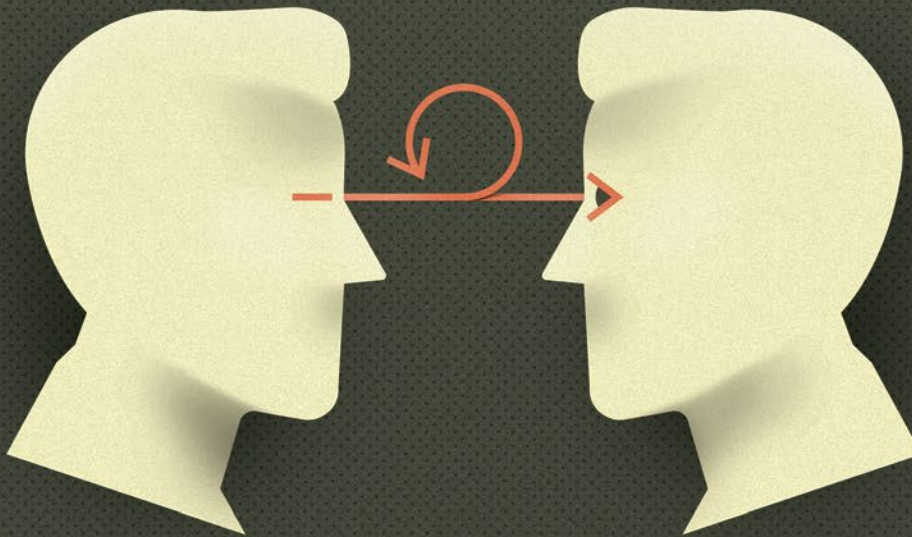


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Doing Agile vs. *Being Agile*

Understand the keys to building buy-in among stakeholders in an Agile transformation—and how to gain the long-term benefits of that transformation.

Agile may be a buzzword in IT delivery, but what does it mean in practice? If your organization decides to go through an Agile transformation, how can you attain long-term success and benefits instead of just going through the motions?

With a few key tips, we'll guide you toward successfully transforming your organization's culture and practice from merely "doing Agile" to actually "being Agile."

As organizations embark on an Agile journey, the process typically starts in one of two ways. In one case, it begins with a grassroots movement from the ground up as interested teams start practicing standard Agile rituals. Interest and momentum builds and grows throughout the organization.

In the second case, executives establish an initiative to implement Agile delivery that is driven throughout the company. In that case, the initial focus also tends to be on standing up foundational Agile rituals and practices.

Standard Agile scrum rituals include backlog estimation, sprint planning, daily standups, end of sprint retrospectives, and product demos. While these practices are vital to Agile team success, truly “going Agile” means building on these rituals and gaining an Agile mindset and culture.

Any team can go through the motions of these rituals, but if team members haven’t fully bought into the Agile mindset, the transformation won’t be sustainable. The company won’t fully realize the intended benefits.

Building on Core Pillars

There are three core pillars to any organization: people, process, and technology. Each pillar must be strong and must work together to reach success. This is especially true for an Agile transformation. Process and technology are often the easiest pillars to focus on, as these are driven by tactical improvements.

Organizations often overlook or deprioritize the people pillar as it moves away from the tactical operations and toward the culture and mindset of an organization. People are the core of each organization, driving the processes and technology to reach overall goals. A successful, sustainable Agile transformation requires motivated and energized people

committed to embracing the Agile mindset and building the supporting culture.

Consider a few key guidelines for forming the Agile mindset and the culture that supports a sustainable Agile transformation.

- Communicate face-to-face when possible.
- Prioritize delivering customer value over creating documentation.
- Set up frequent communication/feedback loops between business and technology.
- Plan a regular cadence of retrospectives and follow through on identified improvements.
- Encourage managers to be servant leaders.
- Create an environment where people feel safe to give open, honest, and direct feedback.

Achieving the Right Mindset

Change management and communication are key. Your organization needs clear goals for embarking on an Agile transformation. You must share those goals clearly and make them relevant to all levels. Ambiguity is the killer of Agile transformation. If people don’t understand what Agile is, how the organization is implementing it, and how it will directly affect them, you’ll

Communicate face-to-face when possible.



lose support early on. From there, the transformation becomes an uphill battle as you work to regain buy-in and build confidence in your Agile operating model.

We propose six critical enablers for building support and confidence within your organization that will lead to an Agile mindset and culture.

- Figure out what your Agile transformation goals are, define the implementation roadmap, and communicate the decision. The earlier you include people in the transformation, the better off you’ll be.
- Update your HR hierarchy so it is distinctly separate from the delivery hierarchy. That removes potential conflicts of interest and communication barriers.
- Start broad change-management efforts and communication as early as possible. Let both business and technology know how they fit into this new Agile operating model and when they can expect to see changes.
- Be transparent with your Agile transformation

rollout plan. Establish multiple ways for people to learn, ask questions, and give feedback.

- Adjust your funding model so stable/durable teams are funded for the year, versus traditional project funding.
- Implement metrics that support Agile delivery practices and goals rather than driving hard project dates and scope.

No matter where you are in your Agile transformation, employee engagement and buy-in are key to success. If your organization’s culture and mindset aren’t transformed, your progress will stop at “doing Agile,” falling short of the long-term benefits of “being Agile.” People who buy into your organization’s goals and want to play an active part will drive your Agile transformation to a successful, sustainable state. ▶

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