

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW ¹



Book Title: ***Developmental Agile Leadership – Empowering Teams in a Changing World***

Author: **Timothy J. Kloppenborg, Kam Jugdev**

Publisher: Business Experts Press, LLC

List Price: 17.99 Format: Paperback, 160 pages

Publication Date: 2025

ISBN: 13: 978-1-63742-884-9 (paperback)

Reviewer: **Sunil Kumar Suvvari**

Review Date: December 2025

Introduction

Developmental Agile Leadership presents a framework that helps leaders make decisions in a fast-growing VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) landscape. This book combines principles of developmental leadership with Agile leadership by overlapping the concepts of Agility, Truth, and Hope in both models. This book helps leaders foster trust, create collective commitments, shared understanding of the outcome, and empowerment of the people closest to the problem through learning agility within their teams and organizations.

The book improves the reader's thoughts in two parts, the first part lays down the foundation of, *principles and values* of Developmental Agile Leadership, covering the concepts of cultivating learning Agility, Trust, and Hope in the VUCA landscape. Elaborating on the importance of empowering the team and leading from behind, and navigating through the challenges with a growth mindset. The second section of the book enables the reader on practical implementation by providing tools and strategies to inspire teams and cultivate emergent leaders to drive continuous improvement. Whether you are aspiring to be a leader or have been leading teams for more than a decade, this book will challenge your thoughts of traditional hierarchy-based leadership and evolve your mindset to empower others and embrace change through collective decision-making and shared learning.

¹ How to cite this work: Suvvari, S. (2026). Developmental Agile Leadership – Empowering Teams in a Changing World, book review, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XV, Issue II, February.

Overview of Book's Structure

Developmental Agile Leadership is structured in two sections; the first one lays the foundations through principles and values of Developmental Agile Leadership and the latter section walks through the implementation of the practices of Developmental Agile Leadership.

Part 1: Embrace Developmental Agile Leadership Principles and Values. This section lays the foundation by explaining the VUCA landscape.

Chapter 1 presents various leadership styles: the transformational leadership, servant leadership, developmental leadership, and agile leadership. Figures such as Figure 1.1 (Developmental Agile Leadership Roadmap) and Figure 1.2 (The Experiential Learning Process – Kolb 2014) provide foundational models for navigating uncertainty.

Chapter 2 explores learning agility, trust, hope, and the growth mindset. Tables like 2.1 (Fixed versus Growth Mindset), 2.2 (Qualities of Trustworthiness), and 2.3 (Hope and Work Outcomes) reinforce these core concepts by highlighting specific behaviors and attributes leaders can cultivate.

Chapter 3 introduces Agile principles, leadership roles, and communication strategies. This section is supported by Tables 3.1 (Effective Transformational leadership behaviors), 3.2 (Effective servant leader behaviors, and 3.3 (Effective behaviors demonstrated by developmental leaders) outline behaviors typical of transformational, servant, and developmental leaders. These comparisons offer practical insights into how these leadership styles influence team dynamics and innovation.

Chapter 4 then shifts the focus to developmental leadership, emphasizing the importance of leading from behind and helping others grow into emergent leaders.

Part 2: Implement Developmental Agile Leadership Practices focuses on applying the principles discussed in the first half.

Chapter 5 outlines how to build a culture of shared learning and trust, with the help of Figure 5.1 (Leadership Roadmap) and Figure 5.2 (Continuous Improvement Cycle). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide templates for stakeholder engagement and action planning, making it easier for leaders to drive collaborative change.

Chapter 6 offers actionable strategies to enhance team and stakeholder engagement. Figures like Figure 6.1 (Risk Matrix) and Figure 6.3 (Kanban Board Example) are complemented by tables such as 6.1 through 6.3, which cover conflict resolution, stakeholder interactions, and communication planning.

Chapter 7 explores how to identify and develop emergent leaders, supporting the long-term vision of building a sustainable and resilient leadership culture. Tables 6.4 to 6.7 detail project decision-making types, Agile team development stages, and team practices, giving readers concrete methods to guide team performance.

Chapter 8 concludes the book by integrating all concepts and practices into a cohesive leadership approach. Hence, the structure of the book enables the reader to understand the concepts and provides tools for the practical implementation of these learnings.

Highlights: What I liked!

A clear breakdown of leadership behaviors across different styles makes this book unique. The Table 3.1, which categorizes the Vision, Outcome, Commitment and progress behaviors of Effective transformational leadership, to explain how a transformational leader can inspire the team and stakeholders to achieve their goals. I found it especially useful how each behavior is tied to practical actions, such as helping team members commit to outcomes or preparing for obstacles. It bridges theory and action in a way that's immediately applicable.

I also found the section on servant leadership particularly meaningful. The explanation of servant leadership's roots and purpose gave depth to the concept, and Table 3.2 (Effective servant leader behaviors) helped clarify what it looks like in day-to-day leadership, helping servant leaders to serve the team and other stakeholders so that they can jointly achieve their goals.

Another standout element is the book's flow of the theory and the tools and models for practical implementations for an actionable impact. Tables such as 5.1 (Stakeholder-related leadership actions) and 6.2 (Conflict resolution approaches) give leaders immediate strategies they can implement in their teams. Similarly, figures like the Developmental Agile Leadership Roadmap and Experiential Learning Process appear across chapters, reinforcing learning and helping readers visualize leadership growth as a continuous, iterative process.

The book also shines in its integration of emotional intelligence with agile methodologies. By focusing on qualities like hope, trustworthiness, and learning agility (especially in Chapters 2 and 5), the authors demonstrate that effective leadership is just as much about mindset as it is about strategy. This emotional foundation is well-supported with data and frameworks, such as Table 2.2 (Qualities of trustworthiness) and Table 2.3 (Hope and work outcomes), which link personal leadership development to team resilience and performance.

Finally, the book's consistent use of **Kolb's Experiential Learning Process** across multiple chapters highlights its developmental orientation. By revisiting this model again and again in the book, the authors reinforce the importance of reflection, experience, and adaptation. This not only supports the agile mindset but also provides a scaffold for leaders to assess and adjust their own behavior in evolving contexts.

Highlights

The highlight of the book is that it follows Nelson Mandela's model of **"leading from behind"**. It emphasizes the importance of collective decision-making by enabling team empowerment and encouraging decentralized decision-making rather than using authority to make controlled, centralized decisions.

This book explains the importance of leadership as a developmental process that cultivates the culture of emergent leadership. In chapter 4, the authors encourage leaders to accompany team members on their leadership journey, recognize and support each person's unique strengths, needs, and motivations, cultivate the culture of shared decision making, and nurture growth by creating psychological safety.

This book presents leadership as a shared journey through trust, learning, and empowerment, but not by command-control.

Who might benefit from the Book

Developmental Agile Leadership is useful for both emerging leaders and practicing leaders. Whether one is playing the role of executive, manager, lead, or even a team member, reading this book will help them with practical strategies on how to lead with agility, trust, and a growth mindset.

Leaders working in Agile environments or transitioning to Agile methodologies will especially benefit from the frameworks, roadmaps, and team-focused practices outlined throughout the book.

This book is also valuable for HR professionals, coaches, and organizational development specialists who support leadership growth and cultural transformation by providing practical tools for inclusion, adaptability, fostering a culture of growth, and building trust.

Conclusion

Developmental Agile Leadership is more like a toolkit offering practices to execute and lead through human-centered feedback loops by empowering people closest to the problem to make decisions. This blends both developmental and servant leadership values to create a leader who neither leads nor makes followers, but shepherds the team from behind by creating opportunities for emergent leadership, creating a safe space to grow through experiments and adaptation.

For both budding leaders and practicing leaders, through the tables, road maps and figures, this book offers a cultural evolution of mindset supported by tools to lead with trust, agility, and resilience.

For more about this book, go to:

<https://www.busessexpertpress.com/books/developmental-agile-leadership-empowering-teams-in-a-changing-world/>

About the Reviewer



Sunil Kumar Suvvari

Texas, USA



Sunil Kumar Suvvari is an accomplished Agile leader, researcher, and advocate for web accessibility, with over 15 years of extensive experience in coaching, training, and empowering Agile teams. His expertise spans Agile Project Management, Product Management, Evidence-Based Management, Software Development,

Artificial Intelligence, Universal Designs, and fostering inclusive cultures. Sunil has authored and co-authored more than 20 extensively researched articles published in reputed international journals, along with three influential books focusing on Project Management and Agile methodologies.

Sunil currently serves as a distinguished reviewer for numerous prestigious publications such as Springer, Elsevier, Sage Publications and international conferences. His reviewer contributions include roles with the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), IEEE International Conferences. editorial teams for journals such as the Journal of Advanced Management Studies, and International Journal of Science and Research.

Beyond reviewing, Sunil served as a judge and evaluator for global awards and competitions in business intelligence, accessibility innovation, and coding—including the CODiE Awards, tech hackathons, and leadership challenges.

A sought-after speaker, Sunil has delivered keynote speeches and expert talks at leading professional bodies such as PMI (Project Management Institute), IEEE Technology and Engineering Management Society, ACM (Association for Computing Machinery), International Association of Project Managers (IAPM) and Agile New England, sharing practical insights on accessibility, empathy-driven design, and Agile leadership.

Sunil holds advanced professional certifications, including Professional Scrum Master III, Certified SAFe Practice Consultant, Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP), and Certified Professional Scrum Product Owner II, among others.

His global mentoring efforts have supported and guided over 1,000 professionals across 24 countries, helping emerging leaders build inclusive, agile careers. Notably, Sunil has empowered more than 100 homemakers to transition into IT leadership roles through personalized mentoring, training, and coaching.

In 2025, he was honored with the Global Leader in Tech for Good Award for his transformative contributions to accessibility, inclusion, and universal design. His mission is to ensure that innovation leaves no one behind and that accessibility is recognized not as an afterthought, but as a catalyst for meaningful progress.

Sunil can be contacted at suvvarisunilkumar@ieee.org

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the PM World Journal and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to the PM World Journal's managing editor; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published.

If you have read a good PM-related book recently and would like to publish a book review, or if you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact Editor@pmworldjournal.com.