

Endress+Hauser

People for Process Automation

SECTOR Digital Communication and Automation Solutions

PERIOD 05/2019 - 02/2020

LOCATION Basel, Switzerland

COMPANY

The Endress+Hauser Group is one of the global leaders providing measurement instrumentation, services, and solutions for industrial process engineering. Its subsidiary company “Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions”, based in Reinach (BL), Switzerland, was founded in 2000. Approximately 180 employees develop solutions for digital communication and automation, focusing on the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) and Industry 4.0.

BASELINE SITUATION

Since 2018, Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions has been in the process of strategic change aiming to reinvent the entire organization. After implementing structural changes, the focus in 2019 was on developing the employees’ individual skills. It became apparent that many people still needed skills for self-organization.

SOLUTION

Together with borisgloger consulting, the company initiated 13 self-organization bootcamps providing the participants with tools for reflecting on their own roles and helping them to learn the new relationship between self-organization and leadership.

RESULT

The self-organization bootcamps gave rise to a new understanding of the staff’s own actions and assumption of responsibility. The participants learned to see more clearly which development steps their roles involved. Employees and leaders closed ranks and came up with ideas for the development of Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions’ vision.

Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions: Fresh momentum for the agile transformation thanks to self-organization bootcamps

Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions’ agile transformation aims at establishing a client-focused agile company. This transformation required new structures, but fundamental changes to the employees’ mindset and skills were equally necessary. Yet what can you do if the key element of agile ways of working—self-organization—requires skills that have not been acquired in sufficient measure?



In 2020, Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions celebrated its 20-year anniversary. With its platform “Netilion”, it is perceived as an innovator in the field of the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT). This success is due to the company’s hard work on their orientation and implementation of a digital and IIoT strategy: since 2018, the company has been in the process of agile transformation. The direction of this transformation is clear: small and autonomous teams with a clear product focus and end-

to-end responsibilities dissolve most of the dependencies within the organization, and specialized knowledge is disseminated among a larger number of people. “We started our transformation by first adjusting our vision and strategy and then developing the structure. First, we flattened hierarchies and restructured our organization using Kanban teams and elements from the Spotify model”, says Renate Burri, HR Manager at Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions. The magical triangle of change—strategy,

structure, culture—thus still had to be completed by working on the culture. In order to involve leaders and all employees, the company developed a competency model which clearly showed the skills that were to determine the new culture and therefore needed particular focus. They offered many workshops so that all those involved could learn about agility.

The employees were certainly enthusiastic about agile ways of working and the new structures, but it gradually came to light that the necessary personal skills required further development. Leadership tools were one of the elements that underwent development in the course of cultural change, among them the annual performance review dialog: it was no longer the leader who told the employee about development potential, but instead it was up to the employees to assess themselves. This self-assessment focused on three key areas for working in an agile environment: self-management skills, collaboration skills, and entrepreneurial mindset.

There was one frequent problem, though: self-perception and the perception of others tended to diverge substantially. Weaknesses in critical areas, such as the ability to voice and receive criticism and feedback, also became apparent. Feedback after the dialogs made it clear that everyone, leaders as well as employees, urgently needed support in developing their self-reflection skills. Many were not yet aware of how important their personal contribution was in turning Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions into a genuinely agile organization.

The agile transformation—it meant everyone!

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ORGANIZATION IN AGILITY

Self-organization is the key element in agile ways of working, but it is also one of the most difficult challenges that companies face during their agile transformation. After all, real self-organization requires employees to autonomously reflect on their actions and assume responsibility for them. They also realize, however, that self-organization does not mean arbitrariness and anarchy, but needs to respect the boundaries set by management. As a result, self-organization is a very personal challenge oscillating between decision-making freedom and boundaries for decisions. Strengthening one's own agile mindset will, in turn, strengthen the entire organization. "This is why we wanted to promote the ability to observe, and reflect on, one's own actions. Relevant workshops aimed at giving our colleagues the tools they needed to first find these competencies within themselves and then, step by step, develop them further", says Renate Burri, describing the lessons that the company learned from the performance review dialogs' results. Based on this knowledge, borisgloger consulting and Renate Burri developed a concept for a two-day "self-organization bootcamp".

Over the course of ten months, bootcamps were held for 90 employees and 30 leaders, providing a protected environment for them to learn that they may assume leadership and

responsibility in their new role, but also needed to be prepared for self-management. Two training sessions were primarily directed at leaders, while the others took place in role-specific groups for product owners, ScrumMasters, developers, testers, or so-called "non squad" employees. The latter came from all those areas that had not been organized into agile teams at that point.

The superordinate goal—enshrining the agile mindset within the corporate culture—was broken down with Renate Burri into the following learning targets for the bootcamps:

- Community-building for existing roles such as product owners, ScrumMasters, DevOps, and leaders
- Refining the roles and acquiring skills for self-reflection
- Creating understanding for self-organization and showing opportunities for implementation
- Becoming aware of one's own role and contribution through self-organization

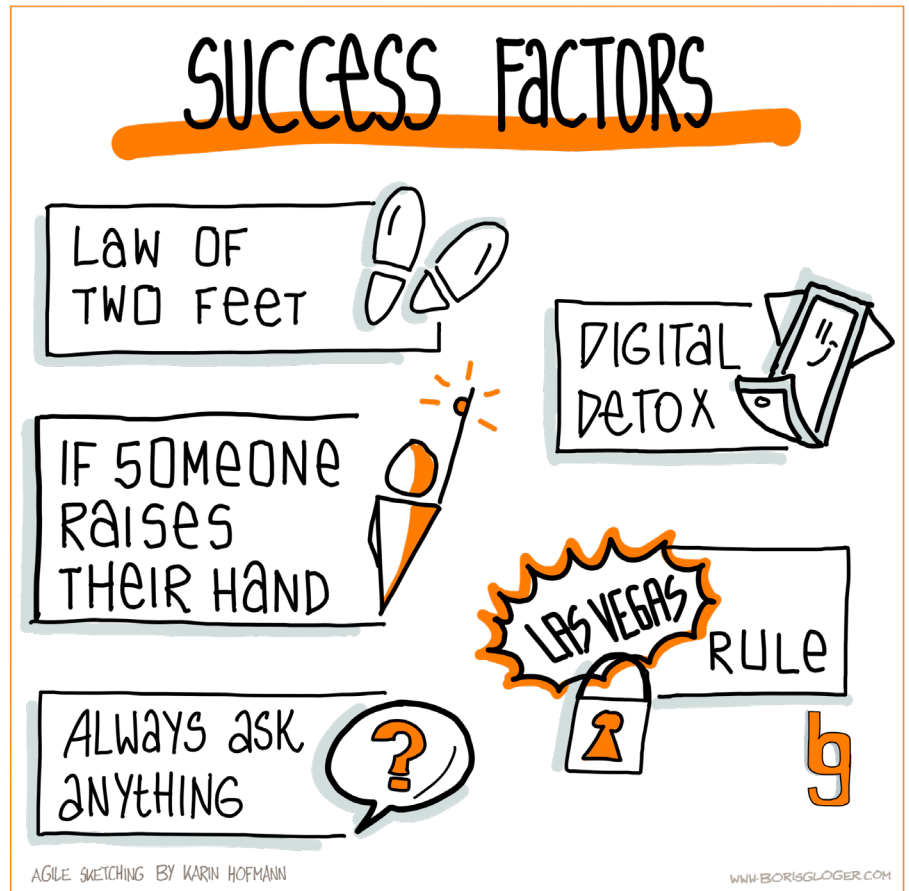
SELF-ORGANIZATION BOOTCAMP: STARTING POINT FOR MORE SELF-ORGANIZATION

A two-day training session will not be able to sustainably change one's mindset on its own, of course, but it can provide important momentum upon which the participants can build. The training sessions conveyed the mindset required for the establishment of an agile organization, thus providing the employees with input to change their views.

Besides technical input, the boot-camps had a strong focus on the group process so that self-organization could be practiced. Methods such as the Circle Way, Open Space practices, or the metaphorical success factors created an environment that enabled participants to have a productive, open dialog at eye level and be playfully introduced to basic agile principles.

Here, one element was key: the participants and the trainer shared responsibility for the bootcamp's quality—a first, clear step towards more self-responsibility. Instead of passively “consuming” the training content, interactive elements required the participants to be actively involved with their topics and make maximum use of their time. This effect already became palpable during the retrospective at the beginning of the bootcamps, during which the groups animatedly and critically discussed the changes within the company and obstacles to self-organization. The discussions addressed both positive developments that had been achieved in the transformation so far, as well as urgently needed improvements to one's own role or relationship with leaders. It enabled everyone to become aware, once again, of the challenges that Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions had to face in a VUCA world, why agility had been chosen in response to these challenges, and how each individual was able to contribute to the organization's desired flexibility. This was the first point of anchor for future change.

Over the course of two days, the participants immersed themselves more fully in the reflection of their own scope of action and their



decision-making freedom in an agile organization. They became aware of their resources and strengths, which already began to show and which they could apply even more effectively. They were introduced to tools to help them set self-reflection into motion in their personal every-day life, for example freewriting.

The bootcamp's second focus was on the relationship between self-organization and leadership. First, the participants used a simulation to find out about the differences between self-organization and external organization and then, during the “buddy walk” that followed, they observed their own take on the topic of leadership together with a colleague. Based on this, the last

part of the bootcamp was dedicated to one's own agile role and the skills it required. The aim was for everyone to create a possible development path for their own role, determine their current location on this path, and deduce the next development steps from there. Finally, self-perception and the perception of others were compared. The participants were introduced to the “journaling” tool that would enable them to continuously plan and assess their development path.

THE MOMENTUM HAS A LINGERING EFFECT

After the last self-organization bootcamp in February 2020, all 120 participants were asked for written feedback on the training session, and 100 responses were included in the evaluation.

The feedback clearly showed that, following the training, more than three quarters (78 %) of the respondents were substantially more aware of their next personal development step. They had gained a clearer understanding of their own role within the company, including the respective responsibilities and their possible effect. One of the employees wrote:

“I became aware of my role within the company. The role description was redefined. The new role description is well-suited to the way I perceived my role and how we had practiced it within our team.”

Another statement showed how the bootcamp’s key message had resonated and caused a change in mindset:

“As an employee, I have a plethora of opportunities to change my personal day-to-day life. First of all, I need to start with myself.”

Besides the employees’ perception of their own roles, the relationship between employees and leaders had changed. Half of the respondents agreed with the following statement: “the leaders are more open-minded than before and more approachable for employees.” However, the bootcamps also raised awareness concerning the fact that an agile transformation would not be concluded at a certain point in time, but that it was a continuous learning process. To this regard, the employees expressed the clear wish to management for the vision of Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions, the agile roles, and the agile

understanding to be developed further. Management will respond to this wish and implement initial measures in 2020.

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” Self-organization will not happen on its own! The bootcamps revealed the environment that management needs to create in order to enable self-organization. I believe that the ability to self-reflect is the most important skill for successful self-organization.

Renate Burri
Head of Department, CH Human Resources, Endress+Hauser Digital Solutions

Find out more about the self-organization bootcamp on our website
www.borisgloger.com/trainings.