# Back to Basics

It is now the fall season and leaves are slowly falling down the trees. It is also now that strategic plans, Long Range Planning and other Mid-Term Plans are discussed everywhere by management teams. We do plan for the future transformation of our companies. They will need to survive and at the same time conquer new markets. We are talking about technology, strategy, and quite often about *Change Management* and *New Way of Working*. Everything is moving faster, we need to be agile and change our culture!

A few days ago, I was listening to a great presentation by the HR (Human Resource) Director of one of the companies in which I'm active. The topic was the transformation of the corporate culture thanks to the accelerated implementation of the "Agile" methodology. To illustrate the topic, a short video was used to introduce the key concepts and the different processes of the "Agile" methodology.

Then, suddenly I felt the beginning of a terrible giggle and I had to call for all my long experience to remain under control.

What did happen? While the video was presenting in an incredible rush, drawings, schematics, keywords such as Scrum, Product Owner, KPI, WIP, Transversal, Self-organization, Sprint, Agile contracts, etc., I suddenly imagined the frowning face of Patrick, one of my old chaps at IRIS, with whom I have developed so many products, for 30 years. I could nearly see his dubitative expression and I could hear his ironic and skeptical voice inside my head saying: *"Yep, looks very nice, but we have not waited for all that theory to develop winning products sold to HP, Canon and Kodak."*

And then, in a flash, I visualized his desk, an amazing bric-à-brac (hodgepodge) with a kind of Tower of Pisa made of documents, one and a half meter high. Then I came back to the nice and clean drawings and schematics of the video and I told to myself that indeed at IRIS we didn't always follow the Best Practices of the Agile development.

And still, it worked! Even today IRIS and IBA, the two first spin-offs of the UCL, two surviving dinosaurs of the pre-agile era, have created together more employment than all the other spin-offs that have followed. Maybe a sign that there are good old recipes that are also worth looking at?

Today, we liberate our enterprises, some of our large banks are organized in "Tribes" practicing special "ceremonies". Our universities are analyzing the organization model of the Japanese Amoeba that is supposed to generate the maximum empowerment.

And what if, Change Management and New Way of working were often mainly intended to do more with less, without telling it clearly? And what if, we were introducing some useless frictions between the "old" who are supposed to be averse to Change and the young kids who are ready to rush? And what if the performance was not only a question of methodology, but also a question of harmony and teamwork?

When we think about it, our "Agile Stag", when in burn-out, is not that useful anymore to his tribe!

An inspiring recipe from the world of the SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) to conclude? I call it #backtobasics.

*"Our 3 priorities are: our customers, our products and our team! Our small, beloved enterprise has some problems, you are now all aware of that. We are on the same ship and we need to stand shoulder to shoulder. So, now we go, we will win that game and we will show them what we are capable to achieve."*

**Agile Methodology, Scrum, Product Owner, Self-organization, Sprint… I suddenly felt the beginning of a terrible giggle.**