



Agiles transitions

# Winning conditions for an Agile transition

**More and more organizations consider Agility as a solution to their problems. However, many winning conditions have to be implemented in order for the transition to be efficient and durable.**

**Here are 4 known problems which drive organizations to adopt Agility:**

1

The main concern is not the value for the client but rather how delivery dates can be met.

2

Projects are not organized in a way that links development to the needs of the business and the end users.

3

Project governance cannot predict the projects' success (known percentage of budget used versus unknown percentage of delivery).

4

In its initial phase, the project as a whole is defined in great detail. Some hypotheses will inevitably be proven wrong along the way and we have very little flexibility to change them. It often becomes a contractual obligation.

The urgent need to solve these four problems often leads companies to implement an Agile approach quickly and incompletely.

In numerous cases, people believe that Agility is just a process change that only affects development teams. Moreover, we minimize the potential impact of Agility on the rest of the organization. Involving insufficient people and means can lead to transition failure. Adopting an Agile approach will impact the company on several levels. This is why it is crucial to ensure proper start-up and to take into account the scope and complexity of such a change.

For example, companies often implement an Agile process in development teams. However, they do not set up processes to connect to upper management. Organizations will often accept that the Product Owner is not really part of the team and is not really involved. As a result, the team is not fully aware of the end-user needs.

We also observed that management does not have a clear picture of the situation because of project governance. Very

often, project managers will talk about their performance and value to upper management but will not mention the problems they are facing. In fact, they are convinced that their teams can solve all their problems.

It is very difficult to make changes to the waterfall approach, which is deeply fixed in an organization's processes. When we launch an Agile transition and teams start to face problems, the first thing they do is revert back to their traditional approach, return to their comfort zone.

Whatever the reasons, they are different from one company to the next. An Agile transition remains a complex process. To ensure the success of such a transition and to prevent problems from occurring, it is crucial to set up winning conditions before launching Agility.

**Problematic practices**

Companies who wish to choose Agility will implement practices to improve their processes. Here are things to avoid:

- Sell the idea of Agility instead of realizing that we have problems
- Believe that the transition only involves the project mechanics
- Lack organizational sponsorship
- Believe that it is a miracle solution
- Try to standardize an Agile process
- Think they will not be temporary loss of productivity
- Expect a conclusion and stop trying to improve.

Such practices do not take into account the complexity of an Agile transition.

Organizations often accept that the Product Owner is not really part of the team and is not really involved. As a result, the team is not fully aware of end-user needs.

## Why choose Agility?

1

To **restore quick response and human agility** in realistic and humans-scale teams and mandates. We must know how to sequence and schedule priorities. This is the core of Agility: divide programs, projects, deliveries, teams and deliverables. The goal is to do less, more quickly, which enables us to accomplish more and to have better global focus.

2

Agility divides a large project into 100 small projects, which means 1 macroscopic plan that launches 100 small detailed sequential plans which, in turn, call the initial plan into question when needed. This **completely eliminates cumbersome risk and change management** while encouraging quick action, learning and high-value creation.

3

The Agile team is a real team. It is fully dedicated to a project, close-knit (not too large and co-located), self-organized, stable and multi-disciplinary (simultaneous engineering) and inherently responsible for its performance. **The team is capable, efficient, focused and energetic.** One member is dedicated to the team's dynamics and work ethic and another member focuses on the client's high-value priorities and the team's apprenticeship. The "hostile" role of project management (full of pressure) is eliminated.

4

**Risk and change management is an integral part of the implementation**, which generates an environment of action and velocity (we learn and we adjust). It is what we call an empirical management approach that focuses on quick progression and learning.

5

Finally, Agility will establish real Lean management. The quick and subsequent availability of concrete high-value deliverables **clearly precedes cash flow** and almost completely eliminates sunk-costs risks. The quick execution of projects and support processes multiply the global delivery capacity while respecting quality standards. This creates a highly stimulating environment of collaboration for clients and employees.

## Ensuring smooth transition

### First step: Situation analysis

All major changes require a clear analysis of the current situation.

- What are the most important problems?
- How can Agility help?
- How will we measure gains?

It is important to communicate the reasons for choosing an Agile transition. The goal is to improve and not simply to become Agile!

This step requires courage on the part of the organization because they will need to objectively challenge its processes.

### Second step: Impact analysis

Implementation of Agility will have an impact on several levels.

Before launching, we have to evaluate processes, work tools, software engineering practices, relationships with business lines and suppliers, roles and responsibilities...

The Agile transition affects project management as well as many other areas. We must not overlook the human impact!






- Who are the opinion leaders?
- Who will be the transformation sponsors?
- What myths are perpetuated about Agility?
- Who will resist change?
- Who will handle the transition?
- Do they have the required competencies?
- Will they adopt the good behaviours?
- Are they open to change and are they stakeholders in the decision-making process?

It is important to get stakeholders involved in order to maximize the chances of success of the transition.

### Third step: Start-up preparation

Each organization has its own constraints and tolerance to risks depending on its culture and the sense of urgency regarding the improvement of the current situation.

## There are 3 approaches to launch a transition:

 <b>All-in</b> Choose when there is an urgent need for change.	 <b>Small steps</b> Choose: • When resistance is considerable • When there is not an urgent need for change.	 <b>Single project</b> Choose when the sense of urgency concerns a specific project.
 <p>Sends a clear message.  Maximizes potential benefits.  Prevents a 2-speed organization.</p>	<p>Limits impact on organization.  When choosing projects correctly, can lead to easy success.</p>	<p>Can isolate the project from external constraints.</p>
 <p>It is a risky approach that may require a reorganization.  Skills must be developed rapidly.</p>	<p>It is a long transition process.  Often, organization reverts back to comfort zone at first sign of problems.</p>	<p>Project constraints could prevent skill development.</p>

### Fourth step: Choosing the right method

Scrum, Lean, Kanban, XP, Scrumban, whatever method you choose, we must launch quickly to validate choices and adapt as needed.

The method will benefit different areas and will depend on the project and organization constraints: process improvement, projects, technical complexity, etc.

It's not easy to launch a transition. Organizations can benefit from collaboration in this area.

### Pyxis guides you through your transition.

Agile practices simplify and speed up operations if they are correctly implemented. Operations require an accurate framework and self-organized and supported team dynamics. Our considerable experience in the implementation of Agile practices enables us to identify key factors that will ensure durable Agility success. These factors led to a defined approach of our Scrum and Scrumban team start-ups that the client manages with us.

For over 13 years, we have been supporting companies in their Agile transition and we have acquired considerable experience in preparing a company current status report before launching the transition.

**Initial diagnostic relative to the Agile maturity level will validate the following:**

- Team members' understanding of Agility
- Team roles and responsibilities
- Understanding of the proposed development process
- Technical coaching needs
- Understanding of the business vision regarding the project.

The current status report will enable us to better understand the business context of the project and the technologies used. We will also identify the expectations of the main stakeholders in regards to intervention and evaluate the level of adherence to the proposed change. This report will enable us to generate an intervention plan according to the team's situation and constraints.

Skills development of teams, project offices, and management requires vast knowledge in order to cover methodological aspects, governance, team dynamics and engineering. Pyxis offers programs that meet your needs and your situation to ensure tangible results. We have experts at your disposal: Agile team coaches, organizational coaches, and trainers.

Here are a few areas on which our coaches work that make a difference in starting up a transition:

Coaches work with individuals and teams in order to move from current situation to desired situation where Agility is fully implemented. They support stakeholders through discussions, suggestions, and observations in order to help them modify their management style and to ensure skills development from all team members to reach desired Agility level. Working closely with the teams' Scrum Masters, coaches establish and implement activities that enable skills development of team members and improvement of development processes. The coach's role is to share his expertise and his observations with all team members.

Moreover, the coach's goal is to help teams quickly develop their skills in order for them to become rapidly self-sufficient and get maximum benefits from Agility. More precisely, the coach supports project start-ups, offers advice to improve Scrum application throughout projects, and applies the best practices. His advice cohesively facilitates adoption of Agility within teams.



### **Who are we?**

We are developers, coaches, trainers, architects, software engineers, Scrum Masters, Product Owners, designers. And we share one passion: that is to transfer our know-how and deliver great software.

**[pyxis-tech.com](https://pyxis-tech.com)**