SCALED AGILE®

AGILE AT SCALE:

Making the Case for Business Agility

Contents

About This E-book

People like you who have applied Agile practices at scale (scaled Agile) are typically practitioners in non-executive roles. Whether you're a senior technologist, team lead, or consultant, you have the real-world knowledge and experience—the practical know-how—required to effect a successful transformation.

Your executives know and understand that business agility is a competitive advantage today and a requirement for survival in the future. But the means is often less clear. You are the champions and the change agents who can help them get there, and this e-book is for you. Use it to arm yourself as an advocate—first, with an understanding of the concerns and priorities of corporate leadership, and then with information and advice to help you educate and persuade those in your organization with the power to make change.

Chapter 1

What's Driving the Need

> "The period we're in right now is like the 50 years ended in 1929, when telephone, electricity, and the internal combustion engine were all invented. … Back then, there were three innovation platforms. Today, there are five: DNA sequencing; robotics with collaborative robots, or cobots; energy storage; artificial intelligence, which has an even bigger impact than the internet; and blockchain technology."[1]
>
> **–Catherine Wood**
> Chief Investment Officer, ARK Invest

Industry and business model disruption.

Rapidly evolving customer expectations, global markets, and government regulations.

Competition for talent.

These are what keep company leaders up at night. And the common denominator is technological change.

We're in the age of software

In an interconnected, real-time world, every industry is a tech-enabled industry and every company is, at least in part, a software company. Those who succeed will be those who evolve, blending the agility of startups and networked organizations with the hierarchy of established organizations. This mindset change is new to most executives. The basic tenets of the Lean enterprise challenge many aspects of

"It's increasingly clear that we're entering a highly disruptive extinction event. Many enterprises that fail to transform themselves will disappear. But as in evolutionary speciation, many new and unanticipated enterprises will emerge, and existing ones will be transformed with new business models. The existential threat is exceeded only by the opportunity."[2]

–Thomas Siebel
Chairman and CEO, C3 IoT

1   Leslie P. Norton, "Tesla, Bitcoin, and the Inverted Yield Curve Herald a New Era of Growth," Barron's, August 2, 2019.

2   Thomas M. Siebel, "Why Digital Transformation Is Now on the CEO's shoulders," McKinsey Quarterly, December 2017.

> "The world is now changing at a rate at which the basic systems, structures, and cultures built over the past century cannot keep up with the demands being placed on them."
>
> **–John Kotter,** XLR8[3]

traditional management theory. But gradual acclimation isn't an option given the pace of technological change globally. The "transformation" story hasn't changed but the market has—the urgency is greater now than it's ever been.

Technology drives relentless change. It also enables the organizational traits and mechanisms that facilitate rapid adaptation to that change. And what Agile has done to revolutionize software development, scaled Agile can do to revolutionize the way an entire enterprise delivers customer value. But only if its leadership commits to invest in fundamental change.

The tipping point

If wholesale improvement was easy, every company would do it and do it well. The truth is, meaningful change is usually the result of a forcing function or tipping point. One of two things typically occurs:

3   John Kotter, *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World,* Harvard Business Review Press, 2014.

"The problem is not with our organizations realizing that they need to transform; the problem is that organizations are using managerial frameworks and infrastructure models from past revolutions to manage their businesses in this one."

"Those who master large-scale software delivery will define the economic landscape of the 21st century."

–Mik Kersten
Project to Product[4]

1 **A burning platform.** Sometimes the need to change a product or service is obvious. The company is failing to compete and the existing way of doing business is clearly inadequate to achieve a new solution within a survivable time frame. Jobs are at stake. This is the easier case for change. While there will always be those who resist, they're likely to be overcome by the wave of energy that drives mandatory change through the organization.

2 **Proactive leadership.** In the absence of a burning platform, leadership must drive change proactively by taking a stand for a better future state. Agile leaders must exhibit what Toyota would call "a constant sense of danger"—a never-ending sense of potential crisis that fuels continuous improvement. This is often the less obvious reason to drive change because the people in the trenches may not see or feel the urgency to do the hard work that comes with change. After all, they're successful now, why should they assume they won't be in the future? Isn't change risky? In this case, senior leadership must constantly impress the need for change on all, making it clear that maintaining the status quo is simply unacceptable.

In the face of such challenges, one can tinker at the edges or upgrade the organization's entire "operating system." The former is a recipe for occasional success or failure; the latter is key to long-term prosperity.

4   Mik Kersten, *Project to Product: How to Survive and Thrive in the Age of Digital Disruption with the Flow Framework,* IT Revolution Press, 2019.

Chapter 2

What Needs to Change

Business agility transcends IT; it's about transforming the whole business.

What began in software development is expanding to encompass the entire enterprise—changing how people work and how every aspect of the business is run. And the responsibility for driving this change is no longer relegated to the CIO or CTO. It's falling squarely on the CEO's shoulders.[5]

A new mindset

Business agility begins with a mental shift. Systemic problems call for holistic solutions and meeting new challenges requires new ways of thinking. In the old way of thinking, course correction is an admission of miscalculation. But when change is a constant, continual course correction is a hallmark of competitive advantage.

An organization that's achieved business agility behaves more like a living organism than a machine. Industry titans of the past were built on the machine paradigm. Today's—and tomorrow's—market-makers are more like living organisms. Machines seize up or break down in adverse conditions; organisms adapt. The former grows by adding scale and complexity, which must be managed. The latter grows by transforming itself to function more efficiently in its changing environment. In the company-as-organism paradigm, less energy is devoted to top-down hierarchy and more to inside-outside symbiosis. Command-and-control is replaced by sense-and-respond. No waste. No stasis.

In the old way of thinking, course correction is an admission of miscalculation. But when change is a constant, continual course correction is a hallmark of competitive advantage.

5   Thomas M. Siebel, "Why Digital Transformation Is Now on the CEO's shoulders," McKinsey Quarterly, December 2017.

Getting your entire organization to adopt this mindset is a major undertaking, but it's worth it. In fact, it's a prerequisite for success. As a change agent, you can help executive leaders recognize this and equip them to:

1

Align strategy with execution to determine what to fund and why, so that teams can develop and maintain a portfolio of products and services that meet the evolving needs of customers and the organization itself **(Lean portfolio management)**

2

Center the customer, using design thinking to build the right products for the right people **(Agile product delivery)**

3

Optimize the value stream using cross-functional collaboration between technical and non-technical teams to get those products to market faster **(DevOps)**

Chapter 3

How to Change

> *What we've found is that the individual is the wrong unit of analysis. It's actually the team, because in reality, no innovation happens without a group of individuals coming together to support it. We've been fascinated by this difference between the question we get from clients—which is, 'How do I find the best innovators and entrepreneurs?'—and the reality that innovation happens in teams.*[6]

–McKinsey
"Creating High-Performance Innovation Teams at Scale"
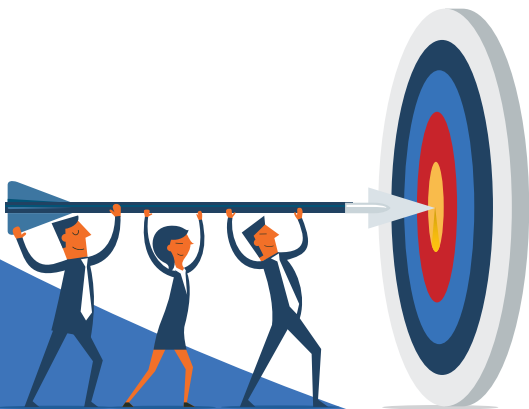
What does all this mean in practical terms? Think teams, not pyramids.

Top-down organizational structures make change slowly, if at all, because they're rigid and the power to make decisions is concentrated at the very top. You've got to build a continuous learning organization that can learn from and adapt to a dynamic environment.

At the leadership level, team-based innovation depends on coordination mechanisms that allow you to do complex things well. The Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®) provides a specialized set of principles, practices, and tools to drive transformation and enable business agility across the entire organization so you can quickly adapt to market changes. With SAFe, you can more efficiently prioritize investments; create, launch, and manage products; and organize teams.

Lean Portfolio Management involves aligning strategy with execution to create a culture of innovation, flexibility, and speed. It's all about making the right investments to build the right things at the right time, so the enterprise can continually adapt to change and meet needs as they emerge.

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6   McKinsey & Company, "Creating High-Performance Innovation Teams at Scale," Inside the Strategy Room podcast, July 2019.

Agile Product and Solution Management encompasses a mindset as well as skills and tools to create successful products and solutions using Agile techniques. Design thinking concepts help organizations create products and solutions that are desirable, viable, feasible, and sustainable. Continuous exploration is central to getting fast feedback to identify what the market needs next.

Travelport, a commerce platform for the $7 trillion global travel and tourism industry, was challenged to deliver product changes on a continuous basis in response to customer expectations and competitive pressures. It runs approximately 2,000 test sets every month, both at the development stage and as part of live product enhancements. Implementing SAFe enabled Travelport to radically accelerate this perpetual value delivery cycle, which now encompasses 40 different projects (automations) with as many as 726,000 test validations going on simultaneously.[7]

USAA, a Fortune 500 financial services company that provides banking, investing, and insurance to people and families who serve, or have served, in the United States military, created a new role for the Chief Design Office (CDO) to translate the high-touch, "white glove" customer service it's known for into equally valuable digital experiences for its membership.[8]

7   "Travelport scales testing, unifies global team of developers and automation engineers with Micro Focus," July 2019.
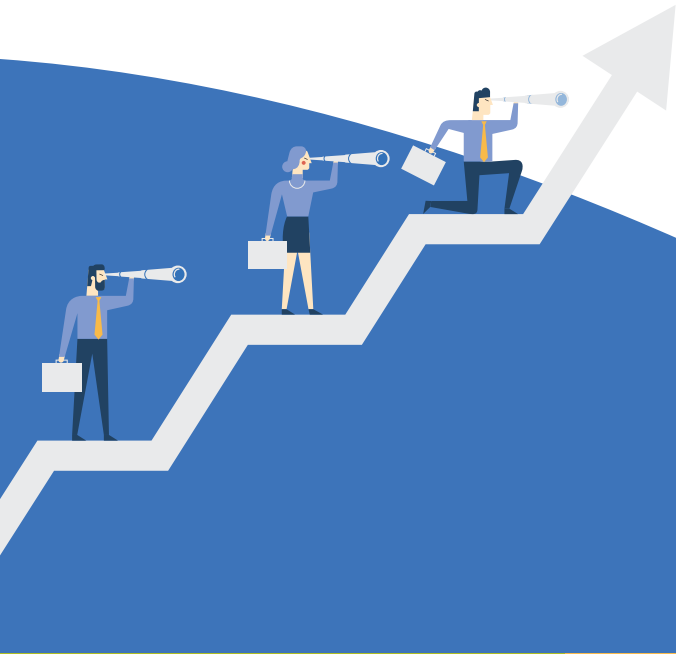
8   Blythe de Orive, "Design Thinking and SAFe Agile: HCD at USAA," User Experience Magazine, April 2018.

DevOps encompasses a mindset and practices that drive behavior and incite a culture change that cultivates a continuous delivery mentality enterprisewide. True DevOps happens when technical, non-technical, and leadership roles—everyone involved in defining, building, testing, deploying, and releasing software-driven systems—are aligned to optimize the end-to-end Value Stream and deliver value faster and more predictably.

In one of the largest Agile implementations in the federal government, the VA transformed its benefits management system with the help of dozens of Scrum teams. The disability backlog dropped to its lowest point in history, a nearly 68-percent reduction from its peak.[9]

68%
reduction in backlog

9   Dan Tucker and Ben Marglin, "3 Cultural Considerations in IT Modernization," Nextgov, July 3, 2018.

"Any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behaviors. To make a switch, you need to script the critical moves."

–Dan Heath and Chip Heath[10]

Chapter 4

Building Buy-in

Making the case for business agility isn't hard.

The *Why?* is evident. It's the *How?* question that stirs debate. And the answer is scaled Agile—harnessing the power not only of teams, but teams of teams, to deliver customer value faster and better than any traditional, top-down organizational structure ever could. Agile at scale is business agility.

Scaling Agile practices has driven impressive results in just about every functional area and industry—from "born Agile" startups like Spotify and Netflix to the Global 500. SAP, for example, an early scaler of Agile, now has more than 2,000 Agile teams around the world.[11]

And Agile translates, supporting collaboration across geographic boundaries and time zones so that quality and efficiency gains follow you wherever you grow. More than two-thirds of the 1,300 people surveyed in the 13th Annual State of Agile Report[12] have multiple collocated teams collaborating across geographic boundaries.

The most often cited benefits[13] of Agile at scale are the ability to manage changing priorities, gain visibility into the progress of projects, and business/IT alignment. These are measurements of overall business health. This is the case that you, as change agent, can make not just for the desirability of business agility but for the feasibility of it. Here's how.

10 Dan Heath and Chip Heath, Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard, Crown Business, February 2010.

11 Darrell K. Rigby, Jeff Sutherland, and Andy Noble, "Agile at Scale," Harvard Business Review, June 2018.

12 Collabnet VersionOne, "13th Annual State of Agile Report," May 7, 2019.

13 Ibid.

Take it to the top

This 13th Annual State of Agile Report finds that executive sponsorship is the second most valuable factor in scaling an Agile practice (topped only by the presence of internal Agile coaches) and that inadequate management support and sponsorship is the third most-often cited challenge or barrier to adopting and scaling Agile practices.

Top 5 Tips for Success with Scaling Agile[13]

1   Internal Agile coaches

2   Executive sponsorship

3   Company-provided training programs

4   Consistent practices and processes across teams

5   Implementation of a common tool across teams

13 Ibid.

Know your audience

Company leadership support will be crucial but finding time on a CXO's calendar can be a project by itself. You might get 15 – 30 minutes to make your case or present a proposal. Make the most of it.

Do your homework. You can't address the needs of your executive, your company, and your industry if you don't know what they are. Read the annual report, research the macro trends, and review the executive bios and reporting structure.

Go in with an attitude of empathy. Whatever drives your decision makers, you can be sure they're under pressures that Agile can help relieve. Try to see problems and potential solutions with their eyes. One CEO states that his primary motivation to maximize business agility and resilience is the responsibility he feels for the livelihood of his employees and their families.

Whatever drives your decision makers, you can be sure they're under pressures that Agile can help relieve.

Talk forest, not trees. If you dive right into DevOps specifics, you'll lose most executives. You'll also miss a golden opportunity to learn more about their context and decision drivers. Start with the business need. The why should drive the what and how, not the other way around.

Don't assume they're new to this. There's a good chance that folks in the C-suite, while not steeped in the methodology, are nonetheless familiar with the concept of business agility. They probably know they need it, too. While less than 10 percent of senior executives see their organizations as "highly agile," more than 90 percent of them say becoming agile is a "high priority."[14] Keep in mind that you may not be the first Agile advocate to pitch them.
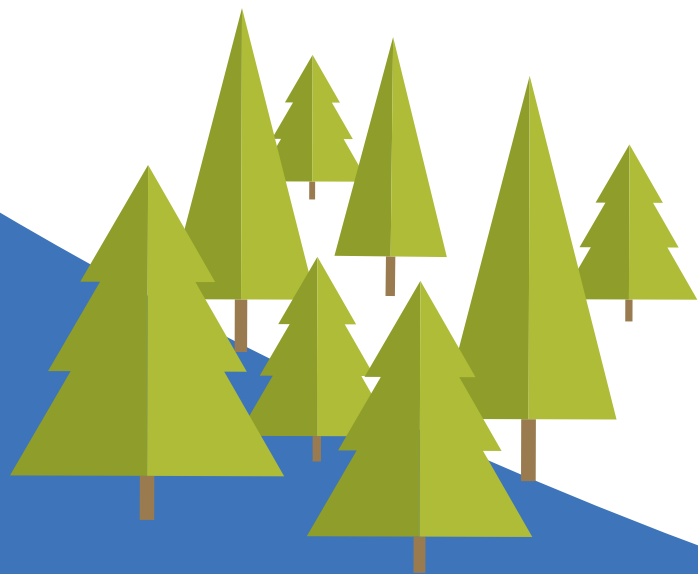
14 Steve Denning, "For Agile, It's the Best and the Worst of Times," Forbes, August 13, 2018.

Lead with the business case

Results are what matter. Where are executives' pain points? What will you measure? Emphasize outcomes and come prepared with examples relevant to your industry and business.

Take an economic view. It's SAFe Principle #1, because whether reactive or proactive, the primary reason to drive change in an organization is to realize business benefits. Dozens of examples show that enterprises can expect to see bottom-line improvements in four major areas: time-to-market, quality, productivity, and employee engagement.

Establish a baseline. How is your organization performing *today* against key success criteria? For example:

- How quickly can you adapt to new macro conditions in your industry?

- How quickly can you respond to new competitive threats?

- How efficiently can you identify and deliver incremental customer value?

- How well do you maintain quality in an evolving solutions portfolio?

- Can you reconfigure teams and redeploy talent in response to the changing needs of the business?

Take an economic view. It's SAFe Principle #1

Start with the SAFe Core Competencies and explain how you can use the assessment to determine your progress—in everything from new product delivery to marketing and human resources—along the path to business agility.

"Why would a highly successful financial services company make a fast and aggressive move from their existing development process to the Scaled Agile Framework?" For SEI, a leading global provider of institutional and private client wealth management solutions, it was to align the company's business focus and development focus with strategic investment themes. Their rapid pivot to SAFe required teams and management to develop new skills, habits, and mindsets as they set about building a complex global securities accounting and trading system for multiple business segments. By delivering more valuable software in less time, they quickly saw a 20% – 25% increase in customer satisfaction.

25%
increase in customer satisfaction

Establish a shared vision

Paint a picture of the future that is aspirational but realistic and work to make sure that everyone shares it. A clear purpose, motivation, and alignment on expectations begins to move everyone together in the direction of an ambitious goal—without the constant need for management supervision or check-in.

Get alignment on expectations. Business agility is the future because it's demonstrably effective. Performance. Objectives. Outcomes. These are the stars by which you'll navigate. Make sure everyone can see them and has the tools they need[15] to keep them in sight.

Be collaborative, not prescriptive. Agile transformation touches many parts of the business. It's a wholesale reorientation that doesn't happen organically. It takes a leadership team to strategize and execute, and change agents who truly understand the scope of the change they're asking an organization to make. The more people feel part of a shared venture, the more they'll be engaged.

15 Christopher Handscomb, Allan Jaenicke, Khushpreet Kaur, Belkis Vasquez-McCall, Ahmad Zaidi, "How to Mess Up Your Agile Transformation in Seven Easy Missteps," McKinsey & Company, April, 2018.

Don't underestimate what it will take

To paraphrase a well-worn phrase, you've got to spend time, money, and energy to save time, money, and energy. Put this reality on the table and keep it there. Plan to dig deep in order to win big.

Invest in your own success. When asked what's been most valuable in scaling Agile, the top three responses[16] were "Internal Agile coaches," "Executive sponsorship," and "Company-provided training." All three of these point to a commitment to invest in success and an awareness of the scope of this work. In last year's survey, executive sponsorship ranked fifth, and company-provided training didn't even rank in the top five.

Don't build on a rigid (and thus fragile) foundation. Your Agile initiative should sit on a stable but flexible operational core. "For example, iterative development requires iterative funding."[17] A dogmatic approach to budget allocation and forecasting would be an obstacle to the very responsiveness and efficiency Agile is designed to drive.

Sweat the details. That is, "Script the critical moves." Achieving the business benefits of Agile at scale is not a trivial effort. The SAFe Implementation Roadmap describes 12 steps—or "critical moves"—for adopting SAFe, based on the experience of hundreds of the world's largest enterprises. While no two Agile adoptions are identical, businesses who get the best results typically follow a similar path.

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16 Collabnet VersionOne, "13th Annual State of Agile Report," May 7, 2019.

17 Christopher Handscomb, Allan Jaenicke, Khushpreet Kaur, Belkis Vasquez-McCall, Ahmad Zaidi, "How to Mess Up Your Agile Transformation in Seven Easy Missteps," McKinsey & Company, April, 2018.

Don't underestimate the people factor

The essence of strategy is sacrifice. Deciding what you won't do (anymore) is just as important as deciding what you *will* do. Any enterprise transformation requires people to let go of the familiar so they can get a handle on the future. This doesn't happen automatically, or even easily.

Put human beings first. Acknowledge that the success or failure of your business agility initiative will depend at least as much on the way human beings behave as it will on the way technology behaves. Business agility lives or dies on the basis of teamwork. Make sure your executive leadership understands this: Human. Resources. In that order.

Invest in them. Corporate culture and talent development will be major determinants of long-term success. Failing to adequately invest in them is a sign of incomplete commitment and a surefire way to hamstring the project[18] before it even gets out of the gate.

Prioritize education about process and roles. It doesn't hurt to overcommunicate when helping people envision the path to business agility and the processes that will make it work. Speak to the question marks above your colleagues' heads: How does all this work in the real world? Who else has done it? What do other people in my position, at other organizations, say about the experience? People need to see themselves in the solution.

✔ **Make sure your executive leadership understands this: Human. Resources. In that order.**

18 Christopher Handscomb, Allan Jaenicke, Khushpreet Kaur, Belkis Vasquez-McCall, Ahmad Zaidi, "How to Mess Up Your Agile Transformation in Seven Easy Missteps," McKinsey & Company, April, 2018.

Show and sell

Once executive leadership is on board, the next step is to demonstrate rapid progress. By showing the rest of the organization what's possible, you'll be selling them on the merits of scaled Agile.

Propose a test. Start with quarterly Program Increment (PI) planning. It's a way for the business to get aligned with the teams doing the transformation work. People see so much value in that process—this one two-day session replaced 300 linear meetings in one organization—that they rarely go back.

Don't put Agile in a corner. Business agility requires the Agile mindset to become part of your organizational DNA—a signature of your corporate culture and an enabler of your brand promise. A protective, "secret side project" mentality teaches people that Agile is limited in its potential application. It's not.[19]

Develop Certified SAFe Program Consultants (SPCs) as change agents. In most enterprises, the primary change agents appear on the scene as certified SPCs. Sourced internally and externally, they may be trusted consulting partners, internal business and technology leaders, portfolio/program/project managers, architects, analysts, or process leads. An experienced change agent can help you get to "yes," build confidence in the approach, and design a program set up to succeed.

19 Ibid.
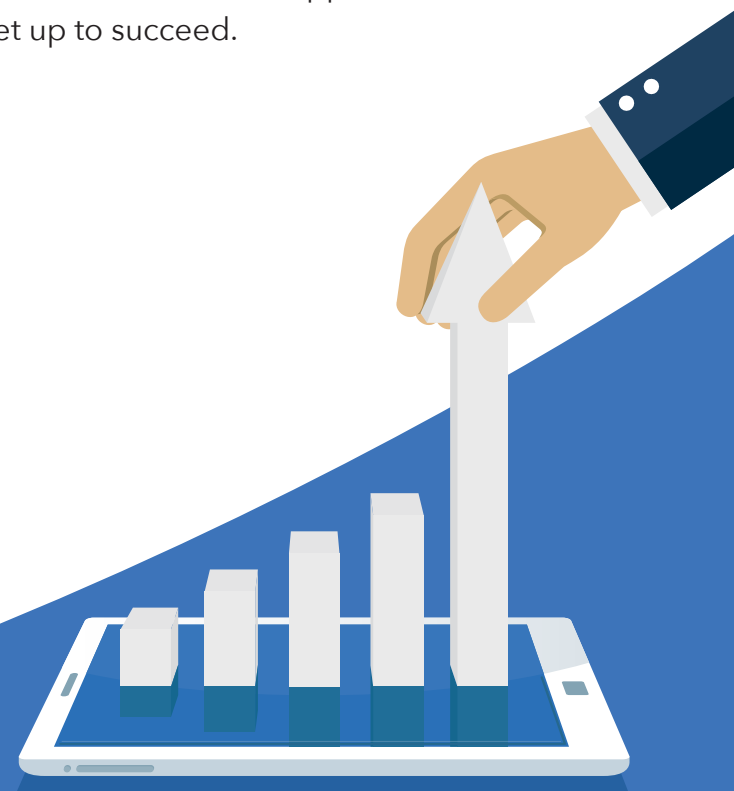
Start ...

... with the end in mind.

Know upfront what you plan to achieve. Change agents must lead with the why, not the what or how. Sell the vision and reasons to believe, not the methodology. This is about business, not IT. Keep the focus on shared objectives rather than promoting a particular tool or framework. In fact, you can make a compelling case without even mentioning SAFe by name.

... small to grow fast.

It's more important to deliver value quickly than to take aim at some big-bang result. Agile is all about iteration and continuous learning. Small, repeatable wins pave the way to bigger ones. When people make and meet commitments, the downstream benefits create a positive feedback loop—with customers, the Board, employees. Once stakeholders start getting what they ask for, they start to believe and go all in.

... somewhere.

While successful initiatives are driven from the top down, they often originate at the bottom or in the middle. Agile movements typically start within the ranks, and it's when groups see success that executives pay attention. This is when a change agent makes the case to extend this way of working to the entire enterprise: scale the method to scale the results.

"Achieving a state of business agility means that the entire organization—not just development—is able to continually and proactively deliver innovative, high-quality products and services faster than the competition."

–Dean Leffingwell

Chapter 5

Addressing Pushback

Know the common objections of the uninitiated and how to address them constructively.

First and foremost, listen (actively). Have frank conversations with them about their perceptions and feelings. Provide analogies that demonstrate your understanding. And use analytics to explain not only how achievement of business agility will benefit them, but how failing to make the change may hurt—even cripple—the business. Common objections include:

1 **Fear of losing control.** We all feel this at times, and an Agile organization is not one where a few key people have been knocked out of the driver's seat; it's one where just about everyone cedes power to proven processes. When everybody has control, no one person does.

2 **Perception of unacceptable risk**—when, in fact, not making the transition, as fast as is feasible, is the far greater risk to the sustainability of the business. Emphasize the opportunity cost of idling while competitors zoom ahead.

In a recent Bain survey of nearly 1,300 global executives, more respondents agreed with this statement about management than with any other: "Today's business leaders must trust and empower people, not command and control them." (Only 5% disagreed.)[20]

—Harvard Business Review

only
5%
disagreed

3 **Belief that Agile is "a software development thing"** that "doesn't apply to our business." While Agile began in software development, it's no longer just for IT and R&D. It governs the way you fund programs, how you track the flow of value, how you're organized as a workforce. It's a holistic shift from building components and products to delivering customer value.

4 **Awareness of failed attempts.** There have been a few high-profile examples. Here's one of them.[21] Note that the initial "failure" was actually process feedback that led to an ultimate success. "Failing fast" results in surprising gains. Following up on such stories and digging under the headlines often reveals the truth that Agile methods themselves can take a rocky start and turn it into serious ROI. You may also hear, "We've tried this before." Or "Nobody does it well." This is simply false. More and more of the world's market-leading companies do Agile and do it well. It's a reason why so many of them lead their industries—or start new ones.

20 Darrell K. Rigby, Jeff Sutherland, and Andy Noble, "Agile at Scale," Harvard Business Review, June 2018.

21 Dalibor Siroky, "Agile and DevOps are failing in Fortune 500 companies," Plutora blog, July 10, 2019.

5 **Skepticism about consultants.** Agile consultants, partners, and coaches may be trusted, or viewed with skepticism. In fairness, sometimes partners sell the partnership more than the best outcome for an organization. It helps to keep the focus on the processes, tools, and performance metrics rather than pitch the partnership and personalities involved.

6 **Resistance to change.** "We're fine as we are." Today, maybe. Five years from now? Doubtful. Many of today's high-flying companies will be unrecognizable in five years' time—or disappear altogether because they failed to evolve rapidly.

7 **Culture clash.** Don't underestimate the role of corporate culture in a program's success or underestimate perceived threats to aspects of the status quo that are highly valued by employees. A continuous learning culture will be tough for some.

Many of today's high-flying companies will be unrecognizable in five years' time—or disappear altogether because they failed to evolve rapidly.

8 **Stubborn silos.** Some boundaries are harder to break down than others. Every organization, department, and manager is different but our observations tell us that teams may encounter resistance, at least initially, from system/software architects, technical leads, finance, operations, compliance, human resources, and even product management.

9 **Middle managers.** Depending upon your organizational structure, you may have to win over one or more group managers to reach an executive. Middle managers, especially people managers, may perceive a threat to their value and their purview as Agile promotes a move away from managing other people and their work. Address this early on, with stories and case studies that counter their fears by illustrating the opportunities afforded others in similar roles. Have multiple examples ready, not just one or two they can say are too different from their situation to be relevant.

"Show me," they'll say.
And you can.

Here's what organizations
using SAFe have achieved.
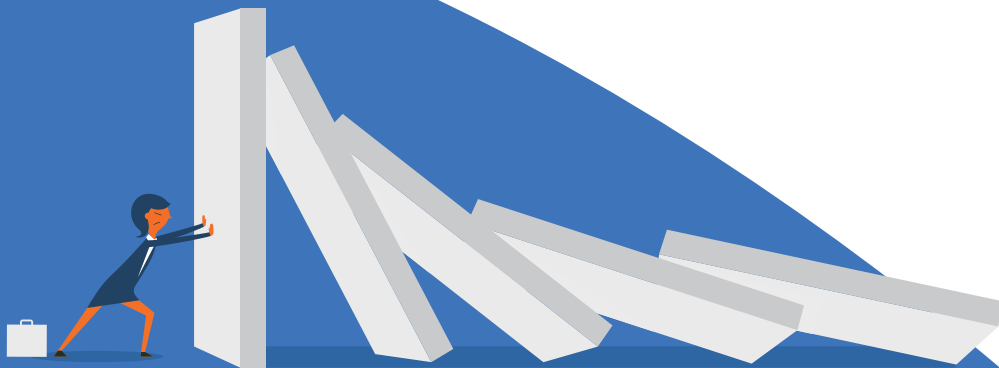
Chapter 6

What Success Looks Like

1

CASE STUDY

PHILIPS

Industry: Technology, Software, Healthcare

Challenge: Philips sought to transition from traditional development to Agile, as well as bring an Agile mindset to business units beyond software to address the needs of a dynamic customer environment.

Solution: SAFe®

Results:

- Average release cycle time down from 18 months to 6 months
- Feature cycle time reduced from >240 to <100 days
- Sprint and PI deliveries on time, leading to "release on demand"
- Quality improvements—zero regressions in some business units
- Five major releases per train, per year, on demand

Best practices:

Philips recommends a straightforward, four-step approach for any organization aiming to transition to Agile:

- Develop products in the Agile way with focus on basic Agile practices (Scrum).
- Establish product ownership with a focus on enabling scaling aspects (SAFe practices).
- Establish a release pipeline with continuous integration (supported by automation).
- Adopt a DevOps culture with focus on continuous delivery (to production environment).

2 CASE STUDY

Intel

Industry: Technology

Challenge: In a complex, fast-growth industry, Intel must continuously innovate while controlling costs and maintaining quality.

Solution: SAFe, Agile, and Lean

Results:

- MVE delivered 65 percent more products with the same capacity
- Improved Commit-to-Accept ratios from 74 percent to 90+ percent
- Everything is visible to everyone
- Scope change reduced to less than 5 percent

Best practices:

- **Choose the right RTEs** – Intel found that effective RTEs have a combination of technical background and a deeper Agile mindset/experience.
- **Train the leaders** – Business owners and Train managers should be required to attend SAFe training. It's critical that the leaders speak for the transformation, act as role models, and reinforce direction within the organization. Tap advocates in the organization whenever possible.
- **Always end with Inspect and Adapt** – Just get started and then learn and adapt. Favor "progress over perfection."
- **Keep it simple** – Don't overcomplicate the process, and always bring things back to the basics of Agile and Lean.

3 CASE STUDY

AIRFRANCEKLM GROUP

Industry: Aviation

Challenge: Air France–KLM sought to scale Agile practices companywide to improve time to market and efficiency but had to contend with specific contexts and regulations in the different businesses of the airlines.

Solution: SAFe

Results:

- SAFe teams released 17 times in the live environment in 7 months compared to every 6 months previously
- On average, SAFe teams release 20 percent more effectively than waterfall teams
- The company gained 20 percent market share in the small and medium logistics market alone
- On one offering, the company exceeded expectation by 25 percent
- Air France–KLM has a more intimate understanding of its clients

Best practices:

- **Focus on Transversal Topics for a sustainable adoption** – "From day one, make them part of the adoption," Moreau says. These topics affect all domains.
- **Let domains and teams define objectives** – Teams are more committed and empowered if they set their own goals.
- **Train continuously** – The Core Team regularly holds Agile Booster workshops to help with specific adoption challenges such as how to deal with conflicting priorities from both airlines, and what does it mean to have an Agile mindset?

4 CASE STUDY

Fannie Mae®

Industry: Financial, Government

Challenge: Within three years, the organization would need to adopt an entirely new business model that would change the way securities are issued to the market—and do so within aggressive timelines.

Solution: SAFe

Results:

- Releases now happen every month, instead of once or twice a year
- They integrate reliably every two weeks
- Fannie Mae reduced delivery risks
- The organization reduced the defect rate substantially
- Teams now deliver more than 30 attributes per sprint compared to 2-5 before
- Velocity increased from 10 story points to more than 30

Best practices:

- **Sync cadence** – Establishing a common cadence was critical to success. Engineering practices must evolve in order to comply with bi-modal governance.
- **Work on database modeling upfront** – For any data-heavy effort, perform advance work on database modeling to avoid the impact of changes identified later in the sprint.
- **Develop a playbook** – Such guidance reduces rework for multiple teams working in parallel.

Don't see your industry or focus area?
There are **many more where these came from**.

Chapter 7

Next Steps

When your organization is ready to pursue true business agility, we can lend a steady hand. Send your leaders to this page for executive-focused resources geared toward transformation success.

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