Enterprise Agile Frameworks

Idea In Short

Today, many enterprises use Agile methodologies to tackle the complexities from changing marketplace conditions. Agile methodologies help continuously deliver incremental outcomes over a foreseeable time period. However, there are several challenges involved in harnessing teams to deliver synchronized outcomes through alignment, dependency management, and program and portfolio management.

Enterprise Agile Frameworks provide organizations with structures, processes and practices that enable delivery of predictable outcomes over short time-windows. These outcomes could be complex Digital products and services, corporate strategy, business transformation, etc. Enterprise Agile Framework help manage and coordinate complex Agile releases [outcomes] and evolve solutions that are, not only feasible, but routine and sustainable.

Agile Adoption

Enterprise Agile Frameworks [EAFs] will continue to grow as more organizations implement the Agile methodology and recognize the benefit of scaling this approach to address complex business challenges. Some will succeed in their enterprise vanilla Agile transformations, while others will customize or choose to replace their current framework with a more suitable one. Some organizations may require more than one enterprise Agile framework.

Roles in an Agile Framework

Enterprises commonly adopt the Agile methodology in Product or service development. The Agile methodology uses industry-standard lightweight patterns, processes, roles, technology and tooling to support delivery and service teams.

Delivery teams

The delivery teams are self-organizing, cross-functional group of 5-11 individuals that define, build, test, and deliver an increment of value in a short time box. Usually, delivery teams comprise of business analysts, designers, engineers, and testers, who are guided by Product Leadership function. The Scrum Master is a specialty role in the Agile framework; he / she is a servant leader and coach for the team. This role instills the agreed-to Agile process, helps facilitates the removal of impediments to progress, and fosters an environment for high performance, continuous flow, and relentless improvement.

Product Leadership Function

The Product Leadership function usually comprises of a Product Owner [PO], a Delivery Manager [DM] and a Solutions Architect [SA]. This function provides the vision, leadership, and autonomy necessary to foster and promote high-performing teams. It also foresees roadblocks and obstacles within the company, and, whenever possible, clears them out of the way before they slow the team's work. The Product Leadership ensures that delivery teams are directed, governance incorporated, funding secured, and stakeholders informed.

Service teams

Service teams handle support incidents and triage any issues to be fed back into the pipeline [backlog] for the delivery teams. Services personnel may temporarily be part of an Agile team for short periods of time to experience the collaborative, quick, and high-quality way in which Agile teams deliver outcomes. It also accelerates the larger teams-of-Agile-teams dynamic that—only by acting together—can they deliver enterprise value.

PRIME approach

The PRIME approach is a meta-framework that encompasses many of the common frameworks in the market and pulls them together. It adds integrated technology options to implement and make the frameworks more effective at scale. The PRIME approach is based on a culture of rapid experimentation, emphasizing value and customer impact over efficiency and progress. It blends continuous discovery, delivery and validation to fuel learning and drives toward business outcomes. The PRIME approach also features the PRIME Kit, a library of templates, tools and other materials.

FAST Agile

Fluid Scaling Technology for Agile (FAST Agile) is described as a lightweight framework for scaling through collaboration. FAST combines elements of Scrum, XP, story-mapping and Open Space Technology [OST]. FAST Agile is designed for projects with multiple, colocated teams. Extreme Programming [XP] practices are at its core. FAST focuses on building networks of multiple, colocated teams, instead of persistent ones.

Scaled Kanban

Kanban University's Scaled Kanban approach to scaling is different. The Kanban approach is based on the premise that the delivery of customer value comes from collaboration across an interconnected network of services. Correspondingly, this approach uses a common language for communication, collaboration and decision making. With this framework, you don't need to make teams larger or cross-functional to achieve the outcomes. Coordination and collaboration among the teams come from a shared purpose, unity, alignment, and a common language for communication and framework for decision- making.

Large-Scale Scrum [LeSS]

LeSS is a lean product development framework that extends basic Scrum to multiple teams that collaborate on one product. LeSS is relatively simple and focuses on descaling complex organizations by balancing abstract principles and concrete practices. It has two frameworks — the LeSS framework for two to eight teams and the LeSS Huge framework for more than eight teams. LeSS is a barely sufficient methodology intended to minimize prescriptive rules. Instead, it emphasizes that adopting organizations must take responsibility and own their method and organizational design.

Scaled Agile Lean Development [ScALeD]

ScALeD is a set of 18 principles for scaling Agile that is consistent with the Agile Manifesto and the cornerstones of Lean Management. It provides guidance for organizations adopting Agile practices on a large scale. Upon development, the methodologists discovered high alignment with the background and foundations of Large-Scale Scrum. Hence, they decided to keep ScALeD as guidance and focus on the practical application of LeSS.

Disciplined Agile [DA]

Formerly Disciplined Agile Delivery [DAD], the Disciplined Agile framework from the Project Management Institute [PMI] is a flexible, meta-process toolkit with six variant life cycles that build on Scrum, XP, Kanban and lean startup. Disciplined Agile has a particular focus on Agile modeling practices and architecture, and broad workflow coverage, such as Data Management, Portfolio Management, Value Streams, and Governance.

Scaled Agile Framework [SAFe]

The SAFe framework helps businesses of any size align strategy with execution to manage technology and business portfolios. Ongoing developments in SAFe are currently focus on Lean Portfolio Management, Lean-Agile Leadership, and enhancing team-based Agile software engineering and DevOps practices. The SAFe framework is also widely supported by leading vendors of enterprise Agile planning tools. Several enterprises have implemented SAFe beyond their IT departments and rolled out this framework in marketing, HR, finance, and other key business functions to achieve agility.

Scrum@Scale

Created by one of the co-creators of Scrum, Scrum@Scale from Scrum Inc. is an extension of the core Scrum framework. Scrum@Scale scales Agile development while following the underlying principles of the Scrum framework that have made it so adaptable. It keeps the modular structure at the core of Scrum, and enables scaling to meet specific business outcomes, such as improved speed, quality, innovation and predictability. Scrum@Scale is designed to function across industries and disciplines, including software, hardware, services, operations, R&D and more.

Nexus

Also created by one of the co-creators of Scrum, Nexus from Scrum.org is a framework that minimally extends Scrum. Nexus enables multiple Scrum teams to use a single product backlog to deliver an integrated product at least once a sprint. Nexus enables teams and organizations to apply Scrum's iterative and incremental approach to product delivery in order to deliver large, complex products.

The Spotify Model

The Spotify model was never intended as a formal enterprise Agile framework. It is a model based on the way that Spotify aspired to meet its innovation alignment challenges. Many organizations are learning from it and organizing into squads, tribes, chapters and guilds, alliances, and so on. The Spotify model has gained in popularity due to articles published in McKinsey Quarterly.

XSCALE Alliance

The XSCALE framework covers business agility, product management and DevOps. It emphasizes pulling the enterprise into the culture, rather than pushing culture into the enterprise. Descaling rather than scaling, and it prioritizing business agility first are the central tenets of this framework. It combines readily with the other team-level and enterprise frameworks, while also working as a stand-alone framework. XSCALE practices derive from many sources, such as Hiawatha's Great Law of Peace, Rikyu's Mu Hin Shu, Goldratt's Throughput Accounting, Holmgren's Permaculture, Stack's Open-Book Management, and Beck's Extreme Programming. Its principles target the enterprise first, only introducing Agile in IT as a means to this end.

Summary

Introducing Agile methods into a large IT organization is, by itself, a significant culture change for every business function. Scaling to address enterprisewide complex systems raises that challenge significantly, as more stakeholders, roles and disciplines are brought into scope. When executed well, Agile Frameworks can transform a business and help achieve a positive impact and value delivery. To consistently realize these outcomes, business leaders must be committed to organizational and cultural change. Business leaders must recognize that organizational and cultural change will be necessary, and must embrace that process, or else large-scale Agile development will not prove sustainable. No framework can replace the heavy lifting of culture change.