

Understanding the importance of assessing organizations during Agile transformation

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In the fast-paced and ever-evolving landscape of modern business, organizations are constantly seeking ways to stay competitive, innovative, and adaptive. One approach that has gained significant traction in recent years is Agile. Originally developed for software development, Agile principles have now expanded their influence across various industries, promising increased efficiency, faster delivery, and improved customer satisfaction.

However, the journey towards Agile transformation is not a simple one. It requires a fundamental shift in mindset, processes, and culture within an organization. To navigate this transformation successfully, thorough assessment of the organization's current state is imperative. This article delves into the reasons why assessing organizations during Agile transformation is crucial for success.

Starting any changers needs, first of all, to understanding the current state of the organization. Assessments provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization's current state, including its culture, processes, structure, and technological capabilities. This baseline assessment serves as a roadmap for identifying areas that need improvement and determining the most suitable Agile practices to implement.

Next step could be the identifying strengths and weaknesses of organization. By conducting assessments, organizations can identify their strengths that can be leveraged to facilitate the Agile transformation. Similarly, weaknesses and bottlenecks are unearthed, allowing for targeted interventions and adjustments to be made. This enables organizations to capitalize on existing assets while addressing areas of improvement.

On a way of transformation organization must aligning objectives and strategies, for example Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), as the most important element of a change. You can't succeed a result with a clear understanding where you go. Assessments help align the Agile transformation objectives with the broader strategic goals of the organization. By understanding where the organization currently stands and where it aims to be, leaders can develop tailored strategies that drive the Agile transformation forward while ensuring alignment with overarching business objectives.

Cultural alignment is one of the key elements of each organization. Agile transformation is not just about adopting new methodologies, practices and tools; it's also

about fostering a culture of collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement. Assessments reveal cultural barriers and resistance to change within the organization, allowing leaders to proactively address them through targeted interventions, training programs, and communication strategies. Culture is always based on the organizational structure of the organization. Without changing the structure, you will fail trying to adopt new Ways of Working (WoW) to the old behavior based on the old rules.

Managing change effectively could save organizational resources and power to overcome all obstacles and achieve the desired objectives. Change management is a critical aspect of Agile transformation. Assessments help organizations anticipate the impact of change on employees, processes, and systems. By understanding potential challenges and resistance points, leaders can develop change management strategies that mitigate risks and facilitate a smoother transition to Agile practices.

Measuring Progress and Success could give you the understanding not only the achievement of the result but the possibility to make changes in your transformation plan. Assessments provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured throughout the Agile transformation journey. By establishing key performance indicators, OKRs and metrics upfront, organizations can track their progress, identify areas of improvement, and celebrate successes along the way.

Organizational assessments in Agile transformations can take various forms, depending on the specific needs and context of the organization. Here are some examples of common assessment methods used during Agile transformations:

1. **Agile Maturity Assessment.** This assessment evaluates the organization's current level of Agile maturity across key dimensions such as leadership support, team collaboration, Agile practices adoption, and customer focus. It typically involves surveys, interviews, and workshops with stakeholders at different levels of the organization. The outcome provides insights into areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, guiding the Agile transformation roadmap.

2. **Value Stream Mapping.** Value stream mapping is a visualization technique used to understand the end-to-end flow of work within an organization. It helps identify inefficiencies, bottlenecks, and waste in the current processes. By mapping out the flow of value delivery from ideation to delivery, organizations can pinpoint areas where Agile principles and practices can be applied to streamline processes and improve delivery speed.

3. **Culture Assessment.** Assessing organizational culture is essential for successful Agile transformations, as culture plays a significant role in shaping behaviors and attitudes towards change. Cultural assessments may involve surveys, interviews, or workshops to gauge aspects such as collaboration, empowerment, trust, and willingness to experiment. The findings inform strategies for fostering a culture conducive to Agile principles, such as openness, adaptability, and continuous learning.

4. **Technical Agility Assessment.** Technical agility refers to an organization's ability to rapidly adapt and innovate in response to changing technological landscapes. Technical agility assessments evaluate factors such as software architecture, development practices, test automation, and DevOps capabilities. These assessments

help identify technical debt, quality issues, and gaps in tooling and infrastructure, enabling organizations to make informed decisions about modernizing their technology stack and adopting Agile engineering practices.

5. **Team Health Check.** Team health checks are regular assessments conducted at the team level to evaluate factors such as communication, collaboration, decision-making, and morale. These assessments are typically facilitated through retrospective meetings or online surveys, allowing team members to reflect on their experiences and identify areas for improvement. Team health checks promote self-awareness, accountability, and continuous improvement within Agile teams, contributing to overall organizational agility.

6. **Lean-Agile Leadership Assessment.** Leadership plays a crucial role in driving Agile transformations and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Lean-Agile leadership assessments evaluate leadership behaviors, mindset, and practices against Agile principles such as servant leadership, empowerment, and value delivery. These assessments help identify leadership gaps and opportunities for development, enabling leaders to align their actions with Agile values and effectively support the transformation journey.

In conclusion, assessing organizations during Agile transformation is not just a preliminary step; it's a fundamental component of success. By understanding the current state, identifying strengths and weaknesses, aligning objectives, addressing cultural barriers, managing change effectively, and measuring progress, organizations can navigate the complexities of Agile transformation with confidence and achieve sustainable results. Embracing assessments as an integral part of the Agile journey empowers organizations to adapt, evolve, and thrive in today's dynamic business environment. The combination of proper assessments according to the needs and demands of the organization could decrease waste of new WoW implementation, reduce the resistance to changes and speed-up the transition of organization on its way to Agility. The practical examples of assessment implementation will be covered in the additional articles.

Key words: Agile transformation, Assessing Organizations, Technical Agility, Agile Leadership.

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