



AGILE TRANSFORMATION

*Driving Competitive Advantage
with a Tailored Agile Maturity Model*

genesis10[®]



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 15 years, the software and technology landscape has dramatically changed. Instead of delivering technology projects by writing down detailed specifications before constructing software, technologists and their business partners have found a better way. Generally, *Agile approaches* rely on customer-centric approaches to delivering software rapidly. The most popular of these, scrum, relies on the pillars of transparency, ongoing inspection and adaptation of software under construction. **Scrum delivers better business value by dramatically changing the way technology teams interact with software and [perhaps most importantly] their customers.**

In the beginning, companies experimented with Agile methods for a variety of reasons, all mostly focused on hoping there might be a better, more productive way to deliver software. Companies found themselves increasingly driven by quarterly earnings reports, emerging competitive pressures and rapidly advancing technology capabilities. As early as 2011, the Standish Chaos Report¹ recognized that Agile methods of interacting with the business and software delivery were the future:

*// The Agile process is the universal remedy for software development project failure. Software applications developed through the Agile process have **three times the success rate of the traditional waterfall method** and a much lower percentage of time and cost overruns.² //*

Six years later, we now see that Agile is no longer a trend or a fad. The longest running survey of Agile methods³ is now in its 11th year and includes thousands of responses from companies on every continent. However, the annual State of Agile Report report also notes that there are still significant opportunities. Specifically,



This points to a challenge and also to a significant opportunity. The challenge: Organizations are still struggling to push Agile adoption forward, and progress can be slow and uneven. The opportunity: To realize the benefits Agile delivery brings, a proactive approach is needed to foster Agile maturity. This approach should account for three critical success factors:

- 1

Each business exists in a **unique cultural context** that should be addressed and accommodated.
- 2

The approach should allow for **immediate realization of the benefits of Agile delivery** including accelerated delivery, project visibility, improved team productivity, improved business alignment and the ability to quickly respond to ever changing priorities.
- 3

The approach should allow organizations to **plan forward, and identify logical next steps** as they transform technology organizations to realize these benefits for business customers.

AGILE MATURITY ASSESSMENTS

Maturity Assessments are not a new concept. Several assessments have been implemented in the technology arena, including well-known maturity models such as the Software Engineering Institute’s *Capability Maturity Model* [CMM], the *Capability Maturity Model Integration* [CMMI] and the Information Technology Infrastructure Library [ITIL]. A wide variety of technology specific maturity models are also available. Since maturity models come in all shapes and sizes, why consider developing a tailored model?

To answer this question, let’s consider the strengths and weaknesses of maturity models.

Maturity Models/Assessments	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<div><div>· Can be used to measure maturity in a technology organization</div><div>· Offer repeatable standards based on a well-known body of information</div><div>· Provide best practices to emulate</div></div>	<div><div>· Do not account for the unique factors (including culture and business practice) of organizations</div><div>· Tend to focus on the model itself, and not the ultimate business goal. As Gartner notes, high levels of maturity do not necessarily correlate with business value.⁴</div><div>· Offer little to no guidance on the logical next steps organizations should take to drive business value</div></div>

In summary, maturity models provide best practices and repeatable standards and can be used to measure an organization against a defined standard. However, they do not account for unique factors the business faces, provide guidance on next steps or necessarily correlate with an increase in business value.

CASE STUDY:
FORTUNE 100 FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION

As a part of a six-week onsite technology assessment for a Fortune 100 financial client, Genesis10 created a more realistic, business-value driven maturity model for Agile adoption. Specifically, we offset many of the weaknesses of the traditional maturity model approach noted above and tailored the strengths offered by maturity models to the specific needs of the organization.

As a part of the overall engagement, we identified several factors that were critical levers in driving business value for the organization:

Culture

In almost all maturity assessments, culture is ignored or only discussed in passing. Best practices in change management identify the importance of assessing any change in individuals, customer expectations and culture. These factors were broadly included in the culture dimension.

People

The impact of change on people was also identified as being critical to the organization’s successful adoption of Agile. Executive sponsorship, knowledge, disruption, training and thought leadership were addressed broadly in this category.

Process

This dimension is often ignored in assessments, but vital to include and consider. Existing processes throughout the organization would either support or detract from an Agile adoption across the organization. Identifying potential roadblocks and process obstacles ahead of time was a critical factor in accelerating the Agile adoption.

Technology

The types of technology in use in the organization were also viewed as being a critical dimension to consider in Agile adoption. The organization we were assessing relied heavily on vendor provided software. Identifying how these software packages would either promote or detract from adoption was essential in managing the adoption.

Empowerment

The final factor influencing the Agile adoption was a broad category we defined as empowerment. Understanding how contributors would react to a move to self-organizing teams allowed us to anticipate and plan to foster this change, and measure progress as the adoption moved forward.

For our measures of progress, we leveraged a well-known scale adopted from the CMMI framework. In our framework, we also included measures of Agile adoption at the organization level using Tuckman’s stages of group development (forming, storming, norming and performing). As an example, in the initial stage of adoption people behaved independently – a characteristic of both the Tuckman forming stage – and the CMMI initial level of maturity. By doing so, we were able to blend both team and process maturity into a combined category of assessment.

Sections of the final tailored maturity model is shown below, with proprietary information redacted.

Agile Competency Area \ Stage of Maturity	Level 1 - Initial Success depends on competence and heroics	Level 2 - Repeatable Some processes may repeat but this may not be uniform across enterprise	Level 3 - Defined Standard processes used to establish consistency across the organization	Level 4 - Managed Using precise measurements, can effectively control technology efforts	Level 5 - Optimizing Quantitative process improvement objectives for the organization are established
Culture	Culture is undefined and driven by individual leaders.		Culture actively promotes agility and defines specific standards.		
People		Agile approaches persist through multiple project deliveries. Some obstacles remain across the enterprise.		Enterprise approaches to agility with repeatable metrics.	Agile thought leadership and continuous improvement is evident at the enterprise level.
Process	Processes generally are not controlled and reactive.		Processes consistently applied across the organization and individual projects.	Processes measured and controlled.	
Technology		Individual services or architectures/ tools are defined for critical technology areas.			Continuous optimization of Quality of Service (QoS) parameters, and service architecture.
Empowerment		Project level resources empowered to act within established parameters.			

TAILORING AND THE PATH FORWARD

In working with this financial organization and others, we are finding that this model offers many advantages for organizations on an Agile transformation journey. With Agile adoption, the adage of “if you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there” is particularly true. Transformations are not just about technologists and technology organizations. They holistically impact the entire business and its many stakeholders, customers and the entire technology organization. **Agile transformations are business transformations that fundamentally change how the business interacts with technology, internal processes, the way products are delivered, and perhaps most important, time-to-market for customers.**

We have discussed many of the benefits of using a tailored Agile adoption model designed specifically for an organization. These include:

- Tailored models **provide a relevant measurement** that is unique to the specific context of a business.
- They **provide insight into Agile acceleration challenges and options** in a single view that blends people and process dimensions.
- They allow organizations to quickly **identify logical next steps that would speed adoption**, as well as identifying those that are too ambitious (more than one step away).

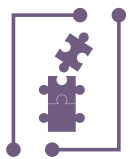
Some other benefits from using this approach include:



Improved visibility across all levers (people, process and technology) that impact time-to-market.



Clearer understanding of logical next steps that are both cost effective and timely.



Expectations for team and individual progress are stated and an overall picture of the journey to the future state is available.



GETTING STARTED: TALENT AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Since business demands to deliver value more rapidly are not going away, CIOs and technology organizations should consider options to accelerate Agile maturity. These could include the following options:

	FOR ORGANIZATIONS WITH NO EXPERIENCE WITH AGILE, consider starting a key Agile pilot project that is aligned with a significant business need. In our experience, we have seen both onsite and offsite pilot programs succeed at delivering value rapidly and allowing technology and business teams to learn, grow and experience the benefits of Agile delivery.	FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERING INITIAL OR ONGOING AGILE INVESTMENTS, proactively plan for the next steps in your organization's Agile maturity and growth. Don't expend time and resources without specific achievable targets in mind. Assess your progress and chart your next steps with a tailored Agile maturity assessment.	FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE ALREADY LEVERAGING AGILE, accelerate your organization's Agile maturity and growth and deliver business value rapidly. Assess your progress and chart your next steps with a tailored Agile maturity assessment.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick start with resources that are experienced with and trained in Agile. Using dedicated external resources avoids the trap of attempting to do this internally with resources that are untrained and subject to internal distractions and delivery pressures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External assessments offer the advantages of bringing fresh eyes to existing business problems and cultural challenges and do not require a significant investment of time, money or resources. CIOs will be able to quickly identify logical growth opportunities for their teams. Tailored assessments align with specific business pain points and account for unique cultural and business challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External assessments offer the advantages of bringing fresh eyes to existing problems, and do not require a significant investment of time, money or resources. CIOs will be able to quickly identify the logical best-growth opportunities. Tailored assessments align with specific business pain points and account for unique cultural and business challenges.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot teams will be burdened with many obstacles if they are delivering more rapidly than existing technology teams. As an example, if infrastructure teams are used for quarterly releases, they may not be staffed or equipped to support biweekly releases of production code. The CIO will need to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed and obstacles removed quickly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. Existing work proceeds without interruption while the assessment is conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. Existing work proceeds without interruption while the assessment is conducted.

REFERENCES

¹ The Standish Group, International, “2011 CHAOS Report.”
<https://www.standishgroup.com/>

² Ibid.

³ VersionOne, “11th annual State of Agile Report.”
<https://explore.versionone.com/state-of-Agile>

⁴ Norton, David, “Agile Maturity Assessments – Use Wisely or Not at All,” Gartner Blog Network. April 20, 2017.
http://blogs.gartner.com/david_norton/2017/04/20/Agile-maturity-assessments-use-wisely-or-not-at-all-2/



ABOUT GENESIS10

Genesis10 has been responding to clients' unique needs for two decades, and has experience with providing skilled consultants that accelerate business value realization. Our clients tell us they select Genesis10 because we are an adaptive partner that provides the services they need in a cost-competitive, flexible delivery model. We began our journey in 1999 as a technology staffing firm and have evolved into a professional technology services firm with an onsite/onshore delivery capability.

Leading industry analysts confirm that Genesis10 remains a true market disruptor, creating competitive pressure for traditional consulting, global outsourcing and technology staffing firms alike. We are a single-service provider focused on reducing complexity in a scalable, and cost-effective model. Today, we continue to offer a breadth of services to aid clients in evolving their business and technology workforce needs to meet contemporary demands for digital innovation, delivery and market competitiveness.



ACCELERATE INNOVATION WITH TALENT

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