

## Approach to Business Transformation using Agile!

### Summary:



Agile is increasingly widespread in usage and mention, making the notion of switching from a more traditional method to agile a plausible one. Those who are considering agile for business transformation should thoroughly understand the process and what it entails, in order to ensure a smooth transformation and to reap the full benefits.

**Key words:** Business transformation, agile approach

### The Decision to Embrace Agile

The decision to embrace agile and adopt it as your organization's project methodology is not a decision to rush into. It is important to understand your organization's specific structure and needs, along with the benefits that are held by agile. Doing so entails considering the organization's life before and after agile, and your decision of whether or not to engage in agile in your business transformation should be based on that.

### Life Before Agile

Each organization's life before agile will vary depending on what methodology they use in completing projects/programs. For some, that life will consist of the waterfall methodology; their work before agile will be drastically different from the work afterward. Their work process will consist of one development cycle with highly defined and rigid stages. They will be accustomed to heavy documentation and thorough completion of each stage prior to moving onto the next stage. Integrating feedback into the development process, and making quick changes, is rare in this life before agile.

### Life After Agile

After agile has been implemented in parts of your business, the organization's work processes – and the organization, itself – will feel different. Work will feel more accelerated, as each project consists of multiple delivery cycles with what will feel like "half-baked" stages, in comparison to life before agile. There will be less documentation required than pre-agile, and changes are embraced. User feedback becomes a large component of product development, as such feedback is gleaned in each cycle and is incorporated into product changes. The organization's work will consist of multiple product adjustments before the final product is complete.

## Scaling Up

Once an organization is comfortable with their newfound agile practices, they may consider scaling up agile to projects involving a large number of individuals, or projects that consist of more than a few sprints or cycles. The process of scaling agile requires changes, but this can be completed smoothly if the stages of product visioning, product roadmap, release plan, sprint plan, and daily commitment are adequately addressed.

The stage of product visioning involves establishing what the completed product should feature, and what the priorities are in order to attain that product goal. The product roadmap stage consists of getting everyone involved on the same page regarding the product's goals, what constitutes ready-for-release, and when releases should take place. This is followed by release planning, which involves specifying deliverables and calculating workload for the teams. Sprint planning consists of teams determining their work capacity and decomposing the tasks. The final stage, daily commitment, requires a strong emphasis on everyone attending daily meetings to update one another about the progress made.

These stages assist the organization in maintaining focus on the project's goals when the goals can get lost in the midst of numerous team members and a large number of sprints/cycles.

## Using Distribution

An organization can scale agile using distributed teams, as well. This has its complexities, but if performed well, it can yield large benefits in enhanced productivity. In order to scale agile using distributed teams, the organization should form distributed teams using the distributed scrum of scrum method, in which each location's teams are well-informed of one another works and collaborate towards the project goals.

## Ongoing Journey

Even after the conversion to agile has been attained, that is not the end of the agile journey. Agile transformation is ongoing. Organizations that take up agile must be ready to commit to this ongoing journey wherein continuous improvement must be made. There may even be the temptation to revert to an organization's pre-agile days, which makes it all the more important to exert effort to train new team members in the way of agile or emphasize the need for existing members to engage in agile processes and strive towards agile success.

## Summary

Agile in business transformation is a process increasingly undertaken by organizations small and large. The move to adopt agile should not be an impulse decision; life before and after agile should be considered, along with the implications for each organization, individually. Once agile has been implemented, it is important to understand that it is an ongoing journey and to understand where to go from there onwards.

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