

AMBER SIGNALS

Sample list

This is a sample list of Amber signals from the book 'The Five Tantras of Enterprise Agility' by Paramu Kurumathur, PM Power Consulting. Find a list of things that an organization should have done better or could have done better in their agile transformation journey.

For the full list of Amber Signals, purchase the book by visiting <https://pm-powerconsulting.com/the-five-tantras-of-enterprise-agility/>

Amber Signal	Some Manifestations	Suggested approach to address
Lack of flexibility in Agile implementation	A rigid Framework that does not allow flexibility in implementation	Self-organizing teams working towards an “Agilization” goal do not need a rigid framework. Even if there is a framework, there needs to be some flexibility in the way it is implemented without compromising on the core values
Not having an inclusive Agile environment	Customers not part of the Agile ecosystem	Bring customers into the Agile ecosystem as early as possible. Customers and end-users, where possible, should be part of the Agile teams
	Customers seen as outsiders who have an influence on the company performance	Need for continuous alignment to ever-evolving customer environment and needs
Teams not aligned with business	Teams not able to relate to outcomes and impact of what they do on outcomes	Development teams need to have a clear view into how the end users use and experience the outcomes of what they create

	Teams not taking accountability for outcomes	Ensuring constant communication and alignment of team to changing business needs
Not empowering associates to make decisions	Not supporting associates when decisions backfire	Allow / encourage associates to act like owners; create an environment of trust
	Delayed decisions	Remove unnecessary reviews / approvals
	Too many escalations from associates to the senior management / leadership team	Support decisions made, even when they fail when implemented
Managing self-organizing teams too little or too much	Managers either taking the ‘spirit of Agile’ too literally and providing no guidance at all to teams, or alternately, micro-managing every situation	Ensure a common understanding of the vision across the team and focus on removing bottlenecks for the team in achieving that vision—facilitate the team in arriving at a set of team norms / working agreements
	Team members either expecting to be told what they need to do or resisting any inputs from their manager in the guise of being self-organized	Extent of handholding the team may depend on the newness of the team or the initiative the team is working on Being trustworthy from a team perspective and being receptive to feedback
No internalization of Enterprise Agility Values	Ritualistic implementation of ceremonies	Teams / individuals being made aware of the “whys” of various processes / ceremonies, etc. through training/coaching

Leadership not seen as demonstrating and living the values

Leadership leading by example for living the Enterprise Agility Values

Lack of trust

Associates bypassing managers to report concerns and issues

Use of five dysfunctions to understand team-working / building an environment of vulnerability-based trust

Managers not being ready to entrust important work to associates

Creating a learning organization where failures are encouraged as a stepping stone to success

Culture of blaming each other for failures

Use of retrospectives and other mechanisms to promote sharing and learning

Very little learning due to lack of experimentation

Managers interfering at working level

Many tech decisions made by managers, not the team

Managers practicing “active” listening and the power of questions to understand situations and coach/guide the team

Managers wanting to be actively involved in tech reviews

Involving senior technical folks in the team for tech reviews (coach them if needed)

Too many questions on implementation level from managers

Respecting people’s boundaries

Culture focus inhibiting hiring of top-class talent

Difficulty hiring top notch people

Look for attitudes in hiring: not ready-fit into a specific culture; but adaptability, openness to learning, and change are the key

High rejection ratio overall and specifically of highly-qualified candidates

Not watching for problems that could happen with a diffident leader	Leaders who are too self-conscious / have a feeling of insecurity	Leadership development
	Leaders who avoid confronting people or take responsibility to provide directions to team as needed	Ensuring right people in the right leadership roles (sometimes even diffident leaders, if they are otherwise good, may succeed with teams that are strong technically/functionally and collaborate well)
Leader not being a role model	Leaders themselves prefer to play it safe almost all the time	Leadership development for innovation / experimentation
	Leaders being too detail-oriented	Allow for experimentation and failures; do not penalize failures
		Involve associates in discussions and decision-making; allow them to express their views freely
Not hiring people with a sense of wonder	Very few ideas / innovative suggestions coming from newcomers over a period of time	Involve people who are able to identify innovative people, as part of the hiring process
	Low energy levels among newcomers	Use of mechanisms to check “sense of wonder” in hires—ongoing reinforcement of innovation amongst them
Not equipping organization for future challenges	Not having people who are abreast with technology trends and can advise the leadership team	Focus for technology-related research and innovation (creating a team focused on it, attendance at technology conferences, etc.)
	Severe budgetary constraints for experimentation / research	

Over measuring efficiency and not measuring waste and inefficiencies

Too much focus on individual / team productivity metrics in internal reviews

Value stream mapping / process analysis to identify non-value adding activities or process steps and eliminate them

Focus on process implementation in letter without looking at value added by a process step

Measuring defects / impact and addressing broad causes to prevent wasted effort

Not accounting for 'wastes of omission'

Nature and type of work does not match the quality and talent within the organization

Recruitment and organization development to focus on having the right / required skills keeping the current business requirements as well as growth in mind

Experts being wasted on doing routine things

Analysis of projects and work to ensure talent of people is not wasted