

## AGILE LEADER DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY - CASE STUDY<sup>1</sup>



**Pierre Philippe – Public Sector Organisation  
Manager: Web Design Services**

Pierre has been leading the Web Design Services team within the IT department for the past 2 years. He is competent and highly regarded.

*“Initially I felt overwhelmed, but the Development journey gave me a clear path to achieve my goals.”*

However, during the **Organisational Review** (1-hour) with Anna, his Learning Coach, he explained that he had recently taken on additional responsibilities and that his team would be doubled. Pierre was already working long hours and was not sure how to cope with the additional staff. He was convinced that increasing self-organisation in the team could be at least part of the solution but wanted to bring about change in a way that would minimise disruption and be sustainable. At the end of the conversation, Anna suggested that Pierre complete a **Learning adventure – Drivers**, which would help him to reflect on the challenges he faced.

**Development Review** (1-hour): Pierre had found the **Learning adventure** helpful to understand what the journey to greater self-organisation would look like, and what the benefits could be for himself, other members of the team and the organisation. Anna and Pierre spent part of the session clarifying the desired organisational impact, such as increased client responsiveness, innovation and productivity, and the personal benefits for Pierre. He was particularly keen to improve his work-life balance. A week later Pierre confirmed that he had received approval to proceed with the project, so Anna prepared his outline **Development journey**.

**Development Journey Design and Implementation:** Pierre’s first priorities were to ascertain his stakeholder’s expectations, get the team working on new workflows and define roles and responsibilities. Pierre already knew how to do this, so the **Development journey** would focus on laying the foundations for greater self-organisation, by clarifying how his role would change, building a psychologically safe culture and starting a conversation with his team about work preferences, skills and strengths. He could then start to delegate more decision-making responsibility to those members of his team who were ready to accept it. Anna suggested the following **Learning adventures**, supported by individual coaching sessions and team coaching as necessary.

**Weeks 1-4: Learning adventures: Self-organising teams, People challenges, Context challenges and Coaching skills** with one week allocated for each topic.

**Weeks 5 - 8: Learning adventure: Strengths and skills** would provide some practical tools with which to start a team conversation about individual strengths. This would start the process of building a more collaborative climate.

**Weeks 9 - 12: Learning adventure: Delegated authority** would provide practical tools with which to increase the level of autonomy within the team.

**Programme evaluation:** At the end of the programme Pierre and Anna undertook a review of the impact. The team was now working much more effectively together thereby increasing productivity. Pierre had been able to delegate more decisions to team members, which had improved responsiveness. Pierre could also see that his workload had started to decrease. He commented:

*“Anna acted like my own personal Sherpa. She helped me to plan the journey, kept me on track and provided support and encouragement when I needed it. My biggest insights came when she gently challenged the beliefs and assumptions that were holding me back.”*

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<sup>1</sup>The case study is fictional but based on an actual programme

**AGILE LEADERSHIP LEARNING TREK**

**AL 5: UNDERSTANDING SELF-ORGANISING TEAMS (ESTIMATED TIME - 45 MINUTES)**

**Objectives:**  
This Learning Adventure is part of a series designed to support managers lead their teams' organisations towards greater agility and resilience. For a complete series overview see AL 0.  
This Learning Adventure provides a summary of what self-organising teams are. After completing this Learning Adventure, you will be able to explain:

- what self-organising teams are
- the role of the self-organising team leader
- key responsibilities about self-organising teams
- the benefits of self-organising teams for people and the team
- common challenges on the journey to greater self-organisation

**What are self-organising teams?**  
Before we dive into the theory, you might want to take 20 minutes to listen to Nelson Mandela's "Self-management - an insider's story". In the TEDx talk the description best explains the team's practice of self-organisation. As we will explore in this Learning Adventure there are different types of self-organisation.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F8M8B5G1G>

When people talk about teams, they often have different things in mind, so we will start with a definition. According to LinkedIn Learning: "Most teams have four main business:

- joint tasks to fulfil a compelling and common mission
- clear boundaries in terms of information flow, alignment with other organisational units, resources and decision-making authority
- authority to self-manage within these boundaries
- stability over some reasonable period of time

**Four functions must be fulfilled within any team:**

- setting the direction for the team, i.e. specifying the objectives
- designing the operational system, i.e. defining tasks, deciding who will be involved in performing them, establishing norms of conduct for work behaviour, and making sure team members have the resources and assistance they need to carry out their work
- monitoring and managing the work process, i.e. collecting and interpreting data about how the work is proceeding and initiating corrective action as needed
- executing the work, i.e. applying physical or mental energy to accomplish tasks.

By allocating these core functions to the responsibility areas of either management or team, a leader provides or with authority matrix to distinguish three levels of team self-organisation.

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