



Sana™



Catalyzing the adoption of Agile principles

Roundtable
White Paper

Introduction

What does it mean to work Agile?

Organizations around the world have been increasingly adopting the philosophy but struggling to apply it in practice. According to the 2020 State of Agile Report, 95% of organizations claim to practice Agile development methods, yet 84% have a low level of internal competency in Agile practices.



“ People use the word Agile, but they don't seem to know how to implement it.

We gathered a group of learning leaders to discuss how to catalyze the adoption of Agile tools and build an Agile coaching capability within an organization.

The discussion resulted in three conclusions:

01 Assess the needs of Agile before implementing

02 Drive leadership engagement

03 Find change agents to power the transformation



01

Assess the needs of Agile before implementing

With resistance to change being the most common organizational barrier to adopting Agile principles, an empathetic approach is key. Do not sell Agile. Instead, identify where teams would most feel the impact from adopting or not adopting it, raise the topics to the surface, and create space for the organization to find the right solution.

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Agile principles work best where they are actually wanted, not where they are pushed for.

02

Drive leadership engagement

A successful Agile transformation depends on understanding which leaders can champion the change and in what ways. Senior stakeholders can play a vital role, but only if (a) their responsibility is clear and (b) they understand how their individual attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets will evolve. Change is hard, so find your most enthusiastic leaders and support them by creating a forum for discussing opportunities and challenges. Once your leaders feel supported, encourage them to communicate internally and share how they're using agile principles—short weekly videos are just one idea.

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I always start by asking leaders what they're going to do individually to bring Agile into their organization. That's what you need to advocate for.



03

Find change agents to power the transformation

Once you've motivated your leaders, you need to engage the rest of the organization. In the spirit of Agile, start small: find three employees who are passionate about Agile and invite them to an informal discussion. Instead of defining the purpose upfront, co-create it with the initial members, then let these people recruit more employees to the group over time. The genuine enthusiasm and engagement from this group will help Agile practices spread more quickly and authentically across the organization.

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Organizational change occurs most effectively when the process is organic. The key topics are the ones that raise themselves to the surface.

This white paper is based on insights generated from a roundtable discussion moderated by Phil King (Phil King Consulting) with participation from Andrew Olliver-Jones (Konica Minolta), Giorgio Cavalleri (Chiesi Farmaceutici), Sue Campbell (Merck Canada), and Samuel Björklund (Sana Labs).

