Award Application Guidance
APPLICATION: Deadline 4th December 2023

Contents

Introduction

Thank you for entering these 2024 Agile Business Awards, we're excited to have you as part of this celebration of business agility in forward-thinking organisations. Please choose one of the following four categories for your entry: Agility in Finance, Procurement and Contracts; Agility in HR; Agility in Marketing; Overall Business Agility.

- Reminder: your application will be scored by at least 3 independent reviewers who are experts in the category for which you have applied
- You will receive written feedback on your application; please note this will not be until after the review process is completed. Feedback will consist of comments from the reviewers, based on how they understood your application. We will NOT publish NOR discuss the scores, with anyone beyond the reviewer panel
- We will be basing our score solely on the information provided in your application, we will not take other information, public or private, into account
- Scoring format – each of our criteria will be scored 0-5 (which will be multiplied by 2) and will have a second score of 0-2 based on evidence you provide to support your stories for each of the criteria
- The basis for review will be the [Framework for Business Agility](#), on which this application form is based
- Should you be successful in being selected, you will be invited to speak at the Agile Business Awards Conference in April 2024. In that instance, we will ask for information on who will be delivering your talk and reserve the right to explore that person's ability to present. We may request links for previous talks and speaker experience
- You can apply as an enterprise, an organisation, a business unit, a department, or any part of an organisation providing value to customers, people and the ecosystem. You should ensure that all evidence you provide relates to the part of the organisation for which you are applying. So, if you are applying for the French Business unit of an international business, all evidence will relate to the French business unit, and not to the German business unit
- We will not accept applications from consultancy organisations (but consultancy organisations are invited to help their clients with an application)

This document is here to support your application. We advise you to work offline and to save your progress before completing the [online form.](#)

For application support and questions please contact info@agileconference.org

All information supplied (except for overview and context) should be written in the format of 'evidence stories'. Please present your application in a concise format, whilst ensuring our reviewers have sufficient information to appreciate the full value. We would expect several stories per category.

Please note: We have introduced maximum word counts to respect the time dedicated by our review teams. There is no expectation you hit the maximum – more words does not mean more value or higher scores!

Evidence should be presented in the following format:
- Situation (S)
- What did you do and how? (A)ction
- Results Achieved (R)
- Lessons Learned (L)

Based on 1 situation, there can be several actions, results and lessons learned.

So, for example in the People section:

We had a situation (S), where we were receiving an unacceptably high number of customer complaints, which were not being dealt with fast enough – leading to further complaints.
A customer survey and feedback along the lines of "the right hand does not seem to know what the left hand is doing" and "I kept getting passed from one department to another but no one would take responsibility" helped us to conclude that most people were still working in siloed departments and not collaborating to serve our customers better.

We looked at the 7th principle of the agile people manifesto,
"Agile People harness the power of boundary spanning **to** facilitate proactive collaboration across organisational barriers"

and in (A) cross-functional workshops we explored how we could provide better customer service. As a result (R + L), we now understand each other much better and have greater insight into each other's functions and challenges, and agreed that from a customer's point of view it did not matter which department was 'responsible'.

(A) We tested the hypotheses from the workshops in a series of experiments, including:

- *Whoever first picks up the enquiry takes ownership and collaborates with other departments where necessary to resolve*
- *Cross department groups meet weekly to discuss issues from that week and suggest process improvement – often followed by social events*
- *Cross-functional workshops to identify further improvements every quarter – with social events added*

(R) Subsequent customer satisfaction surveys indicated significant improvement, with the number of complaints, and complaints waiting to be resolved, going down. We conclude our experiments to have been a success and (L) will continue to monitor and improve.

For every evidence story, we would like to see some supportive evidence. For example, for the story above:

- Screenshot of workshop output/collaboration e.g., Miro or Mural board or photos of flipcharts
- Communications around changes to practices
- Calendar entries for future series of workshops
- Job titles or functions of those involved in the workshops
- Results or NPS (net promoter score) scores from customer satisfaction surveys (before and after)
- The meeting calendar for an upcoming joint meeting, and the graph showing customer satisfaction to have gone up). 10 pictures maximum

Overview and Context (max 500 words)

NOTE: This paragraph is for reference only; all information supplied here is NOT taken into account for scoring by reviewers but will help them to assess and understand the application.

- Describe clearly what part of your organisation this application is based on. Is it the full organisation, a division or department, a business unit etc. Please ensure that all information and evidence you provide is for that scope, for that (part of) the organisation.
- Describe clearly which category the application is addressing. Why are you applying for this category?
- Describe whether this is the standard way of working in this organisation, or whether this is an improvement on the way of working
- Describe the organisational context in which agility relevant to this awards category takes place
- Please add any general information, so the application can be understood in its context (national/international, market etc.)
- For an explanation of the categories, please refer to the webpage.
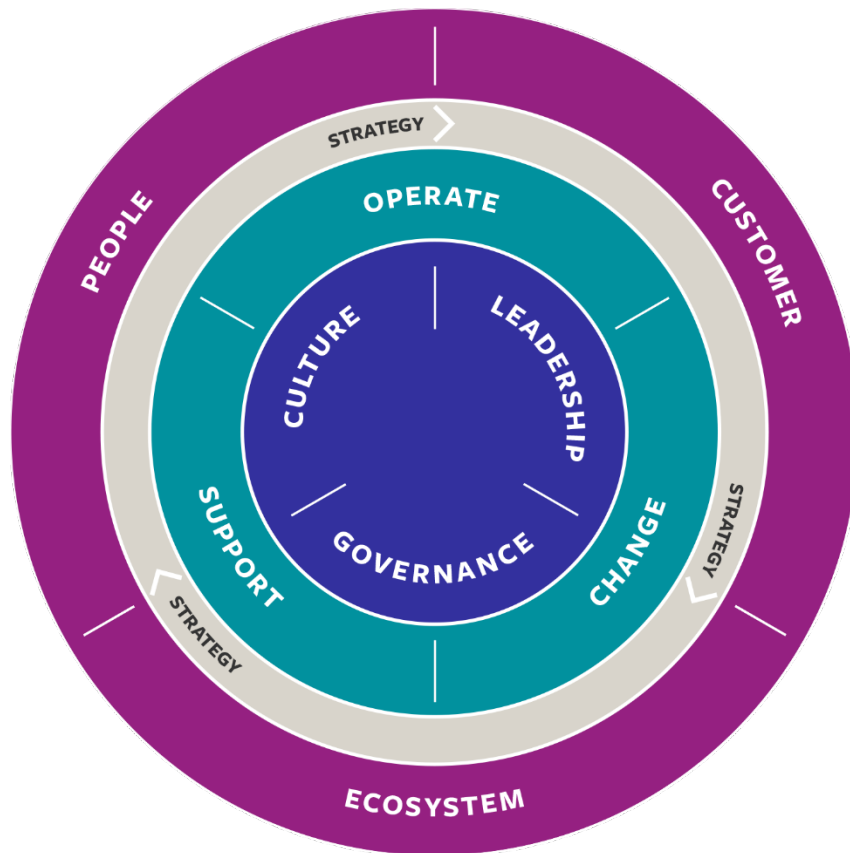
Blue Zone

Leadership, culture and governance sit at the core of the [Framework for Business Agility](). In successful organisations that are more about being agile than about doing agile, agility will be embedded in the organisation's culture, leadership and governance.

- How have you worked on your culture, leadership and governance? What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please upload relevant evidence with your application. This can be in the format of your choice *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Leadership (max 750 words)

[Leadership]() is found throughout the organisation. Constantly improving the organisation to deliver outcomes, value and impact requires supportive, thoughtful, focused leadership. Especially when the going gets tough

- How have you defined and built the leadership competencies needed in your agile organisation?
- How have you supported and maintained the leadership approach?
- What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied in your organisation?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. to support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Culture (max 750 words)

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast" highlights Peter Drucker. In many organisations, developing a "growth" mindset and building psychological safety, so that it is OK to fail within boundaries, is not something that comes easily and naturally. However, in an agile organisation, you need to feel safe to experiment and learn. Hence, an agile culture is part of the core of business agility.

- How have you defined and built the culture needed in your agile organisation?
- How have you supported and maintained an agile culture?
- What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied in your organisation?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please provide some evidence/pictures/recommendations etc. to support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Governance (max 750 words)

Most agility is lost in organisations when the wrong people make the wrong choices, taking too much time. Hence agile governance is also at the core of an agile organisation.

- How have you defined and built the governance needed in your agile organisation?
- How have you supported and maintained the agile governance approach?
- What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied in your organisation?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. to support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Teal Zone

These areas indicate how, directly or indirectly, value is created to provide outcomes and impact. We distinguish between direct value delivery, supporting the direct value delivery (like HR, finance, supply chain, procurement etc) and changing the way the organisation is working, or help to develop new products for a new audience, or for example implement new legislation.

Please write evidence for the operational agility, and for **either** change or support.

Operational Agility (max 750 words)

Describing how the organisation directly provides value to its customers, its ecosystem

- How have you defined and created the direct value production?
- How have you maintained and improved value delivery?
- What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied in your organisation?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. to support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Support or Change Agility (max 750 words)

Please indicate whether you have chosen to include supporting agility (like HR, Finance, Procurement, IT, etc.), or change agility (like project management, change management, programme management etc) in your application. Pick either one to write your evidence.

- How have you defined and created the delivery?
- How have you maintained and improved the delivery?
- What have you learned, what have you achieved, what innovation have you applied in your organisation?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.
- Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. to support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Purple Zone

In the end, an agile organisation is always sustainably delivering added value to their customers, their ecosystem and their people – their staff. In agile organisations this is the trigger to constantly improve, to adjust, to learn. To strive to improve value and impact for the world outside.

Customers (max 750 words)

In the agile world, we are always focused on sustainably, consistently and increasingly providing (added) value for customers. It is in the values and the principles of all agile manifestos. Hence this category is the first one we ask you to reflect upon.

- What is the value for your customers you wanted to create?
- What is the value for your customers you have achieved?
- How did you measure achieving success?
- Where there any innovations in process or technology you have used to increase success?
- How did you learn, with your customer, to provide even more value?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.

Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. To support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

People (max 750 words)

People, your staff, is the core of your success. Providing value is at the core of a sustainably successful organisation. Purpose Driven People, in direct contact with customers, are a key enabler to an organisation's success.

- What is the value for your people you wanted to create?
- What is the value for your people you have achieved?
- How did you measure achieving success?
- Where there any innovations in process or technology you have used to increase success?
- How did you learn, with your people, to provide even more value?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.

Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. To support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Ecosystem (max 750 words)

Ecosystem is the external environment. It might refer to regulators, to the supply chain, to the social environment you are in, to the ecological environment you are in (reducing the use of base materials etc), to the impact you make in society at large. Please, when describing your impact, ensure the reviewers know what aspects of your ecosystem you are referring to. There is no need to write about all, we would expect at least 2 different parts (for example impact on supply chain and impact on the usage of base materials or so).

- What is the value for your ecosystem you wanted to create?
- What is the value for your ecosystem you have achieved?
- How did you measure achieving success?
- What innovations in process or technology have been used to increase success?
- How did you learn, with your ecosystem, to provide even more value?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.

Please provide some evidence / pictures / recommendations etc. To support your evidence stories *(evidence can be uploaded on the online application form)*

Grey Zone

Strategy (max 750 words)

In a VUCA world, an organisation needs to be able to change its strategy and implementation fast enough, and high quality enough, to keep up with its environment.

- How have you defined your strategy, using knowledge, data and experience
- How did you adapt your strategy?
- How did you learn, to provide even more strategic value?
- Please write your answer in the form of evidence stories up to a maximum of 6.

Required fields

Application Contact Details: (This information will be used for communications about the Awards)

Approval & Consent to Share (these are required fields on the online form)

I can confirm that either myself or a colleague would be able to share and present a version of this case study/story publicly as a 20 min talk on 17th & 18th April 2024.

The information in my application can be shared with reviewers for the Awards by the Agile Business Consortium.

Application Milestones

Step 1 – Register your interest or nominate an organisation for 2024 Applications

Step 2 – Download the application guidance

Step 3 – Start collecting and drafting information and evidence for the application, using this Application Guidance document

Step 4 – Complete the online form by copying in your prepared application, and submit **by 4ᵗʰ December 22:00 GMT/UTC**

29ᵗʰ January – Organisations will be informed whether they have been selected for awards and are invited to speak at the Awards Conference

6ᵗʰ February – Public announcement of selected organisations for each category i.e., those that will be invited to present at the Awards Conference

17-18ᵗʰ April – Agile Business Awards Conference

Appendix: The Framework for Business Agility

Business Agility is a people-centred, organisation-wide capability that enables a business to deliver value to a world characterised by ever-increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. It is achieved by inspiring and harnessing the collaborative, creative ways of working of the people of the organisation in meeting its core purpose.

An agile organisation can respond quickly and effectively to opportunities and threats found in its internal and external environments (be they commercial, legal, technological, social, moral or political).

An agile organisation has the ability to:

- **Adapt quickly to market changes** - internally and externally

- **Respond rapidly and flexibly** to customer needs

- **Lead change** in a productive and cost-effective way without compromising quality

- **Sustain a competitive advantage**

The Agile Business Consortium has developed the Framework for Business Agility (FBA) to help organisations to get a holistic, agnostic view of the agility of their organisation, or any part of it. It can be applied to an organisation, or any part of an organisation, to assess its business agility.

Agility in an organisation's culture, leadership and governance enables
Agility in its capability to operate, change, and support its business and optimises
Agility in its delivery of value to its customers, its ecosystem and its people

Agility in strategy ensures that the organisation maintains a focus on delivery of value
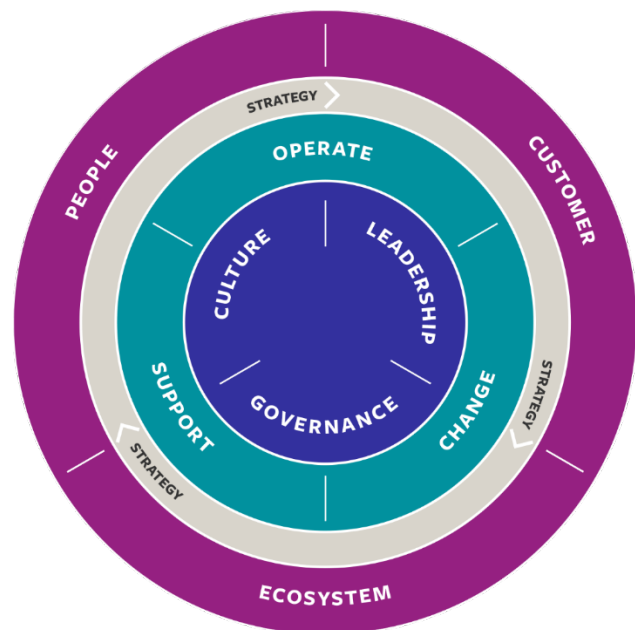
Blue Zone

Agile Culture

An organisation's culture reflects its personality – one that's influenced by a range of factors, including its size, geographic spread, beliefs, and values. People and events also affect an organisation's culture.

An agile culture provides an organisation with a set of core values, behaviours and practices that allow it to prosper in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

Its success also comes from promoting, encouraging, rewarding and harnessing the flexible and innovative behaviour of people within the organisation, by nurturing the three components of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, mastery and purpose.

There are seven elements that combine to form the DNA of an organisation's agile culture, for which there is a Development Matrix for Agile Culture describing five levels of agility for each of the seven elements.

Agile Leadership

Individuals within an organisation are typically identified as leaders as a result of one or more of: Their knowledge and experience related to what they are leading; their competence as a leader; and/or their position within a hierarchy.

To create and sustain flexible, resilient and adaptable organisations, agile leaders seek to develop others as leaders at all levels, believing that everyone has the potential inherent in a growth mindset to deliver on a shared purpose.

To be credible and effective, agile leadership requires a willingness from those who lead to ensure that they extend their own competencies, capabilities and thinking to 'being' agile rather than just 'doing' agile.

There are nine principles for agile leadership that are aligned with the agile themes of communication, collaboration and commitment. These principles should be embraced by any leader wishing to harness the power of collective effort – regardless of the scale of the change or the authority they inherit from organisational structure.

Agile Governance

Agility in governance reflects a light-touch, flexible approach to decision-making and oversight needed to ensure that the activities of an organisation remain aligned with the values and purpose of its sponsors and regulators.

The term sponsor depends entirely on the organisation context: For an entire business, the sponsors are its shareholders; for a charity, its trustees; for a government body, its citizens etc. At a smaller scale, in subdivisions of the organisation, the sponsor may be an individual, a team or a committee with devolved authority.

In principle, governance is universal, pervasive and scaled. It is based on:

- Empowerment – reliant on informed decision making, at the lowest responsible level, that is responsive and at pace
- Alignment - with the purpose and values of the organisation and any appropriate legislation

- Transparency - easy for people internal and external to the organisation to see what is going on and when intervention is needed. Providing an auditable record of activity where needed to demonstrate compliance and appropriate management of risk

Agility in Governance values: radical transparency, trusted autonomy, collaborative responsiveness and Informed judgement. To be effective overall, this should be applied through all levels of devolved accountability.

Teal Zone

Operational Agility

Agility in business operation, business change and the internal support of these are at the heart of every business that is able to survive and thrive in a VUCA world (one characterised by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity).

Operational agility allows the organisation to respond, day-to-day, to the ever-changing needs and demands of their customers, their people and their ecosystem.

In a VUCA world, what is considered to be valuable is constantly changing, so the processes delivering value need to be adaptive in order to ensure sustainable, cost-effective value delivery.

Much effort over the last decades has been into reducing the cost of delivery and increasing efficiency – optimising for a 'steady state' that often does not exist in reality. Organisations need to balance operational efficiency with the ability to respond rapidly to changes in what is perceived as valuable.

An organisation's operational agility is largely dependent on the agility of its culture, leadership and governance.

Note that where pressure for change exceeds the capacity and capability of operational agility, a special response may be needed. This is achieved through agility in business change that exists in a continuum with operational agility.

Business Support Agility

- Agile support processes enable the organization to deliver value to people, customers and Ecosystem. They don't directly deliver value themselves.
- Agility in the way business support functions (such as Finance, HR and Procurement) work will allow the organisation to:
    - Recognise and respond rapidly to business opportunities and challenges.
    - Keep and grow people and customer relations by supporting a growth mindset.
    - Rebalance and refocus if and when needed while stabilizing and maintaining focus where that is appropriate.
    - Achieve its purpose by adding value to customer, people and ecosystem.
- And overcome issues that often hinder the organisation in its business agility:
    - Inflexible financial and planning processes prohibit pivoting and reassigning people and resources.
    - Restrictive HR policies and processes may prevent people from focusing on collaborative and innovative stakeholder-centric delivery of value and building new competences to do this.
    - Heavy process-driven approaches to procurement do not allow for relationships to change if the situation requires it.

- Overly structured marketing & sales processes might cause blindness to new wishes, new opportunities or new markets.
- Inflexible facilities management policies and practices may inhibit collaborative working and the essential focus on delivery of value.

Business Change Agility

Where pressure for change exceeds the capacity and capability of operational agility, a special response may be needed. This is achieved through agility in business change that exists in a continuum with operational agility.

Examples of such changes may include: Changing the way the organisation operates to comply with new regulations; bringing new products or services to market; moving existing products and services to new markets; and transforming the business – either to meet a new purpose or to achieve an existing purpose in a significantly different way.

In order to be successful, these larger changes, often need to be organised alongside the day-to-day operation of the business in a way that allows the value of the change to be delivered incrementally and as early as possible but without creating turbulence that risks overwhelming the operation.

Transformational initiatives to develop significant new products, services or capabilities and ensure that the value of these are fully realised, e.g. by changing operational value delivery processes, support processes, and/or bringing about change in culture, governance and leadership often need to be managed as agile projects or programmes.

Purple Zone

Value Customers of the organisation

- The primary focus for the delivery of value for most organisations should be their customers.
- The most successful organisations will be those that sustain delivery of value in a VUCA world (characterised by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity)
- To survive and thrive in this regard it is important to organise in a way that enables the business to constantly deliver value to customers, in a changing world, with changing customer needs.
- Everyone in the organisation needs to:
  - Know the customer and the value they deserve so that all decisions are focused on adding to that value.
  - Understand the customer's "why", to help anticipate their needs. In public sector organisations, the citizen is the valued customer.
- Sustainable shareholder / stakeholder value can only be achieved as a result of knowing, understanding, championing and serving the customer. That is critical to the success of the organisation and must be the primary driver.

Value the People within the organisation

- People are the powerhouse of every successful agile organisation – one that is able to survive and thrive in a world characterised volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.
- Trusting people, allowing them to develop and show their talents in the organisation, and engaging them through purpose, is critical to ensuring the sustainable success of an organisation.

- Collaborating talents, happy with their work, focused on delivering value, and supported, but not constrained, by processes and technology, are the core of a resilient, responsive, agile and thus successful organisation.
- People learn and adapt faster than systems: They
    - Learn and adapt most easily when they feel safe
    - Are more creative when powered by diversity
    - Grow naturally when learning from each other

Value the Ecosystem in which the organisation exists

- No organisation exists in isolation. It lives in:
    - An organisational ecosystem of regulators, suppliers, competitors, partners, innovators and innovations.
    - A social ecosystem of individuals, communities, rules and customs.
    - An ecological ecosystem of resources, energy, and nature.
- To survive and thrive requires an organisation to understand its role in its ecosystem with success defined by how it delivers customer value while contributing positively to the ecosystem in which it lives.

Grey Zone

Agile Strategy

Agile Strategy connects the operation of the organisation, and the way that is changed and supported, with the delivery of value to its customers, its people and its ecosystem

It consists of a set of guiding principles that is communicated and adopted in the organisation, to generate a desired pattern of formal and informal decision-making needed to maintain a focus on delivery of value, allowing for learning in a VUCA world

In an agile organisation, strategy is not defined, fixed and implemented, but is in a constant flow of defining, realising, measuring, and adapting. This requires open eyes and ears, and open and rapid flow of information.

Agile strategy is therefore about how people throughout the organisation are expected to make decisions and allocate resources in order to accomplish key objectives.

To make this a reality agile strategy requires effective agility in culture, leadership and governance.