



Level Agile

White Paper

[15 mins read]

Executive summary

This report reflects upon the common challenges faced by many organizations, through the lens of transformation, in particular: *voice of the customer, scalability, strategy cascade, engagement, eroding goals and delivery failure.*

As some organizations thrive, others flounder, failing to reach their true potential; it's time for a change, to "level the playing field", and provide a more permanent and cost effective solution than traditional transformation.

Introduction

As we progress into the third decade of agile, many digital natives have known nothing else, whereas many long established organizations are still coming to terms with agile transformation.

Some organizations are on their second or third attempt at adopting a mainstream framework, such as SAFe¹, LeSS², or Spotify.

Startups on the other hand, need to scale, without the convoluted processes and the numerous roles often required by such frameworks.

Either way, or perhaps a flavour somewhere in the middle, simple, effective and independent support is always welcome.

Problem statement

Here are a few *indicative* problem statements, covering some of the symptoms organizations frequently suffer from today.

¹ Scalable Agile Framework for enterprise.

² Large Scale Scrum

Long established organizations

First model

Bored, frustrated or disenchanted with large scale frameworks, transformation and consultancy, tired of burning transformational CAPEX and people. Reluctant to use another consultant, coach or framework. Transformation has become a dirty word.

Second model

The ExCo is disconnected from middle management and execution, strategy cascade and OKRs (objectives & key results) are dysfunctional, people are sometimes unclear on how they contribute to executing the company's strategy and vision.

Digital native organizations

Third model

Startups who have emerged through a period of growth and now face the challenges associated with scaling, with a deep-rooted need to hold on to the entrepreneurial spark as well as speak fluent corporate.

Fourth model

Over time becoming complacent and oblivious to the bad habits that are creeping in and eroding the benefits of agile. In need of a roadmap that avoids the mistakes of many organizations as they grow and evolve.

Indicators

1. **Voice of the Customer** - failure to put customers in the centre
2. **Prioritization** - frequently changing with short term focus
3. **Eroding Goals** - short term focus undermining long-term goals
4. **Bandaid Culture** - failure to address fundamental problems
5. **Quantifying Value** - focusing on output as opposed to value & outcome
6. **Engagement** - people becoming burned out and disillusioned
7. **Delivery Failure** - delivery slippage and budget overruns

Common indicators or symptoms of underlying systemic problems, frequently recurring in organizations, even over longer periods of time

In the following model, ideally, Work & Delivery should be balanced. However, with the prevalence of one or two symptoms the balance becomes disturbed, leading to delivery issues. When more symptoms are prevalent it can be extremely difficult to identify root causes, let alone remedy them.



If allowed to continue unchecked, vicious circles often escalate and become more entrenched over time, therefore, harder and more costly to identify and rectify

Summary

It's a well-known fact that even long established organizations regularly reinvent themselves or aim to refresh their organizational cultures each 3-5 years.

Symptoms of vicious circles add fuel to the burning platform, seemingly confirming the urgent need for transformation.

These transformation activities are often supported with rebranding, changes to vision, mission & values, leading to changes in performance management and overhauling corporate strategies.

It's a cycle that is supported by a deep-belief that the organization must change in order to keep up with the market, indeed in order to survive.

Agile, as an operating model, is surprisingly resistant to these cycles of change and upheaval. Moreover, as we move well into its third decade, we can easily validate its value. Just by reading the Agile Manifesto, we can see that its values and principles are just as valid today as they were in 2002.

If we share beliefs and ideals, as a people, we can carry an organization through anything, and emerge as victorious leaders, stronger than ever. This is a *virtuous circle*, which leads people and organizations from strength to strength.

It's not what the organization can do for you, it's what you can do for the organization

Solution

Level Agile provides access to world-class good practice, which has been tested and verified, through years of transformation observation and experience, in some of the most dynamic and challenging organizations.

It distills years of lessons and comprehensive know-how into an accessible service, which focuses on the highest gain leverage points to secure both short and long-term success.

Level Agile is different because it simply takes what works and empowers people through nurturing a *virtuous circle* of learning & development. It negates the need for heavy transformation programs, through encouraging people and teams to continually improve.

Level Agile scope

Roles & responsibilities - stripped to the essential MVP of roles & responsibilities, we focus on: *Sponsor, Business Owner, Product Owner, Scrum Master & Delivery Team*

Knowledge articles & job aids - short digestible *video guides* and *practical job aids* support participants every step of the way

Communities - we encourage and nurture self-organized *communities of interest & learning*, sharing best practice and learning together

Coaching - just a few clicks away, our coaches are *experienced servant leaders*, who openly share a wealth of experience and know-how

Planning - enterprise *cadence & execution rhythm* can be found at its heart, quarterly planning and incremental timeboxed delivery

Reporting - data-driven *lean* reporting, including team journeys & organizational maturity, as well as portfolio health & execution performance

Level Agile principles

At Level Agile, we simplified the well-known agile principles, and focused on those principles that nurture virtuous circles of learning & development. Everything we do is guided by these principles.

1. We put customers in the centre

2. We empower people & teams

3. We strive for simplicity

4. We support self-organization

5. We continually improve



**Stop trying to change the system (organization), that's difficult,
instead empower people to change themselves**

This emphasizes the importance of individual empowerment and autonomy in driving organizational change. By focusing on individual and team growth & development, organizations *can* create a culture of continuous improvement and innovation that drives long-term success.

Delivery platform

Level Agile leverages existing content management systems and mobile apps, like Microsoft SharePoint and Atlassian Confluence, to deliver its content. This reduces development and distribution costs and negates the need for additional licenses and implementation of external SW or tools. We simply use whatever system that's already in use.

Conclusion

Level Agile provides an effective short and long-term answer to organizational transformation. It will be available in freemium and premium versions and is ground-breaking in its simplicity and usage of virtuous circles, to nurture and strengthen any organizational culture.

Our premium subscription based service is *transformation-on-demand-as-a-service*, aiming to rapidly move organizations forward to a place where support is no longer required, thanks to the virtuous circles we help to nurture and develop.

For far less than the cost of one FTE, your organization can begin its journey with Level Agile, mix and match with our freemium offering, and transformation finally begins to make sense, both financially and organizationally.

References

[Level Agile](#)
[The Agile Manifesto](#)
[SAFe](#) & [LeSS](#)
[The Scrum Guide](#)
[System archetypes](#) and [vicious](#) & [virtuous](#) circles
