KICK-START YOUR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH AN AGILE APPROACH

PROJECT ONE

Many organisations start their digital transformation by defining a digital vision, strategy and roadmap, that often results in a large portfolio of work.

Such programmes can quickly become bogged down in detail and a confused approach, where costs can easily spiral. What felt like a vision of digital glory quickly turns into a daily grind of slipped deadlines, poor delivery, low staff morale and a lack of credibility by the board every time someone mentions the word 'digital'.

It doesn't need to be like this. In our experience, your chances of success increase if you have a clear and targeted plan of action – that silver bullet!

DELIVERING YOUR DIGITAL VISION

Keep it simple and start with a clearly defined digitally-enabled project that will quickly set expectations and pace for the rest of your digital journey. This should be the cornerstone of your transformation and deliver a paradigm shift in the way your organisation operates, leading to either major revenue growth, cost savings or both. The key is to ensure you are delivering what the business actually wants, therefore you need to:

- **Stop talking digital and start talking outcomes:**

  Focus everyone's mind on a single desired business outcome. Get the first one right, get a positive reaction and then emulate for the future. Talk about the real and tangible benefits. For example, 'the ability for my customers to buy from me in three clicks on a mobile app', or 'the ability to save 30% of human effort in an on-boarding process'.

- **Organise yourselves in the right way:**

  Boards often make decisions based on previous experience, "use offshore", "use start-ups" or "it's all about Agile". Implement the approach that works well for your current organisation. If you need to, build or adjust your end-to-end delivery cycle and refine and scale as you make progress. Make sure to measure and celebrate success and apply lessons learnt for the next phase.

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SHOULD YOU USE AN AGILE APPROACH?

Many perceive Agile as applicable solely to software development and even then, frequently 'smoke and mirrors' that often flatters to deceive. However, Project One's experience has demonstrated that Agile approaches can be used to deliver effective transformation across a spectrum of environments. Importantly, Agile is simply a delivery mindset.

WHAT IS AGILE DELIVERY?

Agile delivery provides flexibility and speed to market by breaking down a product or a service to the 'Minimum Viable Product' and deploying it. Critical to success is making sure the business and delivery teams work together, stay focused on goals, effectively manage changing priorities and drive productivity to deliver a better 'product'. This will improve morale, drive efficiency by only delivering what is really needed and, most importantly, improve the overall delivery success for the business and bottom line.

Agile is about placing the end-customer at the centre of delivery and ensuring all work is considered from the perspective of the value the digital service or product adds to their customers and business.

HOW DO YOU DELIVER AGILE?

Whilst you need to understand an Agile delivery methodology don't get distracted. Keep it simple and focus on the outcome. Start with the user needs, do the hard work to make the digital product simple to use and focus on the iterative delivery to the 'Minimum Viable Product' – and when you have done that, iterate further until you meet the point of 'done' (where the business is happy and full benefits are realised). Remember, throughout this, keep showing your product to your users and your sponsors, listen to their feedback and improve based on real insights, not assumptions.

real change • real difference
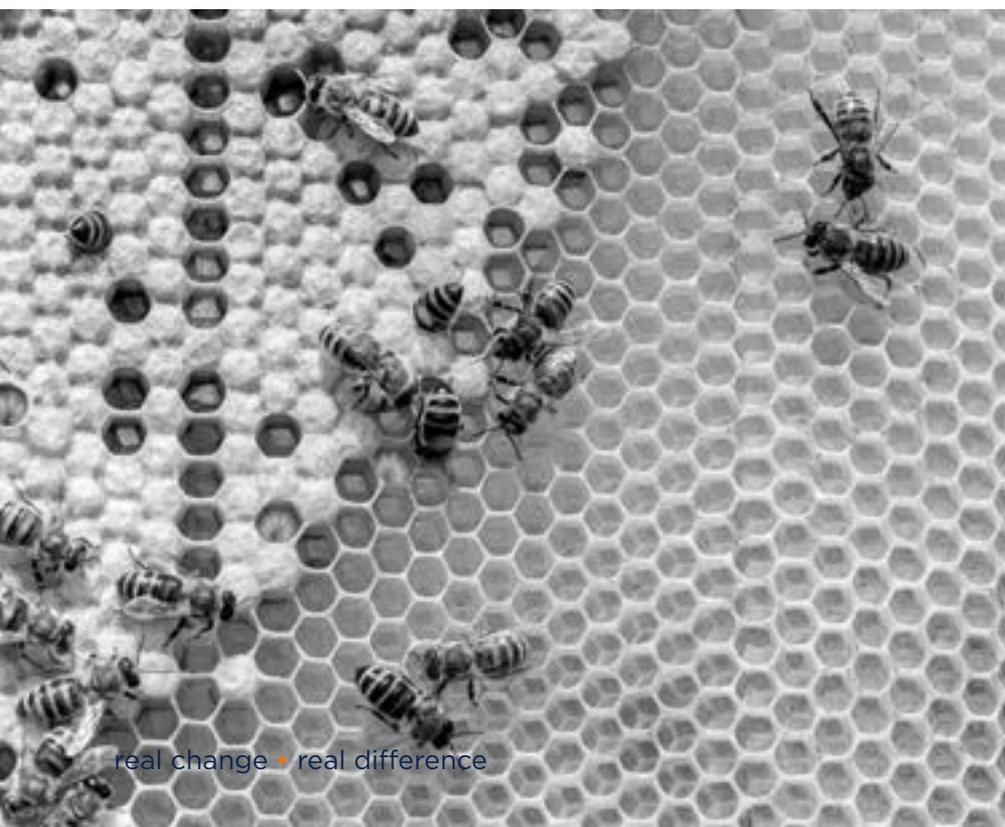
SIMPLE? YES AND NO

Agile is no panacea and sometimes it can appear a dark art, frequently seeming at odds with proven approaches such as Prince2 and MSP. Furthermore, like any approach or methodology, Agile can be used poorly and inappropriately. However, done well Project One has seen it effective in driving fast and continuous transformations across multiple market sectors including retail, telco, aviation and public sector.

HOW DO I KNOW IF AGILE IS WORKING?

Tell-tale signs to be aware of if Agile is not being used well include soaring development costs, muddled ways of working, rampant role creep, low team velocity and transactional team relationships. Agile is not a dark art it is largely common sense – it is about being 'lean' and smart to deliver value to the customer.

Despite urban myths, you still need governance, you still need to deliver to timelines, build a great team and document what you have done and, you still need to provide confidence to the sponsor and business.

Due to its fast-pace and more fluid nature, being good at Agile can be challenging and needs a mindset change across the whole team and wider stakeholders. Remember the mantra - the here and now all trumps the future - the focus needs to be on iterative development and a culture of trust and collaboration that significantly improves delivery velocity.

DO YOU NEED CHANGE EXPERTISE?

Many of you will recognise these challenges. Others may be scratching their heads, trying to work out how to lift the veil on Agile and simply deliver to the business outcome. At Project One, we help our customers by leveraging the extensive experience of our team of change and digital professionals, to help them deliver their goals.

We have a simple and pragmatic approach that helps them through every step of their own unique journey, and we'd be delighted to help you through yours. To find out more, please contact: **James.Osullivan@projectone.com**