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*Interview with Raji Sivaraman and Michal Raczka*
by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Interview

# Interview with Raji Sivaraman and Michal Raczka

## *Principals*
## *AgilityDiscoveries PA Lighthouse Guides*

### *Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler*
*Istanbul, Turkey*

**Raji Sivaraman, M. S, PMI-ACP, PMP, Principal of ASBA LLC**, a Singapore citizen, helps USA/Singapore companies with strategic planning/overseas startups. She speaks several languages. Worked in Singapore, Thailand, India and the USA. She helps fortune 50/500 companies with CSR/BSR projects. She is a Consultant, Director, Strategic Advisor and an Advisory Board member for non-profit organizations. She has worked in IT, publishing, financial, standards and logistics industries. She is an Adjunct Professor at Montclair University, USA. She is a Researcher, Author, Contributor to Project Management books, published articles, research and white papers internationally. She is a global facilitator, keynote speaker, and discussant. Academic chair/Moderator CXO Forum and a panelist. An Agile practitioner with a Master of Science Degree in Project Management. She has held leadership positions with the Project Management Institute at the chapter/global level and conducts workshops around the world. In a nutshell, she is a Pracademic. LinkedIn: /raji-sivaraman

Michal Raczka, MBA, PMI-ACP, PMP, PSPO, AgilePM, CISA, a Polish citizen is a project management expert, experienced in new technologies & digital leadership fields. Currently, he is the IT Strategy and Project Management Vice Director at mBank S.A. He is also a project management lecturer at the Executive MBA programs. He has conducted several organisational changes involving the optimisation of project management methods and agile transformations. Always keeps Team in the centre. Value and results focused with lean and agile approach. Individual with proven achievements in project & business management, process improvement and team leadership. Experienced in managing geographically distributed, multi-disciplinary projects and customer teams. Experienced in project excellence awards assessments. Speaker, Strategic, Advisor, Lecturer, Volunteer, Mentor. Follow Michal at LinkedIn: /mraczka; Twitter: @mraczka; and About Me: /michal.raczka

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**Ipek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler):** You and Michal use your Personal agility (PA) Lighthouse to guide and reach organizational shores securely. Could you explain and give a little information about your PA Lighthouse and the seven "flavors" of the same?

**Raji Sivaraman (Raji):** As we keep conversing, interviewing, and interacting with several small and large company CEOs, we keep hearing the same seven beams hitting the shores over and over again, namely the seven agilities in our Personal Agility Lighthouse model – Cerebral Agility, Change Agility, Educational Agility, Emotional Agility, Learning Agility, Outcomes Agility and Political Agility. All of the research work we do and the papers that we keep publishing around the world most unquestionably converge in different métiers and strengths towards the navigation of *personal agility* to approach *organizational agility* wholistically.

This is the theme of our keynote speeches, our one-day workshops, guides and much more. Our website: http://agilitydiscoveries.com resonates with these in more depth and we implore you to keep watching for frequent updates.

**Özgüler**:  Raji - As a Pracademic where do you find AgilityDiscoveries is most needed?

**Raji:**  I am a practitioner as well as an academic. Hence the word Pracademic. From the practitioner point of view, I take an example of the logistics industry where customers navigate the complexities of today's world using state-of-the-art logistics capabilities increase efficiency, improve reliability and reduce operational costs. Building a lasting partnership with acquisition, agility transformation and performance, in any contingency is where our AgilityDiscoveries seven-flavored model is most needed. Delivery of diplomacies, programs, guidelines, operations, procedures and techniques, whether to sole proprietorships or huge multinational conglomerates, is indispensable.

On the academic front, our seven beams are a solid foundation, in that; agile management takes a different genre. Creativity and innovation to replace rote learning is what this mind set positions itself to dominate. To embrace and achieve this competency through the foggy space of new thoughts our seven flavors of agility is certainly the guiding light. Therefore as an academician, I feel that providing inventive and flexible education options to ensure that we meet the changing needs of students will be the light that penetrates through the grounded academic rigor.

**Özgüler**:  Michal – As an IT/PM in the agile space, where do you find AgilityDiscoveries is most needed?

**Michal Raczka (Raczka)**: Basically, the IT industry struggles with leadership competencies. It is due to the high pace of development and very high demand for experts. Young people can become experts quite fast and then they usually are promoted to leadership positions too quickly. Most of them struggle with it.

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From the other side of the coin, Agile is widely used by IT. In order to have a successful Agile environment, we need to deal with a cultural change and we also need something, called the 'Agile Mindset' – there is famous expression "Don't do Agile, Be Agile". This requires maturity of leaders and healthy teams, who value people over processes and tools. This is the first line from the Agile Manifesto. And here we come to the very important question – what does 'Agile Mindset' mean? How does one define the Agile Mindset?
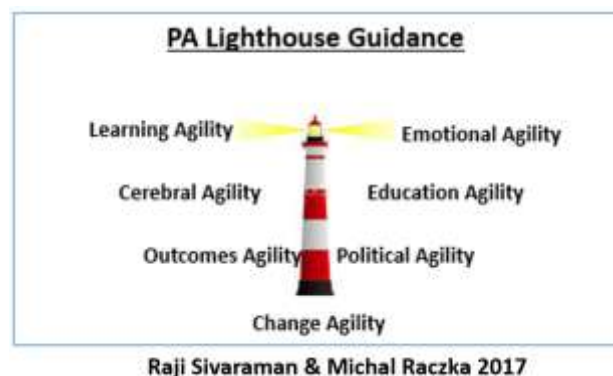
At the very beginning of our work we had the same questions in our minds and this was the foundation of our research. Thus, AgilityDiscoveries with its seven Personal Agility flavors explains the Agile Mindset and guides leaders and executives. The model provides the most important seven agility flavors on which every leader should be focused.  By applying them, leaders can successfully lead the teams and achieve the competitive advantage of an organization and projects.

**Özgüler**:  You and Michal Raczka kicked off the first ever Conference in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Branch, Poland, held on 27 March 2017 in Bydgoszcz. Share your thoughts please.

**Raji and Michal:**    Having been the opening keynote for this event was exhilarating to say the least. With several international speakers and the theme being Challenges of Project Management: (Psychology, Team, Agile), the delegates, the sponsors ranging from academic to IT to training, to name a few and the PMI participants were treated to a thought provoking event. With Radio PIK media coverage and with the conference having the patronage of Bydgoszcz City President Rafał Brzuski was testimony to the occasion as well.

Our opening keynote was received very well. The true nuances of how the cruise from *Personal Agility* to *Organizational Agility* with audience activities and interactions spoke volumes about the need for the honing of our seven flavoured agility model that include, *Learning, Emotional, Cerebral, Outcomes, Education, Political and Change Agility* as shown below in our signature graphic.

Thank you very much for interviewing us. We appreciate it and we wish you the best in all your endeavors.

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## About the Interviewer

**İpek Sahra Özgüler**

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**İpek Sahra Özgüler** graduated from the Istanbul University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 10 years' experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has managed a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, ICT and aviation sectors and gained broader insights. In addition, she has worked as international correspondent for the *PM World Journal* since 2014.

İpek is based in Isanbul and can be contacted at ipeksahra@gmail.com.  Her portfolio is published at the http://ipeksahra.strikingly.com/.