

Agile Leadership and Coaching¹

**Teresa Ramos, Kate Anderson Foley
and
Andrea Leven-Marcon**

1. Introduction

“Agile leadership is not about how to implement agile, Scrum, Kanban, eXtreme Programming or lean principles. You have people in your organization who can do that. Being an agile leader is a state of mind” Zuzana Sochova¹⁹.

We begin this paper with this quote to clearly differentiate agile leadership from the agile methodologies commonly associated with information technology or software projects¹¹. Agile leadership is a mindset steeped in alternative ways of thinking about, or approaching, situations¹⁹.

Agile leadership has its roots in agile methodologies. Understanding agile methodologies and agile mindset is a helpful first step to grasp what agile leadership is, its benefits, and how to become an agile leader to meet the needs and challenges created by changing environments. In today's rapidly evolving different sectors of the economic landscape, the term agile¹⁶ has become a buzzword. It's a concept that has moved beyond its origins in software development to influence how companies and organizations operate, how teams work and how leaders approach their roles. It appears that every aspect and individual must have an agile flavour to remain relevant.

In this paper, we describe the origins of agile methodologies, explore what this means and uncover the main elements that define agile leadership through the lens of coaching.

We will not cover the remit of technical agile coaches, as defined in agile methodologies^{1,12}. We will show that executive coaches do need to get familiar with agile principles and embrace agility concepts to be effective in coaching agile leaders. It is however essential to keep these two coaching roles separate. Executive coaching for agile leadership is not the same as what is typically known as agile coaching in agile methodologies.

¹ How to cite this paper: Ramos, T., Foley, K. A., Leven-Marcon, A. (2024). Agile Leadership and Coaching; *PM World Journal*, Vol. XIII, Issue XI, December.

Origin of Agile Methodologies

By the year 2000, the digital revolution had created a landscape filled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). This highly complex environment rendered traditional approaches to work ineffective, inefficient and too cumbersome. The traditional way of doing things was too slow and rigid; it was no longer valid in a world that was changing at the speed of light¹.

In February 2001, a group of 17 software developers, troubled and frustrated by sluggish, inflexible and inefficient conventional practices, gathered at Snowbird, a ski resort in Utah, USA. Their objective was to find better ways to work so that they could keep up with the pace of change of the digital age¹⁷.

The outcome of this gathering was the creation of agile methodologies, encapsulated in the Agile Manifesto². This mindset revolves around being adaptable, flexible and collaborative. One important aspect is that agile thinking is not just about speed; it's about simplifying complexities, embracing flexibility, and quickly adapting to change.²

This agile thinking is translated into various methodologies that emphasize working together, effective communication, adaptability and continuous learning and continuous improvement^{3,13}. Key aspects of Agile methodologies and agile organizations are:

- Work is in short iterations or cycles. This enables fast addressing of challenges and changes by the team.
- Customer focus. By delivering tangible outcomes at the end of each short cycle, teams ensure they are meeting customer needs and are open to making adjustments based on feedback, adapting to their evolving desires.
- Radical collaboration. Clear and frequent communication or interactions, between all stakeholders, result in the creation of high performing, empowered and self-organized teams¹¹.

Overview of the Essential Mind Frames of Agile Leadership and Coaching

Agile leaders build worlds where the sum of the parts is greater than the whole, they apply creativity and create environments where all parties can apply creativity and achieve success. A state of mind is core to being an agile leader¹⁹.

2. Description of Framework and Its' Key Premise

Agile is a mindset originated in the IT and technology world.¹⁶ Its use extends far beyond technology-related areas and today, we find agile principles across all business and industry sectors including e.g. government, healthcare, manufacturing, retail and education. The need for agility is universal as the challenges posed by a VUCA world affect every business and service sector.

It is important to highlight, per the opening quotation, we will not explore the technical side of agile often associated with IT and technology. In the IT world, agile coaches play a significant role to assist agile teams and organizations in adopting agile methods and working better within this mindset.

Our focus is on the world of agile and agility, and executive coaching for senior leaders. We explore how executive coaches can support senior leaders to become more agile, create agile cultures and agile organizations. Executive coaches are professionals who team up with senior leaders to co-create their leadership agility.

There is a tension between the agile leader in a post-pandemic VUCA world and the agile coach who is able to bring equilibrium to the coaching relationship. Agile organizations are living systems that value openness, inclusiveness, and are non-hierarchical. The agile leader possesses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively respond in like manner to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the organization. Therefore, the role of the agile coach must complement those characteristics by leveraging agile methodologies of adaptability, flexibility, and collaboration in order to support the agile leader simplifying complexities, embracing flexibility, and adapting to change.

In this paper we explored the world of agile leadership, the practical tools that executive coaches and senior leaders can use to become more agile, and how these collaborations can make a significant impact on organizations striving to thrive in the rapidly changing and highly complex digital world¹⁵.

3. Key Strengths and Criticisms

Agile Leaders and Agile Coaches

Organizations in a post-pandemic world and with a younger workforce, require change leaders to possess agility, knowledge, skills, and dispositions as they would their own DNA. Agile change leaders view the system as a living organism that is both stable and dynamic. Moreover, agile change leaders share a compelling and clear purpose to those within the organization and to their external stakeholders. They can clearly see what is, and what is not, working. They are also skilled at promoting calculated risk-taking and experimentation as the way of nimbly responding to change.

Finally, an agile change leader intentionally seeks out boundary-sharing partnerships so the living system, as a whole, can thrive⁸. An environment where the sum or the parts is greater than the whole, and where creativity and collaboration deliver benefits to all of the stakeholders¹⁹. To meet this everchanging reality across sectors, agile leadership coaches must also be responsive and possess the knowledge, skills, and disposition to foster the environment where clients can develop the skills and mindset needed to be successful in agile environments.

Key Strengths and Weaknesses

The principles of agile leadership can be applied across a wide spectrum of industries including, but not limited to, healthcare, finance, government, manufacturing, and education. To make the case for how effective agile leaders leverage these mid frames and principles, a review of the key strengths and weaknesses is useful.

Two studies from McKinsey¹¹ and Deloitte⁴ found organizations where agile principles are embraced are more likely to be high performers and that their leaders are more likely to be successful in leading change and innovation. This is especially important in a post-pandemic VUCA world. Furthermore, the findings supported the other benefits of agile leadership which includes the following:

- Increased innovation: Agile leaders create an environment where teams are encouraged to experiment and take risks which can lead to increased innovation and the development of new products and services.

- Improved customer satisfaction: Agile leaders are focused on delivering value to customers quickly and frequently which can lead to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Increased employee engagement: Agile leaders empower their teams and give them a sense of ownership over their work which can lead to increased employee engagement and productivity.
- Improved adaptability: Agile leaders can adapt to change quickly and effectively which is essential in today's rapidly changing business environment.

Agile leadership coaching is a powerful tool for helping leaders develop the skills and competencies needed to effectively lead agile teams. However, there are some weaknesses to this approach. Perhaps the most important is the false assumption that agile coaching is a panacea for deep change. Instead, the agile change leader and coach must acknowledge that shifting from a traditional organization to an agile one takes time and effort to learn and deeply implement the principles of agile leadership. Agile coaches also need to develop their cache of tools to provide the right support and strategies that can foster the desired transformational change⁴.

Another weakness is the acknowledgment that coaching is only as effective as the commitment of the leader. Simply put, if the leader is not willing to shift mind frames and practices, then agile coaching is doomed to fail⁴.

Finally, agile coaching requires an enhanced skillset, thus agile coaches must invest the time and energy to obtain those skills. There are many people who call themselves agile coaches. However, not all coaches possess the required competencies organizations desire for effective coaching of agile leaders, therefore it's important for organizations to vet the coaches qualifications⁴.

4. Agile Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Application

In this section we will describe the effectiveness of agile leadership and the organizational application thereof. The relevance of the information here needs to be described in terms of emergent trends in leadership, organization and society. Inclusion of figures and diagrams might be useful.

Implementing Agile Strategies

Agile leadership is an effective approach for leading organizations and is becoming increasingly relevant in today's VUCA world. Agile leaders understand the dynamics of post-pandemic realities with the generational workplace shifts and can lead using recursive short cycles of inquiry and process. To meet these new and ever-changing realities, agile leadership coaching has also become an important practice^{4,10,11}.

Primarily, agile coaches help leaders develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be successful in an VUCA environment, but also to the betterment of the whole organization and to its stakeholders. For example, the agile leader and agile coach relationship can benefit organizations by increasing innovation. Through coaching, agile leaders can help the organization as a whole become more innovative by developing new solutions, products and services that meet the needs of their customers^{4,10,11}.

Secondly, agile coaches help agile leaders improve customer satisfaction by focusing on delivering value to its customers quickly and frequently. These recursive short-cycles of innovation allow members to course correct, and make iterative improvements^{4,10,11}.

Third, agile coaches work with agile leaders to increase employee engagement by empowering employees and giving them a sense of ownership over their work.

Finally, agile coaching is employed to improve adaptability. Coaching helps agile leaders, and by association their organizations, become more adaptable and responsive to the one constant that is: change. More broadly, agile leaders create a psychologically safe environment by empowering people within the organization to contribute their talents and ideas^{4,10,11}.

Agile leadership and agile coaching in a knowledge economy

The world has shifted to a knowledge economy thus agile leadership and agile coaching, to be agile, also need to shift. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions must meet this new reality, and also be nimble enough to respond to the unknown uncertainty. Agile coaching can greatly assist leadership to make the necessary shifts so that transformation is achieved.

Agile organizations who view themselves as living systems, are better able to thrive in an unpredictable, rapidly changing environment. Agile organizations are both stable and dynamic and are focused on customers, embedding customer-centricity in all they do. Agile organizations have

tried and tested practices that can fluidly adapt and adjust to market changes, innovative technology, customer feedback, and government regulation. They are also open, inclusive, and non-hierarchical, evolving continually without the frequent disruptive restructurings required in more mechanistic organizations. In addition, they embrace uncertainty and ambiguity with greater confidence¹¹.

These characteristics which lay the foundation of an agile, growth mindset culture should translate into effective leadership practices and effective coaching approaches. Specifically, agile coaches help leaders facilitate a culture of continuous learning and innovation and an environment where their teams feel comfortable experimenting and taking risks.

Agile coaching also helps the leader to think through, identify resources, and support their team members who will need to learn and grow as individuals, and as a team member¹⁹.

Second, coaches need to help leaders empower their teams and delegate responsibility, especially within a non-hierarchical structure. Agile coaches understand that agile teams are most effective when they are self-organizing and self-managing, thus they help agile leaders identify ways of empowering their teams to make decisions and take ownership of their work.

Third, coaches provide effective feedback to the leader so that the leader can provide timely and effective feedback to the people across the organization. Agile leaders understand the value of providing specific, timely and constructive feedback as a key strategy for teams to improve their performance.

Next, coaches help leaders manage change and uncertainty. By using agile strategies when coaching, the leader is better able to support the teams to adapt and change quickly, effectively, and efficiently. Finally, agile coaches help agile leaders build strong relationships based on collaboration, equality of voice, and trust. Fostering psychologically safe relationships provides the type of environment so teams can thrive and the organization prosper.

5. Assessment and Facilitation Tools

There are a variety of vendors and products promising to expertly assess agile leadership organizations to which we are agnostic. Instead, identifying common elements that will help inform an organization's decision-making process and priorities will be examined.

Organizations that are agile embed their north star across the system and create a culture that values collaboration, and empowers teams, with focused bursts of innovation. As important as these characteristics are, recent research has confirmed that leadership is arguably even more important in agile organizations. In fact, leadership and how leadership shapes culture are the biggest barriers to, and the biggest drivers of successful agile transformations¹⁰. Since no single agile assessment tool is perfect, the best path forward is to assess the organization and/or the team's degree of agility using a combination of tools and methods.

When selecting assessment tools, understanding the characteristics of effective agile leaders⁹ provided a guideline for applicable tools. Agile leaders are people centric, good listeners, provide regular feedback, and are supportive. They step into responsibility, are adaptable in uncertainty and are decisive. They foster collaboration, build connections, are systems thinkers evidenced by their ability to see the interconnections of related and unrelated areas, are quick to learn, have a deep and broad knowledge base of methods and skills and quickly adapt to change. Finally, they create psychologically safe environments and support error cultures⁹.

Measurement and assessment tools that might assist to further understand agile competencies could include growth mindset^{6,7}, systems thinking¹⁸, Sochova's agile leadership competencies self evaluation¹⁹ and the creative competencies section of The Leadership Circle Profile 360 assessment that contribute to leadership effectiveness (leadershipcircle.com).

By way of illustration, in Figure 1, we correlated the characteristics of agile leaders as outlined by Krieg et al.,⁹ and leadership competencies (leadershipcircle.com). This correlation exercise can be completed for other measurement and assessment tools.

Figure 1. Characteristics of Agile Leaders and LCP Creative Competencies

Characteristics of Agile Leaders	Measurement Tool: Examples
Preconditions	Leadership Circle Profile (LCP)
Sophisticated characters who build trust by showing vulnerability	● Authenticity ● Self Awareness
Role models & demonstrate agile mindsets	● Relating ● Systems Awareness
Purpose Driven: Motivate & inspire others driving productivity	● Achieving

Empathetic, charismatic & good listeners	● Systems Awareness: Community Concern ● Achieving: Purposeful & Visionary ● Relating: Caring Connection & Interpersonal Intelligence
Tasks & Responsibilities	
Assume responsibility through focused decisions specifically in uncertain times	● Achieving: Decisiveness
Visible & available to their stakeholders	● Relating ● Self-awareness: Selfless leader
Open ears, provide regular feedback, offer support	● Mentoring & Development: Relating ● Systems Awareness: Community Concern
Great communicators	● Achieving: Purposeful & Visionary ● Self Awareness: Composure
Think in interdisciplinary manner	● Systems Awareness: Systems Thinker
Foster Collaboration in complex & often unrelated areas	● Systems Awareness: Sustainable Productivity, Systems Thinker ● Achieving: Strategic Focus
Mentally flexible & quick learners especially in new circumstances.	● Self Awareness: Personal Learner
Sensible risk takers	● Achieving: Decisiveness ● Authenticity: Courageous Authenticity
Actively lead change	● Achieving: Strategic Focus, Purposeful & Visionary, Achieves Results & Decisiveness ● Relating: Fosters Team Play, Collaborator, Interpersonal Intelligence
Well versed in agile skills & innovative methods that they apply to many kinds of situations.	● Self-Awareness: Personal Learner ● Systems Awareness
Provide psychological safety	● Systems Awareness: Community

	Concern • Self-Awareness: Composure • Relating: Caring Connection
Support error cultures	• Achieving: Purposeful & Visionary & Strategic Focus. • Authenticity: Integrity • Self-awareness: Selfless leader, Balance. • Relating: Mentoring & Developing.
Foster Collaboration	• Relating: Collaborator
Assume Responsibility	• Achieving: Achieves Results, Decisive

Note. Figure 1 was derived by the authors from material in Krieg et al. (2022, pp. 29-31) and the Leadership Circle Profile (leadershipcircle.com/leadership-assessment-tools/leadership-circle-profile/). This table is an example of how the characteristics as described by Krieg et al., can be correlated to elements of other leadership and coaching measurement and assessment tools.

Sochova summarized the four necessary core competencies of leaders as being able to create a vision, develop motivation, receive feedback and implement changes. The competencies that support these core elements are the ability to make decisions, collaborate, facilitate and coach. Sochova posited these are continually developing competencies an agile leader develops as they journey on their evolving path of leadership. There is not one perfect great way, but a better way always exists. Coaching opens these pathways of exploration.

Elements to consider when assessing the agility of an organization

First and most importantly, consider the specific needs of the organization. If this is a new endeavour, it is important that the assessment get an accurate baseline across the organization.

Next, consider what areas of agility will be of most interest to assess and what level of detail is needed to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the people. Once those areas have been identified, invest time to compare what each tool can offer, its features that align to the stated interests of the organization, and what the strengths and weaknesses of each tool are.

Finally, once an assessment tool has been selected and its intended purposes has been communicated, use the results to track the organization or teams' progress towards agility.

Commented [1]:

6. Linkages of Agile Leadership with Other Leadership Frameworks

Overall, agile is a mindset. As such, it becomes the overarching framework and takes what is applicable from the other leadership frameworks to apply to the current circumstances facing the agile leader or the agile coach. The agile mindset is a malleable mindset and adapts to the situation¹⁹.

Agile leadership and agile coaching might be seen as the meta models, the unifying framework that select the most applicable techniques from other models, and choreograph them together in an adaptive way that best suits the circumstances and the situation they face. This agile selection approach provides the most effective, applicable, and impactful outcomes. As Sochova stated agile leadership is characterized by a different mindset, different thinking, different approaches all of which are unencumbered by processes, practices and rules. It is the agile leader, who in service of their stakeholders has built influence and gained respect through their leadership behaviours and actions.

Agile has to be impactful. There is no waiting, and through recursive cycles, stakeholders will know through these rapid cycles if the changes are effective²⁰.

7. Coaching Application Methods for Agile Leadership

What an Agile Coach needs to be Effective

To coach agile leaders effectively, we propose that an agile coach must first internalize the agile mindset and its principles and be able to put it into practice effortlessly.

Understanding the Agile Mindset

The first step for an executive coach to effectively coach agile leaders is to understand that agility is based on a mindset that thrives on adaptability, collaboration, and a never-ending search for continuous improvement.¹⁷

Embracing Agile Methodologies

Understanding these methodologies is vital for coaches working with agile leaders but not enough. Given what a paradigm shift, agility is, agile coaches need to internalize and embrace the essence of working in short, iterative cycles— enabling rapid responses to challenges⁵. Customer-

centricity is another key aspect; delivering tangible results frequently, and adapting based on feedback, is the only way for coaches to understand the challenges their executive clients face when moving to an agile mindset.

Nurturing Collaboration and Communication

Radical collaboration and transparent communication are vital. Agile leaders are catalysts for high-performing teams, and coaches need to foster these qualities in their executive clients.

Championing Continuous Learning

Agile is synonymous with continuous learning and continuous improvement. After each iteration, coaches encourage reflection, creating a culture of never-ending learning and growth.

Adapting Gracefully

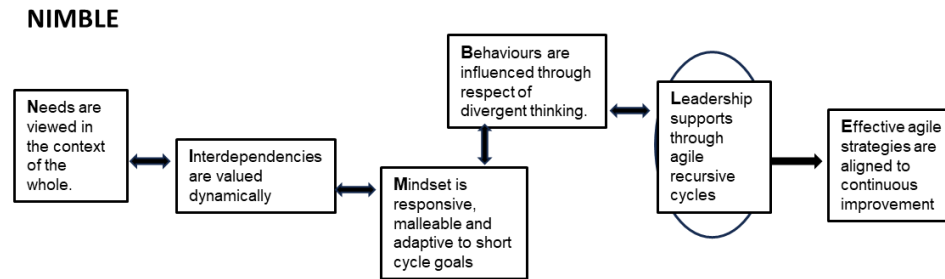
Change is the only constant in the digital world. Agile coaches should be proficient at helping leaders navigate these changes by mastering flexibility and adaptability.

By understanding and embodying the agile mindset and principles, coaches not only lead by example but equip themselves with the necessary tools to support their clients in embracing this radical change of perspective when leading agile teams and organizations⁵.

Being NIMBLE

As authors, we conclude with the culmination of the explored concepts and behaviours with the concept of agile coaches being NIMBLE. Starting with needs viewed in the context of the whole system and where interdependencies are valued dynamically, and where the coach applies a responsive and adaptable mindset to short-cycle goals and evidences behaviours respecting divergent thinking. As they apply leadership supports through agile recursive cycles, we suggest that the emergent effective agile strategies align to support continuous improvement.

Figure 2: Being NIMBLE



Note. This figure derived by the authors illustrates the six interconnected elements of being NIMBLE for agile coaches.

8. Conclusion

This paper provided a comprehensive exploration of the significance of agile leadership in the contemporary business landscape. We distinguished agile leadership from agile terminology related to project management methodologies, and asserted being agile is fundamentally a state of mind.

The authors also introduced the hypothesis of agile leadership being crucial in a VUCA world, emphasizing the need to move beyond traditional change management to embrace disruptive change. An agile mindset acts as a catalyst, permeating various leadership frameworks and positioning itself favorably in the intersection of human-centered leadership and the tech-digital-artificial intelligence revolution.

We explored how agile leadership recognizes the dynamic nature of the post-pandemic world and the importance of agile leadership in navigating its challenges. We highlighted agile leaders' abilities to enhance innovation, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational adaptability.

In the overview we underscored the unique qualities of agile leaders, describing them as builders of collaborative environments with a distinctly adaptive mindset. The subsequent sections explored the agile leadership framework, its key strengths and criticisms, effectiveness in organizational applications, and the assessment tools associated with it.

The discussion on coaching application methods emphasized the importance of understanding the agile mindset for executive coaches. By exploring the values and principles of agility, advocating for coaches to internalize these concepts, and be NIMBLE to effectively support ongoing organizational improvement and transformational leadership.

REFERENCES

1. Abbas, Gravell & Wills (2008) Historical Roots of Agile Methods: Where Did “Agile Thinking” Come From? [Historical Roots of Agile Methods: Where Did “Agile Thinking” Come From? | SpringerLink](#)
2. Beck, Beedle, van Bennekun et al. (2001) Agile Manifesto www.agilemanifesto.org
3. Cockburn, A. (2006) Agile software development: the cooperative Game. Addison-Wesley
4. Deloitte Cloud Services (2022). When scaling agile, engaged self-aware leadership matters. A lot. <https://www.deloitte.com/an/en/our-thinking/insights/topics/business-strategy-growth/scaling-agile-leadership-principles-for-agile-success.html>
5. De Smet, A., Lurie, M., & St. George, A., (October 2018) Leading agile transformation: the new capabilities leaders need to build 21st-century organizations. McKinsey and Company
6. Dweck, C. (2017). *Mindset Changing The Way You Think To Fulfil Your Potential*. Robinson.
7. Elliott-Moskwa, E. (2022). *The Growth Mindset Workbook: CBT Skills to Help You Build Resilience, Increase Confidence, and Thrive through Life's Challenges* Paperback. Harbinger.
8. Harvard Business Review (2018). *5 behaviors of leaders who embrace change*. Harvard Business Review.
9. Krieg, A., Prenner, N., Guckenbiehl, P., Theobald, S., & Schneider K. (2022). *A Scientific Baseline for Agile Leadership*. Bonn.
10. McKinsey & Company (2018). *Leading agile transformation: The new capabilities leaders need to build 21st-century organizations*. Organization Practice.
11. McKinsey & Company (2023 a). *The state of organizations 2023 Ten shifts transforming organizations*. New York. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-state-of-organizations-2023>

12. McKinsey and Company (March 2023 b) *What is agile?*
https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-agile?src_trk=em672baf32847361.668900801893717448
13. Meyer, P. (2015). *The agility shift. Creating agile and effective leaders, teams and organizations*. Bibliomotion.
14. Ray, S.K.S. (2023). Moving toward agile leadership to help organizations succeed. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*. https://www.iupindia.in/0323/Soft%20Skills/Moving_Towards.asp
15. Rigby, D., Elk, S., Berez, S. (June 2020) What really is an agile coach. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://resources.scrumalliance.org/Article/really-agile-coach>
16. Rigby, D., Sutherland, J., & Takeuchi, H. (April 20, 2016a) The Secret History of Agile. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/04/the-secret-history-of-agile-innovation>
17. Rigby, D., Sutherland, J., & Takeuchi, H. (May 2016b) Embracing Agile How to master the process that's transforming management. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/05/embracing-agile>
18. Senge, P. M. (2017). *The fifth discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*. CurrencyDoubleday.
19. Sochova, Z. (2021). *The agile leader: Leveraging the power of influence*. Pearson Addison-Wesley.
20. Stringer, E. T. (2007). *Action Research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
21. Theobald, S., Prenner, N., Krieg, A., & Schneider K. (n.d.). *State of the art of agile leadership and management in agile organizations*. Fraunhofer IESE.

About the Authors



Teresa Ramos

Salamanca, Spain



Teresa Ramos is a senior executive with a diverse background bridging technology, business, and academia. Armed with degrees in theoretical physics, music, telecommunications engineering, and an executive MBA, Teresa has over 23 years of executive experience with global tech giants like British Telecom, Vodafone, Telefónica, and Siemens. Her leadership roles were pivotal in driving digital transformations at BT Europe and Infineon, part of Siemens, where she spearheaded innovation initiatives company wide. Trilingual in Spanish, English, and German, Teresa's global outlook is enhanced by her extensive work in various countries and collaboration with prestigious academic and public institutions like Harvard University, where she is a Fellow at the IoC (Institute of Coaching), Stanford University, where she is an Innovation Champion and United Nations where she is a mentor and trainer. She is based in Spain and works globally.

Teresa helps leaders navigate the complexities of the digital world, fostering innovation and Agile leadership. She can be contacted at [\(4\) Teresa Ramos Martin | LinkedIn](#)



Kate Anderson Foley, PhD

Illinois, USA



Kate Anderson Foley, Ph.D. is Founder & CEO of the Education Policy & Practice Group, International Keynote, McLean Affiliate of Harvard Medical School Institute of Coaching Fellow, Thought Partner, Author.

Kate Anderson Foley is a transformational leader with significant experience leading public school districts and states toward equitable and integrated services for all learners. Her work has been grounded in social justice and breaking down barriers for children who have historically been marginalized. She has led organizational change utilizing a strategic framework that ensured guaranteed and rigorous learning leading to college and career readiness for all students. Kate began her career as a special education teacher pioneering inclusive practices for students at risk and with disabilities. Her work focused on creating conditions that fostered high expectations of adults for students and innovation which catalyzed equitable opportunities for each learner. Kate's deep commitment to creating nimble and responsive systems that supported the whole child led her into administration where she advocated for local, state, and federal reform. That experience with large-scale reform led to improved academic and social emotional outcomes for students, fair funding models, innovative healthcare models, and efficient operations.

As a senior educational leader for the State of Illinois, Kate's vision of fulfilling the promise of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was nested within the Every Student Succeeds Act. She was an expert contributor to the State Plan where the deficit-based system was interrupted and a preventative and nimble system was created that intentionally addressed opportunity gaps of all learners, regardless of background or circumstance. Her deep understanding of equity-based school funding also contributed to a legislative reform model for the state of Illinois.

As the founder and CEO of The Education Policy & Practice Group, Kate partners with local, state, national, and international organizations, education agencies, and various industries providing her expertise with the improvement process, professional learning communities, strategic planning, asset-based education policies and practices, special education, coaching, and consulting. Kate is a Roslyn Wolf Lecturer with the Levin College of Public Affairs in Urban Education. Kate teaches a graduate level Special Education Law course to aspiring superintendents and principals. Kate works closely with senior leadership across various sectors providing executive coaching aimed at creating growth-minded organizational cultures (www.edpolicyconsulting.com).

Kate is the author of numerous articles and books including *Ida Finds Her Voice* and *Fearless Coaching*. Kate's new book, *Radically Excellent School Improvement: Keeping Students at the Center of it All* presents a model for ambitious improvement and tireless focus that ensures every student grows, thrives, and achieves to their fullest potential. It provides district and school leaders with a bold blueprint for designing, implementing, and monitoring a comprehensive school improvement process for radical excellence (<https://us.corwin.com/books/radical-excellence-289045>).



Andrea Leven-Marcon

South Africa



Andrea Leven-Marcon, MA (Leadership), CEC, PCC, Andrea is an Executive and Leadership Coach with multiple decades of multi-faceted business, leadership development, and technology experience gained across multiple industry sectors in South Africa, Canada and internationally.

In her formative career years, Andrea honed her skills as an economist, business and financial analyst. Thereafter, she moved to the vendor side of information technology where she sold, and managed sales, of Enterprise Resource Planning, Human Resources, Workforce Management, and Scheduling systems. During this tenure, she spearheaded and developed new business in multiple industry sectors across North America and Europe. Andrea's early career experiences led her to focus on the strategic commercialization of technologies and she subsequently worked and consulted with both established and start-up companies to significantly develop business.

After completing an MA in Leadership and Executive Coaching accreditations, Andrea moved into the field of leadership development where she led the development and delivery of international leadership learning programs specifically focused on Information Technology teams. Throughout her career, Andrea has focused on client engagement, brand and talent leadership development, strategy, and business development.

Andrea's undergraduate degrees are a Bachelor of Economic Science Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, and an Honours Bachelor of Commerce from the University of South Africa, both specializing in Economics and Business Information Systems design. Andrea advanced her academic studies and graduated from Royal Roads University with a MA Leadership in 2013 and as a Certified Executive Coach in 2017. She is also an International Coach Federation PCC accredited coach and is currently studying towards an advanced team coaching accreditation. Andrea is also a McLean Affiliate of Harvard Medical School Institute of Coaching Fellow. Andrea's MA thesis, Organizational Sustainability and Volunteer Engagement, focused on sustainable organizational environments, engagement, and organizational learning.