

A woman with glasses and a dark dress stands on the left, holding a white pointer and gesturing towards a laptop. Two men are seated at a desk on the right, looking at a computer monitor. The office has large windows in the background showing a cityscape.

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A Celerity eBook

Leading an Agile Transformation

An Organizational Roadmap for Agile Success

Introduction:

More than 70% of Agile practitioners recently surveyed by Scrum Alliance reported tension between their teams and the rest of the organization.

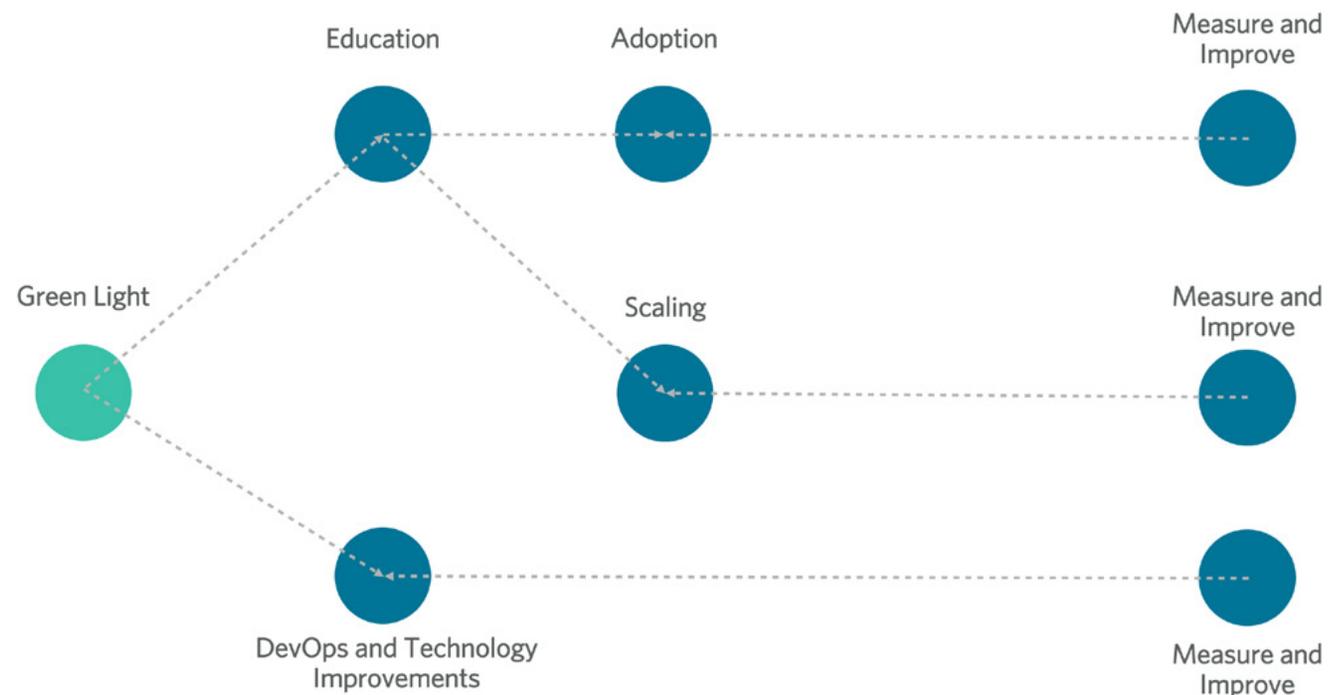
Why? The cultural and process impacts of Agile adoption require non-dev functions and other stakeholders to change as well or inevitably impede the progress of Agile's potential. In this era of digital transformation, organizations seek to stand out with innovative products and services while increasing agility and mitigating risk. The only way to satisfy these demands is by adopting Agile methodologies to transform the organization to support iterative development and innovation.

An Agile Transformation Roadmap

Whether your organization is in the early stages of Agile maturity or you have multiple teams using Scrum, this guide is a roadmap to help your business successfully realize an Agile transformation.

The key phases include preparing the organization through education and technology support, facilitating Agile adoption and scaling, and managing change while driving continuous improvement.

Let's dig in!



Parallel Efforts in Education and Technology Improvements Lay the Foundation for Agile's Success

1. Establish Pilot Teams and Stakeholder Support

Shifting to Agile* is more than changing your development process, it is a total transformation in culture. This cultural change can be one of the most complicated aspects. We recommend pilot teams to model Agile and explore the friction points that will arise with your organization.

Focus on creating Agile pilot teams for 1 – 3 significant projects with 5 – 9 team members. In parallel, educate executive management to encourage an endorsement of this emerging Agile work. This will set their expectations for what to expect and signal to other departments that Agile matters.

3. Adopt DevOps*

DevOps and technology improvements give Agile teams the infrastructure they need for fast feedback. DevOps is about making your entire development process—from concept to production—fast, reliable, and flexible.

The visibility into what's working and what isn't, and being able to act on that information quickly, is enabled by robust DevOps infrastructure, processes, and tools.

2. Educate Teams and Stakeholders

Education is the next critical preparation to launching an Agile transformation. Experienced Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters should help to facilitate proper Agile practices and ceremonies.

In addition to team sessions with Agile experts, an effective education plan should include opportunities to experience the new cultural norms of Agile and discuss possible pain points. Consider lunch and learns, retrospectives, shadowing, and a communications plan to share successes and lessons learned.

4. Promote Quality

The idea of “shifting left” promotes quality and describes the goal of development, QA, and other specialists building and testing systems in an environment that closely resembles live production.

By focusing on minimizing differences between environments, the team will be prepared to find issues in functionality, performance, and data.

**See page 8 for resources on Agile fundamentals and DevOps.*

From Pilot to Transformation, Agile's Success Improves as Teams Mature and Non-Dev Functions Adapt

Agile Transformation Maturity Curve



For Agile to Succeed at Scale, It Requires a Shift in Processes, Funding, and Prioritization

1. Know Scaling Agile vs. Transformation

It's important to note the difference between organizational transformation and Agile scaling. Transformation is how your company organizes and empowers its employees to run Agile effectively, whereas scaling is how your organization will execute. When looking to scale efficiently, there are many frameworks that help, including the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) and Large-Scale Scrum (LeSS)*.

2. Embrace Failure as Learning

When a pilot team begins working in Agile, expect that the first sprint will be the worst. Create a cultural bubble around your pilot teams so they can embrace failure while learning from it. As sprints improve and adoption gains momentum, you will see stakeholders build trust in the methodology, and in response, allow teams to self-organize around a problem.

3. Bring Other Functions On Board

Changes across a transformed organization will be reflected in resource planning, product funding, accounting practices, and even deciding how Sales and Marketing will hit their goals based on available product. Teams will be cross-functional, so your business stakeholders will be comfortable talking to your development teams and vice versa, which brings ideas to the forefront and makes them a reality through Agile development.

**See page 8 for resources on Agile fundamentals.*

A Sample Process Transformation

To use a Finance example, generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) favor a waterfall development approach to explain capitalization rules. This leads a traditional finance team to expense Agile projects up front vs. capitalize them over time, which can increase the immediate hit on profitability and lower the overall allocated budget on an Agile project compared to a waterfall approach. Expect issues like these to arise, and track them as part of your change management program.

An Agile Transformation Requires Change Management to Reinforce the Value of Agile and Build for the Future

1. Bridge the Gaps

Over the course of the transformation, you will identify organizational and skill gaps, but making everyone comfortable with the friction of change as you build toward a transformed organization will keep your efforts on track. Develop a communications plan to not only reinforce Agile's value and provide updates but to proactively address concerns that arise throughout the organization.

2. Socialize Success

Socialize early success stories and paint a clear vision of the virtuous cycle of value creation that can result from an Agile transformation. Many developers love that with Agile, they know exactly what they are going to be working on during a sprint, and they have the permission to focus on their work. Stakeholders appreciate the user feedback and data to fuel innovation, and end users benefit from Agile as well because it results in more value with each release.

3. Bring Agile to Everyone

Encourage adoption of Agile principles by non-development functions. Adopting Agile Marketing for iterative campaigns, for example, or a Kanban board for special projects in Human Resources, not only improves the output of those functions but fuels Agile's momentum. Bringing Agile to other departments also leads to ideas around improving processes to support Agile development teams.



Formalizing Continuous Improvement Is an Extension of Change Management and a Must for Agile to Succeed



1. Establish Meaningful Metrics

Setting up a meaningful metrics program will help you cement Agile's value for your organization. Measurable value creation requires empirical evidence through forming a hypothesis and measuring the outcome. Without clear goals and metrics, you will not be able to tie the output of your Agile transformation to those objectives. In addition to measuring value, other metrics include team member satisfaction, reducing dependency count, time to production, and production bug count.

2. Compare Agile Metrics to Past Reporting

Tracking your progress requires differential analysis between historical and current metrics. At all levels of the organization, focus improvement discussions and decisions around both KPIs and team feedback through anecdotal observations and sprint retrospectives.

3. Embrace Value

Once your organization enters the measure and improvement phase of an Agile transformation, the learning and testing that happens every day in an Agile environment lends itself to doing more of what works and building upon past success. Your programs will add structure to this culture of continuous improvement and guarantee long-term success. A transformed organization means a transformed culture with empowered teams doing great work that provides value to end users.

Additional Resources

A leader's job is to facilitate education and infrastructure improvements, empower teams, and manage change as the entire organization works to continuously improve.

Pushing an organization up the Agile maturity curve is a major investment, but the beauty of Agile is in its team-driven momentum. If done well, driving innovation doesn't involve pushing teams as much as getting out of their way.

The following links to additional resources will help you along your journey to an Agile transformation.

- [**The Agile Tipping Point eBook**](#)
- [**Agile Dictionary**](#)
- [**The Role of the Product Owner White Paper**](#)
- [**Measuring Your Agile Development Success**](#)
- [**Change Management Checklist**](#)
- [**Scaled Agile Framework for Lean Enterprises**](#)
- [**Understanding the LeSS Framework**](#)
- [**What is DevOps?**](#)

Accelerate Your Agile Results with the Right Partner

At Celerity, we believe the most dynamic companies win. Building in a system of adaptable, rapid delivery enables businesses to engage users early and learn quickly from failures. These are the keys to breakthrough innovation.

While Agile is an established and popular methodology, there are certain factors in many corporate environments that make it difficult to implement Agile on an enterprise-wide scale.

If you're ready to get started in Agile, or to scale your existing Agile processes to an enterprise level, Celerity can help you plan for success. Our Agile Development Teams work alongside yours to execute projects rapidly and properly, while teaching the ins and outs of Agile best practices.

Learn more at www.celerity.com.

