Category

Digital Transformation

Agile at Scale & Product Operating Model Playbook

A method for choosing and implementing a scaled agile model and product operating structure that fits your organization's actual size and complexity, not a generic framework.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Workshop Ready

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- 7 minute(s)

Overview

Choose a scaling model that fits your actual org size and dependency structure, then convert project teams into persistent product teams with real outcome ownership.

Should we just adopt SAFe since it's the most widely used framework?

Only if your diagnosis shows high dependency density across many teams at meaningful scale — SAFe's overhead is designed for that specific problem. Applying it to an organization with low cross-team dependency, as in the Ashgrove example, produces ceremony load without a corresponding reduction in blocked work.

How do we fund product teams without an annual project budget process?

Shift to rolling capacity funding reviewed quarterly against the team's outcome metric, rather than a fixed annual project allocation. Finance typically needs a transition period — many organizations run both models in parallel for one or two quarters before fully retiring project-based funding.

What if a team's dependency density changes after a reorg?

Re-run the dependency diagnosis — it isn't a one-time exercise. The framework explicitly includes a quarterly ceremony-to-value review precisely because dependency structure shifts as the organization changes.

How many product teams can one agile coach support during the transition?

Typically 3-5 teams per coach during an active pilot phase, dropping to a lighter-touch advisory model once teams have run the new operating model for two to three quarters and outcome ownership has become routine.

What's the biggest sign that our scaling model doesn't fit anymore?

Coordination ceremonies that consistently produce no decisions or unblock nothing, and teams that quietly stop attending or send junior delegates. That disengagement is a more reliable signal than a formal survey that the ceremony-to-value ratio has tipped negative.

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