

Agile methods, from theory to practice



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Sofrecom, a subsidiary of the Orange group, is a consulting and engineering company specialised in the Telecommunications sector. Sofrecom contributes to the development and digital transformation of its customers by providing them with consulting, IT development and operational solutions. Sofrecom helps them to differentiate themselves on their markets and to improve their operational performance with innovative approaches based on digital and agility.

From the co-construction of a strategy to its operational implementation, Sofrecom provides end-to-end support in different business areas such as Broadband, DATA/IA, Mobile Financial Services, Digital Innovation, e-government or IT and Cloud hosting strategies.

Sofrecom is a network of men and women, a powerful network of know-how and expertise that links its customers, Orange experts, and its industrial and local partners. Today, Sofrecom has more than 2150 multi-skilled consultants and engineers, from more than 30 nationalities.

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Introduction

Becoming a digital company is now a necessity to survive. A digital transformation is based on strong principles: going fast and thinking far, customer thinking, disruptive thinking, focusing on the value created more than on the preservation of existing assets, holding the talents and protecting them from the temptation of complexity.

To do this, the company needs to **innovate, to experiment and to satisfy customer needs within often short deadlines**. In addition, for the Digital Enterprise to succeed, social, ethical and managerial codes that employees can identify with should be adopted.

- At the same time, agility allows the company to develop:**
- Its ability to **anticipate** the consequences of its actions and decisions by foreseeing, planning and building scenarios;
 - Its ability to **innovate** in a fair way to improve, to make a difference and to change only what is necessary, i.e., to avoid unnecessary innovation overkill;
 - Its ability to **cooperate** with its ecosystem by aligning itself with a common sense and to encourage the cooperation of the individuals that make it up internally.

Agility brings many ways to operate this digital transformation. So, what are the benefits of agility for the digital enterprise? Where does its digital and agile transformation begin? And what are the key success factors? These are the questions that our experts and consultants have tried to answer.

We wish you an excellent reading!

The agility, a part of the DNA of work methods and organizations?

For companies, agility is not an end in itself. It is an essential condition for adapting to continue creating value in a world of profound change.

The world is VUCA

Our companies evolve in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment in which traditional reference points are shattered.

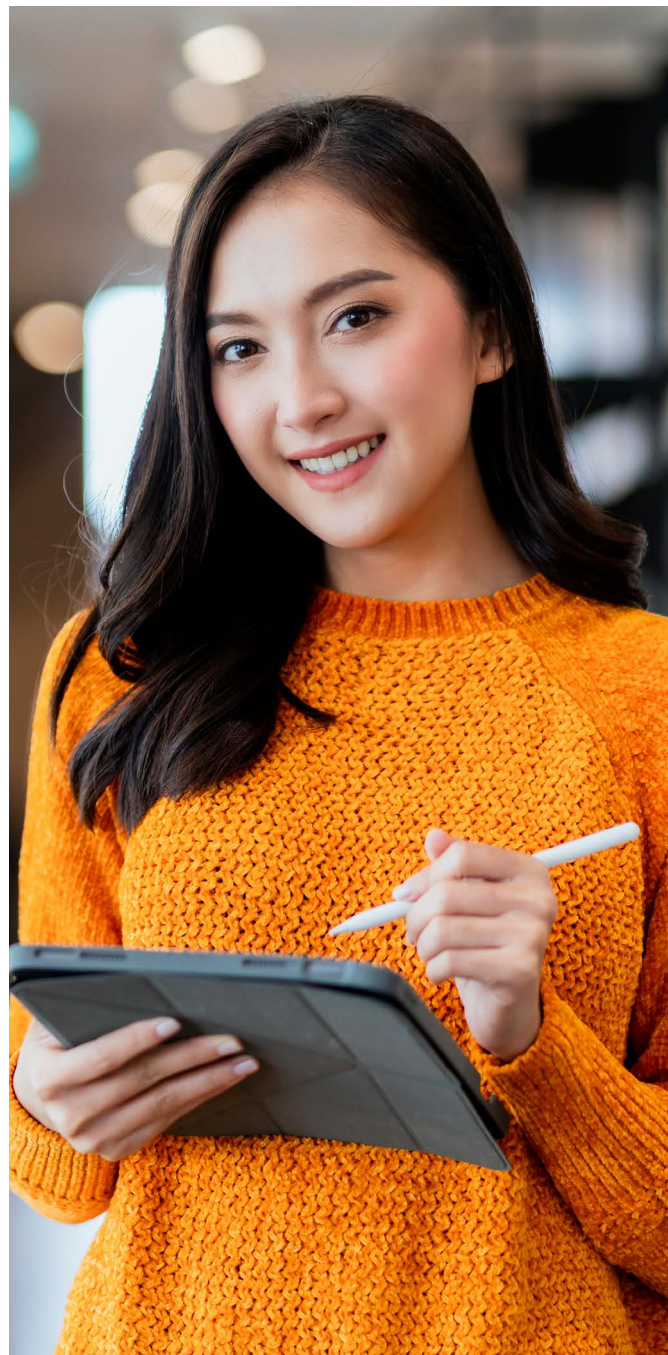
- Everything is changing rapidly such as the geopolitical situation, society, economic markets, and technologies, regulations.
- The world of tomorrow has become unpredictable. The recent global health crisis has clearly demonstrated this.
- The multiplication of interactions and decision-making criteria makes it more difficult to read and understand.
- The evolution of the relationships between the players in the ecosystem creates ambiguity: yesterday's competitors (GAFA) are becoming partners of operators, while remaining their competitors.

An acceleration of market developments

In addition, the Covid-19 crisis has significantly accelerated changes in the behavior of customers.

- Since the end of lockdowns, customers are using more digital and social networks.
- Customers are increasingly demanding. They expect, in response to their needs, trusted solutions that are immediately available online. Digital platforms are offering them more autonomy and customization possibilities, while guaranteeing them a high level of security.
- Customers are far more attentive to the integration of the CSR dimension in solutions.
- Customer experience is becoming increasingly important.

These signals, sent by the market, are constantly changing. Their integration leads companies to change direction while trying to stay on course. These changes can be quite disruptive for the teams.



Rapid change in the businesses

The ecosystem of telecom operators is also undergoing a major evolution. The upcoming deployment of the 5G core network will accelerate the evolution towards the «softwarization» of networks. To become more flexible; more powerful; and more intelligent, networks are increasingly managed like software. Soon they will also integrate the Telco Cloud and artificial intelligence.

This growing transformation of networks is bringing together the telecom and IT businesses, which have very different approaches by nature. The world of network manufacturers, led by historical European and Asian players, has developed according to traditional «V-cycle» methods, with reliable, high-performance solutions. The world of IT, driven in particular by the Americans, has already reached a high level of maturity in agile mode. The convergence of networks and IT is shaking up culture, values, and practices. It will have a strong impact on business lines and skill requirements. It is important to support this change of reference points and this transformation of the network professions.

Agility: a solution for managing permanent change

Agility is not an end in itself, it is a solution for continuous adaptation to change.

Agility is another way of working and operating which assists the company to develop its **business and create value** more quickly. It allows the company to prioritize projects within a strategy and improves time to market. Based on the principle of continuous small changes, it limits risk taking.

The agility approach must be global. It must take into account the company's external partners, in order

to be practiced from end-to-end. We often forget that certain partners, who are already agile, can play a role in accelerating the transformation and complete or even encourage the spread of this agility culture.

Agility is oriented towards customer's satisfaction. It delivers to the customer a solution that is less complete than with the traditional method, but integrates the most important expected functionalities. It verifies that this V1 meets the customer's needs and then integrates in the V2 answers to the new needs of the customer or the moment.

It contributes to employee's satisfaction. In an increasingly complex and uncertain environment, it gives them visibility on a course and then leaves them autonomy on how to manage the project as closely as possible to the customer's needs. Agility brings together IT and business functions, which are often in conflict over budgets. This alignment between the teams favors the development of automation and the refocusing on value-added functions.

Anchoring digital transformation in the long term through agility

Any transformation implies a change, a disruption or a questioning of what exists which will turn the daily life upside down. For an organization, whatever the motivations and the extent of the expected change, its success depends above all on the acceptance and commitment of the teams to do things differently. In order for a transformation not to appear as a problem or as a difficulty, and for it to result in a real change and not just a surface adjustment with the risk of returning to the initial state, it must very often be accompanied by a cultural change. But where to start?

Define and communicate an aspirational “why”

Before embarking on a transformation process — whether digital or not — it is essential to define a strategic direction, an inspiring vision of what the organization wants to become and deliver, its “reason to exist.” From this clear strategic direction and this “why” at the center of the “Golden Circle” described by Simon Shinek¹, it will then be easier to create a real collective ambition which will generate support and commitment from teams.

This meaning questechoes common concerns beyond specific objectives and the “why.” In France, for example, it is estimated that 51% of French people believe that a company must be useful to society as a whole, ahead of its customers (34%), its employees (12%), and its shareholders (3%)².

Top management as a model for transformation

It is therefore up to the top management to define an inspiring ambition, to communicate it, and to set out what the success of the transformation will look like in the long term.

Its responsibility is to also materialize the change, to make the top management a real role model who embodies and drives the change, through tangible actions. Are change initiatives taken with sufficient resources? Is there a regular evaluation of the expected changes? i.e., the gap between the target vision and the current situation? Are the collective

stakes more important than the individual stakes or those of the organizations in place? Beyond top management, it is also the role of the managerial line who needs to be adapted to facilitate and accelerate the expected transformation.

How can we create the conditions for sustainable change?

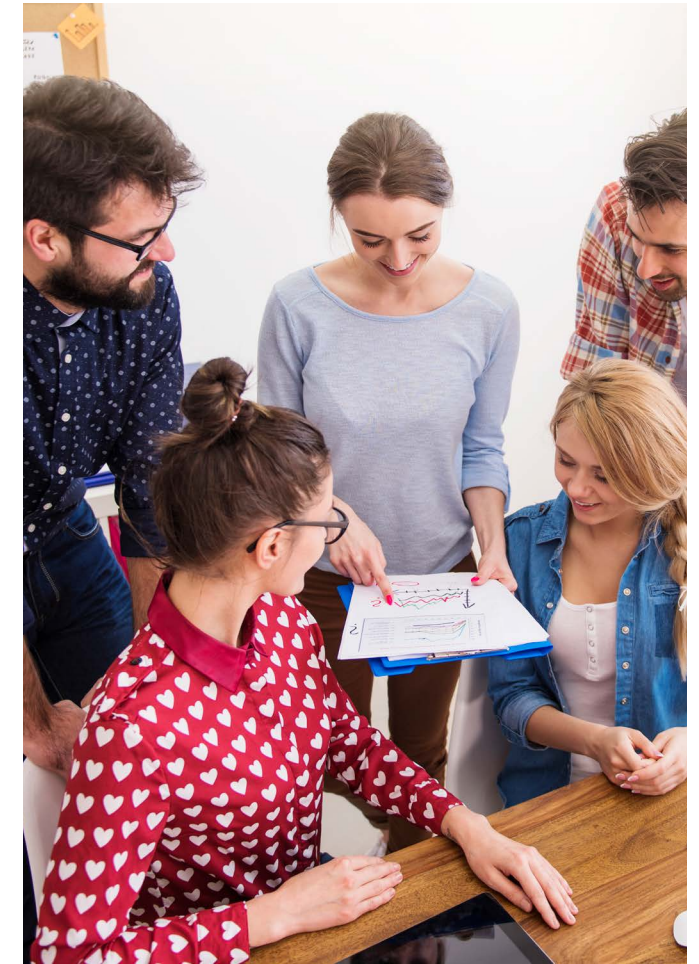
The fundamental question for an organization is to succeed in anchoring change in a sustainable way, not as a result but above all as a means of action to innovate, renew, improve operational efficiency, and create more value.

Value creation must be considered in its broadest sense. Value for customers (satisfaction), for employees (applications, simple processes, etc.), business value for the company, brand image, and risk or cost reduction.

Developing a culture of change and innovation

For a transformation to become a corporate culture — anchored in the long term — a real cultural change must be instilled. Aligning teams around agility — as values, principles and methods — can facilitate a new way of working together, which involves:

- Developing key agile skills and postures: customer culture, collaboration and innovation, importance of feedback, taking initiative, and team engagement.



- Infusing the culture of value creation at a rapid pace and accompanying key projects in "try & learn" or "test & learn" mode.
- Supporting teams in their growth and maturity in agility, through the support of agile "coaches" for example.
- Helping management evolve towards a role of facilitator through managerial agility, for more "trust," right to make mistakes, autonomy and support of teams.

A transformation project relies on many prerequisites and organizations that are committed to it will succeed easier with a global approach. Beyond trying to solve specific problems within an organization, the diffusion of agility through the cultural change and positive energy it instills can create the conditions for a deep transformation. The speed to deliver value, the flexibility, and the adaptability of the teams become a real strength for the company and an asset to achieve its ambition.

Managing the transformation

Once the transformation initiatives have been defined, the changes they will require must be prioritized. To avoid demobilizing the teams by attacking too many fronts in parallel — and to avoid dispersion — it is preferable to adopt the proven agile method of "small steps:"

- Sequencing the ambition by prioritizing what will deliver the most value, eliminating the superfluous.
- Freeing up time in teams' daily lives for change beyond the day-to-day activities of management and production.
- Using the benefits of prototyping and experimentation as a way to assess the value of a project with limited risk.
- Sharing lessons learned and best practices, anchor the results of the changes as the new norm.
- Aligning on a clear and motivating ambition through an OKR (Objectives & Key Results) dashboard.

Let the teams self-organize and invent the "how"

Transformation cannot be decreed and its success depends above all on the collaboration of motivated teams. Once the direction has been given, and the strategic vision is clear, the teams can take ownership of the direction to be taken. This is the time to give space to the field, to trust in the ability of teams to innovate, and find solutions independently:

- Decline the strategic vision within the different departments so that everyone understands the change and where it will lead.
- Engage employees in the changes that concern them.
- Help teams to easily collaborate by distributing collaborative tools and adapting premises to experiment in inspiring places.
- Highlight the teams in the field who are making the transformation, and actively communicate throughout the company on the results of change initiatives — and also on the reasons for failures.
- Structure the collection of internal and external feedback and optimize the listening process to measure the impact of change.



¹Simon Shinek: "Start with why"

²Source : IFOP, Land of Siena, The utility value associated with the company, September 15, 2016

ONATi relies on agility to transform itself

To successfully merge all of its telecom activities into a single entity, improve the customer experience and its internal processes, the historical operator in French Polynesia experimented with the SCRUM agile method with around 20 employees. With the first improvements measured, it is expanding the approach.

differed from one team to another, and to promote better working together.

Why use the agile method?

We had started to work with Sofrecom on the customer journey improvement approach. The first reflections had allowed us to structure the customer approach as well as the work to be launched. We had identified the pain points, the improvement points and the customer satisfaction points. But when we launched the first improvement actions on the customer journey, we realized that we were lacking efficiency in terms of execution. We needed an efficient method to carry out and put into action our transformation work. Sofrecom then proposed the agile method. Three consultants trained and accompanied us in its implementation.

How did you get your teams involved in agility on the ground?

Agility is, first and foremost, a state of mind that must be well understood and integrated: working together, collaboration between different entities, step by step progress, and continuous adjustment. A phase of sensitization to this state of mind allowed us to put things into perspective.

Then we implemented the Scrum agile method by bringing on board about twenty employees. We defined and formalized three improvement user stories:

- Internet technical support, which was the first reason for calls to the customer service department.
- Mobile assistance.
- Internet fibre installation.



“Agility has favored the assumption of employees to adjust processes themselves in a simple and quick way.”



We set up three agile teams of 4 or 5 employees, each with a Scrum Master and a Product Owner. We set them in motion with the Sprint and the various agile ceremonies: the stand-up meetings, which were held by videoconference due to the health crisis and the dispersion of employees on different sites, the weekly reviews, and what we called "Manao days". At the end of each two- or three-week sprint, the agile teams presented their work to the entire company. These agility pioneers were proud to talk about their business, their achievements, and the improvements they had seen in the business. These times of communication, sharing and exchange, carried out both face-to-face and remotely, played an important role. They motivated other employees to commit to sprints and helped to get the company on board with our continuous improvement approach.

What other benefits did you observe?

First, we were able to measure the **effectiveness** of agility. An example: before the internet technical support sprint, 60% of customer calls were resolved at level 2. Today, only 15% of calls reach level 2, with 85% of calls being resolved on the first customer call. Through agile work, the team was able to propose and test different solution options and build these solutions step by step, which they really appreciated. If an option did not work, it was abandoned. If it did work, the team adjusted it step-by-step. The sprint provided new, easy-to-use, rapid problem-solving tools for internet support.

Secondly, the agile method has favored the **assumption of autonomy** in the various departments. The employees, knowing that we were in an improvement process, were in a posture of expectation towards the company or the hierarchy. They wondered if a project team was going to be formed or if their manager was planning to start something. Thanks to the agile method, they now have a kit which allows them to adjust processes themselves in a quick and easy way.

Agility also brought **cohesion** to the merging of teams. It brought together employees who were working on one end of the customer journey but did not interact directly with each other in the improvement thinking process. The Scrum method allowed them to get to know each other, to work together, and to improve their respective performances on the daily activity. This is a benefit that is highly appreciated by the teams.

Finally, Sofrecom's support-training in the implementation of agility has allowed ONATI's employees to **increase their skills** and to lead a Sprint. Some of them revealed themselves in the role of Scrum Master that they were not used to take on in their daily life. The experience was very engaging and motivating for them.

How do you raise the level of agility's deployment?

In February 2022, we held a seminar with 70 collaborators on the prioritization of user stories to be completed in the coming months. This allowed us to plan the next Sprints. From mid-March, 5 or 6 new agile teams will launch new Sprints with two important priorities:

- Set up KPIs in order to properly evaluate the improvements made at the customer level and at the internal level, because we lack indicators on some paths.
- Continue to mobilize other people on agility in order to engage more and more employees in continuous improvement.

From my point of view, a third step, beneficial for the whole company, could be to use agility on large internal company projects such as IS improvement and organization optimization.

How do you continue to deploy agility within your teams?

What is a little complicated in a human-sized structure like ours, compared to what is usually practiced in large companies, is that the employees mobilized in agile teams keep their daily activity in parallel, which can pose a problem of availability. At the same time, as they are directly involved in the user story they are working on, they see the effectiveness of the method. They remain motivated because they improve their processes and optimize their daily lives.

As for the success factors, I think that the integration of the values and principles of agility is key. Communicating what the agile teams have produced allows this state of mind to spread gradually.

Agile transformation: how to scale with SAFe?

Any company adopting an agile transformation or implementing agile initiatives will reach a decisive moment where it will have to extend its transformation to the entire organization or, in other words, go to scale. In this article, we will focus on SAFe (Scaled Agile Framework), one of the frameworks that allows scaling and that has generated several reactions among agile practitioners in recent years.

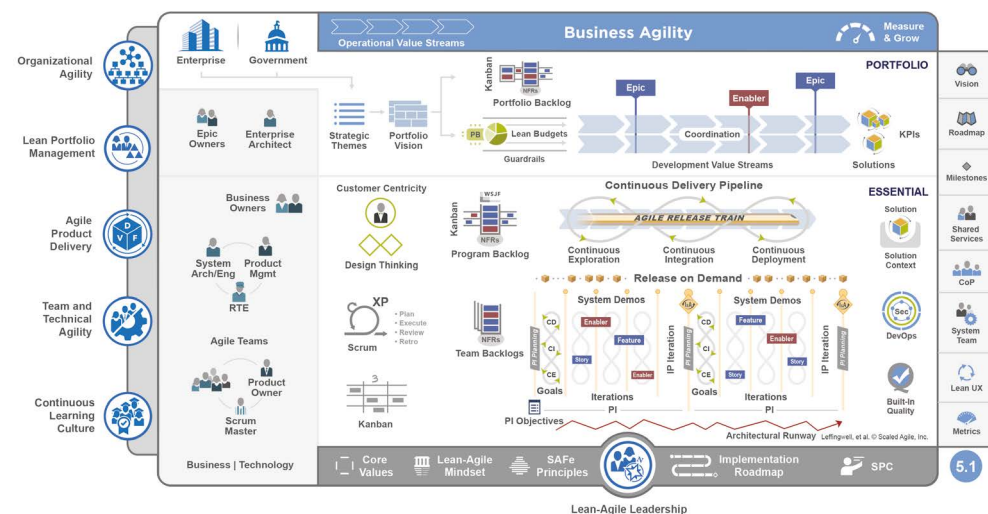
Is it just a buzz word in the agile community? Or is it the Holy Grail to secure the success of your agile transformation?

In order to quickly demystify the hypothesis of the miracle solution, SAFe is not the guarantee of a 100% successful transformation. However, it does raise several points, several important questions via a model that harmonizes the use of different techniques and tools, aligned with the need and the degree of the desired transformation through the different configurations of the Big Picture.

Configuration examples to maximize the success factors of an agile transformation

1. Essential

The **Essential SAFe** configuration provides a straightforward answer for organizations wishing to expand the application of agility to a program level in an Agile Release Train (ART) while enjoying simplicity in team support.



The **Essential SAFe** configuration provides the relevant roles, artifacts, events, and mindset for ARTs to deliver one or more desirable, achievable, viable, and sustainable solutions, or parts of a solution. The sustainable, flow-

based, self-organizing nature of ART is what fuels SAFe and ultimately enables business agility.

Many trains are virtual, crossing organizational and geographic boundaries; others follow a hierarchical structure of activity line or product line management.

This configuration harmonizes the work of different Scrum or Kanban teams by introducing skills and new roles, artifacts, events in addition to those defined in the Scrum framework:

- a. **Three skills:** Team and Technical Agility, Agile Product Delivery & Lead-Agile Leadership.
- b. The **10 SAFe Principles** and the **4 essential values**.
- c. **Essential roles:** RTE (Release Train Engineer), Product management, System Architect/Engineering & Business Owners.
- d. **Essential artifacts:** Enabler Feature, Program PI Objectives, Architectural Runway,
- e. **Essential events:** PI Planning, System Demo, Inspect & Adapt, ART Sync, SoS.

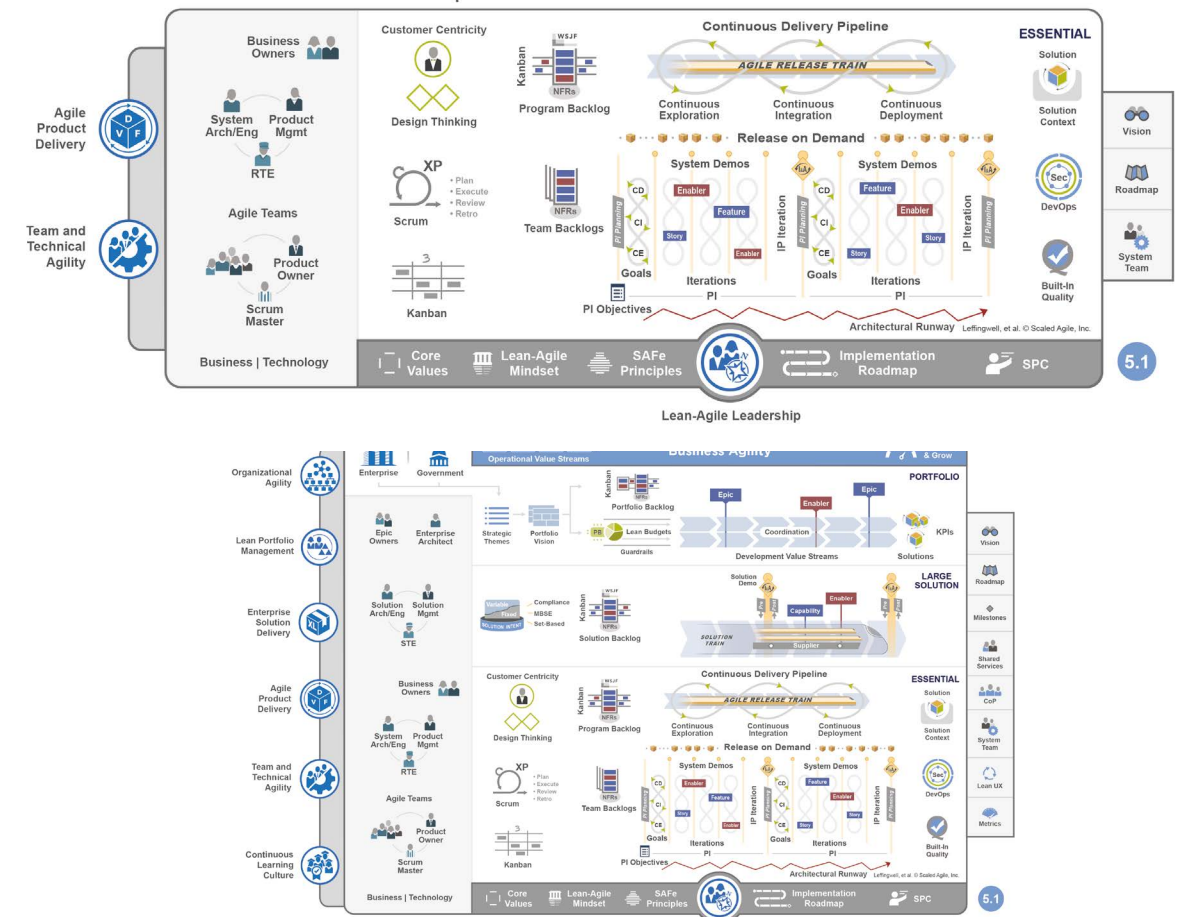
2. Portfolio

The SAFe Portfolio configuration aligns strategy with execution and organizes solution development around the development value stream through one or more operational value streams.

With an incremental logic, the SAFe Portfolio configuration, including Essential SAFe, is the smallest configuration that can be used to enable any organization to achieve Business Agility using the following elements in addition to the elements listed in Essential SAFe:

- a. Three new competencies: Lean Portfolio Management, Continuous Learning Culture & Organizational Agility.
- b. Portfolio roles: Epic Owners, Enterprise Architect, LPM.
- c. Portfolio artifacts: Strategic themes, Portfolio vision, Guardrails, Portfolio Canvas.
- d. Portfolio events: Portfolio Sync, Participatory Budgeting, Strategic portfolio Review.

SAFe® for Lean Enterprises



Deploy OKRs to align business objectives and operational execution

Do you know what your company's objectives and ambitions are? What are the criteria for success? What are the expected benefits of your actions? Often, operational teams are not aware of the company's strategic objectives. They work on their ideas and projects but do not always have a clear idea of the direction the company wants to take. Without a clear understanding of these objectives, operational teams naturally find it difficult to measure the impact of their contribution to the ambitions of their company or entity.

Without a clear understanding of these objectives, operational teams naturally find it difficult to measure the impact of their contribution to the ambitions of their company or entity. What are the steps to take to reach these goals? How can we measure this progress on a daily basis?

The OKR (Objectives and Key Results) method answers these questions to a large extent, since it allows all levels of the company to be aligned around a common vision. We will then talk about agile operationalization of the strategy.

The OKR method

Used by the most advanced companies in digitalization, the OKR method has existed for roughly ten years. Contrary to some preconceived ideas, it is not reserved for GAFAs but can be applied to all other structures. It materializes the **results of actions taken** by teams on a daily basis. It can be applied at all levels of a company: management committee, entity, operational team.

OKR is an acronym that combines two complementary and inseparable elements:

- **O for objective:** it must be ambitious, not very quantified and understandable by all. It is the destination where the company wishes to go. Example: To give our customers a good time.
- **KR for Key Results:** between two and four per objective, they must be measurable and actionable on a daily basis. They will serve as benchmarks to measure the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives. The KRs are ultimately the projection of the results that the

company wishes to achieve, in fact: "I consider that my objective is achieved if I reach these results." Example: Go from a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 35 to 40 on applications.



Why is it a key tool in an agile organization?

Working in agile mode mobilizes the fundamentals of human collaboration and teaches individuals to interact again:



Prioritize projects by staying focused on the essentials for a given time.



Facilitate communication with teams and the sharing of an overall vision



Encourage team commitment by letting them set their own key results.



Identify progress concretely thanks to the dynamic and quantifiable nature of the key results, and thus manage your activity more effectively by giving you the possibility to quickly readjust your actions.

The OKR method fits in well with this state of mind and allows all the individuals in the same company to move forward hand in hand in the same direction.

Challenges encountered during the deployment

Deploying OKRs may seem easy and intuitive. It is not. This deployment requires mobilizing, motivating and involving the teams around a shared vision and a common roadmap. It is a transformation to be managed.

The following steps are essential in the implementation of OKR:

- **Goal setting:** there are several ways to set goals.

It can be done during a collaborative workshop allowing the teams to define the objectives and to associate Key Results (KR) to them. The members of the group then vote to prioritize the topics that seem the most relevant to them, taking care to argue their choice. If the voting phase is not conclusive, it is up to the leader of the strategic theme (the head of the entity) to decide.

This exercise often leads to deep discussions as participants focus on the fundamentals of the strategy: "Why are we doing this?" "Why is this issue a higher priority than another?" This work is even more fruitful if the teams in charge of carrying out the work themselves define the path to take to achieve the goal. Once this step is completed, participants verify the measurability of each KR and define the target value.

This exercise also promotes coordination between the different strategic themes and allows for prioritization, while taking into account interdependencies and risks. Once the OKRs have been defined, the teams can use them to define their annual roadmap.

- **Setting up a steering team**

In order to manage OKRs over the long term and make them evolve, it is necessary to set up a governance system through a steering team. Its mission is clear: to be the guarantor of the application of the roadmap, to involve and make each individual in the management team responsible and to improve the operational efficiency of the teams.

- **Operational follow-up**

Once the OKRs have been defined, they must be monitored by setting up an appropriate operational system. Before defining it, it is essential to ask the leaders (division directors): what form should this operational follow-up take? How often should it take place?

It is at this stage that misunderstandings between project members may arise. For example, some members perceive OKRs as an additional layer of governance, others as a classic KPI monitoring. To guarantee success, it is essential to create support for the methodology by reassuring people that it can be adapted to their workload and by demonstrating the benefits it can bring. It is important to remember that OKRs can be integrated into existing bodies: sponsor points, quarterly reviews, etc. Capitalizing on the existing is a good way to add value while facilitating the daily life of the teams.

In order to simplify the life of the management, it can be interesting to formalize a synthetic vision of all the OKRs and to share them regularly so that everyone can easily follow the progress.

Keeping OKRs Alive Over Time

Making OKRs a reality over time by integrating them into the daily life of the teams is the challenge to be met in order to succeed. This transformation will certainly require efforts in the short term, but it will undoubtedly be a key success factor and will accelerate the operational efficiency of the teams.

Design thinking at the service of the innovation process

How does the adoption of Design Thinking impact the different professions and roles, especially those of the Technical Department?

Within our teams, we have made Design Thinking the dedicated and preferred method for initiating, framing and "designing" innovative projects.

This methodology is inclusive, collaborative, and adapted to various situations. It is now an integral part of the daily life of an increasing number of employees.

Technical teams are the first to embrace this approach because it involves them, just like the business teams, from the project scoping phase. The objective is also to produce deliverables that facilitate the work of the delivery teams.

What does Design Thinking bring to employees?

Through this methodology, employees are encouraged to:

- Focus on the people and/or customers they create for, in order to improve products, services and internal processes.
- Mobilize collective intelligence by co-constructing solutions as a team.
- Work in iterative mode.
- Learn the Mindset and workshop facilitation techniques to gain agility and efficiency.

What are the best practices for leading change and getting teams on board?

The key will always remain the co-construction and direct involvement of the teams in the construction of the

approach, we do this in particular by:

- Ensuring the availability and commitment of stakeholders throughout the project.
- Clarifying the roles and scope of each party
- Sharing common rules to ensure all team members will be able to contribute to the project in an atmosphere of sharing and goodwill.

Also, we recommend building in-house expertise to ensure the rise in competence, the expansion of the impact and the sustainability of the approach.

How does Design Thinking serve the ambitions of the Digital Bank?

Design Thinking is above all a method of thinking, working and designing centered on the **human being**. It is oriented above all towards problem solving by proposing solutions adapted to the human being, the client, the user.

This Human Centric aspect has led our teams to adopt this methodology for the initiation and launch of digital projects. Indeed, it allows us to start from the need or pain point in order to design a **solution with the customer and for the customer**.

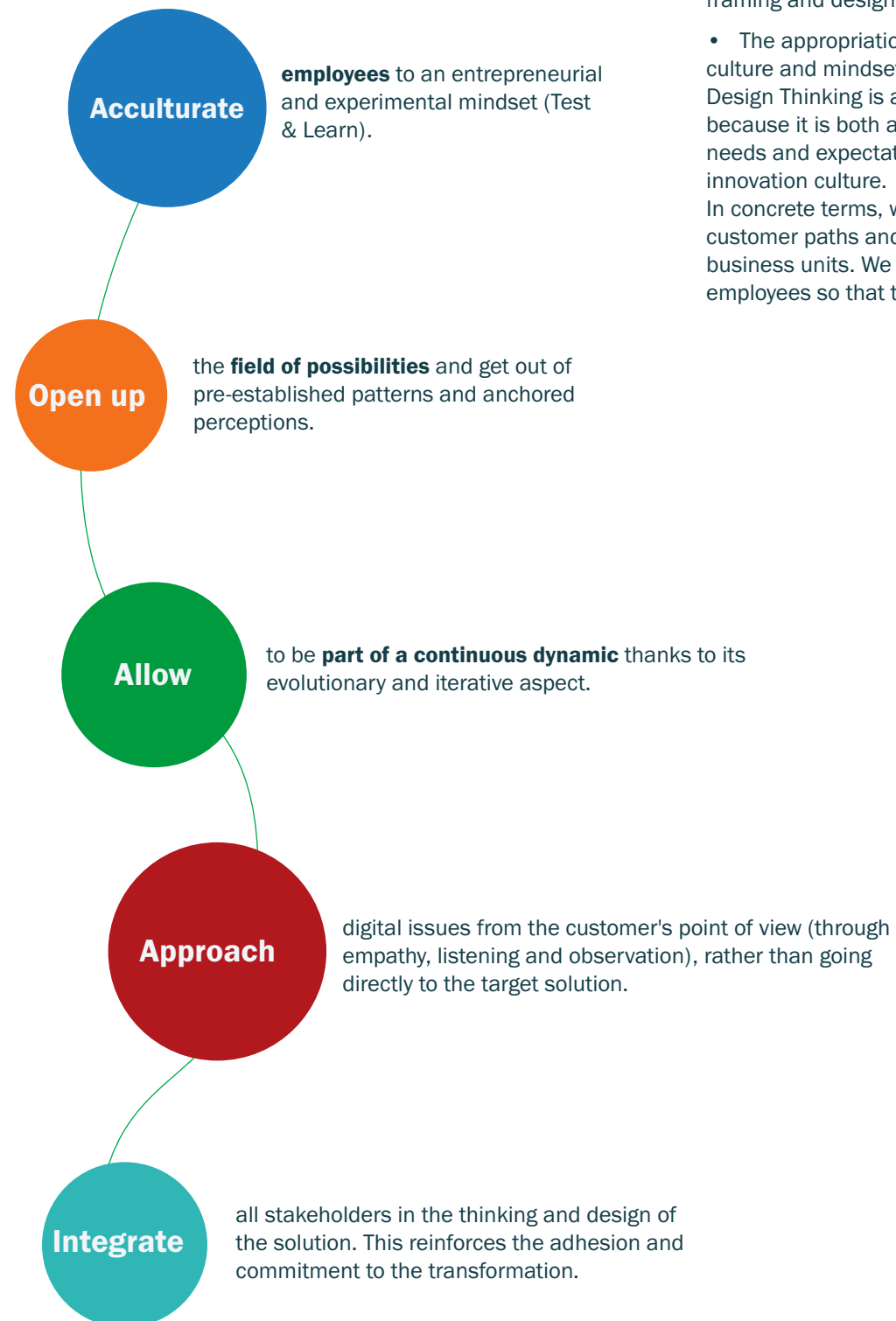
It contributes to the realization of the Bank's ambitions because it:

- Allows the strategic axes to be broken down into problems to be solved for and with the client.
- **Facilitates the work of delivery** by formalizing the priority functionalities and paths for the client beforehand.
- **Is agile and iterative, ready to evolve** over time.
- Mobilizes all stakeholders **in a collective intelligence dynamic**.
- **Reinforces the diffusion of a customer-oriented culture and mindset**.

What does Design Thinking bring to a digital transformation?

Beyond Digital, Design Thinking has the advantage of being adapted to all types of problems as soon as it is a question of solving human-centered problems.

Moreover, in a context of digital transformation, Design Thinking can be a real lever to:



Also, the appropriation of the approach by the employees is key in order to widen its impact and ensure a wider scope of adhesion and application.

How does Design Thinking serve the challenges of the Innovation Department?

Our department's mission is to support the Bank's business lines by providing them with enablers to launch innovative services. Among these enablers, two major levers are:

- A dedicated innovation approach consisting of initiating, framing and designing innovative projects.
 - The appropriation and deployment of an innovation culture and mindset among employees.
- Design Thinking is a major element of these two levers because it is both a methodology for formalizing customer needs and expectations, and a vector for appropriating an innovation culture.
- In concrete terms, we use Design Thinking to co-construct customer paths and an initial solution prototype with the business units. We also disseminate this approach to our employees so that they can adopt it at their own level.

David Benasroune
Head of the architecture storage
Orange France

How did you get into agility?

We had the intuition that agile approaches which are widely deployed among our customers on the service platforms and applications side, could bring benefits to our field of IT infrastructures in datacenters, particularly in terms of operational efficiency. Feedback from outside the Orange Group (Ubisoft in particular) that had implemented agility in a similar domain reinforced our conviction.

The choice was made to draw inspiration from agility to bring together business expertise and to bring together engineering (think), deployment and operations in "teams." This was done with a common "raison d'être" to better serve the customer based on a shared understanding of their needs and challenges.

This implementation was carried out first of all within the scope of new technological solutions under construction in the field of storage/backup (examples: The Back-up as a Service (BaaS) team and the File Service Storage (FSS) team).

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What are the first projects undertaken to initiate the agile transformation?

The principle adopted was that the new agile teams were formed by mixing the think, build, and run businesses on the scope of emerging infrastructure solutions.

The participation of employees from the "historical" organization's teams was voluntary. This principle seemed important to us to ensure that they would adhere to the idea of working in a different way, and also because integration into the teams meant a two-day per week, "one-roof" meeting to build the team (and therefore travel when the one-roof was not on its site).

A lot of sense was given to the teams on the interest of going on this type of integrated team operation to tackle the new virtualized technologies and the evolution of the jobs associated with the introduction of devops, CI/CD chains and automation.

Communications were organized to make management aware of agility and the team's operating mode so that they could best support the employees involved. We started with a 2-day agility acculturation for all candidates, then the teams attached to agile trains followed Safe training. A coach also accompanied the launch of the teams during the first year (in particular on the staffing aspects and the setting up of rituals).

How did you get up to speed?

The on-board contributors had a specific time allocation for the team (up to 70%). Particular attention was paid to maintaining the link and communication with their initial team (e.g., sharing team news in team meetings by the contributor concerned).

The managers were mobilized to set an example by training themselves in agility and also by introducing agile practices

The benefits of an agile organization in the field of IT infrastructure in Datacenter

In 2019, Orange France's Infrastructure Department (now Cloud Platforms Department), anticipating the limits of its industrial organization to deploy "disruptive" technological solutions, is embarking on an experiment in agility. A learning approach adapted to the field of IT infrastructure in datacenters, careful support for the teams, strong mobilization of managers, and the care taken to ensure interoperability between the targeted perimeter and the teams of the "historical" organization were all factors in the success of this transformation.

What was your initial context and challenges?

In the Cloud Platforms department, our missions are to ensure the delivery and run of active infrastructures to host in our datacenters the applications of the IS and service platforms of Orange France. Our customers are the entities that ensure the build of these services. We have two main challenges to address to meet their needs: QoS and TTM.

Originally, we were organized as a production factory in order to address large volumes of customer requests.

Whether for storage, servers or networks, the engineering teams were separate from the deployment teams, which were themselves separate from the operations teams, with a single team addressing a single business area (e.g., the deployment team for storage/backup). Therefore, the organization was very siloed with a precise RACI between the different teams. This processed and industrialized way of working was very effective for responding to "standard" requests but less suitable for "custom" solutions or new technological solutions requiring a mix of business expertise (e.g., storage/backup and server). In addition, "standard" requests were increasingly addressed through the Orange France Private Cloud solution, with the existing teams handling increasingly complex requests.

Moreover, the teams felt confined to the perimeter of their mission without being able to intervene in related actions that would have made sense in terms of optimization and that were within their reach in terms of skills.





“Drawing on agility to bring together business expertise and to bring together engineering, deployment and operation in "teams".



in their facilitation (example: retrospective on the team meeting to co-construct a format and content corresponding to everyone's expectations).

On the production side, a synchronization was organized between the product managers of the "teams" and the managers of the historical perimeter. Indeed, the launch of a new technological solution by a "team" could have had a negative impact on customer requests for the old technologies. The first teams took about 6 months to reach a cruising speed, depending on the staffing time.

What difficulties were encountered? And how were they overcome?

Difficulties were encountered in participating in trainings and acculturation. It was necessary to prioritize and dedicate time for this. The two days per week of travel to participate in the "one roof" may have also been a hindrance for some.

The initial distribution of roles within the team (in particular the pre-emption of techlead and PO positions by project manager or architect profiles on the build side) posed problems by sending an antagonistic message. On the one hand, each participant was invited to put his or her expertise at the service of the "team" on all types of contributions. On the other hand, certain roles were geared towards a certain type of profile. This problem was addressed by allowing a wider casting at the start of the teams. Some profiles on the run or deployment side were thus revealed in their new role as scrum master or PO. This even allowed some of them to revitalize their professional careers.

On the other hand, it quickly became apparent that the POs and scrum masters played a key role in ensuring team cohesion and that their casting was therefore critical.

On the management side, a difficulty arose for the end-of-year evaluation exercises. How to evaluate team participation? What individual objectives to set? How to ensure that this evaluation is fair in relation to that of other employees who do not participate in the teams? These questions were resolved by setting up a synchronization between the manager and the "team's" PO.

What were the contributions and lessons learned?

The team-based organization has proven its worth in building disruptive technological solutions while developing operational performance and the development of onboard employees.

The approach has also shown that it is important to select projects positioned on agility. Some projects, such as obsolescence management, are not suitable because agility does not add value to them. It was also noted that when the solution moved into the "lifecycle" phase, it was more efficient and economical to entrust it to the operations teams (contrary to the original intention of entrusting the

entire lifecycle to the team). Beyond the gains cited for the creation of new solutions in terms of efficiency and benefits for contributors, the evolution of mindsets by capillary action on the "historical" perimeters was a major contribution of the approach. The implementation of agility has led to a global evolution and in particular to greater flexibility and optimization of the entire "historical" organization in the service of its clients' challenges.

In 2021, the reorganization of the entire department into think-build-run product lines was largely based on the lessons learned from this agility experiment.



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