

Agile Design Strategies

A series of process planning and reframing strategies used to help people and teams learn to FLEX.

Today, organizations of all kinds struggle to understand, control, adapt, and respond to changing conditions that continuously impact internal and external operations. **Traditional management approaches are too narrow and don't have the tools to handle these rapidly changing situations.** The successful organization of tomorrow will need to offer positive personal development and design more flexibility into their systems. **To become more agile, teams need to practice these skills: Context Shift, a Positive Language Reframing process, opening Dialogue Circles, Appreciative Inquiry and a PDLR model that helps a team keep pace with ever evolving conditions.**

1. Context Shift is the First Principal, use it to open up flexible thinking:

If we first shift the context/climate of our thinking, we can change the results of our work. If we learn to shift the context we can be more open and flexible, producing outcomes that shift and grow as changes in the environment emerge around us. **For Example:** thinking needs to be inclusive, diverse and holistic, so try to reframe from a narrow "either/or" frame to a more open "both/and" approach. Or, practice developing thinking that...is both fixed and agile...uses both discussion and dialogue, and considers...both problems and possibilities. Context shift means we agree to learn paradoxical thinking because both traditional systems and new approaches continually exist side by side. Agile Design Strategies can create new results if we first shift the thinking context.

2. Use a Positive Language Reframing Process to shift the context:

This means using new terms to reflect that we are transforming systems and behaviors into our preferred futures. It means turning the language of conflicts, problems, concerns, and other business terms "inside- out." Reframing shifts the thinking from problem-focused to possibility-centered. It creates a new context where innovative terms can foster a "healthy tension" for growth. Using paradox and metaphor are seen as keys to reframing. Reframing is a core skill for refocusing the context of our systems to reflect positive team interventions.

3. Use Dialogue Circles to open up conversation possibilities:

Circles mean holding a space open long enough for people and teams to work through their confusion and get to in-depth conversations that can help them deal with the real issues.

Dialogue Circles facilitate a rich exchange of ideas that create new energy flow and team growth. A Circle is focused more on possibilities thinking and less on problem solving. This positive approach to having a team or community conversation opens up space for deeper learning with less judging and blaming. If we hold the space open for each other as partners, new learning and major growth can occur. Participants go deeper to learn strategies for collaboration and co-creation. People freely explore and innovate when they do not feel criticism and blame.

4. Use Appreciative Inquiry for Organization Development:

Systems are continuously reframing positive questions in a way that opens up new possibilities for growth and spaces for collaboration. All the partners and stakeholders explore the possibilities inherent within the organization's whole network. They use a positive approach designed to create an innovative perspective.

1. **Dialogue** about what is best in the current system, -- the strengths that we want to build on in future systems.
2. **Discover** some healthy, life-affirming stories that result from current operations, - sort out patterns and trends.
3. **Dream** the ideal or preferred futures and new capacities we want to create as a self-organizing team.
4. **Design** system and process innovations that develop the ideal future capacities and truly benefit customers.
5. **Deliver** a PDLR action agenda where goals, strategies, new behaviors and processes unfold in pilot testing.

5. Use a Plan-Do-Learn-Reframe (PDLR) model to pilot test new ideas:

The PDLR model uses a pilot project approach to explore and test process innovations. Partners have a voice in designing and Co-creating the pilot-tests for several iterations of a project. This encourages the team to work out all the bugs. It can result in new systems that work and can be adapted and reframed for the benefit of all members. If a PDLR is focused on customer satisfaction, partners really listen and learn from customers.