enlighten
operational excellence

BUILD AGILITY AT SCALE

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An agile back office that can quickly respond to opportunities and threats – what an enticing vision! But how can large companies make this vision a reality and become truly agile, when the truth is that their operations are cumbersome, slow-moving beasts that – like a supertanker – are slow to realign and readjust? Thankfully, there are several steps that companies can take to shift from **'cumbersome at scale'** to **'agile at scale'**.

Before offering solutions for shifting to an agile environment, it is worth briefly exploring how companies evolved to be cumbersome. Fundamentally, organisations are designed to be stable and adopt a "If it's working don't mess with it!" mentality.

> "Agile runs contrary to what organisations are fundamentally designed to do: to provide stability. It disrupts the permanence of the system, creates vulnerability and is rarely successfully implemented. Instead of becoming agile at scale, organisations remain 'cumbersome at scale'."

They are frameworks that allow exceptions to be managed effectively, producing predictable outcomes and constraining as much change and risk as possible. They strive for consistency and foster an environment that values stability over dynamic change.

Conformity can be seen, for example, in the areas of:

- Compliance: Pressure from regulators to comply with rules, policies and regulations.
- Risk: Protect the organisation from security threats and reputational or financial damage, which calls for checks, balances and rigidity.
- People: Clearly delineated reporting lines, goals and procedures, a management team   that is filled with domain expertise and promoted based on technical skills rather than management qualities.

Together, compliance, risk, and people practices create an environment of stability and certainty, not an environment that can dynamically change or readjust. The desire for stability manifests itself in symptoms across all critical performance measures:

- High backlogs: Work accumulates and becomes critical before anyone reacts.
- Overstaffing: Pockets of the operation are overstaffed because readjustments are rarely made, and load balancing does not occur.
- Silos: Operations are managed in parts (silos) rather than as a whole.

CREATING AGILITY AT SCALE

There are several actionable steps you can take to shift from 'cumbersome at scale' to 'agile at scale'. The first is to solve your current operational problems and shift to agile metrics, behaviours and culture:
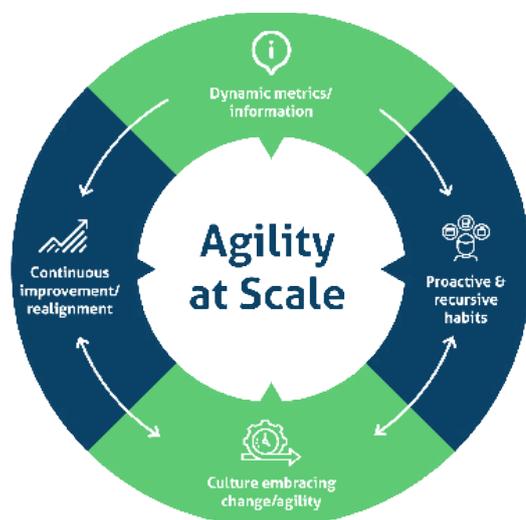
Agile metrics
From opaque operations to transparency

Before becoming agile, you need to create transparency across your operations by implementing dynamic metrics and providing managers with information. You need a system that gives you fast, accurate information even when the deliverable is a moving target.

By having greater visibility and continuous feedback loops, your managers can react quickly to changes and bottlenecks in the development process, which is required if you want to be agile.

Agile behaviours
From a reactive to proactive management behaviours

Rather than simply reacting to situations, managers (and employees) are coached on proactive habits and thus, make a result happen. Reliable forecasts and operations-wide planning are keys to this endeavor. Teams are planning and executing parts but their efforts are synced to the whole.

They achieve this by applying insights gained via metrics, in combination with knowledge of what's happening on the ground, your managers learn to identify and preempt potential problems, and/or move quickly resolve issues before they escalate.

Agile culture
From low employee engagement to a highly engaged workforce

Improve employee engagement through participative management practices to create a culture that embraces agility. This includes using transparent communication tools and methods to draw in your team members and bring visibility to, and sharing of, best practices, as well as the identification of obstacles encountered throughout the workday.

The integration of active leadership and the daily review of performance reports allows for a streamlined approach in conducting structured, transparent and targeted performance reviews and one-on-one coaching.

Team member satisfaction and engagement increases when knowing what needs to be done and how individual performance can influence the results. Increased engagement further leads to improved team performance.

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ABOUT US

To meet our vision of being the partner that business leaders want to work with, we understand that a strong, experienced, effective and visionary team is needed, with the energy, commitment and drive to succeed. We deliver on our promise through our leading propriety methodology that combines business experience, technology and data analytics.

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