

BUSINESS VITAMINS

The Agile Organizations

Introduction

Our common notion of Agile is that it is synonymous with collaboration and flexibility, but it also implies an iterative environment in which requirements change as needs change. Therefore, we tend to conceptualize Agile as a method for enabling development teams across industries to develop new features more quickly.

The need to bring products to market faster than in traditional business models gave rise to business agility. Despite this, business agility possesses several fundamental principles in common. Agile methodology was born in the early 1990s when software manufacturers were struggling to meet their customers' needs because of a slow development process.

Agile is a well-known development methodology and the approach of choice for many development teams, especially those trying to create an environment of continuous delivery. So Agile organizations are different, they can ideally combine velocity and adaptability with stability and efficiency.

Vitamin Definition

An agile organization is characterized by its ability to adapt to new market requirements in a short amount of time.

Usage of the Vitamin

It is crucial for an organization to be agile in order to respond quickly to changing market conditions and disruptive technologies

Vitamin Details

In order for an organization to be considered agile, it must be able to adapt and react quickly to changing circumstances and they are characterized by adopting a customer-centric culture and being quick to learn and make decisions.

How to become an agile organization? It does so through short and cost-efficient development sequences, which allows for constant change and improvement for new products.

Also, becoming an agile organization will need a change in organization's culture: Instead of creating long-term projects with sequential tasks as the Waterfall framework does, an Agile approach breaks large projects into smaller pieces that are easier to manage. An Agile organization will not rely on heavy documentation - instead, it will create short-form cards known as user stories to note project requirements. An Agile business will be able to save valuable time and money by implementing this practice.

It is common for agile development to be used for short-term projects, but business agility applies these principles throughout an organization, benefitting every department. Team commitment is required, as well as buy-in and encouragement from leaders, but it can be enormously rewarding. The Agile organizations foster a common purpose, using transparency and visibility to empower teams to make better decisions. In the process, they constantly strive for the right balance between speed and adaptability, as well as stability and efficiency.

If an organization is an agile one, should include these pillars to its culture:

- Independent, autonomous, dedicated, and passionate teams
- Frequent communication and cross-functional collaboration
- Intelligent and adept decision-making
- A shared customer-centric purpose
- A growth mindset
- Cutting-edge technology

Agile organizations value challenging the status quo, doing things differently, confronting dogmas (sacred cows), and proposing new, creative solutions. As a result of clear strategies and a shared purpose, there is a great deal of autonomy to innovate. We view mistakes as opportunities for discovery, learning, and growth. Mastery of core technical skills and subjects is valued and integrated into high performing teams.

EXAMPLES:

So now let's see an example on how a company become Agile in its processes and what was the result:

San Francisco's Fitbit was one of the early successes in the wearable technology market, taking advantage of a data-driven society that has become more and more introspective over time. Shortly after their launch in 2007, they adopted a successful Scrum approach, which helped them meet the demands of their holiday-oriented product delivery schedule (especially Christmas). As the number of Fitbit's customers grew, as did the number of their employees, and soon the Scrum approach was no longer scalable.

As a result, the Management Office Director, who had previously worked with SAFe, decided a change in mindset and approach was necessary. Fitbit, rather than starting with a revolution overnight, started small by converting 12 Scrum teams to SAFe, adding more teams as they went along.

So, what exactly did they do?

- Design and create a fast and flexible flow across the Fitbit ecosystem
- Create cross-functional teams that focused on fast delivery
- Scaling up team growth to improve onboarding
- Improving objective visibility, with 2-month forecasting
- Align key business dates across the whole company, from marketing campaigns to office moves, keeping everyone in the loop

Approach: SAFe (Scaled Agile Framework)

Result: Four new products and 22 million devices shipped in the first year of SAFe, the most they had ever achieved. Increases in overall speed and team engagement were recorded.

