

## Leading Through Teams: Collaboration in Agile Environments

**Mr. Avito Tan, Jr.**

Filipino-Australian

Master of Engineering Management

Electrical Engineer | Live-Line Lineman | Academic and Practitioner

*avi2\_tan@yahoo.com*



*Mr. Avito Tan, Jr. is an academically trained electrical professional with extensive experience in power distribution systems, high-voltage operations, and team-based technical work in safety-critical environments. He has been professionally engaged in the Australian power sector for more than a decade and is currently affiliated with Western Power, where he serves as a Team Coordinator and High-Voltage Glove and Barrier Lineman.*

Collaboration is a key component of agile leadership, particularly in technical and high-pressure settings like electrical engineering and power distribution. Leadership in these environments can only be achieved by coordinating efforts rather than relying on individual authority. Teams must also be able to respond to changing operating environments while maintaining safety, accuracy, and operational control. Without this collaborative element, the principles of agile leadership cannot be fully realized.



Academically, teamwork is a structured process in which team members depend on one another, communicate, and share accountability for results. On a professional level, it should demonstrate this through the coordinated execution of team activities, adherence to established protocols, and shared responsibility for outcomes. Without a clear understanding of the importance of teamwork, an organization's agility

may be compromised by a lack of cohesion, safety, and reliability, as responsiveness to change will not provide the necessary stability in complex operating environments.

Agile leadership frameworks such as Scrum, Kanban, and XP emphasize the importance of teamwork in agile organizations. Research has demonstrated that when teams communicate effectively, share a common understanding of the work, and support one another by applying teamwork principles, the team's performance, creativity, and innovation are enhanced. Additionally, teams that work collaboratively will be better equipped to respond to changes in the operating environment while delivering value to the organization through iterative processes, demonstrating the interdependence between teamwork and agile methodologies.

Agile leadership frameworks emphasize enabling teams rather than directing them. Shared leadership allows individuals to perform at their highest level based on their skill set, rather than having their responsibilities defined by a particular position within the organization's hierarchy. Empirical studies have demonstrated that leaders who develop trusting relationships, utilize feedback loops, and create an environment of psychological safety foster employee engagement and ultimately improve organizational performance.

Continuous communication and reflective practice are also essential components of effective teamwork. Each team should establish regular planning meetings, conduct retrospectives, and hold collaborative sessions to align individual team members' goals with the team's objectives and hold the team accountable for achieving them. Agile leaders also create an environment where team members feel empowered to take initiative, learn from mistakes, and contribute meaningfully to the team's success, even in fast-paced, high-pressure settings.

There are, however, challenges to achieving effective teamwork within an agile functioning organization. For teams to exhibit effective teamwork, they must be able to resolve conflict, self-organize, be accountable for their performance, and have the necessary technical skills to perform their roles within the team. When organizations lack cultures that support decentralization or open lines of communication, teams often struggle to achieve their desired level of effectiveness. Successfully implementing an agile leadership approach requires addressing barriers to teamwork and fostering trust and collaboration.

Teamwork is an essential element of agile leadership theory, as it relies on the collective efforts of individuals to perform complex tasks. Foundational research by Kurt Lewin and J. Richard Hackman has shown that team performance is determined by interactions among group members, not by the isolated efforts of an individual. Effective teams are structured with clearly defined roles, shared objectives, and enabling processes that align directly with the adaptive characteristics of agile work.

Reflections from both professional and personal perspectives demonstrate that the concept of teamwork extends far beyond conventional definitions. Leadership is about creating an environment of shared accountability through open communication and adaptability to different work environments, whether managing technical teams or a family. Teamwork creates stability for organizations operating in highly ambiguous and complex environments; therefore, the ability of agile leadership to thrive depends on an agile team structure that fosters collaboration, trust, and a shared purpose throughout the organization.