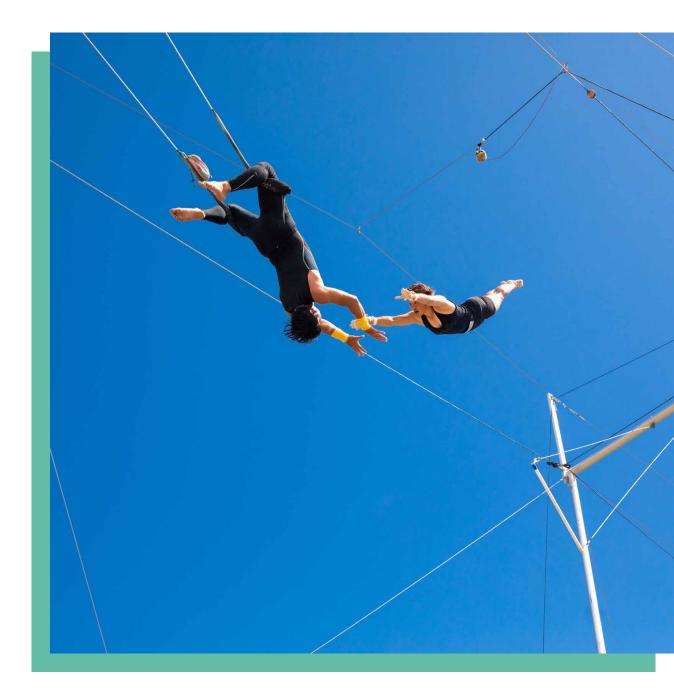
Whitepaper

Coping with a VUCA World — Detecon's Take on Agile Organizations





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_ 1. The rise of corporate agility

In the modern world, agile methodology is a familiar concept to nearly everyone. While most commonly associated with software development and continuous delivery, it is gradually finding its way into other business areas like marketing, sales, HR, or even finance. That has not always been the case, however. Prior to the introduction of agile concepts, development teams would employ a methodology known as the waterfall model in which they would identify problems and create a solution for the specific instance. The waterfall model required everyone to stick to the plan as initially defined change management processes, even for marginal modifications, were complicated and rigid. Naturally, this led to long development cycles. During these cycles, there would be no further adjustments to the envisioned solution, and by the time the solution was ready for market, chances were high that customer problems had already changed and the proposed solutions were no longer in line with customer requirements – products were out of step with the market as soon as they were introduced.

In the early 2000s, a group of software developers seeking to resolve the issues of product-market fit and unfinished products, published the Manifesto for Agile Software Development (Beck et al., 2001). To ensure usefulness of new software, shorten delays and ultimately benefit customers, iterative approaches and continuous gathering of feedback from customers were envisioned. The agile manifesto was based on a set of principles and core values that have since been adapted by Detecon to fit the organizational context (see chapter 3).

Over the years, various agile concepts have found their way into the corporate world. What started as an innovative approach for a faster time-to-market strategy has turned into more than straightforward project management and offers additionally the means to structure entire organizations, business units, and functional departments.

The subject of this paper is an assessment of the current state of agile organizations - what they are, where they make sense, and whether you should go agile or not (and if so, to what degree).

_ 2. Introduction to a VUCA world

The rapid spread of agility is apparent everywhere. But what has sparked this popularity? The continuing progress of globalization and digitalization leading to unlimited interconnectedness and accelerating the exchange of ideas, products, and services has significantly increased the pace of the world we live in today. Upheavals in society and leaps in technology of growing complexity occur at ever shorter intervals, the so-called VUCA environments.

As part of their efforts to cope with these VUCA environments, many managers have made corporate agility one of the top priorities on their agenda. Figure 1: The VUCA environments

V U C A

Volatility

describes a market of frequent, comprehensive, and dynamic change, including surprising product requirements and a continuous, fast-paced shift of customer preferences. The underlying unpredictability renders the determination of the link between cause and effect extremely uncertain.

Uncertainty

means a lack of predictability i.e., forecasting market developments based on historic information is no longer accurate or possible. Quick decisions must often be made under time pressure and with the support of no more than limited information

Complexity

characterizes a market with different layers involving increasingly intricate relationships, making the identification of interconnecting structures between these layers impossible. Choosing the right path going forward is well-nigh impossible as control and innovation are lost

Ambiguity

leads to an environment where data can be weighted and interpreted in multiple ways, augmenting the probability that decisions will in retrospect prove to be wrong because they were based on misinterpretations

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The growing dominance of VUCA environments in today's world in conjunction with several other trends (Figure 2) starkly underscores the importance of corporate agility and creates both new opportunities and additional risks for organizations.

The light shed on the topic of VUCA and on the trends that contribute additionally to the progressive unpredictability of the operating environments for organizations reveals why corporate agility has gained considerable momentum in recent years and may perhaps be the inescapable choice for a company's future organizational set-up.

Figure 2: Current trends



Highly qualified individuals are hard to come by and while employers are in dire need of them, employee preferences have shifted towards company cultures that encourage innovation and leadership styles that create spaces in which they feel appreciated and respected



New, emerging technologies enable companies to engage in new business models or lower costs of existing products and services – if companies are able to adapt their organizations to altered needs and requirements



Shorter life span

of companies

Digital business models focus on the ability to scale products and services, in some cases even flexibly to fit demands. They are built to inherently address rapidly changing customer demands and expected 24/7 availability



_ 3. Understanding the fundamentals of agile organizations

The term agile organization is ubiquitous in today's business world. To date, a standard definition in academic terms is lacking, although the efforts to reach a consensus are legion. What most of these definitions have in common is that they all describe agile organizations as structures that are capable of responding (or rather, adapting) quickly to changes in the business environment. Furthermore, many of these definitions also incorporate aspects associated with the philosophy of agility such as customer focus, networks of teams, rapid learning and decision cycles, etc.

Drawing on extensive research and its own profound practical experience, Detecon has developed its own definition of an agile organization. As it is fundamental to this paper, it is shown here:

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An agile organization is one that is able to adapt rapidly to new and ever-changing market demands and business environments. It is characterized by flexible, customer-oriented structures, fast learning and decision cycles, empowered self-organizing teams, and a shared purpose.

~

This definition incorporates the aspect of adaptability along with essential characteristics linked in theory and practice to the concept of agility: customer focus, self-organizing teams, etc. Besides this definition, Detecon's agile organization concept integrates some widely accepted theoretical foundations, first and foremost the Agile Manifesto. As briefly described in chapter 1, the methodology was developed in February 2001 by 17 representatives from various development and programming backgrounds (Beck et al., 2001). They compiled a document that sets forth the core values and princi-



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ples of agile software development and seeks to provide an effective model for teams wanting to adopt the concept of agile project management and to use it for the enhancement of their work performance. It is firmly grounded on the four core values shown here:

- 1. Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- 2. Working products over comprehensive documentation
- 3. Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- 4. Responding to change over following a plan

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The manifesto also lists 12 principles to be followed by software developers. But as these principles are closely tied to the field of software development, Detecon has adapted them to be more relevant within the context of agile organizations. The result is ten principles that constitute the guard rails for agile organizations and that should be considered when designing and operating agile structures (Figure 3).

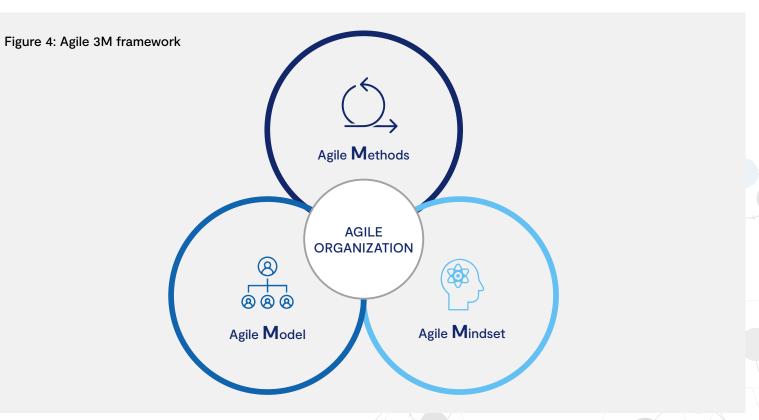


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_4. The Agile 3M

Any agile organization wishing to live up to its expectations - i.e., enabling a company to be more adaptive, more flexible, and faster - must approach its tasks from a holistic perspective. This requirement has prompted Detecon to develop a unique framework, the Agile 3M framework (Figure 4), that features an integrated perspective on corporate agility comprising an agile model, agile methods, and an agile mindset. The agile model encompasses all structural characteristics of an agile organization (e.g., organizational chart, processes, roles, etc.). Agile methods (e.g., Design Thinking, Kanban, Scrum, etc.) provide the guidelines for collaboration in an agile environment in support of the agile model. Last, but not least, the agile mindset is essential to ensure the company's embracing of a culture that reflects the principles of corporate agility. This paper focuses particularly on the agile model; nevertheless, the other components (agile methods and agile mindset) are outlined in the following chapters.



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4.1 Agile model — Getting the structure right

This paper will begin by examining the agile model. While the following characteristics make no claim to completeness and are not found exclusively in agile structures, they do feature design implications that should be considered when building an agile organization.

- 1. <u>Strict customer orientation</u> is a requirement in every action. A customer-centric organization has strong relationships with its key customers and understands their needs. Serving these needs adequately demands a structure that supports fast delivery and a high level of adaptability.
- 2. <u>Cross-functional, interdisciplinary teams</u> form the core of the organization. They are the engine that delivers value to the customer. Thanks to their largely autonomous and self-responsible working methods, they can leverage the best possible results from their potential.
- 3. <u>High responsiveness and reduced hierarchies</u> support the above-mentioned characteristics. As-

signing control responsibilities among many allows faster decisions and a steeper learning curve, elements required in a VUCA environment to keep up with the competition.

- 4. Decentralized decision-making further supports the principle of assigning control responsibilities among many. Employees are empowered to make their own decisions and have the support of leadership. This method ensures that decisions are made at the right place, at the right time. The level of responsiveness can be increased, benefiting the customer relationship and ultimately contributing to the push for a customer-centric organization.
- 5. Grown importance of accountability of every employee is another important aspect of an agile organization that is concurrent with decentralized decision-making. As levels of hierarchy are removed and control responsibilities are assigned among many, employees are automatically given a higher degree of accountability that must be assumed with great(er) power comes great(er) responsibility.

- Increased importance of technology in a digital world is not to be neglected. New and more intense approaches to collaboration require state-of-theart collaboration and management tools, but they also increase efficiency.
- 7. <u>Reduced formalization</u> supports the increase in autonomy and self-responsible behavior within an agile organization. Processes, responsibilities, and rules should be self-managed rather than strictly controlled. A certain level of formalization must exist, however. In a fast paced, ever-changing VUCA environment, high adaptability and responsiveness can be achieved by deformalizing processes and providing more flexibility in a team's everyday work.
- 8. <u>Clear Departmentalization</u> plays an important role in an agile organization as the agile model differs from a functional or divisional structure; it focuses more on the identification of core value streams that can be used as a basis to set up agile teams best suited to deliver value to the customer.

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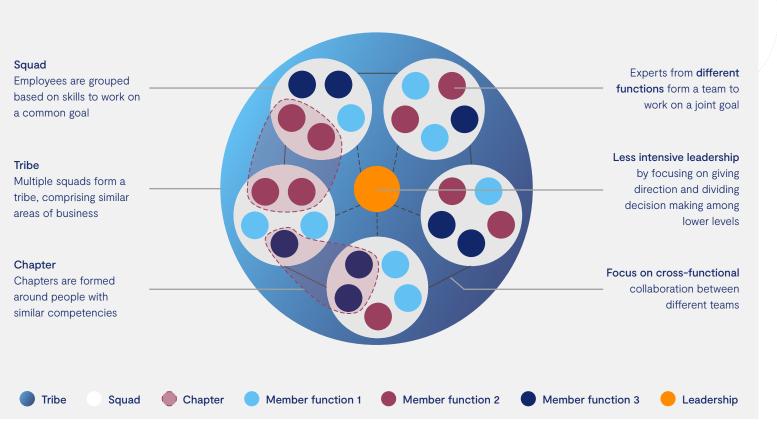
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4.2 Agile model – What it might look like

The above-mentioned characteristics should be taken into account when designing an agile model. But what might an agile model look like? The thought of an organizational model often brings to mind a set of boxes and lines in the form of a pyramid with a hierarchical structure or a rectangular shape depicting a matrix-style organization. All organizational forms have their purposes, their benefits, and their disadvantages. First and foremost, there is no universal agile model. In practice, the nomenclature for the elements of an agile model can vary (e.g., hubs, centers, tribes, etc.). Moreover, the forms these agile models take can also differ tremendously. The fundamental principle is to structure the agile model according to value streams; on lower levels such as squads or hubs, however, organization can be based on skills or competencies, whatever best serves the delivery of value (more information on how to organize the agile model by value streams can be found in the separate text "Value streams", chapter 4.2).

However they are organized, all of these models aim to dismantle hierarchical structures, break up silos,

Figure 5: Agile model



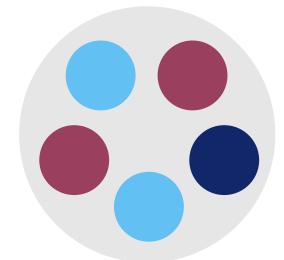
and change the style of leadership. These fundamentally different approaches to an organizational model also call for a different approach to visualization. The presentation of an agile organization as a circular model highlights its collaborative and cross-functional capabilities (Figure 5).

This illustration encompasses many of the essential characteristics of an agile model outlined on the previous page. It is an example of how typical agile characteristics that are essential for an effective agile structure can be visualized, but is certainly not the only possible solution (as mentioned before). Nonetheless, since an agile organization breaks up legacy structures and introduces new organizational elements, the creation of a well-thought-out reorganization program with a clear vision is crucial. The most important elements of the illustration will be explained below.

Leadership retains its key position in the organization, taking on an enabling and servant role that focuses on providing guidance and giving direction. This behavioral approach empowers others to make decisions themselves and on lower levels of the organization. As the number of hierarchy levels is reduced, decisionmaking itself becomes less hierarchical and decision cycles are shortened, ultimately leading to faster decisions made at the core of the business. Caution is advisable; if not carried out precisely and carefully, the elimination of hierarchy levels can lead to disgruntlement among the deposed leaders and the relocated employees. A careful balance between efficiency gains, cost reduction, and employee commitment must be found. Overall, the top-level structure of the organization remains relatively unchanged; the transformation focuses on the creation of scalable, agile teams with only minimal hierarchies.

The smallest unit in an agile model is the team unit that in this case is known as a squad. The composition of such squads can vary. Employees may be grouped according to similar skills or competencies. A different approach groups team members with different skills and from different backgrounds into a multidisciplinary squad (Figure 6). This team unit is staffed specifically to achieve a previously defined goal that demands the analysis and identification of the requirements for success. The squad can be set up as a permanent body for the regular performance of a recurrent task, or it may act only temporarily as a project or task force team. Bringing people from different backgrounds together forms a cross-functional and interdisciplinary team. If staffed correctly, the team possesses all the skills required for the performance of its specified task. Ideally, a squad consists of 6-12 employees, which is a reasonable size for col-

Figure 6: Agile model squad view



laborative and effective work. This limit is important because squads are intended to work more or less autonomously and on their own responsibility, but are at the same time assigned a high level of accountability. These elements are most effective when the hierarchy within a squad is kept to a minimum. While squad leaders may be designated among the members of the team, their leadership style should demonstrate the characteristics of decentralized decision-making and a low level of formalization.

Clear roles within a squad exist even in agile frameworks. In Scrum, for example, a product owner (PO) heads the squad. However, the PO's role focuses more

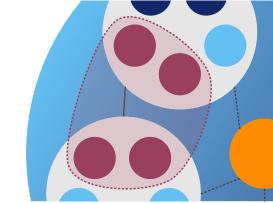
on giving direction, prioritizing work packages, and enabling the squad members to conduct their tasks than on control and intervention.

As the number of squads, each working toward its own specific goal, continues to grow, effective coordination of their achievements requires at some point a second level that groups the squads into meaningful units. This is where **tribes** come into play (Figure 7). These department-like structures are formed by grouping together squads that are engaging in similar areas of business. The squads within a tribe may have to collaborate to achieve a common

Figure 7: Agile model – tribe view

objective that represents the output of the tribe as a whole. Being close together, they can easily support one another and share knowledge or shift resources whenever necessary. In brief, a tribe is a powerful and highly interdisciplinary group where employees from different backgrounds contribute their expertise that can then be leveraged for the success of the organization. Tribes are designed to be highly permeable to knowledge and should also observe the principle of flat hierarchies. Leaders assume the role of coordinators and supporters, always striving to encourage high autonomy of the squads.

The staffing of squads and tribes with employees from different backgrounds and with different skillsets creates new opportunities for sharing knowledge and collaborating across functional boundaries. Nonetheless, people with similar competencies must also have the chance to interact with one another. This is the reasoning behind the additional grouping of employees into **chapters** (Figure 8). A chapter's membership comprises exclusively experts on a single topic and provides a platform for knowledge sharing. The participation of all employees with similar competencies can broaden and deepen their knowledge, which they can subsequently transfer to their squads and tribes. Chapters have powerful self-learning capabilities and are a means of ensuring that their members maintain or strive for the



Agile model – chapter view

Figure 8:

highest level of competence in their fields of expertise. In conjunction with tribes, they construct a matrix-like grouping for each employee. The resources employees invest in their participation in all different groups can over time vary and change as expedient for their current tasks or expertise. Usually, however, most tasks are carried out in squad- and tribe-related work, and chapters play a supporting role.

The terminology used here is not binding; squads may be called teams or tribes may be called cells. The critical element is a common understanding of the goals the different groupings are supposed to reach.

_ Good to know

Value streams

Careful consideration of the above comments outlining the structures of squads and tribes may give rise to the question of how common goals or similar areas of business can be identified. Of course, this process is highly individual and differs from industry to industry, company to company, and sometimes even from department to department. Resources within agile organizations can be allocated according to value streams. As previously mentioned, they are the primary means by which an organization delivers value to its customers. This concept is broadly used within the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe®) and defined as "the series of steps that an organization uses to implement solutions that provide a continuous flow of value to a customer" (Scaled Agile, 2022).

For example, SAFe® differentiates between operational and development value streams. A development value stream contains all resources necessary to develop a product or service. An operational value stream comprises all resources necessary to deliver that previously developed service or product to the customer (Scaled Agile, 2022). Once the overarching value streams have been identified, squads and tribes that will best support the delivery of value to the customer can be formed.

Other elements: Guilds/communities of practice (CoP)

Guilds/CoPs are examples of how employees can be more closely interconnected throughout an organization. They consist of employees that share a common interest, have common expertise, or are interested in broadening their knowledge in a certain field. Unlike chapters, which also focus on knowledge sharing, guilds have no real boundaries. They may even be set up as voluntary communities in which employees from any of the different tribes can freely participate.



4.3 Agile methods — Providing the right toolset

Setting up an agile model cultivates the fertile soil from which the benefits of agile working will later be reaped. As emphasized in the chapter on the Agile 3M framework, however, there are other components that must also be taken into account. If the agile model is to be brought to vibrant life and agility is to be embraced as an approach to work, organizations will need to complement the structure with the implementation of agile methods. There is a wide range of methods that observe agile principles and lead to an efficient delivery of value. Frameworks such as Scrum provide extensive guidelines for effective collaboration on both a larger and on a smaller scale. Organizations often utilize these frameworks and make minor adjustments to adapt them to their individual requirements. Sometimes it is neither necessary nor beneficial to integrate larger-scale frameworks. Organizations can choose to integrate agile methods such as OKRs (objectives and key results) into their performance management or implement the Kanban method to structure their tasks more efficiently. In the agile world, there are also numerous less extensive techniques that can be employed as concrete measures to implement agile principles. One common example is the introduction of review meetings, retrospectives, and daily stand-ups during which task boards or burndown charts are used to facilitate close cooperation within a team.

The above examples represent a selection of possible agile methods that all offer opportunities for the adoption of agile working methods. When combined with an effective agile model, they can pave the way to the exploitation of agility's full potential.

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Detecon has a proven track record, having supported its clients with consultation services on the subject of corporate agility for more than ten years. We work with different agile methods across different industries and are highly versed in their proper implementation. Selecting the right methods and tailoring them to the client's needs is crucial for the development of a futureproof agile organization.

Detecon's certified agile experts have a large methods portfolio from which to choose and always take your company's vision and its agile model into account. We support you from the initial outline of your agile strategy to the go-live of your agile organization and beyond by providing profound expertise, professional guidance, and extensive training.

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4.4 Agile mindset — It's more than just structure

There is an essential step for the completion of the creation of an agile organization: the recognition of the significance of an agile mindset, the third component of the Agile 3M framework. From an employee's perspective, the implementation of an agile model and agile methods entails profound and far-reaching changes that cannot be implemented and adopted on the fly. Changing the way people work also requires a shift in mindset on all corporate levels. An agile mindset describes an inner attitude and way of thinking that allows uncertainty to exist and accepts that change is a constant. By adopting an agile mindset, people comprehend that they are at the center of change and are the driving force that make it happen. Furthermore, the concept of an agile mindset should also be reflected in a company's culture and its values, so it is important to define a clear vision that incorporates cultural aspects on what the future organization should look like. Communicating and living this shared vision creates a common purpose that generates a strong level of commitment and a sense of belonging. As is true of any transformation process, implementing an agile model requires effective change management capable

of instilling a deeply-rooted agile mindset throughout the entire organization and its culture. Leaders are required to change to a servant-leadership role focusing on enablement and giving direction while allowing decentralized decision-making and fostering self-managing and autonomous teams. Employees, on the other hand, must accept a higher level of autonomy, clearer lines of accountability, and responsibility for the achievement of targets. The mindset shift must be initiated and truly lived by the company's leaders who, acting as authentic role models, pave the way by adopting agile principles and demonstrating their confidence in the benefits of the change in the daily routines.

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The best-designed agile model and methods are worth little if the organization is unable to adopt a truly agile mindset and review its culture.

This is similar to diving below the surface in the picture of the iceberg-model. A change in culture is central to agile working and must be implemented through specific measures such as decentralized decision-making towards the agile team or the understanding of a changed knowledge distribution. Changing the way people deal with uncertainty and periodic change requires diligence and should not be neglected when going agile. It can be a real challenge to embrace fully a more flexible, volatile, and changing work environment. These are key findings that Detecon has determined during its projects, and the consultancy has since acquired more than ten years of expertise in transforming organizations and supporting them during the transformation of the underlying mindset and culture as well as the structures. Detecon assigns dedicated agile mindset and change experts to consulting projects to ensure that the new agile model is also embraced by the company's personnel.

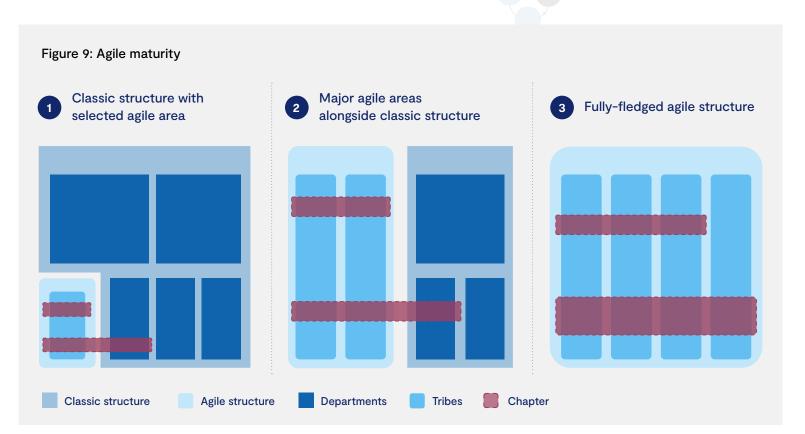
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_ 5. Agile at all costs?

Unquestionably, there are a multitude of viable approaches to building an agile organization. In practice however, many decision-makers struggle with the when, what, and how of agile transformation within their businesses. It appears that there is a trade off between either a lack of change or an oversaturation of change and companies often seem overstrained in finding an equilibrium between the two extremes. The diversity of their operating models, the resources at their disposal, and the differences in their market environments demand the determination of the specific level of agility appropriate for each and every company individually. It is unlikely that a company with a conventional operating model - e.g., an asset-heavy company with a more traditional structure - will be capable of matching the agile maturity of a digital start-up. Agile methods and structures that work for one company may not be suited to others. There simply is no one-size-fits-all solution.



Nevertheless, there are three common types of agile organization set-ups (Figure 9):

- A generally classic structure with selected agile areas, e.g., functional department
- Major agile areas alongside a classic structure, e.g., business unit

A fully-fledged agile structure

The first two models can be defined as hybrid organizations consisting of a certain degree of amalgamation of classic and agile structures. In these cases, innovation departments or other project-driven functions that are confronted with complex and non-standardized tasks are commonly transformed into agile units. In contrast, organizational units performing mostly non-complex, standardized tasks may continue to operate as functional departments. The tasks the departments perform and the environment in which they operate can



indicate which departments should be transformed. The organizational direction often involves a decision about the tradeoff between the effectiveness of agility (due to strict customer centricity) and the efficiency of the classic approach (due to functional specialization) and is dependent on the operating model of the individual organization.

On the other hand, a fully-fledged agile structure is based on the concept of maximum customer centricity and may manifest itself in a variety of different forms, one of which is shown in chapter 4. In general, a fully agile structure is often utilized in start-ups operating in a digital environment and is not necessarily viable for companies with more traditional operating models and rigid structures such as asset-heavy manufacturing companies.

Ultimately, there is no universally right degree of agile maturity within an organization. A company-wide agile structure is rarely the best solution. Every organization is unique and must be assessed individually to identify the adequate level of agile maturity

_ 6. A rocky journey

As indicated in the previous chapter, establishing an agile organization is no mean feat for many companies as it often entails substantial changes in the company's operating model. Research reveals that approximately 50 percent of companies are unsuccessful at implementing agile methods and structures owing to a multitude of roadblocks before or during the transformation. While the reasons for failure are manifold and in part case-specific, some of the common pitfalls are briefly described below:

- 1. Copy and paste of organization models of other companies: One of the major traps during the conceptual planning phase of agile transformation processes is the attempt to emulate the agile structure of other companies. The so-called Spotify model is a prime example of this phenomenon. Many decision-makers have tried to replicate Spotify's organization model without fully grasping Spotify's particular and unique circumstances. Spotify's origins as a digital start-up are often overlooked.
- 2. Lack of leadership commitment: The absence of top management support is often seen as a point of concern during transformation, and without the commitment and demonstrations of leadership of the top management, transformation initiatives are doomed to failure. In contrast, a committed top management is more likely to overcome any barriers that are encountered along the way. It is consequently crucial that the transformation initiative is driven by senior leaders who lead and engage the rest of the workforce and provide guidance on the journey to becoming an agile organization.
- 3. Absence of shared vision: Problematic situations often arise when the vision is poorly communicated or there is no vision at all. A clear vision brings direction as well as a sense of community and is capable of building momentum that excites people to action. Formulating a vision and ensuring that the vision is communicated to relevant stakeholders from the very beginning is a prerequisite for successful transformation.
- 4. Deficiencies in the transformation plan: The journey to an agile organization is quite tough. In contrast to popular belief, agile transformation is not a matter of just doing it; it is a complex venture that demands a well-thought-out road map and defined milestones. While the scope of the transformation may be adjusted on the go, setting broadly defined goals is vital. An adequate plan considers every relevant step as well as potential barriers that may be encountered during the transformation.
- 5. Disregard for organizational dependencies: The significance of dependencies among organizational departments is often neglected during the transformation to agility. This is especially true when a hybrid approach is chosen and parts of the organizational structure are transitioned to agile operation while other areas remain unchanged. Examination of essential dependencies and their consideration during the design of the organizational interfaces is critical.

_ Key takeaways

1.

Upheavals in society and leaps in technology, which occur in ever shorter intervals, have led to VUCA environments. A more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world requires companies to readjust their organizational set-ups – consider becoming more agile to cope with ever-changing environments.

2.

When transforming to an agile organization, a systematic approach is essential. However, as each organization is individual, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. To tackle this, the Agile 3M framework provides a holistic picture – make sure to look beyond structure and also focus on agile methods and an agile mindset.

3.

Agile structures may not always be appropriate. It is important to thoroughly sound out the adequate level of agile maturity – keep in mind that agility does not bring immediate or ultimate salvation to every organization.

4.

Many agile transformations fail. Going agile is no easy undertaking and requires full leadership commitment and employee engagement – do not take on the transformation half-heartedly as you would be setting up for failure

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_ The company

Detecon is the leading, globally operating management technology consulting company with headquarters in Germany, which has been combining classic management consulting with high technological competence for over 40 years. The focus is on digital transformation: Detecon supports companies from all areas of business to adapt their business models and operational processes to the competitive conditions and customer requirements of the digitalized, globalized economy with state-of-the-art communication and information technology. Detecon's expertise bundles the knowledge from the successful conclusion of management and ICT consulting projects in over 160 countries.

Detecon is a subsidiary of T-Systems International, one of the world's leading vendor independent providers of digital services and subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom.

From the concept to implementation

We accompany our clients from strategy and idea generation to implementation. We tailor the flexible, precisely fitting use of methods and tools as well as the networking with experts within our ecosystem to each individual project.

Our consultants are constantly developing their knowledge and using all their expertise to find the best solution for the specific needs of our clients. We focus on taking responsibility and create an infrastructure that allows both mobile working and working in a creative office environment. Fair and appreciative cooperation is the most important characteristic by which we define ourselves as a company in our daily collaboration. The second most important: the passion to shape the digital transformation!

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