Path to Agility Approach

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Overview of Path to Agility (P2A)

Why Path to Agility?

The journey toward Agility can be long and challenging. Our experience and research has shown that the vast majority of organizations who take on an Agile transformation will either experience “superficial agility” which usually results in failure and reverting back to old, ineffective behaviors, or “pocket agility”, where some things may improve, but falls short of the true organizational improvements needed to be more resilient.

This is why we created the Path to Agility. It is a proven Agile transformation approach designed to help guide organizations through their Agile transformation journey. It helps organizations achieve specific business outcomes by providing a clear approach for identifying the capabilities needed for navigating change and the visibility needed to resolve obstacles and adapt along the path.

Path to Agility is designed with the following objectives in mind:

- To provide visibility into transformation outcomes, progress, and impediments.
- To enable the communication of the past, present, and future value within a context that everyone in the organization can understand.
- To provide change agents and leaders with proven patterns to improve transformation consistency, quality, and results.
- To enable transfer of ownership to key decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders at all levels of the organization.

Path to Agility Approach

Stages

The Path to Agility approach consists of 5 stages: Align, Learn, Predict, Accelerate, and Adapt.

Each stage provides a point of reference and context for change:

Align: It starts with a compelling purpose, the “why”, for taking on a transformation effort. It’s about addressing the conditions that are challenging the organization and setting a vision and prioritizing key business outcomes accordingly. Lack of alignment creates incoherence and waste that can derail a transformation.

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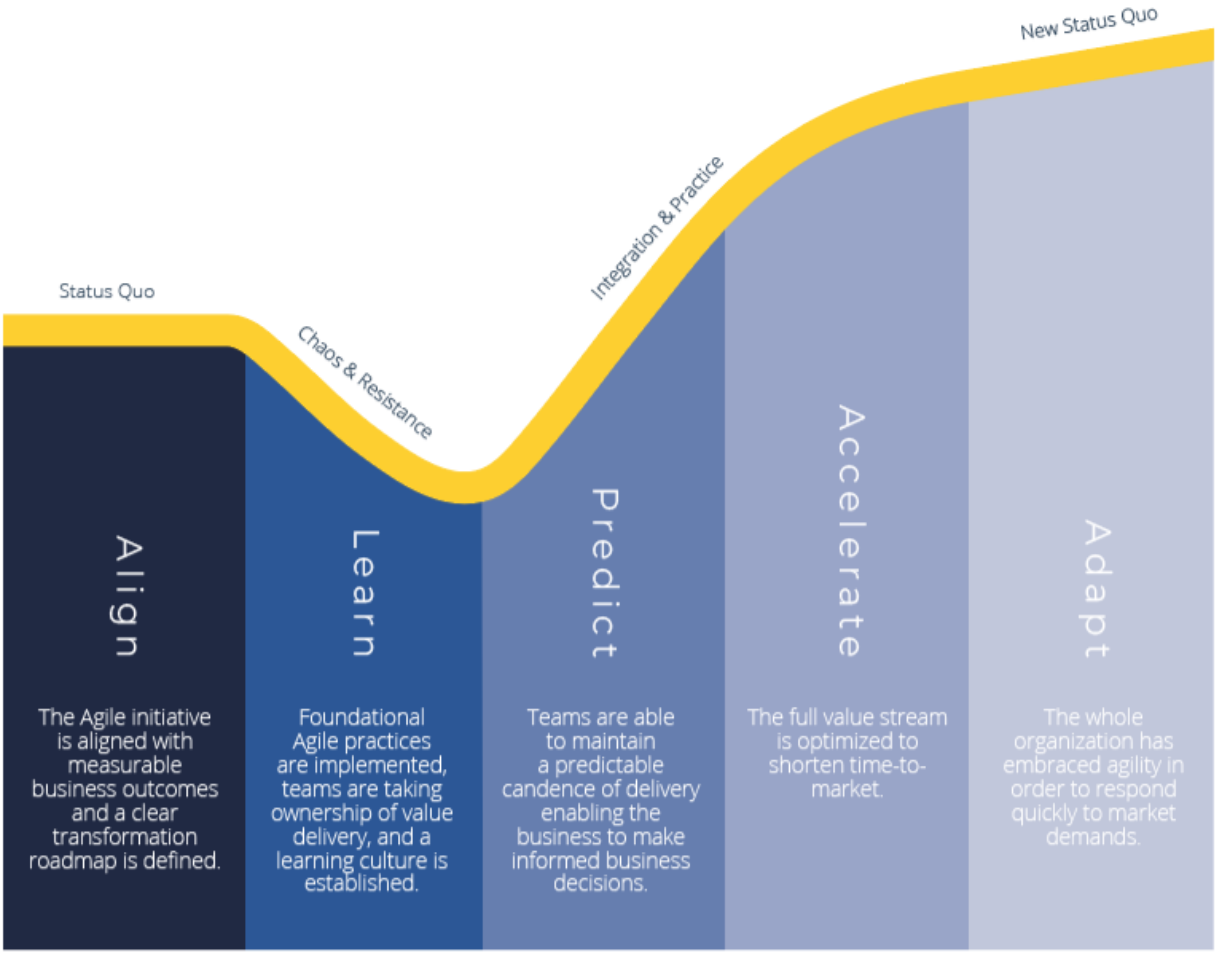
Learn: The emphasis is on learning new concepts, terminologies, new ways of thinking and working, and creating a culture of learning.

Predict: This stage is characterized by seeing real, tangible results and the indicators of what's working in a given context or situation. It's about getting the volatility out of the systems in order to be more consistent and predictable.

Accelerate: This is about optimizing the full value stream. Tuning the engine that drives shorter cycle times for value delivery.

Adapt: Here organizations have a whole organizational view of agility, based on lean and agile principles, making it more resilient to future market demands.

With each stage of change, there are core capabilities that enable the continued progress toward the outcomes that the organization is striving for.



Levels

The reality of organizational change is that it's hard. It takes time and it will be met with resistance. It takes more than just a few people to create a movement that sticks. That's why the Path to Agility

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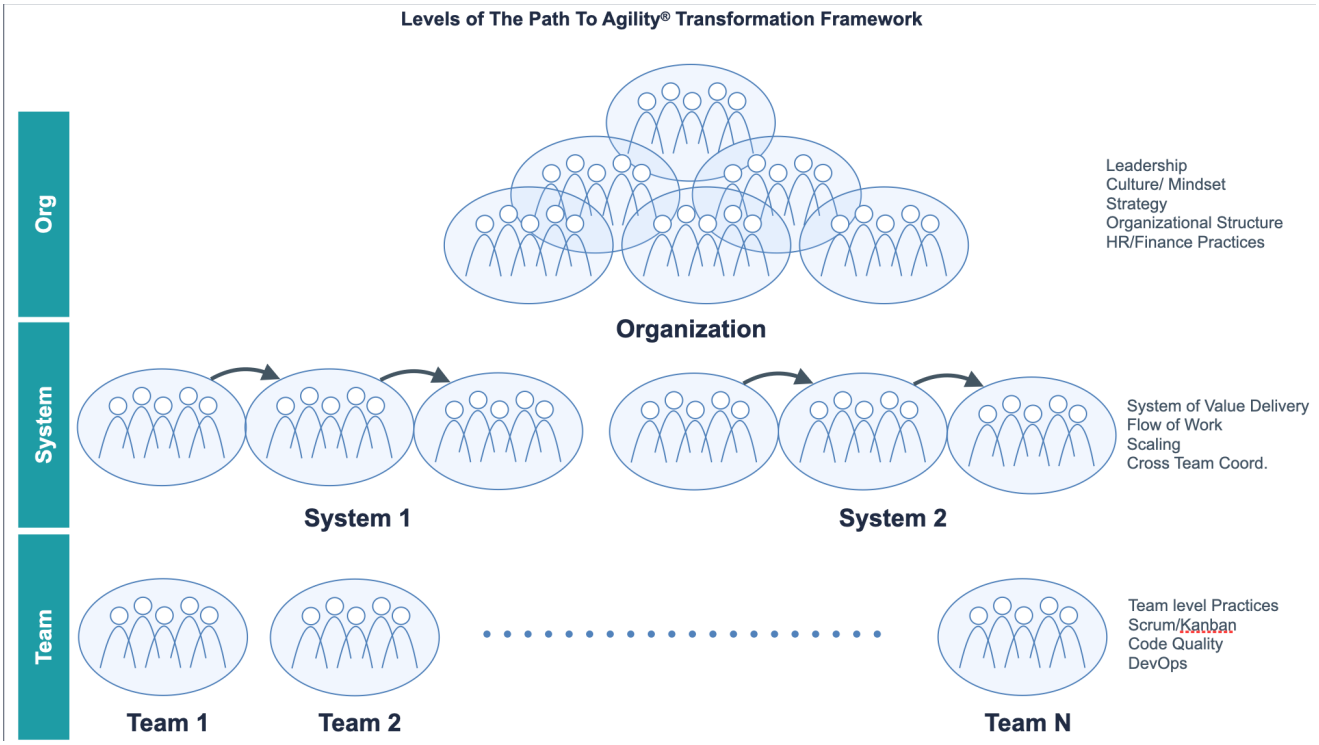
develops the necessary capabilities to deliver outcomes across 3 levels:

Organization level - Leadership develops a modern mindset, increases visibility throughout the organization, and creates alignment around vision, goals and measured success for sustainable organizational change.

System level - Networks of teams are coordinating and collaborating to address dependencies and achieve optimal flow in value delivery.

Team level - Teams successfully take on new roles, establish agile team practices, increase engagement, and achieve sustainable, predictable cadence of delivering value.

Each level defined in the approach has custom outcomes mapped within them that provide visibility into the relationships, dependencies and impacts across all stages of the journey.



Outcomes

Path to Agility's outcomes-based lens helps organizations evaluate where they are on the road to business agility and map out what they should focus on next--no matter where they are in their journey.

Being outcome-focused, rather than practice-driven, means the Path to Agility approach is not intending to prescribe how to implement agile. The emphasis is on building agility, not "doing" Agile. The objective is to help the organization achieve what is needed in order to thrive. The approach has natural dependencies between outcomes and the outcomes build upon and strengthen each other.

Before an organization embarks on the road to agility, the leadership team uses the Path to Agility

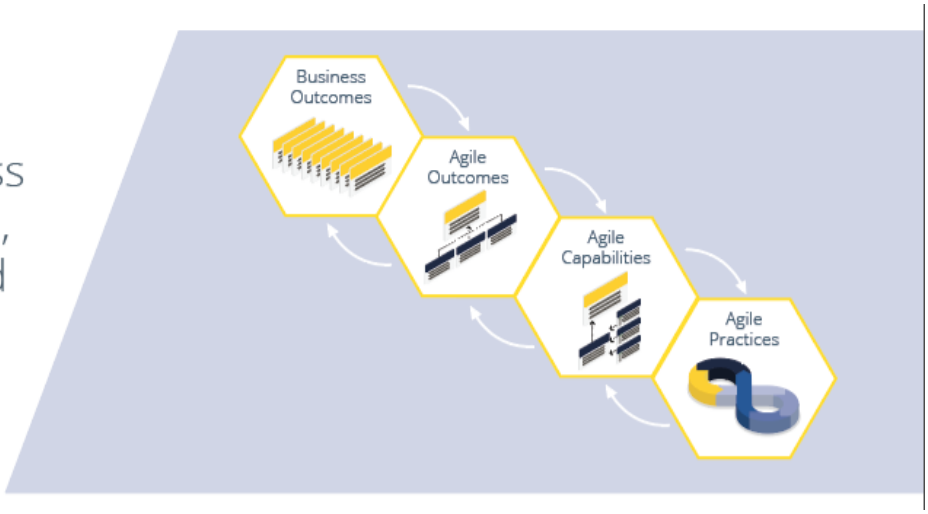
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approach to identify and prioritize business outcomes that are best suited to their organization's needs and goals. The approach provides nine common business outcomes, based on many years of experience, that provide a starting point for alignment:

Continuous Improvement The ability of the organization to relentlessly pursue optimizations in all aspects of business functions.	**Speed** The time it takes to deliver an idea into the market.	**Predictability** Teams maintain a predictable cadence of delivery enabling the business to make informed business decisions.
Innovation New ideas, creative thoughts, or novel imaginations provide better solutions to meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or known market needs.	**Customer Satisfaction** Customers are satisfied with the experience, benefits, and outcomes when using your product or service.	**Employee Engagement** Employees are more satisfied in their work, willing to go the extra mile, passionate about the purpose of their jobs, and committed to the organization.
Productivity Increase the business value realized while maintaining or reducing costs.	**Market Responsiveness** The ability of the organization to pivot quickly to respond to ever-changing market demands.	**Quality** The product or services meets the expectations of the market for usability, reliability, etc.

Components of Path To Agility

Breaking business outcomes down, so you can build them up.



Organizations can customize Path to Agility to their preferred Business Outcomes, using the related set of Agile Outcomes and Agile Capabilities as a comprehensive roadmap to help visualize and build on the necessary Agile Practices that enable and drive tangible results. Every aspect in the Agile transformation journey can be clearly mapped to help align and measure progress.

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Business outcomes are the results needed by organizations to succeed in the modern world. Organizations use these to customize their Agile transformation strategy by prioritizing business outcomes to suit their needs.

Agile outcomes are the organizational functions that come as a result of developing an agile mindset and fundamental Agile capabilities within the organization. When Agile outcomes are achieved, they then become the building blocks for achieving sustainable business outcomes.

Agile capabilities are the foundational behaviors and abilities that, once in place, will lead to the development of Agile outcomes. These capabilities are tangible and measurable, but may vary across an organization.

Agile practices are the processes, techniques, roles, meetings, and systems that are recommended in popular Agile frameworks like Scrum, Kanban and Scaled Agile Framework. These practices are the tools and building blocks that allow organizations to build specific capabilities needed to achieve desired Agile and business outcomes.

Read More:

- Business Outcomes Part 1: The Need For Speed & Fast Product Delivery
- Business Outcomes Part 2: 8 Steps to Achieving Predictability In Business
- Business Outcomes Part 3: 11 Tips For Creating Innovation In Business

Agile Outcomes and Agile Capabilities Explainer Videos

Familiarize Yourself with Path to Agility Content

Each of the Agile Outcomes and Agile Capabilities has a short (1 to 2 mins) explainer video.

You can access these video descriptions within P2ANav.com anywhere you see the camera icon: eg:

- **From the Map as well as the Dashboard views:** Click on an Agile Outcome to open the sidebar. Click on an Agile Capability to show its details and video link
- **From the Capabilities as well as the Prioritization views**: click on an Agile Capability to open the sidebar and access the video link

Slides, Handouts and Graphics

Supporting Documents

The following slides, handouts, and graphics are available for your download and use:

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Path to Agility Stages and Change Curve.pdf	Path to Agility Slides.pptx	Path to Agility Multi-page Handout.pdf	Path to Agility One-page Handout.pdf	Path to Agility Business Outcomes Poster.pdf
				

Advantage of a Capability Model

Path to Agility embraces the concept that teams and organizations need to develop capabilities and not focus on achieving a level of maturity. We think this was best captured in **the book Accelerate by Nicole Forsgren, Jez Humble and Gene Kim.**

Excerpt

> Focus on capabilities, not maturity
>
> Technology leaders need to deliver software quickly and reliably to win in the market. For many companies, this requires significant changes to the way we deliver software. The key to successful change is measuring and understanding the right things with a focus on capabilities -- not on maturity.
>
> While maturity models are very popular in the industry, we cannot stress enough that maturity models are not the appropriate tool to use or mindset to have. Instead, shifting to a capabilities model of measurement is essential for organizations wanting to accelerate software delivery. This is due to four factors.
>
> **First**, maturity models focus on helping an organization "arrive" at a mature state and then declare themselves done with their journey, whereas technology transformations should follow a continuous improvement paradigm. Alternatively, capability models focus on helping an organization continually improve and progress, realizing that the technological and business landscape is everchanging. The most innovative companies and highest-performing organizations are always striving to be better and never consider themselves "mature" or "done" with their improvement or transformation journey -- and we see this in our research .
>
> Shifting to a capabilities model of measurement is essential for organizations wanting to accelerate

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software delivery.

Second, maturity models are quite often a "lock-step" or linear formula, prescribing a similar set of technologies, tooling, or capabilities for every set of teams and organizations to progress through. Maturity models assume that "Level 1" and "Level 2" look the same across all teams and organizations, but those of us who work in technology know this is not the case. In contrast, capability models are multidimensional and dynamic, allowing different parts of the organization to take a customized approach to improvement, and focus on capabilities that will give them the most benefit based on their current context and their short- and long-term goals. Teams have their own context, their own systems, their own goals, and their own constraints, and what we should focus on next to accelerate our transformation depends on those things.

Third, capability models focus on key outcomes and how the capabilities, or levers, drive improvement in those outcomes -- that is, they are outcome based. This provides technical leadership with clear direction and strategy on high-level goals (with a focus on capabilities to improve key outcomes). It also enables team leaders and individual contributors to set improvement goals related to the capabilities their team is focusing on for the current time period. Most maturity models simply measure the technical proficiency or tooling install base in an organization without tying it to outcomes. These end up being vanity metrics: while they can be relatively easy to measure, they don't tell us anything about the impact they have on the business.

Fourth, maturity models define a static level of technological, process, and organizational abilities to achieve. They do not take into account the ever-changing nature of the technology and business landscape. Our own research and data have confirmed that the industry is changing: what is good enough and even " highperforming " today is no longer good enough in the next year. In contrast, capability models allow for dynamically changing environments and allow teams and organizations to focus on developing the skills and capabilities needed to remain competitive.

By focusing on a capabilities paradigm, organizations can continuously drive improvement. And by focusing on the right capabilities, organizations can drive improvements in their outcomes, allowing them to develop and deliver software with improved speed and stability. In fact, we see that the highest performers do exactly this, continually reaching for gains year over year and never settling for yesterday's accomplishments.

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