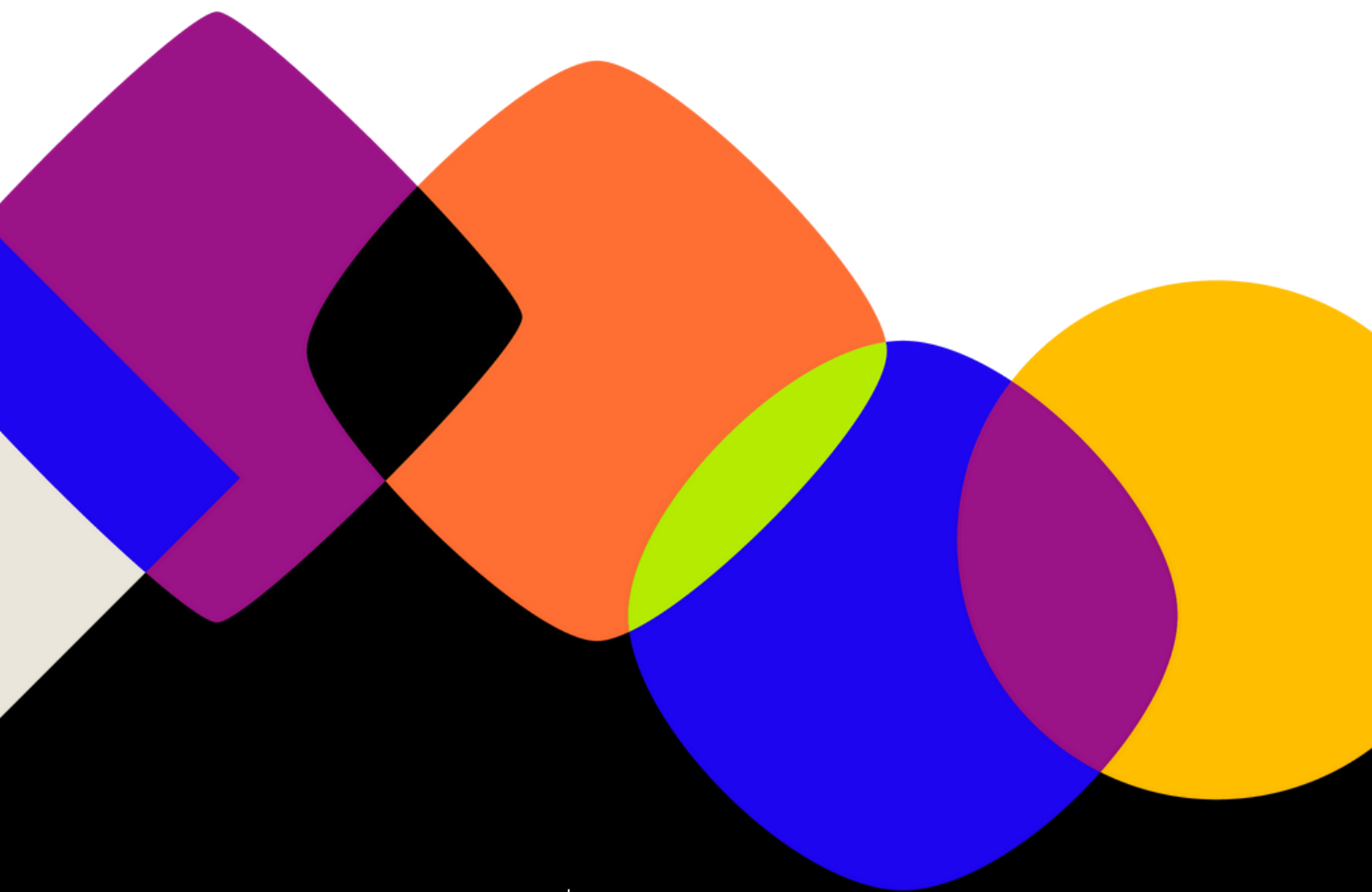


**Agile
Business**

Insights 2025: Practical Guide

A practical guide based on insights from the Agile Awards
Conference 2025



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Agile Business Consortium

About the Agile Business Consortium

The Agile Business Consortium is an independent, not-for-profit body dedicated to advancing business agility worldwide in accordance with a defined set of standards, competencies, and a code of practice. It does this by:

- Supporting the development of individuals through formal and informal learning, recognizing knowledge, practice and experience
- Providing access to relevant, trustworthy, content, including a range of events, special interest communities, and a network of like-minded professionals
- Commissioning and engaging in research, thought leadership, and market-wide collaborations to extend knowledge and develop good practice

We encourage an inclusive, agnostic and people-centered approach to organizational agility, including the use of a wide variety of agile methods and frameworks.

We are the brains behind DSDM, AgilePM®, AgileBA®, AgilePgMTM, AgilePfM, and AgileDSTM, as well as the originators of the Framework for Business Agility and the Agile Project Framework - including the Nine Principles of Agile Leadership and the Agile Culture Matrix.

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Introduction

Why Agility Matters

Business Agility is an organizational competency that enables consistent delivery of value in an increasingly unpredictable, changing world. Change Management, concerning the “who” and “why” of transformation initiatives, is a key capability for an agile organization.

As Customer, Employee and Ecosystem needs become more complex and uncertain, Business Agility, encompassing flexibility, adaptability and resilience, is being increasingly recognized as essential to modern organization success.

About the Agile Business Awards

The Agile Business Awards, organized annually by the Agile Business Consortium, recognize excellence in business agility across various sectors worldwide. They attract applications from banks, healthcare, tech firms, public bodies, and non-profits, showcasing how organizations deliver sustainable value and adapt to change.

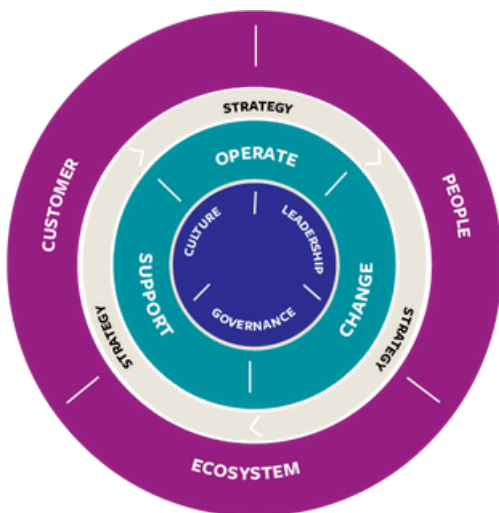
These awards provide a valuable evidence base of real-world case studies, with each entry reviewed using a robust framework and receiving detailed feedback. This ensures insights are practical and grounded in real experiences, offering project and programme managers meaningful lessons on embedding change.

The Framework for Business Agility

What is the FBA?

At the centre of both the awards process and this report is the Framework for Business Agility (FBA).

Unlike prescriptive methods, the FBA is an effective agnostic framework that acts as a lens through which organizations can assess and understand their agility capabilities and identify areas for improvement through four zones of competence:



Blue Zone: Enabling Empowerment

Culture, Leadership and Governance.



Teal Zone: Ways of Working & Enabling Structures

Operations, Support and Change Agility.



Purple Zone: Value Creation in a Complex World

Customers, People and Ecosystems.







Grey Zone: Strategy & Measurement

Direction, Alignment and Outcomes.

About this guide

The Aims of this Guide

This guide aims to:

-  Translate award applications into lessons for those delivering and leading change, based on the zones of competence described in the FBA.
-  Highlight good practices in change management from a diverse group of organizations.
-  Equip practitioners with practical tools, insights and examples to strengthen their change leadership abilities.
-  Emphasize that successful change is not about following a framework but about developing competence and resilience.

Real transformation requires clear definition of purpose and meaningful engagement with stakeholders (customers, employees, ecosystem) to ensure their needs are met. These are imperatives for successful programmes, projects and change initiatives.

This guide offers structured, practice-based guidance to help those delivering and leading change to deliver programmes and projects that not only launch successfully but also create value and lasting impact.

How to Use this Guide

This guide has been organized to reflect the key areas of the Framework for Business Agility to provide straightforward, practical guidance for practitioners in each area. These practical tips are based on the feedback and insights we received from Awards Applicants in 2025.

The key areas are:

The Blue Zone

- Agile Leadership
- Agile Culture
- Agile Governance

The Teal Zone

- Operational Agility
- Business Support and Change Agility

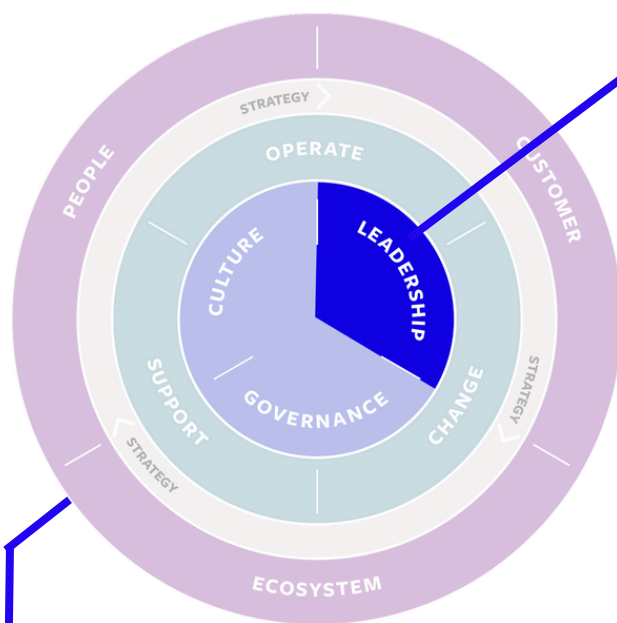
The Purple Zone

- Value for Customers
- Value for People
- Value for the Ecosystem

The Grey Zone

- Agile Strategy
- Measurement & Continuous Learning

The Blue Zone: Enabling Empowerment



Agile Leadership

Agile leadership is best understood as an organizational competence rather than a managerial trait.

It shifts the focus from authority held by a few to distributed leadership, where anyone can lead within agreed boundaries.

This approach encourages shared responsibility, empowers decision-making at all levels, and builds resilience across the organization.



Common Practices

Common practices in agile leadership include:



Servant leadership which prioritizes enabling others to succeed.



Leadership retros which create space for reflection and growth.



Coaching ecosystems which support learning and development.



Cross-functional labs which promote experimentation.



Leadership Practical Tips

1

Model the behaviors you want to see

Demonstrate servant leadership by focusing on enabling your team rather than directing them. Show openness to feedback, admit mistakes, and prioritize value delivery over hierarchy.

2

Create the right conditions for distributed decision-making

Clarify boundaries (what teams can decide vs. what requires escalation) and provide lightweight guardrails. This empowers teams to act confidently while maintaining alignment with strategy and governance.

3

Build leadership communities

Establish forums such as leadership retros or peer-learning groups where project and programme managers, team leads, and staff can share experiences, reflect, and grow together. These communities normalize leadership as a shared organizational capability.

4

Use shadowing and mentoring to spread leadership skills

Encourage emerging leaders to shadow experienced ones and provide mentoring opportunities. These practices accelerate learning, transfer tacit knowledge, and embed leadership across levels rather than keeping it concentrated at the top

5

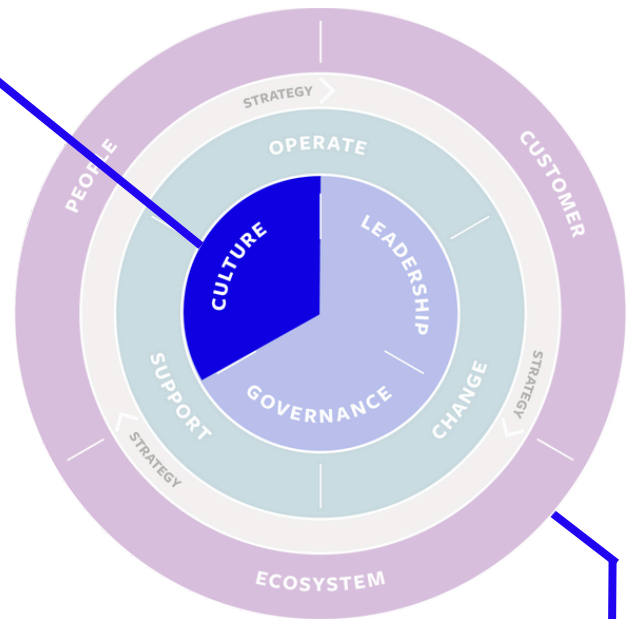
Experiment with cross-functional leadership labs

Establish spaces for leadership experimentation where diverse roles collaborate on real-world problems. Labs provide safe environments to test new approaches, strengthen collaboration, and build confidence in distributed leadership.



Agile Culture

Agile culture is the foundation of lasting change, not a by-product of processes or frameworks. It is intentionally designed to foster psychological safety, openness, and a growth mindset, creating an environment where experimentation and learning are encouraged.



Common Practices

Common practices in agile culture include:



Embedding no blame approaches



Empowering decision-making



Aligning cultural values with daily work



Reinforcing mechanisms such as ambassadors, storytelling, recognition, and peer learning to ensure that cultural values are lived rather than merely stated.

By nurturing this culture, organizations build resilience and adaptability, enabling change to stick and thrive over the long term.



1

Embed cultural practices into project rituals

Use retrospectives, stand-ups, and feedback loops not just to discuss delivery but also to reinforce values like psychological safety, transparency, and continuous learning.

2

Model a “no-blame” approach

When issues arise, focus on learning rather than assigning fault. This encourages experimentation, reduces fear of failure, and builds team trust.

3

Align project outcomes with cultural values

Make explicit links between project goals and organizational values (e.g., customer focus, empowerment, collaboration). This helps change stick by making culture visible in day-to-day work.

4

Activate reinforcing mechanisms

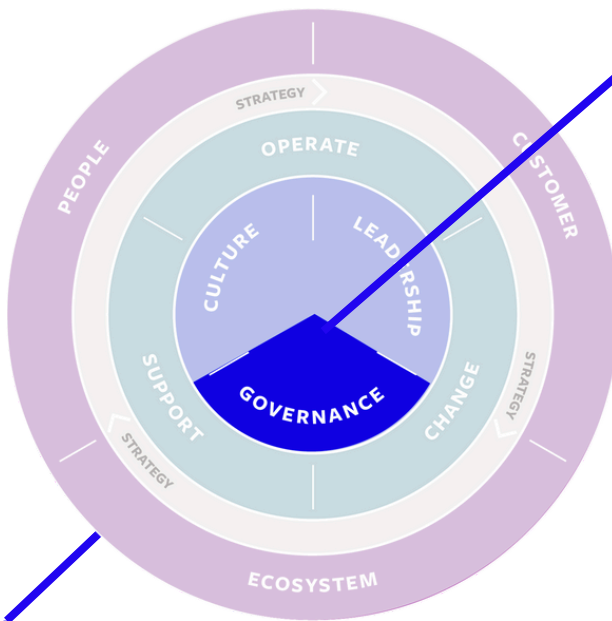
Encourage peer recognition, sharing of successes and failures, and the role of culture ambassadors in sustaining positive behaviours beyond the project team.

5

Design culture intentionally, not passively

Don't assume culture will shift on its own. Use workshops, shared agreements, and visible leadership commitment to shape the environment in which your project operates

Agile Governance



Agile governance is about clarity in decision-making and empowerment, ensuring that authority sits with those best placed to act.

Instead of rigid, rule-based compliance, governance is built on principle-driven guardrails that provide transparency, alignment, and psychological safety while maintaining accountability.



Common Practices

Common practices in agile governance include:



Big room planning



OBEYA (visual management environments)



Minimum viable governance

These governance practices help simplify oversight without compromising quality. They allow organizations to balance control with flexibility, speeding up decisions and keeping the focus on delivering value.



1

Clarify decisions rights from the start

Make it clear who decides what at the project, programme, and organizational levels. This avoids bottlenecks and ensures accountability without confusion.

2

Encourage principle-driven decisions

Anchor decisions in principles such as customer value and transparency rather than rigid processes or hierarchy. This creates consistency without stifling adaptability.

3

Use “big-room” planning and visual management

Bring all key decision-makers and knowledge holders together to create shared understanding and accelerate alignment. Tools like OBEYA walls or digital equivalents make governance transparent.

4

Adopt “minimum viable governance”

Provide just enough oversight to manage risk without burdening teams with unnecessary rules. Balance safety and speed by eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy.

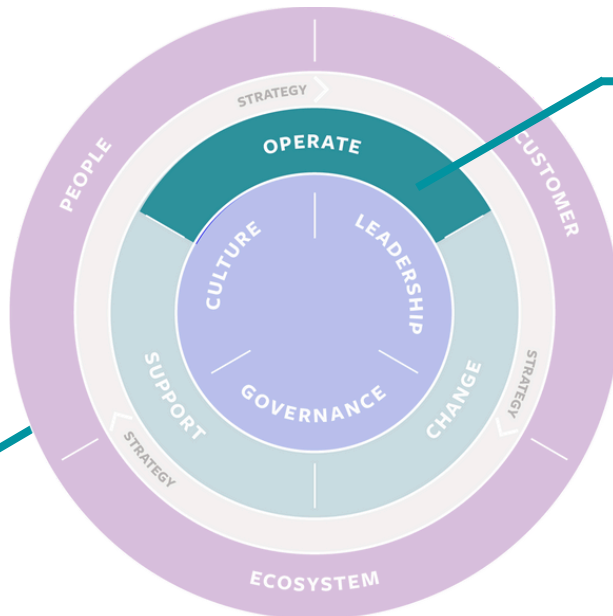
5

Enable empowered decision-making with guardrails

Create frameworks that enable teams to act autonomously while remaining aligned with strategic goals, ensuring agility without chaos.



The Teal Zone: Way of Working & Enabling Structures



Operational Agility

Organizations must respond quickly and decisively to emerging opportunities and threats. Operational Agility is the ability to turn turbulence in the operational environment into an advantage.

Methods like AgilePM, Scrum, SAFe, and Kanban can enable experimentation, continuous delivery, and quicker adaptation to market and customer needs.



Common Practices

Common practices in operational agility include:



The formation of cross-functional, customer-focused teams.



Using MVPs and experiments to learn quickly, and adapting frameworks to specific contexts.



Use of Gemba walks, Centres of Excellence, and agile offices to drive improvement.



Prioritizing outcomes and value over outputs and velocity.



1

Tailor frameworks to context

Adapt AgilePM, Scrum, SAFe, or Kanban to fit the needs of the team and project, avoiding “one-size-fits-all” implementation.

2

Balance delivery with improvement

Create space for experimentation alongside business-as-usual delivery to avoid stagnation.

3

Use MVPs and experimentation

Test ideas quickly, learn from outcomes, and pivot when needed instead of waiting for full-scale rollouts.

4

Support with Centres of Excellence

Use Centres of Excellence (CoEs) or equivalent structures to provide coaching, mentoring, and guidance while evolving as organizational needs change.

5

Focus on value, not activity

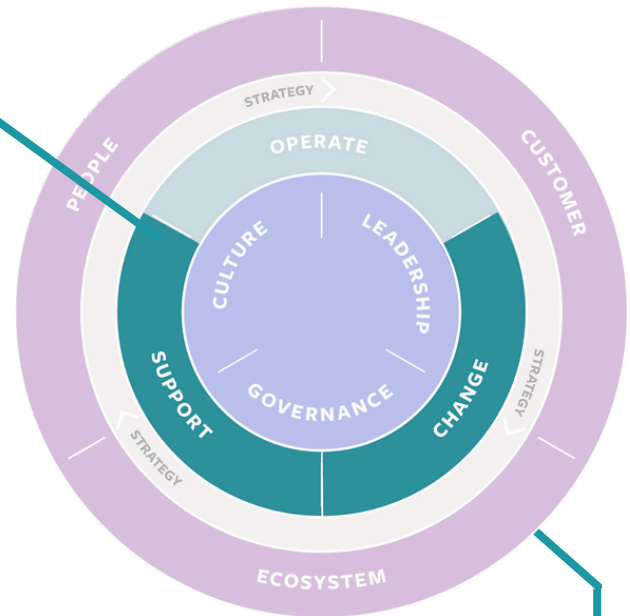
Move beyond measuring velocity or output — keep the emphasis on delivery of customer value and impact.



Business Support & Change Agility

Support functions like HR, Finance, Procurement, and Marketing are key to agility. They must be flexible and collaborative to prevent change efforts from stalling.

Business support agility makes these functions adaptable and value-driven, while change agility helps organizations respond to overloads. Together, they foster resilience and organizational agility.



Common Practices

Common practices in support and change agility:



Implementation of rolling forecasts, Beyond Budgeting, competency-based HR, and agile procurement.



Using Centres of Excellence for support and pivoting as support and change functions mature.



Leading agility with marketing and customer-facing teams who co-create value with customers.



Support & Change Practical Tips

1

Engage support functions early

Treat HR, Finance, and Procurement as partners, not obstacles, by involving them from the start of change initiatives.

2

Use rolling forecasts and flexible funding

Replace rigid annual budgeting with rolling or outcome-based funding that adapts as priorities shift.

3

Pivot support structures as maturity evolves

Adjust the role of Centres of Excellence (CoEs) or learning circles as the organization matures to keep support relevant.

4

Apply agile principles to HR

Focus on competency growth, coaching, and development rather than static job descriptions.

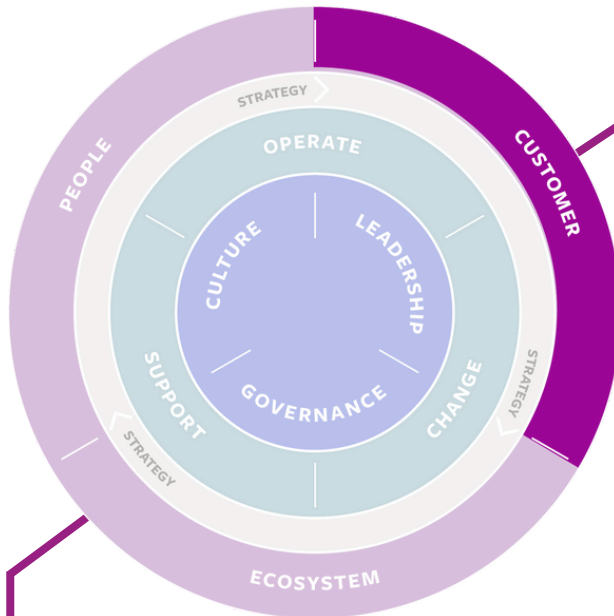
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Treat support functions as strategic enablers

Position HR, Finance, and Procurement as active contributors to agility, ensuring they evolve alongside delivery teams.



The Purple Zone: Value Creation in a Complex World



Value for Customers

Delivering customer value is key to successful change. Agile organizations focus on co-creation and collaboration rather than assumptions, keeping products relevant and impactful in changing environments.



Common Practices

Common practices in delivering value for customers include:



Customer labs.



Design partnerships.



A/B testing.



Continuous feedback loops

These tools are used to involve customers throughout the change journey to support co-creation and rapid prototyping. This helps to accelerate learning, improve customer satisfaction, and reduce waste.



Customer Value Practical Tips

1

Involve customers at every stage

Engage customers directly in design, testing, and feedback rather than assuming their needs.

2

Experiment and learn quickly

Use MVPs, A/B testing, and prototypes to gain rapid insight into customer preferences.

3

Co-create solutions

Work with customers as partners, not just end-users, to ensure relevance and shared ownership of outcomes.

4

Measure outcomes, not just outputs

Focus on impact measures such as satisfaction, adoption, and business value.

5

Balance customer desires with sustainability

Avoid short-term fixes that undermine long-term value delivery.

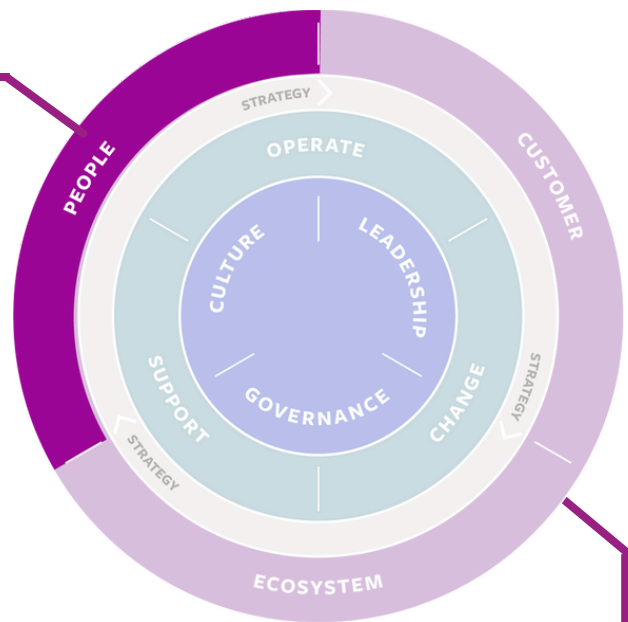


Value for People

People are the ultimate creators of value in any organization.

Agile approaches recognize that sustainable performance depends on empowerment, development, and well-being.

By treating employees as value-drivers rather than resources, organizations unlock innovation and resilience.



Common Practices

Common practices in delivering value for people include:



Building psychological safety.



Promoting “squiggly careers” and T- and M-shaped skill development.



Investing in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).



Peer-to-peer learning, coaching, and recognition schemes to reinforce a people-centered culture that fuels adaptability and growth.



1

Support skill growth and resilience

Encourage continuous learning, mentoring, and development beyond job-specific skills

2

Prioritize psychological safety

Create an environment where people feel safe to experiment, voice concerns, and learn from failure.

3

Value diversity and inclusion

Actively design for different voices, backgrounds, and perspectives to strengthen resilience.

4

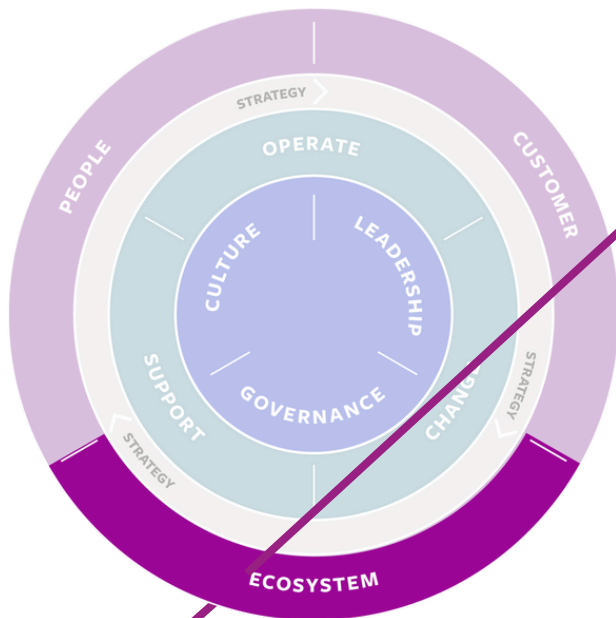
Anticipate resistance to empowerment

Recognize that not everyone embraces autonomy equally; provide tailored support.

5

Treat people as value-creators

Build purpose and meaning into roles to enhance engagement and long-term performance.



Value for Ecosystem

No organization exists in isolation. Agile organizations recognize that their adaptability depends on their wider ecosystem of partners, suppliers, regulators, and communities.

Collaboration across this ecosystem is essential for resilience in the face of disruption, from AI to sustainability demands.



Common Practices

Common practices in delivering value for the ecosystem include:



Partnering with suppliers, universities, NGOs, and regulators to co-adapt to disruption.



Embedding ecosystem thinking into strategy.



Focusing on sustainability, resilience and shared value across networks.



1

Map your ecosystem stakeholders

Identify suppliers, regulators, partners, and communities critical to change.

2

Build partnerships to co-adapt

Collaborate with ecosystem players to address shared challenges such as AI adoption or sustainability.

3

Embed sustainability into outcomes

Treat environmental and social resilience as part of project success, not an add-on.

4

Share learning across networks

Exchange knowledge and practices with partners to strengthen collective resilience.

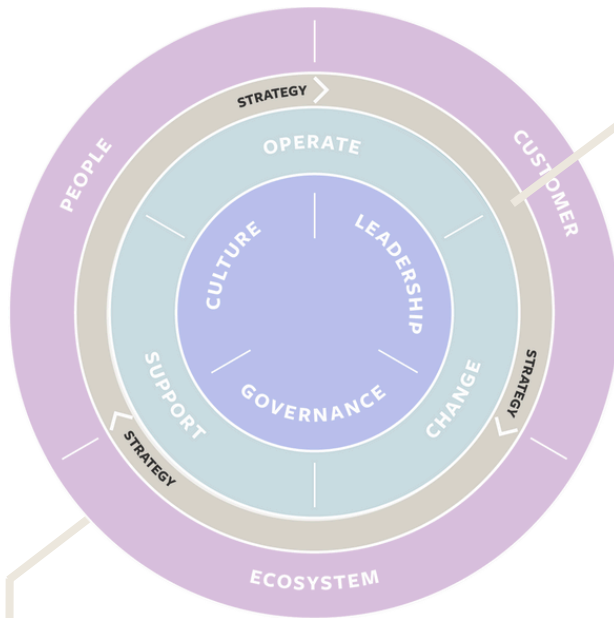
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Recognize interdependence

Remember: you can only be as agile as your least agile partner.



The Grey Zone: Strategy and Measurement



Agile Strategy

Agile strategy treats direction as a living process rather than a fixed plan. It balances a clear North Star with the ability to pivot as circumstances change. Instead of rigid long-term roadmaps, agile organizations adapt strategy through continuous cycles of learning, experimentation, and review, keeping alignment with customer, people, and ecosystem value.



Common Practices

Common practices in agile strategy include:



Increasing use of quarterly strategy reviews and Objectives & Key Results (OKRs).



Portfolio steering to test hypotheses and refine direction.



Big-room planning and transparent information flows to ensure strategy is shared and owned across all levels, not just the executive.



1

Anchor projects to a North Star

Provide clarity of purpose while leaving space for flexible execution.

2

Integrate strategic reviews

Build regular checkpoints (e.g., quarterly) into project lifecycles to adapt to change.

3

Use OKRs to connect strategy to delivery

Translate organizational goals into measurable objectives linked to project work.

4

Encourage experimentation

Treat strategic initiatives as hypotheses to be tested, not plans to be followed blindly.

5

Make project data visible

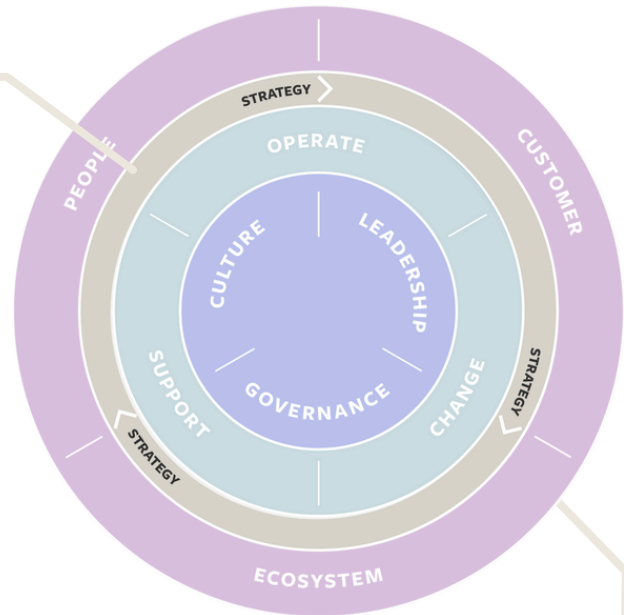
Use dashboards or OBEYA walls to give leaders and teams real-time insights for strategic pivots.



Measurement & Continuous Learning

Measurement in agile organizations has shifted from tracking activity to evaluating outcomes and impact. The focus is on learning what creates value for customers, people, and ecosystems, not just ensuring work is delivered.

This mindset makes metrics a tool for improvement rather than compliance.



Common Practices

Common practices in agile strategy include using:



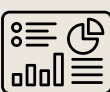
Objectives and Key Results (OKRs).



Outcome-based key performance indicators (KPIs).



Project health checks.



Customer impact dashboards.

Organizations are using the above measurement practices to move away from a reliance on velocity or output measures, so they can instead focus on value delivered and lessons learned.



Measurement & Learning Practical Tips

1

Measure outcomes, not outputs

Focus on customer and people impact rather than delivery speed or volume.

2

Use metrics for learning, not policing

Treat data as a conversation starter for improvement, not compliance.

3

Balance short- and long-term indicators

Track immediate project success alongside sustainable value creation.

4

Run regular health checks

Use lightweight reviews to spot risks early and keep learning visible.

5

Guard against measurement distortion

Be mindful that “what gets measured gets gamed” — design measures that encourage the right behaviours.



Sustaining Change & Avoiding Agile Fatigue

The Risk of “agility fatigue”

Long-term change journeys can create fatigue, especially when organizations constantly pivot or reframe priorities.

Teams may feel exhausted by continuous transformation if there is no sense of stability or progress.

Sustaining change requires balancing momentum with rest, celebration, and renewal.



Common Challenges

Common challenges when it comes to agile change include:



Change becomes the “new normal” without visible wins.



Support structures fail to evolve as maturity grows.



People disengage when energy is drained by endless initiatives.



Organizations risk slipping back into old habits if progress is not sustained.



1

Celebrate milestones

Mark progress visibly to build pride, motivation, and energy for the next phase.

2

Refresh the change narrative

Update stories and communication to keep the purpose alive and relevant.

3

Pivot support structures

Adapt Centres of Excellence or coaching functions as organizational maturity evolves.

4

Balance maintenance with innovation

Protect what is working while still creating space for experimentation.

5

Recognize the human factor

Allow time for recovery, reflection, and consolidation alongside forward momentum.

Conclusion

Changing How We Work

Sustaining agility involves embedding new competences so they become “how we work,” rather than temporary projects.

The organizations that succeed are those that treat change as an ongoing journey of learning and renewal, not an endless cycle of reinvention.

Overarching Themes

The 2025 Insights Report identified several overarching themes:



Successful organizations do not treat change as a checklist or a one-off project.



Change is an organizational competence to be developed.



Agility is about “being agile,” as well as “doing agile.”



Sustainable value comes from balancing leadership, culture, operations and strategy.



Final Takeaways

1

Treat every project as part of a learning journey, not just a delivery exercise

2

Embed cultural and leadership practices into project work

3

Focus on outcomes and value creation across all zones.

4

Lead change with resilience, humility, and adaptability.

Final Thoughts

Change Management, founded on a clear expression of purpose and value, and including evolution of culture and leadership, is a key enabler for an agile organization. By applying the lessons from the Agile Business Awards, programme and project managers can deliver not only successful projects but also sustainable transformation that creates lasting value for customers, people, and organizations alike.



