborative approach where we all work together towards the outcomes.



Primary and Secondary Objectives

This is important when there are two organisations in the relationship and vital when there are more parties involved. Every individual or company will have primary and secondary objectives. It may be reasonably easy to agree on a mutual primary objective, but unless we can align everyone's secondary objectives we may find we have dysfunctional behaviours.

Increasing transparency is a sure fire way to work towards full alignment. Can we be open and honest with each other about what we are trying to get out of the project, personally? If we can't then maybe we want to consider carefully whether we want to work together. It will be hard to build trust. Worse will be if we later find that the stated secondary objectives do not line up with the behaviours being exhibited, and so discover that there are unstated secondary objectives. In these situations trust will stop and the relationships are likely to break down.

If the project does not help everyone involved to win then we must have the courage to seek new relationships or different projects.

Case Study of the NUMMI workforce

Treat people well and they will help you achieve your vision.

This is the case study (two different reference sources in the links) of the worst performing car factory in the United States when it was run by GM. The workforce had a high absenteeism rate, and there are stories of them "sabotaging" the cars by adding loose bolts and screws inside the doors to make them rattle.

When GM gave up the factory was taken over by Toyota. Through a lucky twist of fate (for the case study and therefore all of us), Toyota had to hire back the same workforce.

Under new management, and with the same workforce, the factory became the best performing car factory in the US, because they had motivated, happy employees.

For reference, the same factory is now where Tesla's are made. And that is a whole new case study on Agile and motivated workforce.

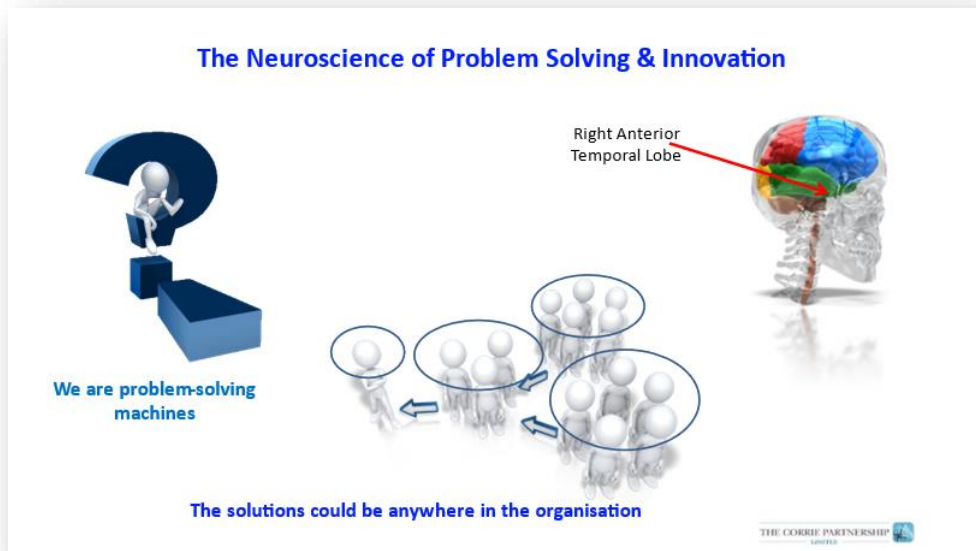
<https://medium.com/10x-curiosity/worst-to-best-lessons-from-nummi-4cde7eb41f21>
<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-to-change-a-culture-lessons-from-nummi/>

The Neuroscience of Problem Solving & Dealing with Mistakes

Covering this subject might be one of the first things we do in the first workshop.

The goal is to explain how the human brain solves problems and innovates, and how we all too easily (if inadvertently) interfere with each other's intellectual abilities through emotional hijacking.

The human brain is a Problem Solving and Innovation machine. Like all machines, if it is not oiled and fuelled properly, and if it is not kept free from bugs and dirt, it will not work optimally.



As part of the process we want to ensure that we are aligned on how we deal with mistakes. With lessons from the Red Arrows and Airline Pilots



The Big Five Personality Traits – (OCEAN)

[Scientific American article](#)

- **Openness** to experience (inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious)
 - People with high scores here love novelty and are generally creative.
 - At the other end of the scale are those who are more conventional in their thinking, prefer routines, and have a pronounced sense of right and wrong.
- **Conscientiousness** (efficient/organized vs. extravagant/careless)
 - This dimension measures a person's degree of organization.
 - Those with high scores are motivated, disciplined and trustworthy.
 - Irresponsible and easily distracted people are found at the low end of the scale.
- **Extraversion** (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved)
 - The most broadly defined of the Big Five factors measures cheerfulness, initiative and communicativeness.
 - Those who score high for extroversion are companionable, sociable and able to accomplish what they set out to do.
 - Those with low scores tend to be introverted, reserved and more submissive to authority.
- **Agreeableness** (friendly/compassionate vs. critical/rational)
 - This trait describes how we deal with others.
 - High values show that someone is friendly, empathetic and warm.
 - Shy, suspicious and egocentric individuals score low on the spectrum.
- **Neuroticism** (sensitive/nervous vs. resilient/confident)
 - This scale measures emotional stability.
 - People with high scores are anxious, inhibited, moody and less self-assured.
 - Those at the lower end are calm, confident and contented.

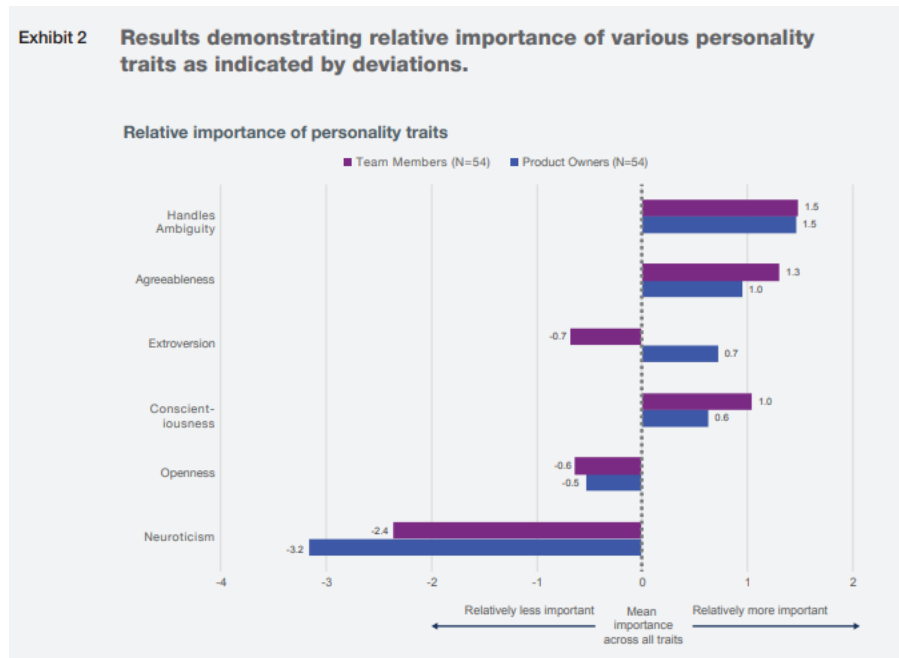
Here are some free tests we might like to take and discuss. (Pick one)

- <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM/>
- <https://www.truity.com/test/big-five-personality-test>
- <https://bigfive-test.com/>

The Big Five and Agile

A 2019 study by Scrum.org & McKinsey shows the importance of a high score on Agreeableness and a low score on Neuroticism among individuals working in Agile teams. Above all, the study found that one's ability to handle ambiguity was paramount.

From the Scrum.org article: “The findings suggest that the **ability to handle ambiguity** and agreeableness are most important among personality traits, ...”



Work Values

- Pride in product
- Openness to change
- Customer centrisim
- Self-enhancement
- Self-transcendence
- Conservation

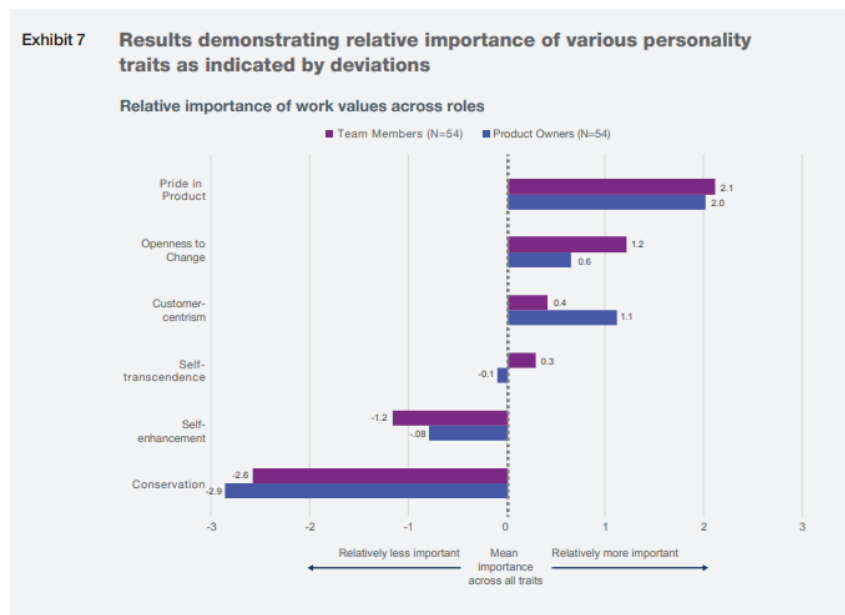
The same study mentioned above also looks work values. The Scrum.org article continues: “...pride in product outcomes and self-direction are most important among work values. ... Additionally, the study suggests the importance of customer-centricity as a way to inspire agile teams. It also provides practical questions to support the interview process and good practices for developing agile teams.”

The study explains: “Research on values in the work context has evolved four broad categories of values at work (self-enhancement, openness to change, self-transcendence, and conservation); we added pride in product and customer-centricism to sharpen the agile context.”

The study shows that team members in effective Agile teams score high on the first three work values and low on the second three.

[Scrum.org article on the study](#)

[Link to study](#)



As discussed briefly in the section on alignment and the NUMMI example, it is often mis-understood by traditional leaders and managers that humans are not intrinsically lazy.

Other work values we may want to consider in addition to those mentioned above might include:

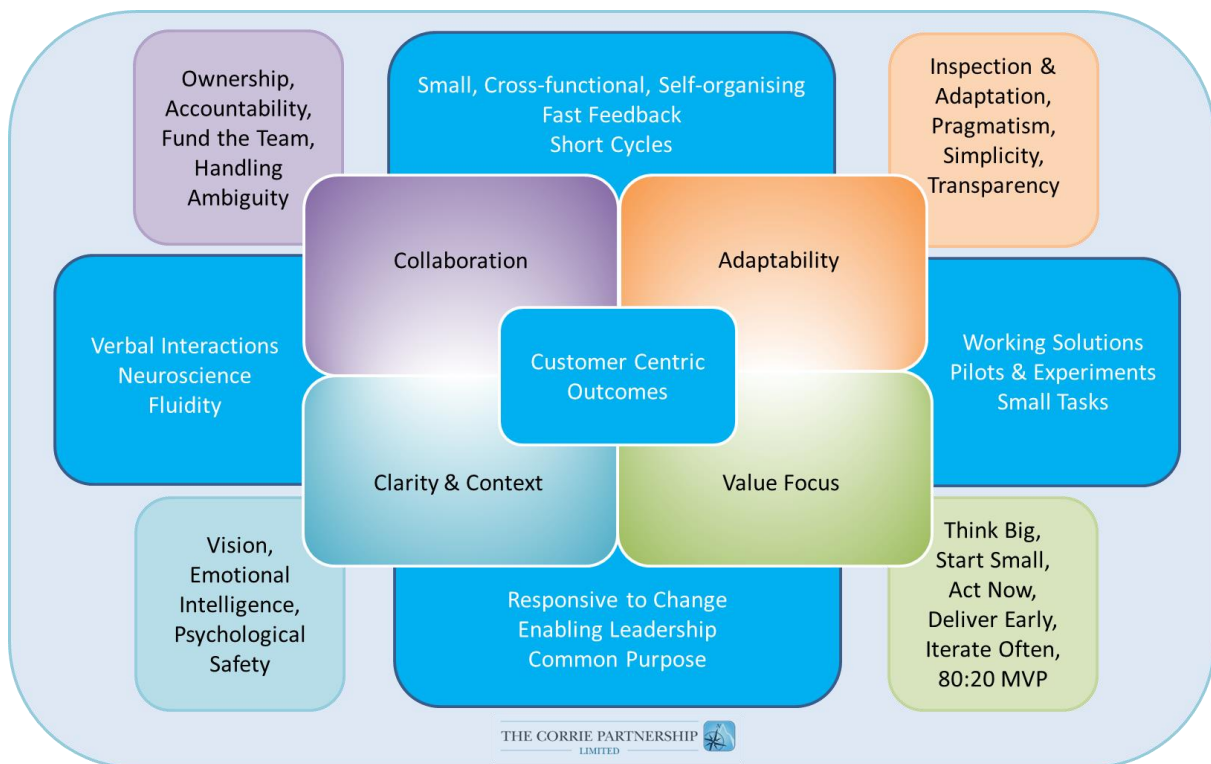
- Transparency
- Empiricism
- Collaboration
- Value Focus
- Adaptability

The Agile Mindset



Ultimately we want to work together whilst applying an Agile Mindset. Indeed the elements of the Agile Mindset may well inform our choice of Work Values.

[This link takes us to a document](#) which explains an interpretation of the words used in the infographic.



Scrum Values

It is good that companies and organisations subscribe to the idea of having a set of Values designed to drive the expected attitudes and behaviours of those involved. Many sets of values are very likely to overlap, and key words are chosen to define each which are the triggers or reminders.

The Scrum Guide lists five Scrum Values.

- Focus
- Openness
- Respect
- Commitment
- Courage

Words often carry different charges and different meanings for different people. Therefore each word used in a set of values needs to be explained, explored and discussed, so that those in the team or organisation can agree on the set of values.

Gunther Verheyen, an independent Scrum Caretaker on a journey of humanising the workplace with Scrum, explains [his description of the Scrum Values](#). This has been translated into over 20 languages.



Reaching a Common Understanding and Agreement

It is important of the team reviewing and discussing their ways of working using this document to invest the necessary time to agree what words, values and principles they will agree to follow.

We suggest that everyone coming to the workshop(s) reviews the content of this document and the content of the links before we get together.

As stated at the beginning of this document, this process won't be easy and won't be quick, but it will save everyone a lot of time and heartache in the future as the project and our relationships progress. Done properly this will combine the Forming, Storming and Norming steps of Bruce Tuckman's group development and get us to Performing faster.

It can be used by small or large teams, by suppliers and customers, or in places where multiple vendors / parties are working on the same project.

Appendix: Other Resources

<https://www.agilealliance.org/resources/experience-reports/stop-spinning-your-teams-wheels-its-time-to-revisit-your-working-agreements/>

<https://techbeacon.com/app-dev-testing/power-working-agreements-how-drive-your-agile-team>

<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/working-agreements-defined.pdf>

Appendix: Other thoughts and bullet points

Output of Agile Manifesto

Create a working agreement like a Coaching Agreement / Agile Manifesto

Define the Outcome and What Problem Trying to Solve – definition of done & critical success factors

Then agree ways of working agreement

Then agree the tools using

Then agree knowledge repository

Then agree reporting style and cadence

Then agree process for reporting – e.g. ceremonies (PMO stuff)

Then agree sign off

Who is involved and what expecting them to do and who are they talking to

What is the escalation route if there is an issue

What is quality escalation route

How manage blockers & impediments (obstacle board)

This all leads to our WoW Playbook – which you agree with your client

List techniques – e.g. clean language, non-violent communication, etc.