

Management trends related to product development

Background

As in any other area of human endeavor there are trends coming and going in management, not least so in the area of product development. Famous examples of such trends include project management, total quality management, lean, and agile. Such trends have consequences for product development organization and practice. Changes induced by significant developments such as the pandemic or digitalization (aspects of which potentially can be considered a management trend as well) means practical changes for product development and how it is organized. More work carried out from home, increasing dependence on software in product systems, less clear boundaries between companies in innovation ecosystems etc..

Problem

The effects of management trends on product development practice and organization are not always exclusively constructive. In times of drastic change there are risks of exaggerated belief in trends making management of product development less clear sighted. The scrutiny of management trends in times such as ours is therefore highly relevant.

Broad purpose/aim

The broad purpose of the proposal is to explore and critically reflect on the role of management trends in relation to novel practical conditions for product development. To consider a novel condition for product development (such as increasing work from home, digitalization of previously non-digital types of products) and explore management trends that it fuels or gives rise to, and conversely how such trends might kick back at the condition under consideration.

Method

Relevant methods in addition to literature studies could be interviews with management consultants, product developers and managers; thematic analysis.

Expected results

Thorough understanding of what management trends are, demonstrated through a final thesis which also presents and problematizes recent developments of conditions for product development in relation to some

relevant management trends. The above should be achieved with empirical support (e.g. interviews) as well as through critical reading of relevant scholarly literature and reflection.

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