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Bachelor Thesis

Business Ethics and Agile Methods

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Objectives of thesis

This thesis will focus on issues in business ethics and corporate social responsibility, focusing in particular on the ethical issues raised by so-called 'agile methods'. Business ethics is seen as an important part of contemporary business practice. This is often described in terms of 'corporate social responsibility', which suggests that businesses have duties to society beyond making money for shareholders. There are debates, however, whether such duties exist at all, what they are, and how companies should fulfil them.

Agile methods provides a particularly interesting example of business ethics in action, since it emphasises the importance of alignment around mission and values in order to provide flexibility, as well as high levels of accountability, suggesting that there is a complementary relationship between ethics and business strategy. The thesis will thus examine how and whether this works in practice.

Methodology

Develop literature review considering issues of business ethics and corporate social responsibility, focusing in particular on questions of company mission, vision and values.

Examination and comparison of the impact of 'agile methods' in companies and its relation to questions of business ethics, through case study analysis of companies engaged in such methods.

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Business Ethics and Agile Methods" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 23.03.2020 _____

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Business Ethics and Agile Methods

Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the issue of the importance of business ethics and corporate social responsibility. The relevance of this work is determined by the fact of the increasing level of interest to agile methods of organizational structures and doing business. This study aims to investigate the ethical aspects of such a managerial manner. What is the ethics of agile management? What are the key aspects of ethical management in an agile manner? Which approaches lead to success and reinforcement of the company and which may create risk for business issues? How does agility work for corporate social responsibility?

In the theoretical part, the development of business ethics to the newest time is reviewed as well as its importance and current issues in the sphere of practical business ethics. Also, central questions in business ethical programs are described in the model of an ethical compass that makes a direction for a company to see its way for development. The question about corporate social responsibility and its components is also considered. As it serves as a fundamental component in any robust corporate culture, this question is examined deeply from four dimensions in which it exists – economic, legal, social and philanthropic views. Further, ethical issues are examined from an agile culture perspective. The main principles and values that lead to the core of any agile structure are described.

Keywords: Business Ethics, Corporate Culture, Corporate Social Responsibility, Agile Methods, Human Resources Management, Ethical Leadership

Obchodní Etika a Agilní Metody

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá otázkou důležitosti obchodní etiky a společenské odpovědnosti firem. Význam této práce je dán skutečností, že roste zájem o agilní metodiky pro organizační struktury a podnikání. Cílem této studie je prozkoumat etické aspekty tohoto manažerského přístupu. Jaká je etika agilního řízení? Jaké jsou klíčové aspekty etického řízení agilním způsobem? Jaké přístupy vedou k úspěchu a posílení společnosti a jaké mohou představovat riziko pro obchodní záležitosti? Jak agilita funguje v rámci sociální odpovědnosti podniků?

V teoretické části je zhodnocen vývoj podnikatelské etiky až do současnosti a její význam a aktuální problémy v oblasti praktické etiky podnikání. Jsou zde také popsány ústřední otázky obchodních etických programů v modelu etického kompasu, který společnosti udává směr pro rozvoj. Zvažuje se také otázka společenské odpovědnosti podniků a jejích složek. Jelikož je tato otázka základní součástí jakékoli masivní podnikové kultury, je důkladně zkoumána ze čtyř dimenzí – ekonomický, právní, sociální a filantropický pohled. Dále jsou etické otázky zkoumány z hlediska agilní kultury. Jsou zde popsány hlavní principy a hodnoty, které vedou k jádru jakékoli agilní struktury.

Klíčová slova: Obchodní Etika, Firemní Kultura, Společenská Odpovědnost Firem, Agilní Metodiky, Řízení Lidských Zdrojů, Etické Vedení.

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1 Introduction

Goods and services are carried out through human resources to human clientele. So the role of human resources both at the organization level and at the consumer level cannot be ignored. That is the driven machine of any business. Therefore the workflow must meet the physical, mental, and emotional needs of workers at all operational levels.

The organization's culture is not determined by itself, but by the values and ethics of those people who breathe life into this organization. Moreover, the performance of the company and the coordination of operational processes depend on these same people. For instance, burnout of employees, retention of staff, unproductive workflow, customer dissatisfaction, distrust of managers and strict control over work processes lead to a lack of independent decision making among employees, the rigidity of the work process, etc. Sometimes it can lead to corporate ethical disasters.

The more business structure can quickly respond, change and adapt the more it is competitive. It is believed that being agile for the company about employees and the consumer of the product has become a necessity. A business should no longer be static but in a constant process of changing and adapting to today's changes in the world. To this end, a set of bestselling books and business sources, and leading managers offer companies to move to an agile structure, which not only carries a special corporate culture but also, as its followers claim, create such environment where values and visions, principles, workflow, personnel obey the laws of agile world.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine agile practices in a modern changing world and compare the ethical vision of agility with a practical application of it.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

This thesis will focus on issues in business ethics and corporate social responsibility, focusing in particular on the ethical issues raised by so-called 'agile methods'. Business ethics is seen as an important part of contemporary business practice. This is often described in terms of 'corporate social responsibility', which suggests that businesses have duties to society beyond making money for shareholders. There are debates, however, whether such duties exist at all, what they are, and how companies should fulfil them.

Agile methods provides a particularly interesting example of business ethics in action since it emphasizes the importance of alignment around mission and values to provide flexibility, as well as high levels of accountability, suggesting that there is a complementary relationship between ethics and business strategy. The thesis will thus examine how and whether this works in practice.

2.2 Methodology

Develop literature review considering issues of business ethics and corporate social responsibility, focusing in particular on questions of a company mission, vision, and values, corporate social responsibility and company culture.

Examination and comparison of the impact of 'agile methods' in companies and its relation to questions of business ethics, through case study analysis of company engaged in such methods.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Defining business ethics

Hearing the term 'business ethics' one can say that it sounds contradictory, but in fact, ethics is a natural market consequence of business.

Ethics was laid in the basis of decision making as an important criterion since ancient times. As defined by the philosopher Epicurus, ethics by itself "deals with things to be sought and things to be avoided, with ways of life and with the telos" (Telos is the chief aim or end in life). When a conflict of principles or values arises, established ethical maxims are designed to solve such dilemmas.

In the business ethics framework in evaluating business behavior, we also rely not on the principles of accountability or management, but on the standards of right and wrong.

Business ethics was developed with human morality evolution. Scholars George Steiner and Jonh Steiner (2011, p.200-212) defines six primary sources of ethics in business area:

1. **Genetic Inheritance.** Arguments in favor of this theory say that the evolutionary forces of natural selection influence the development of traits such as cooperation and altruism that lie at the core of ethical systems.

2. **Religion.** Religion has been accompanying societal ethics in shaping its morality for centuries. Lots of ideas and principles of different religions have similarities between each other, but have no limits in everyday life - they are the standards that are universal, practical and helpful even for the business' conduct.

3. **Philosophical Systems.** From the ancient philosophers to contemporary ones advocated a disciplined, hardworking, thrifty lifestyle. Every philosophical school and tradition ever existed has been instrumental in our society's moral development.

4. **Cultural Experience.** Rules and standards, customs and values of individuals are shaped in large by the norms of the society. From generation to generation they have been transmitted and changing.

5. **The Legal System.** The law system approximates norms established by society. Laws represent current social perceptions of what is right and what is wrong, protecting every citizen from unfair acts.

Eventually, these elements have transmitted in the corporate sphere and company codes and operating policies have developed containing ethical dimensions.

In summary, business ethics is a broad topic that covers everything from corporation responsibilities to a public (corporate social responsibility) to specific laws prohibiting illegal practices in the workplace.

3.1.1   Development of notion in the historical framework

Philosophers from ancient times to nowadays have been searching for the answers on topics that are relevant particularly for issues in business activity.

Aristotle inspired future generations of scholars (Beadle & Moore, 2006, p. 323–340) with *the idea that the good life is achieved in a community* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Every business entity begins with a community of people, stakeholders, and shareholders, and its performance depends on relations between those groups. Hence social performance has a direct influence on financial profit.

Kantian moral theory (Kant, 1785) opened up a new important approach to the study of business ethics and perhaps had the most powerful influence on the philosophy of ethics. From one side it develops how individuals should relate to each other in the context of business, from the other – it comprehends the laws and regulations that structure markets and organizations.

We already use ethics as a basis for decision making. And the measurement of human decisions can be made based on the rightness of an act by looking to the consequences of the decision (the ends) or by looking to the process of the decision (the means). The kantian theory says that the means are much more important than the consequence of an act. For instance, if a person follows the rule of "Do not steal" because he or she does not want to go to jail, it is morally unworthy, but if this person fully understands the reasons why it is bad, that's morally worthy.

Kant believed that every rational person acts according to what is right for him or her and what is right for one is right for all. According to his philosophy, rules and rights that permit this person to act somehow are based entirely on a goodwill. Problems exist, however, when an individual does not know which is a rule to follow.

Chines scholar Confucius prescribed the same. As quoted in Jeff Hay 1991, p.159, he said:

What you do not wish done to yourself, do not so to others.

Do not wish for quick results, nor look for small advantages.

If you see quick results, you will not attain the ultimate goal.

If you are led astray by small advantages, you will never accomplish great things.

When you see someone of worth, think of how you may emulate. When you see someone unworthy, examine your character.

Wealth and rank are what people desire, but unless they are obtained in the right way they may not be possessed.

Feel kindly toward everyone, but be intimate only with the virtuous

No theory or approach to the evaluation of actions is more rule-based than religion. Noteworthy, the religious point of view is not so different from Kant, except that universal principles come directly from religious beliefs. Whether one is of Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, or other faith, the deity's laws are viewed as absolutes that must shape the whole of one's life, including work. Recognition of such absolutes provides the foundation for a moral life.

In recent years, philosophers and scholars such as Moore (2005) or Mints (1996) develop the idea of virtue ethics that tells that there is no universal principle of acting that lies in good ethics, but the notion of character. Mints notes in his work (1996, p.827-838) that Plato and Aristotle were the first who said that our focus should be directed on efforts of encouraging desirable character traits such as honesty, fairness, compassion, and generosity. The primary issue changes from "What actions are universally right?" to "What is the best sort of life for human beings to live?" According to his study, in virtue ethics, the most moral person is that who is motivated to do the right thing and who cultivates that motivation in daily conduct.

3.1.2 The importance of business ethics

The meaning of ethics in business lays in helping employees avoid impediments that they may face in their workflow (Hartman et al., 2014, p.133-140):

1. Ethics instructs them in laws, regulations, policies, and procedures they must know and follow.

2. It acts as a guideline in understanding the dilemmas that employees may face in their jobs and the role their institution plays in those dilemma situations.

3. Also, it guides in applying those laws and regulations to their work.

4. The ethical program helps employees to gain skills they need to resolve their dilemmas.

5. A key message of business ethical practices is that the institutions respect the employees and their capabilities, and expect them to be responsible and accountable for the actions they take. In other words, such ethical programs say they are part of the team.

3.1.3 New developments in business ethics

Business ethics underwent many changes during the last 50 years. The most remarkable shift was about refocusing from identifying business ethics to developing codes of ethics and implementing practices and programs that prevent injustice and misconduct (for example, Matten & Crane, 2005; Moore, 2005; Steiner 2011).

The corporate code of conduct became maybe the most important part of business ethics as it describes and reinforces organizations' values and principles. Therefore, employees need to have a code to establish ethical foundations, training to help people truly understand it, and programs that allow them to investigate and report ethical violations (Ruggie, 2013).

Nowadays ethics programs are not static anymore (Hartman et al., 2014, p.150). They change with changes in social values and desires. For instance, employees wanted to be more part of an organization and have more decision making power, so management policy has moved from pure authoritarianism to more collaboration and work on an equal footing. Besides, the level of individual and collective empowerment will increase further. Anyway, putting such programs in place is not enough; to follow constantly social movement and prevent possible misconduct organizations should find the right ways of effectiveness measurement. The Human Resource Institute (HRI) finds ethics surveys, consumers' complaints and audits the best way of doing this.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, business ethics have expanded to the online realm. This new era raises big ethical issues regarding privacy, surveillance, transparency, and freedom of expression (Hartman et al., 2014, p.209). Companies start behaving as every action can be criticized by the public, and they will expect the same from their employees because they are representatives of a company and responsible for its reputation as well. Broadly, such diverse interconnectedness will change the way companies interact with all stakeholders – external and internal as well. This will require a rethinking of approaches to reputation, stakeholder engagement, and values (Hartman et al., 2014, p.239-248).

In today's fast-changing world, companies should be assured that their employees advance their skills and knowledge with professional requirements and needs of the market. With this purpose, attention on corporate education is increasing what helps employees stay encouraged, motivated and keeping up with the times (Hartman et al., 2014, p.172).

What is noteworthy to say is about the organizational culture at all. Apart from decision-making power and participating in any processes of every worker despite his or her position and place in the hierarchy, employees would more likely work on that workplace where they feel themselves freer and place that associates with positive emotions (Hartman et al., 2014, p.74-85). Considering this, companies develop corporate life that includes corporate celebrations, free time activities, active work of the HR department in internal processes and other tools that keep the company environment flourishing. Afterward, it leads to blurring the border between work and personal life.

Summarizing up, in the eyes of the employee, the workplace has changed to the one that brings common values.

3.1.4 Central questions and challenges in business ethics

To contribute to organizational effectiveness management has to focus on creating a framework for integrity. Thinking about four fundamental questions that are sources of responsibility is important to benchmark progress on ethical matters (Hartman et al., 2014, p.162-168).

Purpose. What is the main reason for the existence of the organization and its ultimate goals?

People. Who are the stakeholders to whom the company is accountable on whom it depends for success? What are their legitimate claims and interests?

Power. What is the organization's authority and ability to act?

Principles. What are the organization's obligations or duties, as well as its guiding aspirations and ideals?

Adopting such programs helps to prevent possible problems of misconduct, often because problems are caught earlier and are dealt with at the onset. Moreover, this integrity approach may even lead to strengthening competitiveness: it facilitates the delivery of quality products honestly and reliably.

However, setting the framework of ideas is only start. Putting it into practice is the difficult part. This requires intense commitment and involvement from managers and leaders of the company and setting so-called "tone". It involves specific leadership tasks and behaviors, modeling responsible decision making and ensuring that the company supports responsible behavior.

Corporate social responsibility about which we will discuss further is considered as one of the fundamentals of any ethical program.

3.2   Corporate Social Responsibility and Its Impact

3.2.1   Mission and Purpose

There is a big variety of definitions for corporate social responsibility and things that it embraces (Hartman et al., 2014; Werhane et al., 2013; etc.).

The main purpose of corporate social responsibility implementation is to concern that every business strives to achieve a healthy climate in which to function and to ensure its long-term viability (Steiner et al., 2011, p.156).

With this purpose business entity must take action now to achieve it in the future. First of all, a business should act concerning their workers, consumers, communities and other stakeholders, even if making things better for them requires companies to sacrifice some profits (Carroll et al., 2010, p.89).

What is noteworthy of corporate social responsibility definition is that it has four dimensions that characterize its meaning.

This four-part definition of corporate social responsibility has been stated by Caroll as follows: "The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary [later referred to as philanthropic] expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time". (Carroll 1991, p. 283)

Also, there is a belief in existed strong correlation between social performance and financial outcome. The more society feels the positive impact, the more support and acceptance the company has.

On the other side, business people like to think about their profitability performance from the perspective of a positive impact on society while providing goods and services too. That is why a lot of businesses start with social issues.

Further, Carrol's four categories of corporate social responsibility are separated and described more.

3.2.1.1 Economic responsibilities

The objective of any business as an economic unit is to make a financial profit by producing goods or services. A product that business provides depends on society's desires and company mission, vision and values.

On the other side, customers exchange resources for the products of the firm and in return receive benefits of the products. Therefore thus, they expect that service will be equivalent to the price they pay.

There are two main doctrines that companies might follow – the principles of maximizing profit and the principle of acceptable profits. Milton Friedman (1962) developed the idea of profit maximization arguing that "there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use it resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception and fraud".

Alternatively, Drucker (1954) argues that profitability objective measures as a minimum the company can produce, not its maximum. This idea has risen from the conviction that striving to achieve superior limit companies mostly lost the quality of the product and the true needs of their target audience. Instead of this Drucker proposes the theory that profitability defines as producing a minimum of market demand. So, if this demand is increasing, this minimum will grow respectively.

Without going into this discussion, the notion of economic responsibility that is to make financial profit lays in both views.

3.2.1.2 Legal responsibilities

The legal responsibilities represent laws and regulations of obligations and rights of business entity, its stakeholders and shareholders approved by the government and society. As was mentioned before, the legal system represents what society finds right and wrong, and defines ways of preventing, protecting and judgment of unfair actions.

The legal system is set for maintaining balance and the greater good of the society. Main laws that regulate business activities are labor law, environmental law, criminal law, and product quality law.

Every action that made beyond these boundaries indicates as immoral and deserves to be brought to justice.

3.2.1.3 Ethical responsibilities

McGuire in his work (1963, p.144) argued: "The idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations".

Firms have a direct responsibility to their stakeholders – employees, consumers, community, and others. In this study, we will mainly focus on the conditions of workflow which lead to certain service production.

In this framework, the internal company environment is the topic that is the most important. Relations between headship and workers, the freedom of speech and open-mindedness, obligations and freedom of decision-making, and lots more play a huge role in the productivity of manufacturing processes.

For instance, Smith (1776) observed that a detailed division of labor greatly increases the performance which leads to the final product.

Using his example, we can conclude that a worker who's responsible for one or two goals is much more productive than one who performs all the spectrum of tasks. Moreover, productivity increases when the first worker partly works by himself or herself and partly - in the team. The performance will raise in hundreds or even thousands of times.

In classical terms, evaluation of human cost is made personally for every worker, but nowadays, in times of rush and need in fast result, the main assessment should be made with an evaluation of criteria for final product achievement.

Calls for 'meaningful work' are a response to this problem. As this implies, a call for meaningful work is not a call for work to be more 'important', i.e., to contribute to the production of a good or service that is objectively valuable, or that workers believe is valuable. Instead, it is a call for labor processes to be arranged so that work is interesting, requires skill, and gives workers substantial decision-making power (Michaelson, 2014). Meaningfulness of work helps to stay motivated and inspire workers to become better.

Corporate culture says a lot about that: when a workplace is a place of belief in every team member, but not a place of bullying behavior when people work knowing the price of their labor.

Workers value when leaders keep their promises, support their colleagues and encourage open communication. Contemporary corporate culture defines as unconventional, employee-friendly, flextime and offers perks for every member. But globally ethical responsibility applies to everyone who can be affected by concrete actions.

The basis for this approach is the theory propounded by Ed Freeman (Steiner, 2011, p.16-20) called stakeholder analysis. This theory asks a decision-maker to consider, in reaching a decision, the interests of each individual or entity that holds a stake in that decision or who will be affected by the decision. Stakeholders are those groups who have a stake in or claim on the firm. Usually, suppliers, customers, employees, stockholders, and the local community, as well as management in its role as an agent for these groups are included in stakeholders' groups.

To consider the stakeholders of a decision, it is critical to be able to understand the interests of each party, to be able to evaluate empathetically what the potential impact on that stakeholder will be and what the stakeholder's perspective on the decision is likely to be. This is not as easy as it may first appear.

Figure 1 A Stakeholder Model of the Corporation

Source: by George Steiner and John Steiner, 2011

According to discussed here and legal, economic, ethical and philanthropic challenges that firms face doing their duties, each of these stakeholder groups has a right not to be treated as a means to some end, and therefore must participate in determining the future direction of the firm in which they have a stake.

3.2.1.4 Philanthropic responsibilities

As it is stated by Carroll and Shabana (2010, p.90), philanthropic social responsibilities may include donating, employee volunteering encouragement, driving social initiatives and so on. Since the industrial revolution, firms have sought to soak up all the benefits they could and negate the costs of these goods. This is the problem of the tragedy of the commons. In the pursuit of economic success, everyone considers the right to use resources in an uncontrolled amount, leading to their depletion. It mainly touches on the environmental topics, but other issues of common-pool resources as well.

Society expects that in exchange for the use of public property resources, the firm will be a good citizen, like any other person. The company does not have the right to expose the community to hazards in the form of pollution, toxic waste, and so on. A company that ignores the requirements of local society and is in a bad relationship with them takes the same position as the citizen who committed the crime. In addition to the legal acts that the company may violate through its actions, there are also certain implicit social contracts with the community, in violation of which there is an immediate reaction of the community, a storm of indignation and exile.

Now companies try not only to avoid such conflicts of interests – they started truly understand the means of their responsibility for actions and their consequences, but contemporary firms also started to integrate social values into operational and business strategies. Many organizations are proud of their CSR efforts, create special reports, and use social media to share their achievements. In some way, CSR effort became to get a competitive and challenging look. Organizations and interested external third parties evaluate the effectiveness of CSR by comparing performance and their results with competitors or other groups of organizations. From this point of view, the company's involvement in the conduct of CSR creates a certain (positive or negative) reputation in the eyes of customers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Carrol proposes a pyramid model of building interrelationship between those aspects. The model presented on Figure 1 starts with the foundation on the economic responsibilities as the main aim of every business entity is to make a profit while providing goods and services. The second layer presents legal responsibilities upon which ethical aspects and philanthropic responsibilities at the top of the pyramid rest. Society

expects business to do what is right and fair, and as the highest purpose – people expect from the business organizations that they will improve the quality of life as responsible corporate citizens.

Figure 2 The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

Source: by Carroll, 1991

Lastly, the responsibility of the firm is to conduct the business by their desires, which generally will be to make as such money as possible while conforming to the basic rules of the society, both these embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom.

3.3 Ethical issues of agile methods

Agility comes into our lives and workplaces more rapidly with market changes. Now customers demand more respect and self-focus, fast and quality product and product that brings some values (Wiraeus & Creelman, 2019, p.71). These entire caused new streams in mass-production to come up, called agile development – set of processes whereby ideas are researched, prototyped and underwent changes by repeated testing with target users. In turn, such innovative approach has created a space for the development of new business principles and values that aim to harness the creativity and find new ways to market fit.

As agile developers note, the purpose of "agile ethics" is to create an environment in which *the maximum speed of product development will be achieved while following ethical standards* (Goodpasture, 2016 p.63). In today's world, most technology organizations

work this way, with the invention of products being creative and iterative, which makes it possible to better know the desired product and the possibilities that can be expanded.

Adopting agile ethics create a framework that enables companies to use a value-driven method - both in the promise to provide value to customers and in the promise of ways to conduct teamwork to ensure this value.

There are six ethical principles, that are set in the Agile Manifesto and which represent a vision of an agile work environment. They are described further in 3.3.1-3.3.6 subsections, based on the study by Goodpasture 2016, p.4-7.

3.3.1 Responsibility

Just being a member of a team and rashly agreeing to try this new agile thing is not enough, as well as not enough just being devoted. It is also necessary to make every effort to achieve the intended goals of the team, and take responsibility to do so to heart.

3.3.2 Focus on customer desire

Peters and Waterman (1982) have argued that being close to the customer leads to success with other stakeholders and that a distinguishing characteristic of some companies that have performed well is their emphasis on the customer. By paying attention to customers' needs, management automatically addresses the needs of suppliers and owners. Moreover, it seems that the ethics of customer service carries over to the community. In their theory, Peter and Waterman have found multiple applications of Kant's dictum to 'treat persons as ends unto themselves' and it should come as no surprise that persons respond to such respectful treatment, be they customers, suppliers, owners, employees, or members of the local community. The real novelty of the application of Kant's rule is a theory of good management practice.

3.3.3 Openness or publicity

Openness means that the status of the project is visible to all interested parties. This may be achieved thanks to the active sharing of news in the organization's social networks, wiki page, a special project management toolbar, and any other media sources. You can also find out what path the project that has undergone updates (iterations) has already passed, at what stage it is and what upcoming goals are in front of it.

3.3.4   Feedback

As stated earlier, one of the main business' responsibilities is to provide value to the customer. To do this, prototyping and iteration methods have been developed, which were also mentioned above. Frequent feedback from customers helps to create exactly the product that they expect, making corrections and introducing improvements on time. Such an ethical system performs almost the most important function for society - the creation of a product or service that will correspond to the paid cost and, accordingly, the value that the manufacturer promotes.

3.3.5   Teamwork

The team is a smaller model of a community. And in most things we do in life people have to work with rather than against other people to get some done. Win-win situations and partnerships are the most important results of teamwork. Teamwork restores consciousness in the workplace, helps people to become better and achieve together even more than they could on their own.

3.3.6   Respect

Success means nothing until you draw other people into the picture. If a leader treats people right and other team members agree that everyone deserves to be treated with respect, they create a workplace where every worker feels valued and worshipful. It leads to growing empathy in a work environment that supports everyone to give the best. Genuinely caring about people usually leads to success.

3.3.7   Agile methods

Different techniques belong to agile methodologies, such as Kanban, Scrum, XP, Crystal (see more in Goodpasture 2016, p.19-21). They have different names and some differences, but fundamentally, they have a lot in common. They aim at boosting product development in start-up companies and helping to speed up teamwork to get to the finish line in the shortest period time. They provide close cooperation of team members that gives an opportunity to every one of them to be heard and valued, and new ideas to be reviewed.

All flexible methodologies consist of repeating cycles of iterations, that is, periods for which the team expects to implement the preparatory parts of the product (Ibid 2016,

p.21-25). Iteration blocks are typically designed for a standard eight-hour day, with a maximum of several weeks. Each day, the team makes a meeting for a narrowly limited period time (typically, 15 minutes), where the results of each employee for the past day are evaluated, plans for the day are considered; after which follows the process of developing and testing the product, and ideally, the working day ends with a ready outcome.

Furthermore, every agile team has its agile master who controls the workflow and the working environment, product master (or project coordinator) who guides the team and controls everything to produce the product corresponding to requirements. Also, team members have their leading role in a team that can be chosen according to their talents and competencies. So every member has own place in the team, the role, and the voice.

Several such iterations form part of the so-called *release*, which implies one or more product increments, which can be used in subsequent operational processes. In turn, releases are built in accordance with the planning horizon, that is, the time distance, usually a few months, a quarter or a year, during which a certain vision of the product can be achieved and evaluated on the fact. A series of such releases are called *waves*.

Thus, business cycles can be planned for a longer than a year of strategic planning by dividing it onto smaller strategic waves.

3.3.8   Discussions about agile methodologies

For now, agile practices almost do not use at a full-strength; they are implemented in the processes partly (Goodpasture 2016, p.18). Every company implements them based on their interests and principles.

Most businesses use agile tools aiming not to be more ethical in respect with their clientele and staff, but to perform more efficiently and be esteemed by society (Goodpasture 2016, p.216-222). Along with this, the working process may take a lot of time. Respondents who have been participated in agile-based project development admit that they could work up to 14 hours per day, often – without days off, while the underlying goal is not achieved (Ibid 2016, p.217, 221). They were enthusiastic, but such a devotion to the mission led to full exhaustion and exit of such 'weak links' from the team because everyone has to go at the same work speed or they leave. This attitude towards human resources can hardly be attributed to sympathetic, but in the opinion of the followers of agile, maintaining the system requires a rough control of the workflow.

Returning to the stakeholder model, this opinion contradicts the ethical foundations of the right attitude towards interested people. The company as a decision-maker must consider each group of stakeholders, among which there are both consumers and employees. In this case, the "give the best of the best" approach should also be applied to the latter. For this purpose, as has already been said, it is necessary to understand what is valuable for each group of stakeholders. If the understanding of customer needs is defined as creating a product that is as close as possible to the vision and desire of the customer, then what are the employees' requirements for the company? The idea of an agile culture is that the highest value for an employee who shares its principles is the very achievement of customer satisfaction, a kind of absolute value- and product-driven business philosophy. Everything else for them is secondary, and is minimized by focusing on some tips for project, people and operation management, and is also compensated by overtime, praise for the work done and other ways of moral support (Goodpasture 2016, p.203-206, 219-220).

To establish a project environment operating model of agile team conforms to such parameters as small teams (typically 6 to 8, but in some cases to 12), team leadership and rules are determined by the team, transparency in everything that happens during a workflow. The project management structure is built for team-operating model and focus on managing the relationship between every stakeholder party. Project managers in agile projects coach the teams and are responsible for keeping any gap closed during work processes. They help with conflict resolution, new members with adaptation, low-performing workers to be corrected. To achieve consumer expectations, customers and end-users assist the team during each of iteration. Product master is in-between customer community and project team and is committed to team success by assisting the project manager in coaching the team members for coherent product design.

Thereby, weaknesses of the agile approach are compensated by the careful management establishment that is in charge of efficient communication between headship, team and customer community, and of recognizing the voice of every party. Agile says that rules and principles of workflow should be clear and determined democratically with the participation of every team member, so as the rules are set by workers themselves, they have to be ready for every hardship during the project. Still, it does not mean that such an approach is ethical towards employees. According to the author of the thesis, even though the rules are established unanimously and the team follows a certain plan, not a single project is safe from unpredictable situations, among which there are often delays from the

plan, unaccounted for nuances that complicate operational processes at times, increasing levels of stress, etc. In such cases, instead of caring for employees, a plan is built on the achieve-the-aim-at-any-cost model, which often leads to the depletion of the team. A more ethical solution could be considered as especially thought out for such emergency cases, which would consist of working simultaneously with customers (that is, with customers) to explain the reasons for the deviation from the schedule and reevaluate and reschedule the work process. Also, as typically human factor is one of the most significant in productivity and delays are expected, it is possible to conduct the measurements of flexible iteration time blocks that have two deadlines – the most desirable one and the worst case so that the team has few scenarios to follow as appropriate. But this proposal contradicts the agile principle about customer-centricity and productivity at maximum speed. In this regard, agile culture does not have such a strong ethical foundation to employee as to the customer.

However, there are not so many companies fully devoted to the ideology of the agility to conclude with confidence. Mostly, companies use it in the pocket only and do not hurry to adapt throughout the organization. Every company implements them based on their interests and needs. From one side it helps to adapt agile methods to a certain team and to avoid such ethical issues towards employees or clients, from the other side excluding some features from the agile model can cause more conflicts and inefficiency only. For example, one can believe in the importance of the agile way of a team working but do not give attention to provide training for continuous skill development (despite it is one of the agile principles of management) or the company is paying attention to customers' needs but ignoring ideas and proposals of its workers. Taking into account written above, the author considers that it is difficult to evaluate agility as a complex system but to analyze its methods separately. This way, it will be possible to measure if agility partly used is more efficient or not.

4 Practical Part

The practical part is devoted to the case study of Amazon's business ethics. For the last decade, Amazon showed an excellent customer-centric approach – developing product standards, customer care programs, implementing innovations in respect of customers' needs and lots more. In turn, since 1996 sales have grown from $15.7 million to $147.8 million in 2019 – an 838% increase (Amazon Inc., 2018), caused by an ethical program as well that inspired devotion among people. A focus on customer needs to accelerate an engine of innovation that improves service and delivered products, each time exceeding the expectations of their customers.

Amazon is actively applying agile practices, partially introducing it in the culture of the company as well as in the system operations. From the very beginning, the management of the retail company realized that this market is rapidly changing, thus to be a leader, new principles of work are in demand.

This study is focused on the investigation of its mission, vision, and values corresponding to the ethical principles of an agile business. Moreover, corporate social responsibilities of the organization and leadership principles are examined from the perspective of building a culture of agility externally and from the inside of the corporate environment.

Information is taken from primary sources such as Amazon website and annual reports of recent years, supplemented with the author's comments about fitting Amazon corporate elements to the agile ethical concept. Then, the internal corporate culture is analyzed through the evaluation of former and current workers' reviews. For measuring employee satisfaction Glassdoor web-portal is used, where the average rating of the company's work and worker feedbacks are given. They are investigated in the framework of the work environment, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, work-life balance, career opportunities categories, quoted and supplemented with the author's thoughts.

Taking official data from the Amazon sources was a conscious step made with a purpose to compare written ideas and their state in real, how agility works in favor of or up against corporate culture.

4.1 Mission

The need for a flexible business approach came globally with a new era built on world-wide-web. Business keeps getting dragged into its network more and more, causing changes in the approaches of doing business, customer relations, and sales principles. The entrepreneur is increasingly turning to the client for advice - what he (or she) wants, how he (or she) wants, where and when. Often people go into commercial activities not for the sake of creating their masterpiece, hoping to get a response from the society, but with the desire to make a profit on what the society tells him to do.

Case in point: Amazon, since it already defines its mission as the creation of a universal platform that will cover all the visible and invisible desires of customers, where they can buy anything and anytime. On the official website of Amazon it is stated:

Our mission is to continually raise the bar of the customer experience by using the internet and technology to help consumers find, discover and buy anything, and empower businesses and content creators to maximize their success.

Flexibility is beyond normal, but the flexibility that is laid in the very foundation of the organization. Usually, such an approach may be destructive for the company since it can completely erase its essence, but in Amazon's case, it is a conscious step to follow customer rules and whims.

The mission also approved the goal of strengthening and encouraging suppliers of products that use Amazon as a distribution platform to create better quality products and promote generating a creatively unique vision. For Amazon, the purpose of its existence lies in the satisfaction of both parties to market relations.

4.2 Vision

The vision statement of a firm creates a vector that the company strives to follow towards the highest goal. Amazon defines its vision as s global leadership in providing customers with a decent shopping experience:

Our vision is to be Earth's most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

Returning to the Stakeholder Model of the Corporation by Ed Freeman (1984), this definition of vision indicates that the vector of development of the corporation is noticeably biased towards the customers, devaluing the values of the remaining components of the model.

Pursuing trends, receiving feedbacks and adjusting the service to the instant whims of customers, if the given mode is sick and harmful (for example, a surge of interest in alternative smoking methods or non-certified dietary supplements), will the service also be on the side of the buyer who is the victim of advertising and manipulation, is mistaken and hurts himself? The platform, which is trusted by a lot of people, controls the products supplied, in fact, according to information provided by the seller and feedback from people who have already used the products. But what if someone gets a negative experience by harming themselves, and returning the goods does not help smooth out the damage? Nevertheless, the client is not always right. And to stop dangerous trends in time, it is necessary to take several critical control measures, rather than let buyers go by their wits.

Moreover, such a statement indicates great attention to customer requests, which are monitored not only by marketing tools but also by reading personal information from customers of their search queries and views. Although retail platform users often agree to the terms on their own, most often the confirmation click is done automatically without really studying the conditions that are a long list with a small font indicated in the agreement. This topic is worth a separate debate on consensus and controversy over data privacy.

4.3 Values

Ideally, the corporate culture and work environment are built on values like bricks that make walls for the future building. On these bricks (values) the company's relations with all interested parties (walls) are based. What is valuable for a company to have inside the work environment and beyond? How does the company interact with the world and what is important for it to get from every effort made? What is vital to the firm?

According to official information at Amazon.com, Amazon has identified 10 values by which the company lives every day, but below there are described only those that refer to the principles of agile. In this case, Amazon lives and breathes by these concepts:

Change for the better. This principle is a vivid example of introducing a systemic agile approach at the level of work culture. The creators of the Amazon claim that the

"change for the better" is derived from the Japanese term Kaizen, which in translation means continuous improvement. As it is stated, the Kaizen program is implemented through the creation of small working groups that identify areas in need of process modernization. According to their belief, this accelerates innovation in a variety of manufacturing processes, resulting in both lower cost of goods, better quality or faster delivery. Empowering their employees is a guarantee that they feel their value and importance. Following the theoretical part about agile principles, giving responsibility for the project to the team is the basis of agility. Autonomy is the path to self-organization and self-sufficiency through advanced training of design, testing and modernization skills. From author observations during research, often, employees complain about their inability to do better since there are "bosses who decide" who most often do not listen to the proposals, finding them irrelevant. Even if the proposal is approved, then the process itself is very slow, and the boss acts as a "deterrent". Employees are involved in the process only for the time being until their already bound hands fall. The title of this value already sounds like a call for participation, for the creation of something more. Amazon leaders say they want to expand a network of innovators. In their understanding, Amazon is not just a workplace, but *a community with big dreams*. Factual veracity of the above will be verified in the Amazon Employee Review section.

Customer Obsession. This is also one of the basic principles of agile (see 3.3.2. subsection), calling for continuous usage of prototyping and iteration methods, which require careful coordination with the opinion of the potential client and improve the product by receiving feedback from the initial stages of product design. In fact, for decades, most companies have attracted buyers with content and advertising, focusing on finding buyers who are suitable for the finished product. According to Mitchell's philosophizing on customer obsession (Mitchell et al., 2011, p.71), we're coming in a new age of the customer, when the power of the sale goes from business institution to the client's hands. The transition from offering-centric approach to customer-obsessed creates an environment where a business study thoroughly every fiber of its customer first and, starting from this, creates a product that is best for their audience (Figure 3).

Such companies focus more on customer retention, making it a permanent part of business activity, offering loyalty programs and increasing customer satisfaction and trust. According to Gartner's recent report (2014), while a product-oriented company acts reactively when a customer encounters negative experience from a service, a customer-

oriented company acts by actively analyzing, predicting and preventing the possibility of a case with negative experiences.
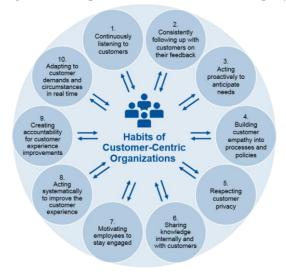
Figure 3 Principles of customer-obsessed company

Source: Gartner Inc., global research and advisory company

High standards and trust level. According to the leaders of the company, they are continuously working on raising the bar for the quality of service and goods. While clients are in the center of focus, all decisions will be made based on the influence that they can exert on these stakeholders. "*High standards in exchange for trust in us*" - sounds like a good deal. Everyone gets what is expected from the agreement: the client - satisfaction, the company - profit and a potential client base, which can only be constantly fed by new mutually beneficial transactions.

Inventions and Simplifying. Adherents of the Agile culture declare that an ongoing search for excellence lies at its root. Being in a changing unstable world (agile world!), it is important to keep the rhythm and be a creator. As it was already said, setting common, shared goals lead to collaborating with workmates instead of competitiveness one against others.

Making Amazonians the best. Many employers have the belief that an employee must be able to do everything and unprecedentedly and invariably do his job and always succeed. If your work does not bring the desired effect, you should be fired, and there will be a more "relevant" specialist for a vacancy. But recently, the opinion that the company should be interested first of all so that their employees remain motivated and keep abreast of the latest trends in their field of activity has begun to be popularized. It is the employer

who must be the guarantor of continuous training of employees and mastering modern skills, increasing their expertise. The employer-employee relationship should be built on mutually beneficial, complementary and fair principles. On the other hand, the employee has to honestly perform his work qualitatively, and not to give up responsibility for consequences to superiors. The employee is also required to be involved in the process and find ways to make the best decisions. Amazon considers it its duty to provide all possible resources for its staff, including by providing the opportunity to change their position within the company thanks to the Career Choice education program, which covers 95% of the cost of retraining (or advanced training) and also provides the opportunity to receive an official certificate of nationally recognized courses. Payment of 5% is symbolic, awakening a student's self-motivation to learn. According to Amazon leaders' words, in this way they seek to unleash the potentials of their workers, believing in their uniqueness and hidden talents, which are enough to find how to open. Amazon believes their workers are the best. Such an attitude towards employees might cause a positive response among them – workers should feel proud that they work here and have the power to make their own decisions. In the author's opinion, fair pay is, of course, important, but people are more likely willing to work diligently and motivated out of gratitude for their worthy attitude towards themselves as mature individuals.

4.4 Leadership Principles

Elements of the leadership Amazon seeks to deliver are illustrated in a quote by Jeff Bezos (i.e., CEO, President of Amazon) below (adapted from Amazon.jobs):

These Principles work hard, just like we do. Amazonians use them, every day, whether they're discussing ideas for new projects, deciding on the best solution for a customer's problem, or interviewing candidates. It's just one of the things that makes Amazon peculiar.

It is significant to investigate the set principles of leadership as it was mentioned in the theoretical part, it is the application of ethics to the organizational realm. Thus, ethical leaders put what is right before what is profitable, expedient or efficient. In the author's opinion, organizations have to encourage their workers to act ethically. To do this, the company should have guides, cultivators and role models.

In its reports, Amazon reveals its understanding of leadership. The following is a summary of the core beliefs of Amazonian leaders with the author's critiques.

While studying official data it is noticed that perhaps one of the main advantages and powers of this corporation is that at different hierarchical levels the employee has a sphere of his strength, his internal mission, for which he is responsible (according to information about Leadership Principle of Amazonians). In the author's thought, such an approach helps to diverse many tasks and decisions to make between those who are much closer to the process associated with this issue.

The author is convinced that leaders are responsible for continually carrying the values that the corporation rests on, from the work process to the sale of the product. Amazon has no doubts about its leaders, and as stated on its web page: "*Leaders start with the customer and work backward. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they obsess over customers*" (adapted from Amazon.jobs). Such calls sound like a speech for soldiers. If you are a leader in Amazon, you must be a true commander. Job satisfaction does not come directly from your superiors (because it already believes you, does not drive you into the cage and gives you space for free work – at least so Amazon convinces), but from the process of work and the achievement of results. In this, we can see the elements of virtue ethics (see – 3.1.1. subsection) when an employee fairly receives what he has earned by honest labor.

One of the points of Amazon's summarize says: "Leaders are owners" (adapted from Amazon.jobs). This phrase emphasizes - each leader has powers that in their way determine the fate of the entire company. But this is much more than the duties of an average clerk. Amazon states about their employees: "They never say that's not my job".

The following paragraph states: "Leaders are right a lot. They have strong business judgment and good instincts. They seek diverse perspectives and work to disconfirm their beliefs*"*. Thus, leaders are competent; they possess common skills and knowledge of all the specific mechanisms of their work, and in return receive recognition and "rightness". Leaders have an opinion, have the right to make mistakes and, as it is stated, "listen attentively, speak candidly, and treat others respectfully. They are vocally self-critical, even when doing so is awkward or embarrassing". In the author's opinion, the ability to self-criticism and refraining from condemning others is a very important feature for team members (especially for leaders), which prevents the emergence of conflict situations and hostility within the group.

In the agile managerial system it is vital to have agile-master in the team (see 3.3.7 subsection) – person, who is a team coach who helps to manage tasks, reviews work environment and workflow, even conducts psychological support and lots more. Amazon says that its leaders are "mentors for motivated and capable lower-level employees in career development, training, and talent releasing". Such ethics removes barriers in the hierarchical system and evens out the possibilities of each, regardless of the individual characteristics of the person. Moreover, leaders as well follow lifelong learning and always seek to improve themselves.

Finally, leaders are in charge of the team and achieving key goals with the right quality and in a timely fashion. Amazon believes, being at the heart of the processes leader has a mindset of the chief executive officer of a whole company who acts keeping in mind that every victory and failure affects the company at large.

4.4.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Belong to agile business means to respond to changing needs quickly and more efficiently. Continuous measurement and evaluation of performance may also be used to impact positively society, the environment or other areas.

According to "Sustainability: Thinking Big" by Amazon (2019), they have conducted an investigation to identify the most significant environmental and social topics across their business and distinguished the prioritization on sustainability development and focusing on such topics as:

1.   **Environmental:** climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energy. In 2018 Amazon was ranked number 1 for using 100% renewable energy across its global infrastructure (by Solar Energy Industries Association). In their fulfillment centers, particularly in India, Amazon uses a system that collects and recycles water making it possible to re-use and save it.

2.   **Responsible supply chain practices, including human rights and the safety and well-being of workers in the supply chain**. At the moment when work becomes part of a person's life, the role of the company is to support the spirit of the employee and opening talents. Inner culture is not limited to the common goals, values, and responsibilities that linked them together. Culture continues in a work ethic that is measured by labor conditions, inclusive workplaces, and dignity of workers.

Also, the practice of a responsible supply chain includes the production of affordable goods and services. Amazon government says the highest product and working standards are set and they conduct programs that support continuous improvement for their suppliers and workers.

Key areas have been identified: safe workplace and fair salaries, women empowerment, freely chosen employment (nobody has to be pushed and threaten to work), environmental protection (care for living and working environment of workers and their communities).

3. **Waste, recycling, and the circular economy**. Amazon is developing programs to minimize costs, as well as processing materials used in operations, and also encourages its customers to participate in the circular economy.

4. **Sustainable products**. Amazon calls itself a data-driven machine, explaining that in all processes the organization relies on measurements and data. The scientific approach is used in finding innovative solutions to accelerate customer service, as well as in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in operations and other environmental issues. Drones, autopilot cars and other technologies are introduced to reduce the cost of service.

4.4.2 Amazon Employee Review

You can judge the working conditions in companies, how companies treat their people by studying the opinions of the employees themselves. For this purpose, the Glassdoor web-portal was analyzed, where you can get company reviews from experienced ones. The analysis was carried out taking into account views about the work environment, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, work-life balance, career opportunities.

40,354 former and current Amazon employees gave their feedback on Glassdoor.com directly, on average rating the company's work at 3.9 points out of a maximum of 5, which is not much above average. However, 75% of reviewers would recommend the company to friends. In the remaining categories, the indicators are approximately the same as the overall Amazon score:

- ❖ Culture & Values – 3.8/5
- ❖ Work/Life Balance – 3.4/5
- ❖ Senior Management – 3.4/5
- ❖ Compensation and Benefits – 3.9/5

❖ Career Opportunities – 3.8/5

Source: adapted from Glassdoor.com

4.4.2.1 Work environment

Among the Fortune 500 companies, Amazon has one of the highest staff turnover rates (International Business Times). At the same time, the company works tirelessly only increasing its pace. Over the past five years, the number of employees has increased by 400,000 from 230,800 full and part-time workers to nearly 650,000 people working in the offices of 32 countries.

Amazon is very responsible for recruiting, so each team member is considered as part of the elite empire that is chosen one. According to one of the former HR managers, the dedication to the company's culture begins with selection for open vacancies (which are always enough, given the volume of work and staff turnover), when all newcomers guide into Leadership Principles, gold rules of the organization, that every Amazonian has to follow every minute day and night. This is what connects everyone - from beginner to senior specialist. Every aspect of the Amazon system motivates us to become smarter, superior and more professional. Company veterans often say that Amazon's genius lies in how it makes them control themselves.

But sometimes, as it was noticed during worker reviews investigation, it is going to extremes. For example, often in the reviews, there are accusations of the cutthroat work environment. "I would see people practically combust" is a frequent commentary on the conditions in which people had to work.

The main ideologist Bezos transferred his ideals to the company – to the very leadership principles, where the team should always have competition (opposite to the team spirit), where only the strongest wins; where co-workers must constantly challenge their comrades by challenging their ideas, even if "doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting". Thus, the workspace turns into a place of frequent combat. An Amazon's former senior developer said he admired the customer focus but could not tolerate the hostile language used in many meetings, a comment echoed by many others: "You learn how to diplomatically throw people under the bus," he said, "It's a horrible feeling".

Besides, the organization consistently compiled the rankings of employees, and when the system required "cleanings and improved performance", scapegoats were chosen. It could be either an employee who ended up at the end of the rating or a dummy person

who was bombarded with complaints by a group scheming. In such cases, the role was played not by revenge, but by the fear of being kicked out of work. In such circumstances, people were ready to trample on others, just to stay afloat themselves.

What Bezos called the transparency of the workspace in his Leadership Principles, in reality, turns out to be reports and intrigues. Many former employees admitted that they were given special instructions, according to which they had to report information about their boss and colleagues to another boss.

According to the New York Times article (2015), lawyers also respond with comments on these confessions. According to lawyers from Seattle (where Amazon's central office is located), Amazon employees often turn to them for advice. But the legislation does not provide for punishment for such an attitude towards employees. "Unfairness is not illegal," echoed one of them, "Without clear evidence of discrimination, it is difficult to win a suit based on a negative evaluation".

4.4.2.2 Diversity and inclusion in the workplace

Starting in 2017, Amazon began to actively support various population groups, especially supporting women, LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual plus), BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) and disabled employees. The organization launched a special diversity-focused initiative - Amazon Amplify. As part of this program, interview panels, grants to female students, regular recruiting of women in their positions, and the creation of opportunities for people of any age and experience to learn new professions through special degrees and training programs are regularly held. A special AWS program was also launched for people who had to take breaks due to personal circumstances (childbirth, illness, accidents, etc.) to help them return to work and enter the stream.

But there are not rare reviews that it was a gender that became the stumbling block in promotion or retention. Some women complained that they were fired shortly after their return after childbirth, as young mothers were given priority not to work, but their newborn baby. Other women shared that it was especially difficult for women in this competition-and-elimination system. They said they could lose out in promotions because of intangible criteria like "earn trust" (i.e., leadership principle No. 10) or the emphasis on disagreeing with colleagues. Being too forceful, they said, can be particularly hazardous for women in the workplace.

They could be especially unfair with people in a crisis of life – who are struggling with serious illnesses, suffering miscarriages or other personal misfortunes. They were not given time to recover at all but were disposed of as an unnecessary burden, saying that it was not in their competence to take care of the personal problems of workers. A former member of the Kindle team commented that: "When you're not able to give your absolute all, 80 hours a week, they see it as a major weakness".

4.4.2.3 Work-life balance

In continuation of the last quote, some workers said that they had decided to quit because their superiors pressured them to spend less time with their families. Working overtime, on weekends and holidays is not encouraged, but is considered the norm. Some left feedback that they could not sleep peacefully at night, because at any time they could receive emails and after a while, the boss wrote and called asking why he did not answer the letter.

Many employees are sure that their success at work is directly affected by age: a 40-year-old man will be less preferred to a 30-year-old man who is not burdened by family hardships and children, and a 20-year-old man is more likely to be chosen than a 30-year-old, despite the difference in experience and knowledge, because the younger one is more active and resourceful.

Although the organization generously pays overtime and compensation, it costs employees personal life, continuous work, and full dedication.

4.4.2.4 Career opportunities

Despite all this, Amazon's performance assessment has remained stable and above average for many years. Employees are enthusiastic about the work here (adapted from Glassdor.com):

This company has high goals and this is not easy at all. To be in such a dynamic system, you need to constantly change. And here there are great opportunities for those who want to stay afloat.

A job description for vacant positions in Amazon often indicates that work experience is not mandatory. The salary for beginners is decent and not much behind the

salaries of seniors. In an interview, motivation and a desire to work are often appreciated: "If you can find your niche within the company, there is going to be room to further your career".

5   Results and Discussion

After studying the agile ethics in the theoretical part, an analysis of its application in practice was indispensable. A case in point was a global company with more than half a million Amazon employees. In its working principles, which they officially pursue, the philosophy of the workflow is traced: customer-centricity which leads to constant product development, transparency and openness that removes barriers between employees and the public, a responsibility that is every worker feels and much more that affects working atmosphere and relationships.

After first analyzing the official documents of the organization related to the mission, vision, and values that it follows, as well as corporate responsibility, which the company embodies as a caring citizen of the world, and then, transferring ideals to real conditions, weak zones were identified. In pursuit of customer satisfaction, an employee supporting the company's engine remains in the background with its interests. Because of this, many employees, unable to withstand heavy loads and an unhealthy attitude, simply quit. Human resources are valued as long as they bring economic benefits to the company.

Despite the frequent conflict situations in the company, hundreds of thousands of employees continue to spin the wheels and do more and more. At its offices, Amazon uses a strong set of management, data and psychology tools to gear up teams. Each aspect of the Amazon system strengthens others to motivate and discipline specialists of different ranks of the company: principles of leadership, strict constant performance ratings; and competition among peers who are afraid of being fired as a scapegoat. Also, to survive there for more than a year and hope for career development, you need to not have any restraining factors in your personal life that prevent you from fully devoting yourself to work, and also be pugnacious and work-obsessed to survive in this Hunger game.

But on the other hand, Jeff Bezos gave birth to a new giant of e-commerce and was able to realize a new type of workplace: flexible, but tough, with employees working for a short time, and employers requiring a maximum. Being motivated and willing to know and be able to do more, the employee is guaranteed to receive a reward and the opportunity to

be noticed. Not everyone is ready to work at such a pace and with such loads, but the company requires compliance with its scope and plans.

Many go to get jobs, blinded by the grandeur of the company and not having a clear grasp of what they will face and what is required of them. In such a case, such employees are doomed to excessive stress and further dismissal from the organization.

Regarding buyers and society as a whole, Amazon acts prudently, using its capabilities – financial and intellectual, for the benefit of society. The organization embodies numerous local and global initiatives, creates innovative products that facilitate life and solve social and environmental important problems. It seems that everything Amazon strives for is created for consumers with the highest goal.

But this desire completely erased the meaning of those who are working on the implementation of Amazon plans. Hundreds of ethical issues with employees pop up after leaving the company since it is forbidden to disseminate any information about the internal life of the company due to a mandatory contract before hiring. Many former employees claim that they were extremely disappointed by what they read in the headlines about corporate culture and leadership principles and what it turned out to be in reality.

Anyway, these issues are solvable. It is enough to seriously think about the ethical component of the corporate environment and begin to take action to regulate it. As one of the possible solutions, in addition to managerial control, Amazon should pay special attention to adhering to the ethical standards of employee relations. To carry out control, it would be appropriate to create a separate independent department of corporate ethics that would serve as a supervisory eye. In the case of Amazon with a transparency of the workspace, so, the need for employees to spy and inform someone else's boss about their team lead disappears, as this new department will have to follow up on this. It is also possible to resolve any other conflicts found during the study of this issue. But for this, such conflicts should worry about the company. Amazon is concerned about customer issues. It is caused by the fact that the company is customer and best value-oriented. Any other issues stay aside as irrelevant.

In general, this study leads to the conclusion that obtaining customer approval leads to the loss of valuable key aspects of the work process, primarily staff. From one side, agile methods can be a good tool for building a business strategy targeted toward the client, but with partial or inept use in the workflow, they can violate ethical standards to employees. Good governance can hold back the rest of the negative consequences, but with

tremendous effort. After all, the loss of employees leads to a loss of maximum speed and quality, while customer requests each time become only more voluminous and more complicated.

An agile business approach is new and little practiced in full format rather than partly. Implementing it on enthusiasm, many non-banal nuances are missed. Agile principles can easily become a nightmare for employees: focusing on customers (principle №2) and receiving feedback from them (principle №4) goes into cycles, while project delivery dates are coming to an end (and the product is still not "the perfect one"), the employee's responsibility (principle №1) becomes the responsibility at all costs and any sacrifices (personal life, sleep and rest, a normalized work schedule, and so on) to do the impossible in the set time, openness and transparency (principle №3) turn into denunciations and intrigues, open competition replaces teamwork (principle №5).

Thus, agility has very thin boundaries between what is normal and is no longer acceptable. For agile methods to be considered ethically correct, toughened measures must be established within the company that regulates the balance between the desire to achieve a goal and an adequate relationship between employees.

6 Conclusion

There is not a single convincing, clear and indisputable study that established the decisive superiority of agile ethics. Also, the growing voice of agile practitioners against this methodology is of concern. Many emphasize the growing workload of employees, an ever-increasing list of lagging and dissatisfaction with the bosses regarding the final product.

As an opposite argument, proponents of the methodology argue that the main cause of the problems is implementation gaps, not conceptual flaws. High turnover rates, when many employees change jobs every one to three years, are the tough realities of an industry obsessed with rapid advances and innovations.

The work cycle consists of the development, testing, release, innovation, testing, re-release, and so on in an endless circle. Consequently, frequent alteration becomes inevitable. The final product in an agile environment is redone many times. Employees become overwhelmed. These limited resources are forced to become uninterrupted, which goes beyond their capabilities. They should not only work in the workplace but also work anywhere, anytime. This affects system performance even more, as the result is squeezed out of overloaded human resources. The result is an inadequate development process.

The destructive effect of 'forcing' the teams, which the authorities resort to, leads to the fact that at the finish they are no longer capable of anything. With the inadequate use of agility, this tool turns into a Procrustean bed: if the employee does not become flexible enough for the system, the system will forcibly make him or her suitable, or throw away.

Partly due to its ability to maximize the benefits of employees, Amazon is stronger than ever. According to many current and former employees, these deviations are not a system failure, but rather a logical result: massive recruitment of new employees helps speed up Amazon's system processes, but then they wear out and are replaced by new personnel, while the most loyal Amazonians pass the test of fire.

In essence, the agile philosophy is to respond quickly to changes in a world where you need to maintain flexibility, but in Amazon reality business philosophy is also to remain tough. This is an approach that helps Amazon be afloat. But in this case, Amazon's agile reputation loses its strength and becomes more like corporate totalitarianism with the uncontrolled use of human labor, not taking into account the employee as a free person, but one who has to give himself all day and night to work. Corporate life should be your whole

life. Although agile confirms the need for full dedication, it is clear that this should be an adequate line.

The concepts and ideas, methods and principles, real case and conflict situations studied in this work lead to the conviction that agility lacks mutual understanding and healthy internal communication. Employees must share the company's desire to satisfy customer needs, but at the same time, the company must take steps to hear, support and take care of its employees. To find the best solution for the business, the owner often builds on his interests and ultimate recipients, ignoring own obligations.

So, introducing agility into practice, many forget about one of the most important points - respect. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. There have to be no longer power relations of entrepreneur interests to an employee and society, all three should work in synergy satisfying their purposes and of each other.

Conceptually, a culture of agility allows companies to stay adaptable and to strengthen a capacity to implement changes, but to truly become an agile company every worker and leader has to share its principles and set mindset this way. Since it is still new in the business industry, many companies are still not truly agile. Thus, it inhibits a reliable investigation of its efficiency.

This topic still needs in-depth study. Many issues remain open, but their solutions are possible to reveal. A lot of conflicts in the workplace arise due to the lack of ethical conduct from managerial stuff. For example, lots of issues come up because of unlimited usage of human resources, pressure and urge for the aggressive rivalry for better productivity. Thus, the development of agile business approach should be focused on ethical problem solving.

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