

HOW TO SWARMING X4



BY PIERRE E. NEIS

AO W SERIES

HOW TO:

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A year ago, I wrote my first book on AO. That book was just a milestone.

I thought to move on to the next level of Agile or the very nature of complex systems. But, I wanted to come up with a way more easy approach than the previous one.

The W series will be a collection of organizational topics that I experimented and expecting to share for those in the organizational challenge of short product lifecycle, faster responsiveness.

I hope that this first book will inspire you.

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PROLOGUE

I know, Agile people have an extreme bias; they think agile everywhere.

On the other hand, how are digital people? Or even better, let's look at how experts address digital.

Digital is an old topic, and everyone is using it. Most of the publications, presentations in conferences, or projects speak about technology such as Cloud, AWS, Blockchain, ERP systems and other robots, and the internet of things. But, what we can see as a digital nomad is just a huge mess.

When I travel to New York City, I have to buy Data Credit through a lengthy procedure to use my Phone Navigation System. The ATM or any Public Transportation ticket machine asks me my ZIP Code and not my PIN.

When you travel in Germany with your Lufthansa App, you have to log in twice, check a catalog of legal requirements (AGBs) to get access to the wrong pieces of information.

Indeed, these are small examples, and I'm pretty sure you know way more. Or maybe not if you are living in South East Asia and Japan, then you know way better.

I can speak for Western Europe. Here, compliance comes first, and even the customer has to comply with regulations. It goes better since the last century. You now have Train tickets locating you and counting down to your location, adjust the price. You can buy a Bus ticket by SMS in France. It's nice indeed, but, I have to say, the customer experience is almost awkward. In a Pokemon Go era, we can do better by providing such weak usability.

AND WHAT DOES AGILE IS THAT CONTEXT?

Agile is putting the customer in the middle of the work. When I write Agile, I don't mean the tools, the methods, or techniques (tecne). I don't tell a catalog that possible customers will consume. I mean projects or development having customers engaged with the developers in short experiments.

The actual Agile roll-out process goes from Vision to Customer Experience and from Customer Journey to User Stories. In Agile, Customer Experience and Journey are built with... customers and, User Stories with ...Users.

AND WHAT'S ABOUT THE MVP?

The Minimal Viable Product is usually misunderstood as Minimal Set of Requirements instead of Customer Must-Have Needs First.

Very few companies are doing it correctly. I have to mention that one company has impressed me by doing it right, that is LaPresse in Montreal. I never had the opportunity to see it, but I attended J.M. DeJonghe's presentation in Paris, and I liked what I heard. The concept was that the teams were working directly with the customer. The Product Owner is translating the needs into a vision. Once the solution is delivered, then only then, the solution is documented and move up in the company structure. It is not a revolution.

That's Agile at its simplest and how it should be.

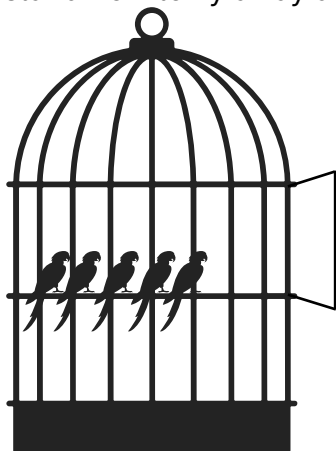
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THE METAPHOR

Let's assume that we are working in a hive. That hive influences our behavior, and some can consider it a cage; some think it a safe place.

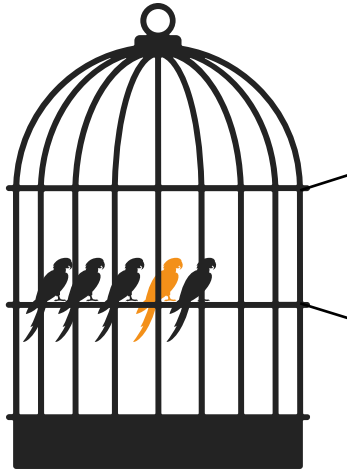
Some parrots in this "hive" don't see that the cage's door is open. They are not able to process that information.

Some will die with that open door, and some will fly away. And some will understand how to fly away and come back.



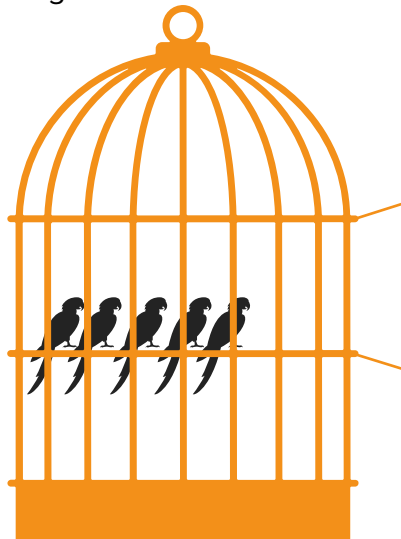
Some consider that a yellow parrot will change the whole flock into yellow parrots. It doesn't work. It remains one yellow between several black ones.

It also applies to Agile. Having one team member Agile doesn't make your team agile.



On the other hand, if I have a yellow nest, whatever colors are available doesn't matter. The nest remains yellow.

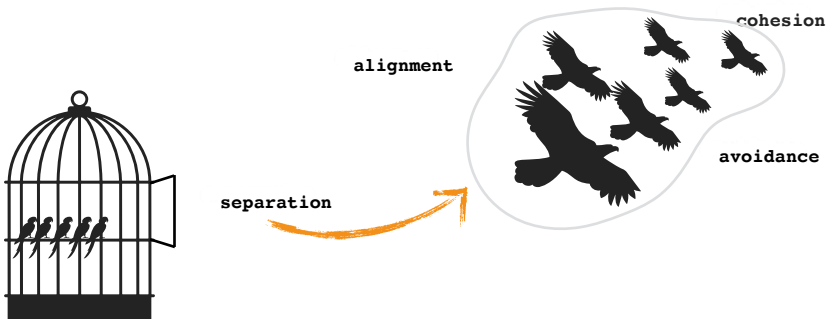
It is also true for Agile.



Once in a while, the birds leave the nest for any reason, such as migrating, discovering surroundings, or feeding.

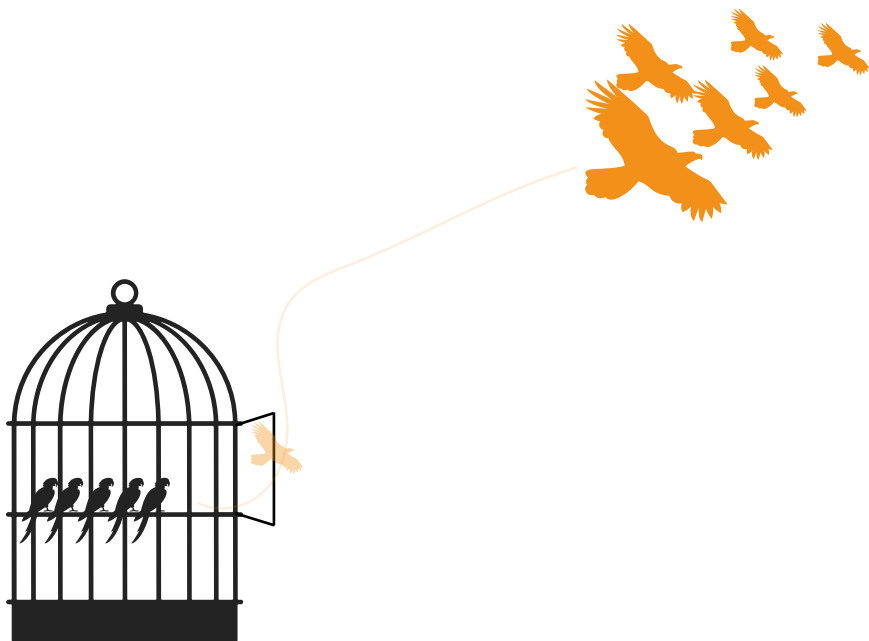


BIRDS HAVE A VERY SPECIFIC WAY TO MOVE TOGETHER. IT IS NAMED SWARMING.



Swarming is not a process. It is an organic behavior for a group of birds to move towards a goal. It responds to four simple rules: separation (from the hive), alignment (sharing the same direction), cohesion (fly as a collective), and avoidance (of collisions).

**SWARMING IS THE WAY HOW
INITIATIVES ARE WORKING.**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pierre Neis is a French-German Agile Coach in charge of large Agile and Digital Transformations.

Since the last decade, he has supported around 200 companies around the world in their agile journey as a scrum master, product owner, executive, coach, consultant or mentor.

Believing in synergies, Pierre is collaborating actively with most of the major strategy consulting companies for both Agile and Digital Transformation strategies. In 2020, He joined Cognizant Digital Solutions in Zürich Switzerland.

He is the author of "The New Normal: AO concepts and patterns of 21-st century agile organizations" and co-creator of #play14.

Pierre is also contributing in several books and publications around agile management, social sciences and gamification.