



# Allianz HEY!

The Story of an Agile Transformation



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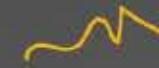


HEY! Let's see  
what we have here



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HELLO



# The journey from good to great continues...



Tolga Gürkan  
Allianz Turkey - Chief Executive Officer



06

In the introduction of our book, where we described the success of Sirius, the first agile initiative of Allianz Turkey, I said:

"In addition to the success of the project itself, the whole team's rapid adaptation and internalization of this new, agile model has also encouraged and inspired other teams during the organizational transformation. While unleashing a truly competitive team spirit, we have witnessed how a work environment that is full of opportunities for everyone to reveal their individual potential produces positive results. All our small or big achievements in this project, which has broken new ground on many occasions, will continue to guide us forward."

As Allianz Turkey, we continue our journey from good to great at full speed in line with our agile working model "**HEY!**", which speeds up life, improves the effectiveness of operations, and empowers the entire team from A to Z.

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We took the first steps for this transformation process in 2017. Allianz Turkey's people-oriented, modern, and innovative culture, which is open to change and embedded enough to affect all individuals within the organization, facilitated this transformation.

In 2017, we aimed to build a team structure that could respond to rapidly changing conditions just as rapidly. This structure would allow employees from different departments and areas of expertise to work together to produce a common outcome.

That day, we knew that adopting the right strategy, forming the right team, and implementing decisions strictly would bring success. Once we identified what we had to do, it became easier to achieve the desired result.

With the improved satisfaction and vigor that agile has brought to our teams, our agile transformation journey **HEY!** has begun.

As Allianz Turkey, we have pioneered this transformation within Allianz Group. This model, which we built to fit our own corporate culture and be embraced by everyone, inspired many companies in Turkey as well as other Allianz entities abroad as they started to devise their own transformation plans with the inspiration they derived from us. Allianz Group has made agile transformation one of its top priorities in accordance with the lessons learned during the pandemic. We are thrilled to lead and mediate this major transformation.

Today, we do not only strive to achieve our growth and profitability targets but also aspire to adapt to the unique disciplines and rules that the pandemic has brought to the world of business, in line with our innovative vision; to become a source of pride within Allianz Group, and to stay up-to-date on what the future holds.

In line with this vision, we are moving towards becoming a truly digital insurance company to create an unparalleled customer experience. Knowing that all our business units embrace this unique transformation and are passionate about building the new world together motivates all of us.

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In this book, you will read about what we have achieved on our HEY! journey in the last 4 years.

You will see the challenges we have faced on the way and the solutions we have developed against them.

However, we will also explain how we worked together towards the same goal, while going through all of this.

Our journey still continues. Of course, we sometimes stumble along the way. Yet, even in such times, we continue to move towards our goal determinedly, just like goal-oriented young people who fail along the way, yet persevere and work even harder until they win the gold medal. Our goal is to create a transparent, objective, and collaborative environment where all our employees challenge the status quo and transform it by asking questions.



We can only achieve this goal with the support of all Allianz Turkey employees, who have led by example with their numerous success stories within Allianz Group.

I would like to thank those who walk and work with us on this path.





# The critical pillar of transformation: Cultural Change



**İlkay Özel**  
Chief Human Resources Officer

The world is changing rapidly. Technological developments, the culture of the new era, the libertarian demands of generation Z, and the two years of COVID-19 pandemic have been the main pillars of this transformation.

If someone had told us years ago that everyone would be walking on the street with face masks, that we would be staying away from our loved ones in order to protect them from the pandemic, or that we would come to work one morning without knowing that it's our last day in the office; we would have thought that we would be living in a science fiction movie. However, over the last two years, all the scenarios that seemed absolutely fictional have come true.

This new order has changed our professional and personal lives forever.

After COVID-19, the world realized that we no longer have to leave the house and go to the office every morning to get to work; to get together to hold a meeting; or to be in the same office to work together.

 We have experienced tailwinds from Allianz Turkey's new work environment, which is characterized by flexible and people-oriented working arrangements, the adaptiveness of agile teams, and a suitable cultural fabric to put all of this into action, all of which in return empowered us to navigate through difficult situations such as the pandemic.

Behind this positive experience was the cultural transformation we had been building for a long time.

 Our cultural transformation took place under the guidance of our agile working model, **HEY!**, after a comprehensive preparation process that catalyzed the change.

**We realized that being agile starts with a mindset shift, which affects the way individuals work and ultimately makes the entire organization agile.**

**So, how have we gone about it?**

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We believe that hierarchy and titles have no place in the new world and that simple, easy, and sustainable procedures should be developed instead of lengthy processes.

We abandoned the idea that success can only be achieved on paper by focusing on planning and designing upfront, because if your management philosophy is not compatible with your way of working, if you cannot create a culture of experimentation within the organization, and if you do not explain the importance of MVP\* (Minimum Viable Product) or the efficiency of the trial-and-error approach, you will not be able to achieve success easily in this age of transformation.

This is exactly where the cultural transformation begins. Cultural adaptation is the sine qua non of steady and continuous change.

After thorough studies, we have identified seven focus areas for the cultural transformation at Allianz: ownership, collaboration, performance and value orientation, growth mindset, information sharing, feedback, and appreciation.

And we have identified acting in line with these focus areas in all processes as a basic building block of our journey.

As a result, we created the necessary environment to take our work from good to great and enabled co-workers to work in harmony towards the same goals.

**HEY!** allows us to maintain our own agenda and focus on our work, regardless of external factors.

**HEY!** is a transformation that has shaken the system to its foundations and radically changed the corporate culture and the way employees work.

You will read about every aspect of our **HEY!** journey in this book.

You will see how the management's and the team's ownership of the cause, support for each other, and unity around a common purpose contributed to the organization's agile transformation.

You will witness how the integration of agility into the human resources function can give employees the message that transformation is about "people."

**The experiences of our colleagues who aim to be agile rather than do agile will inspire all of you.**



**\*MVP:** In an agile working model, Minimum Viable Product is a viable, valid, and practical product with core features that are essential for users to experience the outcome and provide feedback.





# We are all looking for an answer to the same question



**Serhat Toptancı**  
Agile Office Leader

The world of business is changing just as rapidly as the world, which is getting more and more complex. Individuals and leading organizations keen to adapt and remain relevant strive to keep up with this dizzying pace. While organizations are adapting to transformation, new generations are joining the workforce. As a result, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and the latest Generation Z work together at Allianz Turkey. Therefore, it is becoming more and more important to melt this wide range of perspectives in the same pot and create a common language from this diversity.

Furthermore, while everything was normal, COVID-19 has accelerated many changes that were anticipated in the longer term, and led them to take place in a short time. Day-to-day business has become more flexible, fluid, and time-independent. What is ahead is a business environment that leverages new technologies and new ways of working.

In order to be ready for this whole picture, we need to transform our teammates into individuals who have a learning mindset and can take responsibility to overcome hurdles.

This is where agile perspective and enterprise agility gain importance. If you ensure the internalization of this perspective across the entire organization, an unparalleled experience will be ahead of you and your stakeholders. It is an experience where small, cross-functional, and autonomous teams, who are motivated by brilliant success stories of customers, unite around the common purpose of delivering customer value and gradually turn the whole enterprise into a data-driven network.

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Since we embarked on this journey in 2018, we have had the chance to present our journey to more than 50 foreign and local companies. From Asia-Pacific to South America, all the organizations that have contacted us, and their leaders were looking for answers to the same questions:

Can agile organizations be the answer to this new world that we will face?



Based on this question, we decided to write a book about our journey and share it with you. We have compiled our experiences for organizations that are either just starting this journey or considering to embark on it.

We hope our experience can make this journey a smooth yet adventurous sail for everyone.

Enjoy the book!

# Behind the Scenes of Agile Transformation

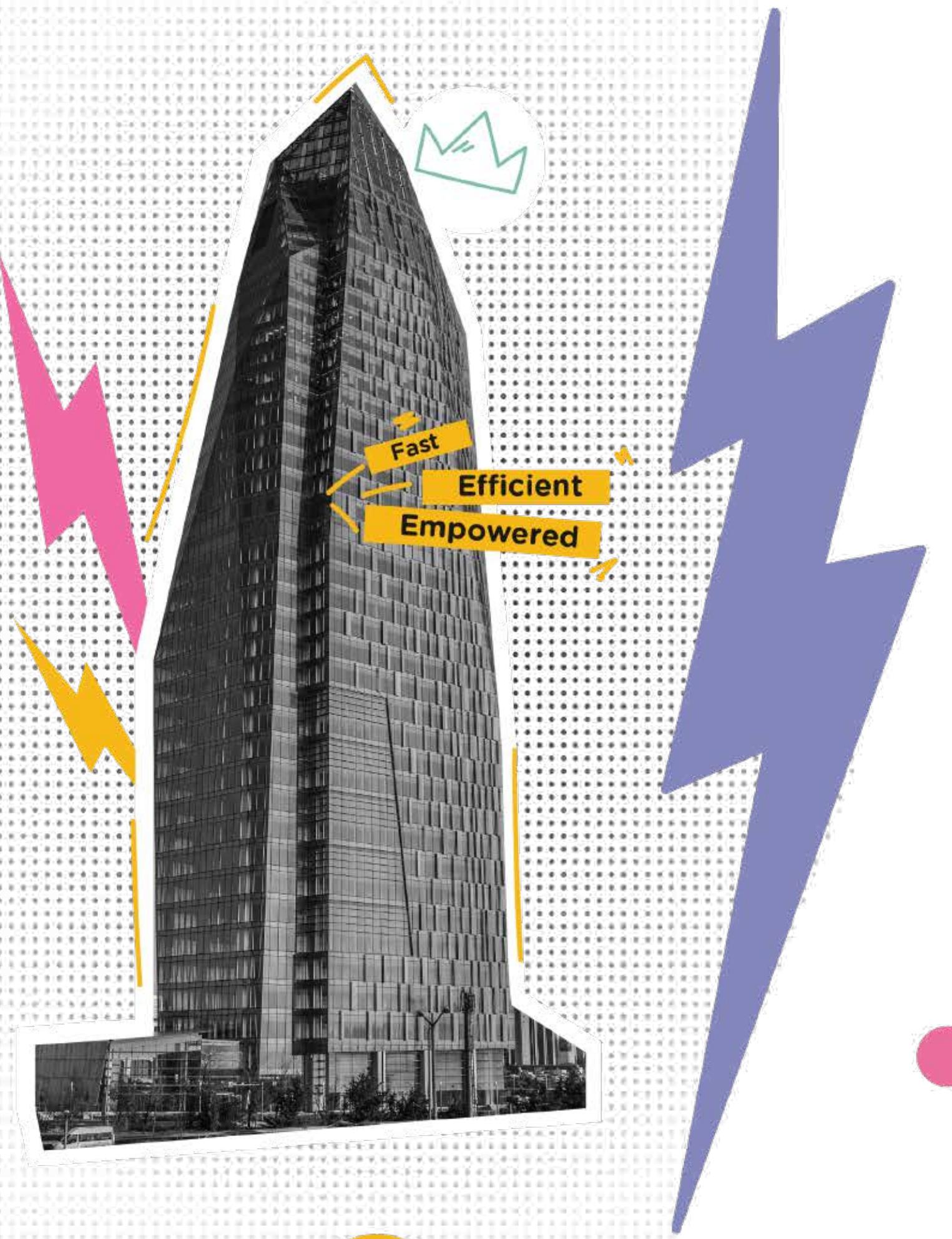




# From a project to the entire organization...

It is futile to try to meet the expectations of the new world with old ways of working. We are facing a fast-paced world where competition is heating up, the startup ecosystem is forcing traditional ways of working to change, customer demands are getting diversified, and employees are dreaming of a brand-new culture. Resisting this new world and believing that it is possible to survive by doing the same things without adapting to the change marks the beginning of the end for companies.

Behind Allianz's more than 130 years of success in responding to radical changes lies its adaptability. It is encoded into its DNA. **HEY!** is one of the most critical steps taken by Allianz Turkey, a large and pioneering organization, to adapt to the new world order.





**HEY!**, Allianz Turkey's agile transformation journey, is built on the Sirius Project, implemented by more than 100 colleagues in 4 countries in the field of software development with agile practices. Sirius was a transformation process in which the main insurance system, which had been in use for more than 20 years, has been renewed; the way of working has changed as a result of the transition to the new system, and multiple technical infrastructure projects have been undertaken simultaneously.

We have achieved significant outcomes in the Sirius Project, such as building a competitive team spirit and yielded the benefits of a work environment that encourages everyone to show their individual potential.

The mentality and culture have changed, inspiring people from different disciplines and cultures to work together towards the same goal and leading business units to change their way of thinking.

The success we have achieved in the Sirius Project has been our greatest source of motivation to initiate an unprecedented transformation at the enterprise level in Turkey.

**As Allianz Turkey, we are the first and only company in Turkey to transition all its lines of business into an agile working model, which speeds up life, improves the effectiveness of operations, and empowers the entire team from A to Z.**

You might be asking, "**So, why did you need to change the way you work and make such a radical change when everything seemed fine?**" Let's answer this question right away.

Even though everything seemed fine, we had to focus on making customers happier, creating an innovative and digitalized work system, encouraging ownership, replacing hierarchy with empowered teams with end-to-end responsibility in order to increase the level of success and satisfaction, and being open to change rather than sticking to a strict plan from day one.

Other factors that rendered the change inevitable include the need for approval from numerous senior managers for some micro-level decisions, and the challenges posed by it, such as the inability to properly focus on some "minor" changes with major impacts, and limited collaboration across business units.

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The change- and people-oriented corporate culture we have built over the years has encouraged us to undertake this transformation.

**As Allianz Turkey, we said,  
“HEY!” and became the only  
global insurance company in  
Turkey and the first in the world  
to undertake an organizational  
transformation at this scale.**

We have moved from a traditional functional organization model to a lean system consisting of tribes, self-managing teams, and support teams who implement agile practices. We have supported the development of our colleagues by providing technical and personal development training courses on transformation.



We consider **HEY!** as a new, flexible, people-oriented, dynamic, and entertaining initiative that allows us to build an organizational culture that is independent of titles and hierarchy and to respond more quickly to changing market conditions and competition while truly putting customers at the heart of the business.

In this book, you will find all the experiences that led us to **HEY!**





# We used the brightest star in the sky as our guide star

The brightest star in the sky became our starting point and the guide star for Allianz Turkey's transformation. Here comes Sirius!

April 19, 2017 is a milestone for us as it marks the launch of the Sirius Project with 9 scrum teams, 80 software developers, 10 analysts, and over 100 business unit members in 6 cities across 4 different countries.

This project, which concurrently ran in India, Austria, Germany, and Turkey, has led us to HEY!.

Let's rewind this special story a little:

1

The transition from Allianz Main Insurance System to Allianz Business System (ABS) has presented itself to the top management as a critical decision point. It would be challenging as the legacy system had been in use for over 20 years.

2

The transition to the new system would lead to a change in our way of working, and simultaneous technical transformations. Our project team was already under time and budget pressure.

7

Our way of working has changed along with our 20-year-old system, which led us to the decision to favor agile in all upcoming projects.

8

The positive results achieved by other project teams, the supportive feedback from employees, and the need for organizational change have accelerated the agile transformation of our business units.

9

The foundation of the experiences you will read in this book was laid on this very first journey.

3

Even though it was first intimidating to explore an uncharted territory, change a 20-year-old system, and carry out this project with agile practices, the failure to do so posed the risk of "struggling to adapt to the changing world."

4

Eventually, we decided to make this change and got to work.

6

Teams took ownership of their work and learned every little detail about the agile mindset and agile practices by completing the preparatory training. Cross-functional teams who worked together achieved effective results using agile working practices and the mindset brought by this business model. As a result, Sirius was completed with great success.



10

Then, we reached the most critical milestone: The Motor Insurance Team (Motor Tribe) was nominated as the pilot team on our organizational transformation journey, which marked the beginning of enterprise agility.

2018

11

You will shortly read in detail the impact of the Motor Tribe on our agile journey. In short, we can say that the pilot project helped us understand the groundwork we needed to lay in terms of communication, training, and technology, and determine how to scale up this approach to the organization level while adhering to our values such as customer centricity and technical excellence.

2018

12

Following this pilot project, we completed the first step by forming other tribes immediately.

2019





# The best part of agile: Learning by doing

Many challenges arise over the course of a project.

When carrying out a project, it is necessary to deal with a wide range of problems and get up and carry on every time you stumble.



MVP is one of the hallmarks of agile working and allows one to see the results of their work in a short time with small steps instead of long planning and design processes. Thus, it is an informative concept that prevents waste of time and reduces risk.

In this context, the Motor Tribe was very informative for our **HEY!** journey.

We learned a lot from the transition of the Motor Tribe, our pilot team, to agile:

- ★ We realized the groundwork we needed to lay in terms of organizational design, working principles, and resource allocation, when forming a tribe. We made the necessary revisions to our "Playbook," which summarizes our agile working principles.
- ★ We once again understood the critical role of communication, both within agile teams and at the organizational level. We realized how following a company-wide communication plan can dispel the doubts of employees.

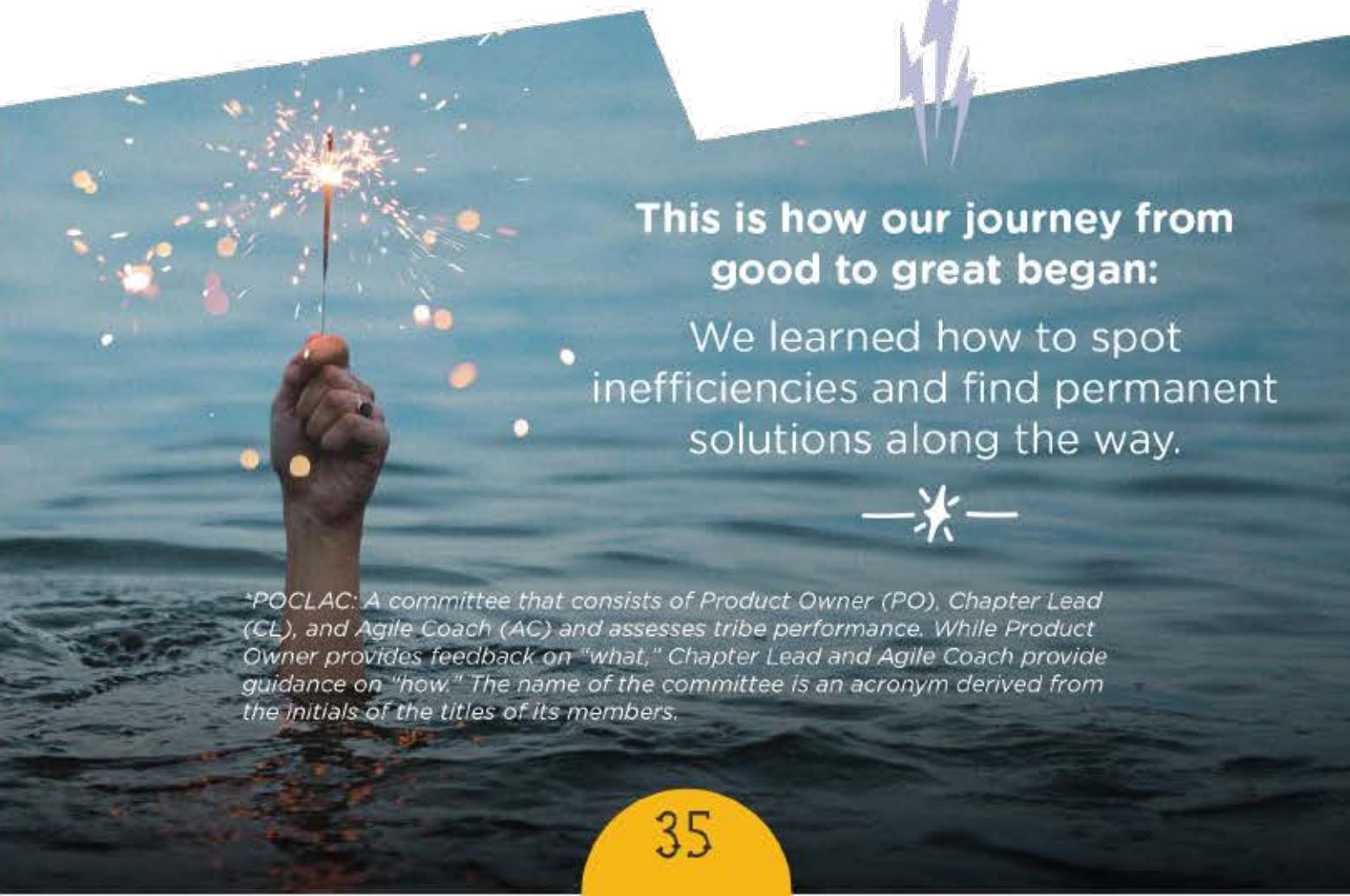
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- ★ We have realized the importance of exchanging ideas with critical stakeholders and seen how aligning adds value. As other tribes were formed, we held synchronization meetings between our tribes and the main lines of business they serve. We have rearranged the scope, participants, cadence, and shared agenda of these meetings in order for them to produce the desired business outcome and progress at an optimum pace.
- ★ Drawing on our experiences during the pilot phase, we redesigned our training programs to ensure that they help team members to internalize not only how to implement agility, but also the "how" of agility. Agile Development Program was our master's program. We contacted trainers from Turkey and abroad and brought them together with our employees. We have provided an average of more than 160 hours of training to each of our employees.
- ★ We realized once again how crucial it is to create a roadmap. Therefore, we held supportive workshops when forming new tribes for the teams to see the big picture and understand the high-level plan.
- ★ While devising the transformation, we further clarified the duties and responsibilities of our new roles independent of hierarchy and reduced the gray areas. The most popular question in the transformation process was, "Well, if I am going to work in a title-free environment, what will I put on my LinkedIn profile?" Together we looked for an answer to this question and found a solution.
- ★ We transformed our performance evaluation process to make it more agile-friendly. We developed a system where Tribe members will receive feedback from all the individuals they work with, and where their performance will be evaluated by

a much larger team. We called this team POCLAC\*, inspired by its members. In the following pages, we will articulate the details of our performance evaluation process and our achievements in this context.

- ★ We realized that offices should also be redesigned in line with the agile way of working. We identified the benefits of eliminating desks of different colors and sizes to indicate hierarchy, and observed how a visually enriched environment allows teams to work together and supports their creativity. We also adapted the layouts of the offices of our transformed teams to this model.
- ★ Furthermore, perhaps the biggest lesson we have learned is that even though it is easy to list problems one after the other, finding solutions to them is very difficult yet critical for achieving remarkable results.



## This is how our journey from good to great began:

- We learned how to spot inefficiencies and find permanent solutions along the way.

\*POCLAC: A committee that consists of Product Owner (PO), Chapter Lead (CL), and Agile Coach (AC) and assesses tribe performance. While Product Owner provides feedback on "what," Chapter Lead and Agile Coach provide guidance on "how." The name of the committee is an acronym derived from the initials of the titles of its members.



# From a pilot project to a full-fledged transformation

Allianz Turkey's **HEY!** journey, which started with the Sirius project, is going strong today with 7 tribes.



The needs that emerged during the transformation process led to the development of different agile business models in other business units of Allianz Turkey.

These new teams are the final building blocks of our organizational agility journey and support the tribe formation.

Support Teams

Self-Managing Teams

Details are on the  
following pages...

Why  
Did We  
Say HEY!?

Fast  
Efficient  
Empowered





# What is **HEY!**? Why do we call it that way?

After a comprehensive preparation process to respond to the needs that had arisen over the years, we started to implement the agile working model.  
So, why do we call it "**HEY!**"?

**HEY!** stands for  
**Fast (Hızlı)**, **Efficient (Etkili)** and  
**Empowered (Yetkili)**



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# It has a meaning.



We believe that there should be no hierarchy and titles in the new world.



Organizations should build leaner, simpler, and easier processes instead of focusing on lengthy tasks.



The company culture should put customer satisfaction at its heart and include teams who work together towards the same goal, quickly adapt to changing conditions, and listen to and learn from each other.



We did precisely that!

Not only did we change our organizational structure and ways of working, but we also rebuilt our corporate culture in line with agile principles.



We changed a lot to get here.

Today, we seize opportunities and respond rapidly with organizational agility, which pleases Allianz very much!



# What does HEY! involve?

HEY! is a set of values. We believe that the ideas included in the concepts of **Fast**, **Efficient**, and **Empowered** are the key to our success. These values shape our new working culture.

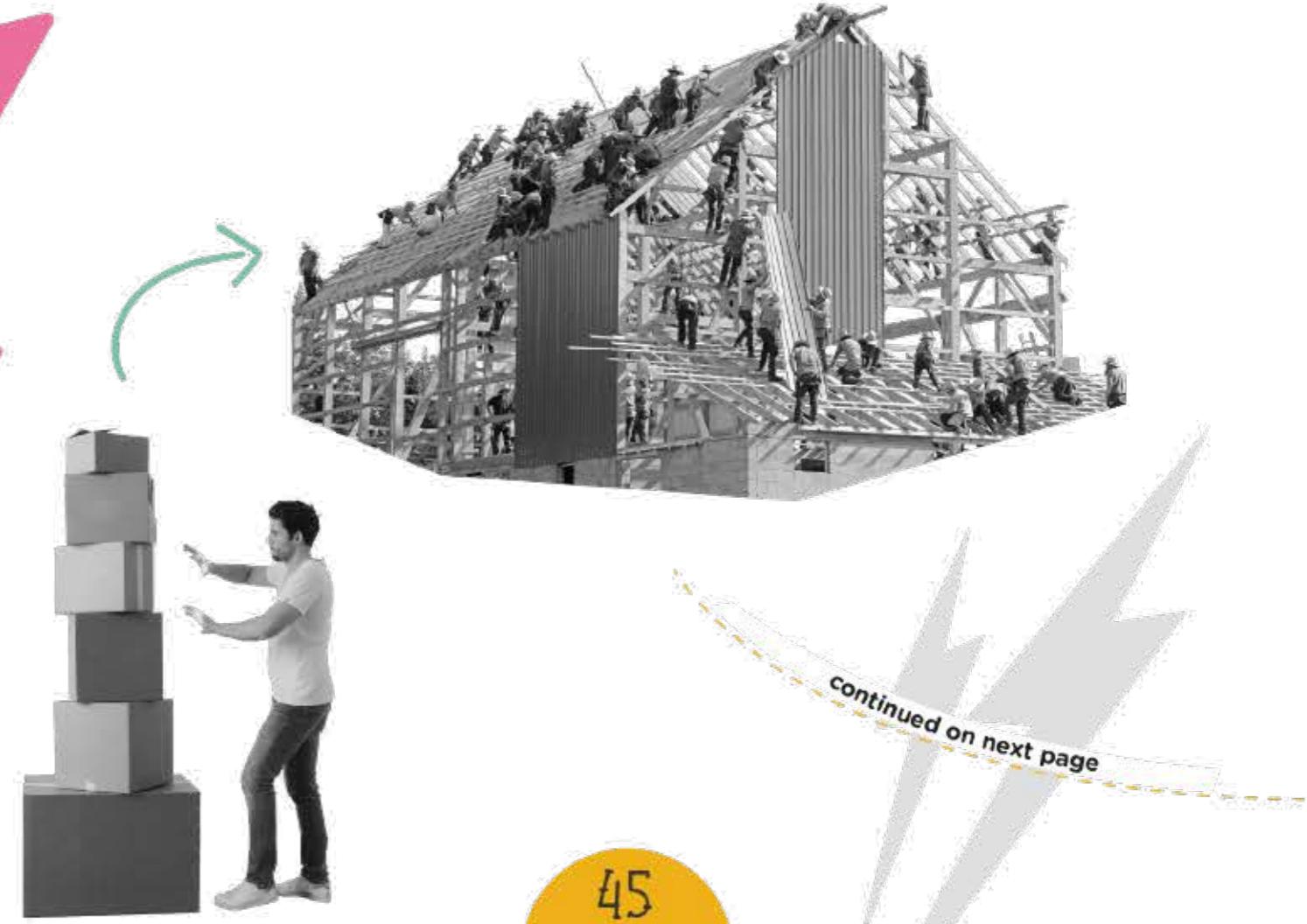


## Values That Make Us Fast:



### Cross-functional way of working and collaboration:

The transfer of work is reduced when individuals who are able to get the work done end-to-end, have different areas of expertise, and work autonomously, work together towards a common goal. Thus, the perspective of the team widens, and the throughput time is improved with the right plans as the whole team can observe the entire process, the expected outcome, the dependencies, and the big picture itself.



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## ★ The MVP (Minimum Viable Product) mindset:

Products are gradually produced and shaped in accordance with feedback to meet the needs of customers. Thus, features that truly create value for our customers are prioritized. Clarifying the requirements helps us offer products and services to customers more quickly.

**Wait until it's perfect.**



**Launch it if MVP is ready.**

**We need to be bold.**



## ★ The culture of trial and error:

Experimentation is one of the main pillars of agile. Trying persistently, proving ourselves wrong, and learning from it is another value that propels us. For that very reason, we own our mistakes and see them as opportunities for growth.

**How can you make this mistake?**



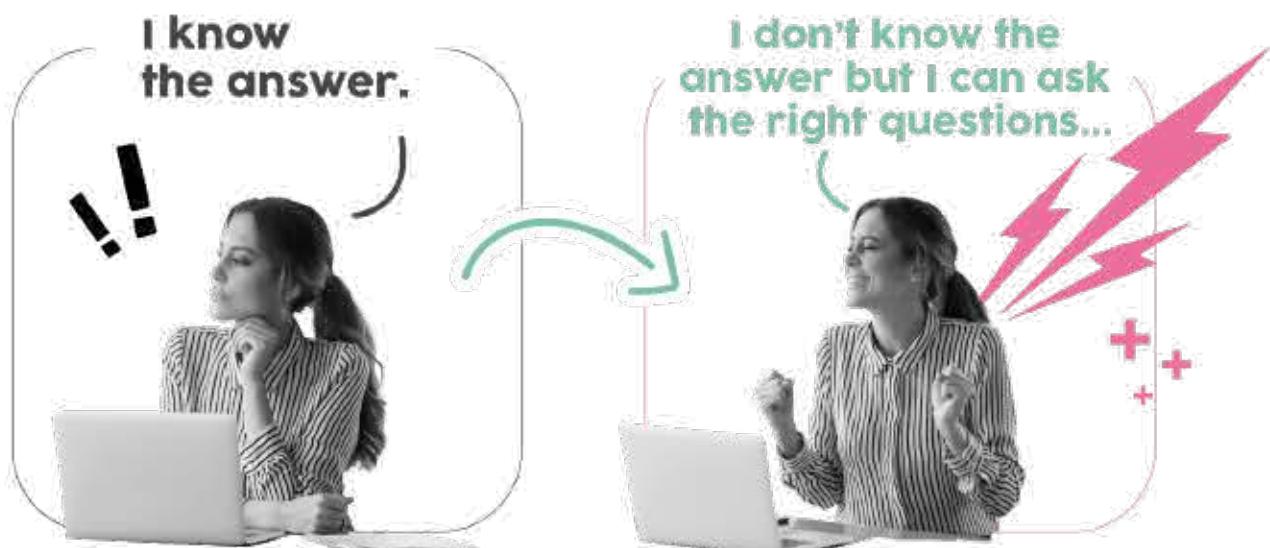
**What can we learn from this mistake?**





## ★ Commercial mindset:

Teams that actively follow trends, industry dynamics, and market conditions, rather than focusing solely on their own environment, are able to produce proactive solutions for our customers. It is because keeping curiosity alive, avoiding assumptions, questioning the root cause behind the symptoms, and being able to ask the right questions is critical to stay one step ahead in the changing world.



## Values That Make Us Efficient:

### ★ Performance and value orientation:

Teams that unite around the same goal and are aware of what they are doing perform consistently better. Putting the value created for all stakeholders, especially customers, front and center and creating visibility over progress and performance offers various opportunities.





## ★ Prioritization:

It's critical for teams to channel their focus in the right direction as we run towards our goals. We have been working on teams to improve their ability to adapt to ever-changing agendas; to distinguish important, urgent and value-delivering outcomes based on the right criteria; to make independent decisions; and to deprioritize or pivot when necessary.



## ★ Customer focus:

We focus on creating value for our customers and making their lives easier. We want to deliver excellent products and services to them. This perspective improves our efficiency in what we do.



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## Values That Make Us Empowered:

### ★ Non-hierarchical mindset:

We have been creating the right environment for everyone to freely express their opinions. Such an environment will improve participation, sense of ownership, and willingness to take initiative. It will also enhance employee motivation and satisfaction.



### ★ Transparency:

Teams can clearly identify their priorities, the tasks on which their members work, and the hurdles ahead. Having information readily available helps build trust.

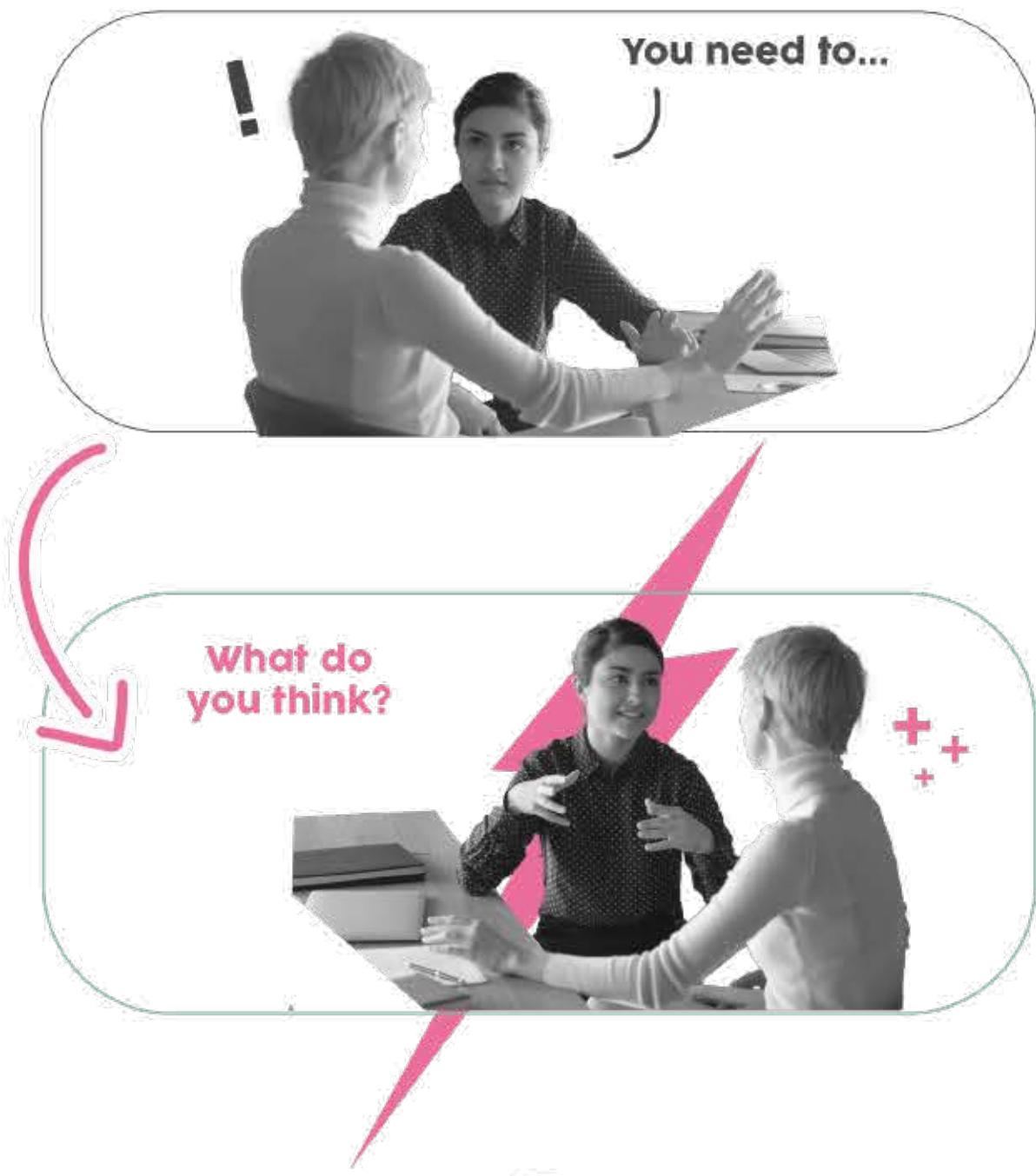


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## ★ Feedback culture:

We have a well-established and constructive feedback loop.  
We strive to improve ourselves and each other and help each other achieve progress at all levels and in all settings, in line with the principle of continuous improvement.



**The entire organization is coaching, mentoring, and training each other.**



A Unique  
Way of Working





# Each team is different

**When creating a new system, emerging needs require different solutions. All teams in HEY! are the results of these solutions.**

Whilst shaping our organizational structure on our agile journey, we created our own path and defined our own model. Needless to say, we have always remained people-oriented and followed agile principles.



We aimed to create more than just a model. We envisioned teams that would work cohesively and support us in achieving our goals, in order to scale up our agile approach.

We have read, researched, studied, and discussed examples abroad before making a decision on how we would do it. Then, we repeated this cycle over and over again.

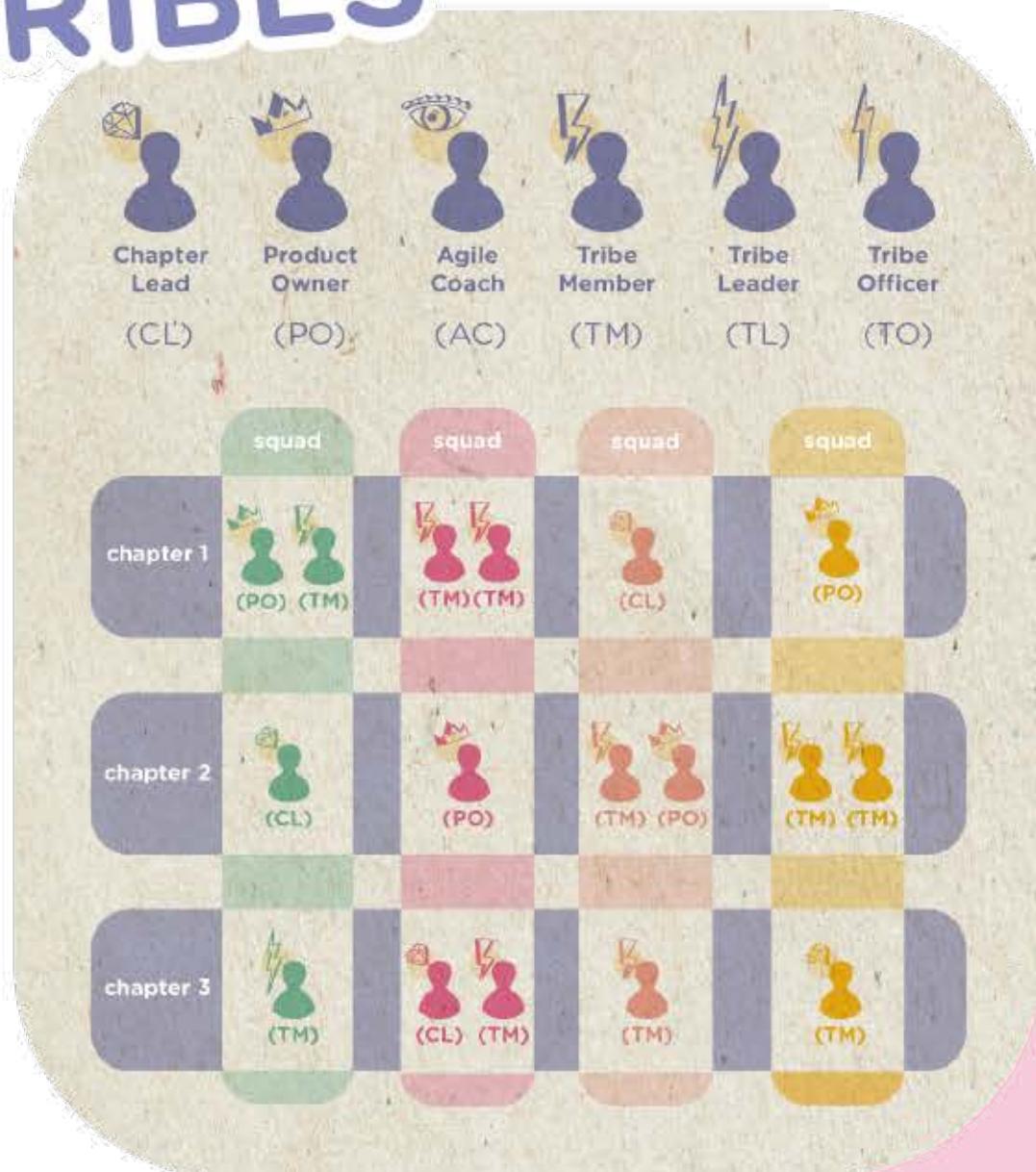
Eventually, we laid the foundations for a model that is tailor-made for our needs. We keep staying on top of ever-changing conditions.

HEY! has 3 main units that cooperate with one another. What they have in common is the HEY! perspective. However, there are some differences in roles and events. Let's take a quick look at these teams.

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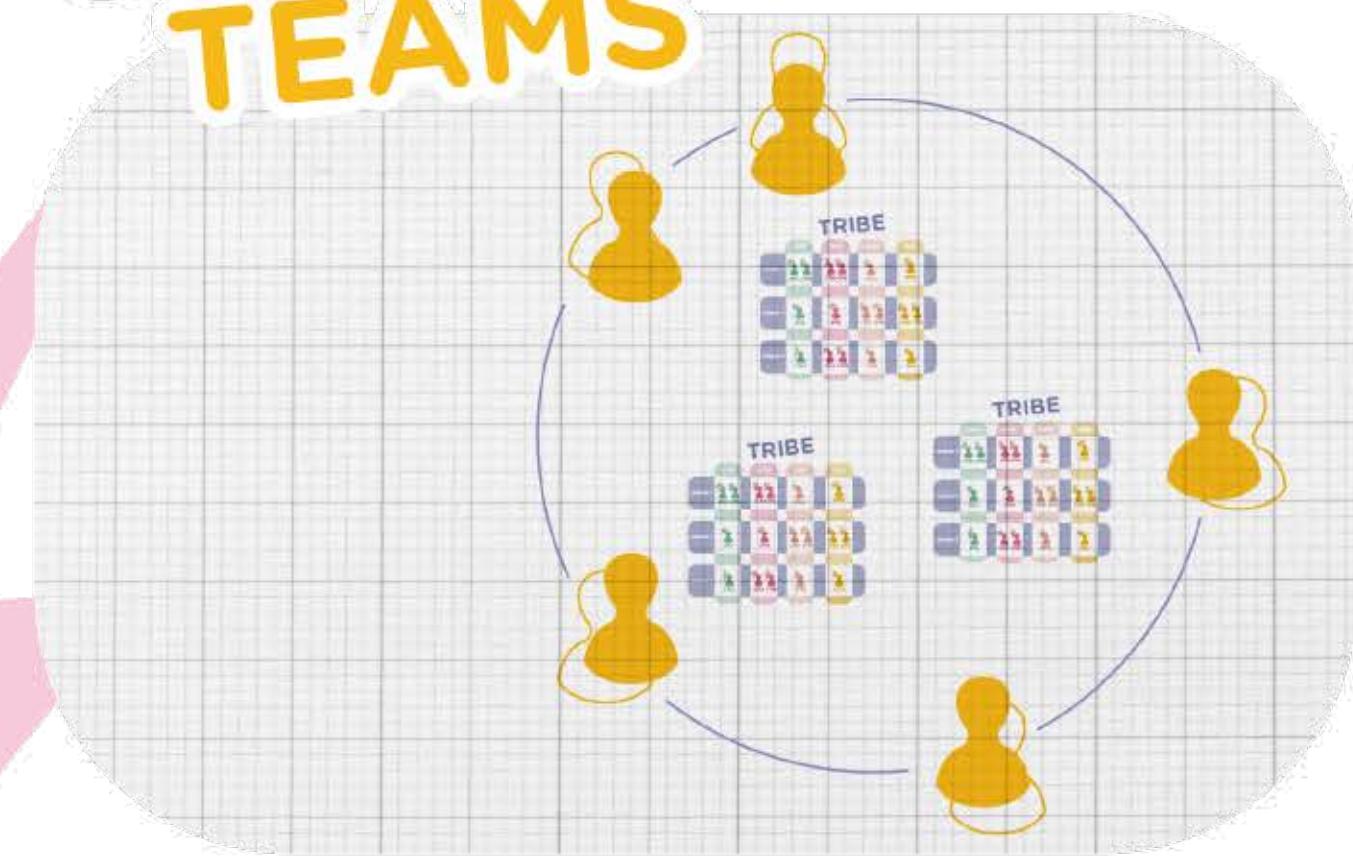


# TRIBES



Tribes, which manage our main lines of business, consist of interrelated, customer-oriented squads with specific goals and end-to-end responsibilities. In tribes, both software development teams and business units focus on value creation and change.

# SUPPORT TEAMS



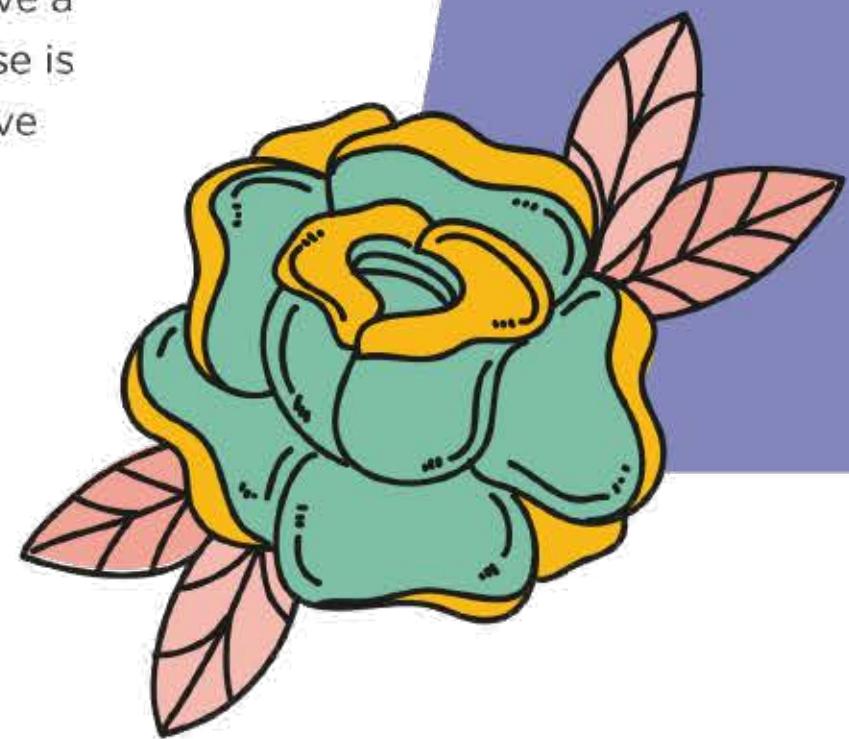
As its name suggests, these teams support other functions within the organization. They ensure operational continuity by binding together the entire structure. Therefore, the scope, duration, and period of their work may vary, and they need a backlog to prioritize. Examples include Human Resources, Finance, Corporate Communications, Internal Audit, and Marketing.



# SELF MANAGING TEAMS



Operational teams that undertake mostly recurring tasks are an example. Unlike tribes, these teams are not cross-functional but have a specific area of expertise. Their main purpose is to enhance customer experience and improve operational efficiency and output.



Now, details





# Our Tribes

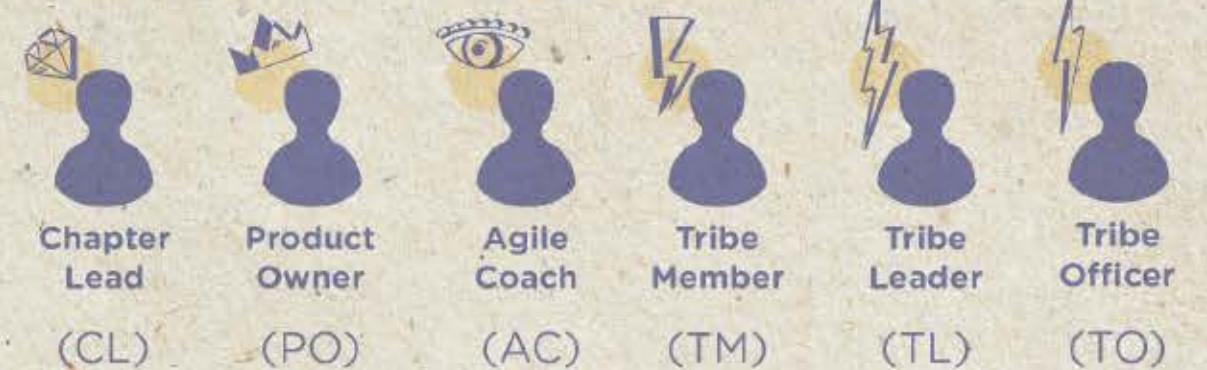
**Tribes, which manage our main lines of business, are the basis of our agile framework.**

In the first phase of our agile transformation, we were inspired by the Tribe structure built by a popular digital music platform, when shaping our framework. We reframed all our business units as customer-oriented tribes that act as small businesses with their specific goals and end-to-end responsibilities

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# Tribe



## Tribe:

It consists of interrelated squads united around a common goal. It is dynamic and evolves constantly. Not only is it responsible for every aspect of the processes, such as output, profitability, customer experience, and employee satisfaction, but it is also fully empowered throughout the processes.

## Squad:

It is a group that makes up tribes and has its own goals and autonomy to prioritize its own work and decide on the details. It consists of specialists from different areas of expertise with the ability to enable the squad to achieve its goals. These groups usually consist of 9 to 11 members and have end-to-end responsibility for their own products, including decision-making. Squads can evolve as per the tribe's needs.

## Chapter:

Chapter is a community of practice that brings together individuals with similar levels of knowledge from similar areas of expertise. It sets standards, defines methodologies, and improves functional capabilities by building collective knowledge. Chapter members share best practices across business units.





# What are the roles in a tribe?

In agile transformation, a successful and integrated structure cannot be created without the necessary roles. The crux of the transformation is the pieces of this integrated structure, i.e., the roles. The successful players in these roles reinforced the success of “**HEY!**”.

In “**HEY!**”, there is no hierarchy, and everyone is the lead.



These roles include:

## PRODUCT OWNER (PO)

PO is the sole responsible for the product. They set a vision and create a roadmap for the product and the team in line with customer needs and market dynamics. PO is responsible for the development, management, and outcomes of the backlog. They sort the tasks in the team's backlog by the value to be delivered. PO also gives voice to the concerns of customers and all the stakeholders, ensuring continuous delivery of value to them.

PO keeps MVP in mind when fulfilling all these functions. Focusing on MVP, they maximize the value delivered to the stakeholders based on the feedback provided by them.



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# CHAPTER LEAD (CL)

They develop the main strategy of the community of practice under their responsibility within the tribe, and play an active role in its execution using their expertise in the function. For instance, the

Marketing Chapter Lead serves as the CMO\* (Chief Marketing Officer) of that tribe.

They are responsible for setting standards within their area of practice. Chapter Leads ensure adherence to international and local standards and share best practices.

CLs mentor and coach chapter members to support their development. They lay the foundation for the improvement of

knowledge and skill sharing. They support problem-solving in their area of expertise of the chapter and help overcome obstacles.

CLs support Tribe Leaders in dynamic resource management based on the capabilities and backlogs of squads.

Chapter Leads are also responsible for centers of excellence and their coordination. They ensure synchronization with central teams.

Each Chapter Lead is also a team member.

\*CMO: Chief Marketing Officer is responsible for marketing activities and is also known as Marketing Director.

# TRIBE MEMBER (TM)

The tasks of squads cannot be completed without Tribe Members. TMs are responsible for completing the tasks, serving as a cog in a large wheel, so to speak. It is a crucial role to keep the wheels turning.





# TRIBE OFFICER (TO)

They support the Tribe Leader in strategy development and deployment. Tribe Officers play an active role in the coordination of squads and chapters within a tribe, as well as the coordination of tribes together with external stakeholders. They act as the first point of contact within a tribe for support functions outside the tribe.

They support the Tribe Leader together with the relevant stakeholders during the strategic planning process, and track the progress in the roadmap against KPIs.

TOs also ensure that the portfolio prioritization is aligned with the tribe's strategies.



# AGILE COACH (AC)

They always ask the question, "Yes, we have transformed, but has everyone adopted the agile mindset?" They are the custodians of agility who instill agility and ensure that Tribes collectively pursue their strategy.

ACs coach teams on agile thinking and ensure the integration of the principle of continuous improvement and growth into the daily operations of teams.

ACs attend all the necessary team rituals and support facilitation. They ensure coordination between teams and different agile units as needed.

ACs hold one-on-one coaching sessions and provide feedback to support the internalization of agility.



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# TRIBE LEADER (TL)



If tribes were a company, Tribe Leaders would be their CEOs. They are responsible for the overall well-being of the tribe and the achievement of its goals.

TLs set the vision of the tribe and create a high-level roadmap as per the requests and opinions of internal and external stakeholders. They adapt this vision and roadmap to teams together with Product Owners.

TLs manage the annual targets of the tribe regarding marketing, campaigns, headcount, and other budget items. As the sole hierarchical leader of all the squad members, they involve the teams in the design and management of HR processes such as talent acquisition, career management, and performance management.





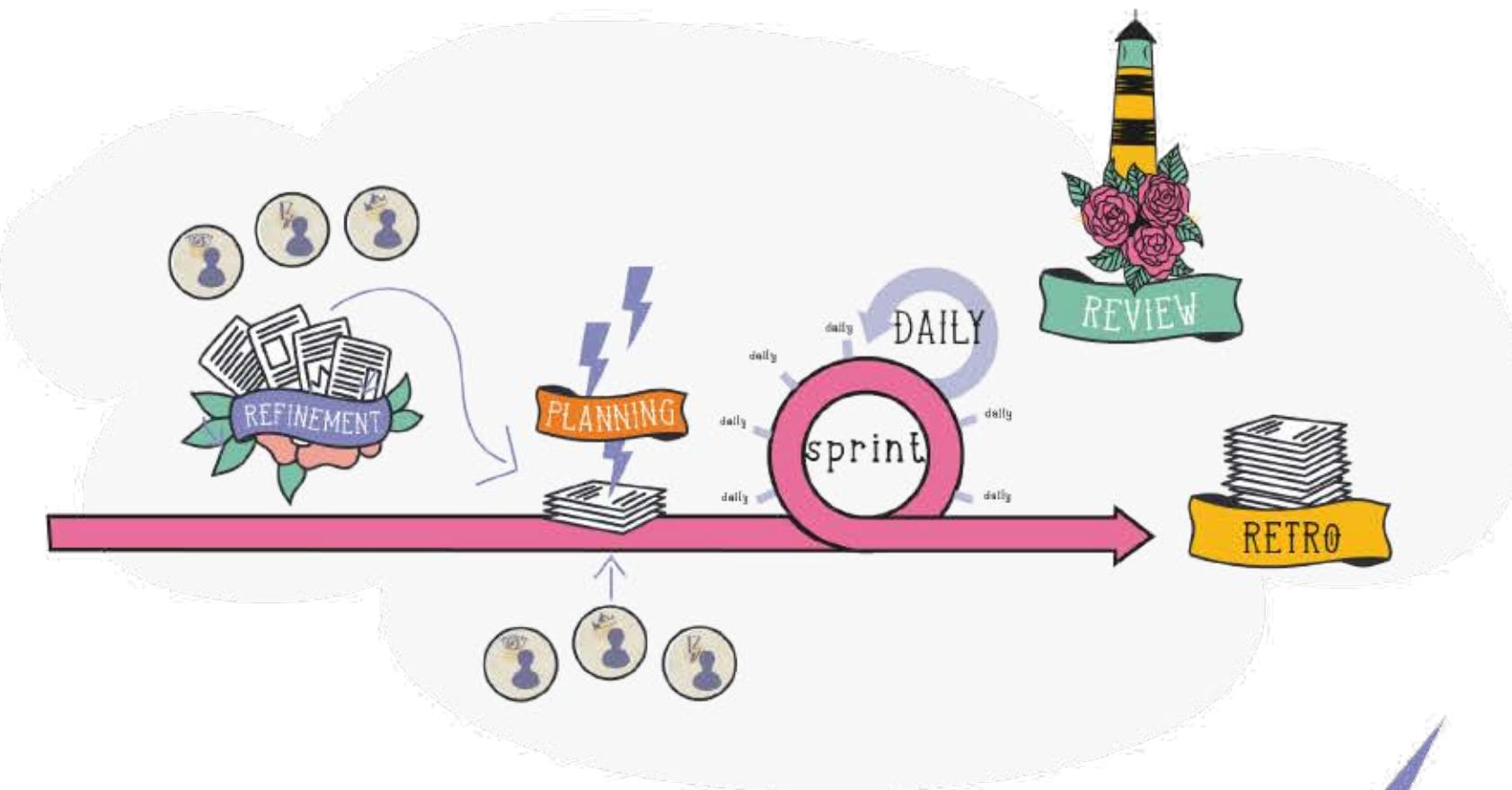
# Welcome to the marathon!

In order to say, “**HEY!**”, at the end of the journey, everyone needs to be aware of their roles and responsibilities while running towards the same goal, as it is the basis of the success of sprints, one of the events in the Scrum framework.

At Allianz, squads use the Scrum framework and run bi-weekly sprints.

The main goal of the squads is to deliver value to their customers during a sprint. The context of this value can range from a marketing campaign to the release of a piece of software.

Sprints start with planning. The team get together. The backlog has already been refined in the **refinement sessions** held during the previous sprint. The Product Owner are responsible for the backlog and sorts the tasks in the team's backlog by the value to be delivered. The entire team go through the backlog and agree on the tasks to be carried out during the sprint. They plan the sprint and decide what to do during the sprint and how to achieve the targets of the sprint.





Then, the sprint begins.

The team get together in **Daily Scrum** sessions. They have a 15-minute time-box, during which they evaluate the previous day, the steps to be taken to achieve the targets of the sprint, and the obstacles and risks, if any. The entire team transparently discuss the current stage.

Throughout the sprint, the team strive to achieve the goals and deliver the value they committed in a timely manner.





## THE AGILE COACH

supports the team and individuals in applying agile principles. The AC holds team meetings or one-on-one sessions, as needed. They hold workshops and brainstorming sessions to engage the team and guide them in the right direction in internalizing the agile culture and understanding the perspective that constantly delivers value.

## THE PRODUCT OWNER

gives voice to the concerns of customers and collects customer and stakeholder feedback regularly. They clarify backlog items, set their priorities, and work with the team towards the sprint commitment.

## THE CHAPTER LEAD

focuses on the development of the chapter members. They set business standards, identify best practices, and support the chapter members in solving problems and overcoming challenges and obstacles, if any. They ensure the development of collective wisdom between teams, adherence to the tribe's strategy and the roadmap, and facilitate synchronization within central teams and the chapter. They also work on the tasks in the backlog of their squad as a team member.

## THE TRIBE LEADER

paves the way for the squads to achieve all the targets of the relevant sprint.

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While the team strive to achieve the targets of the sprint, they also refine their backlog and prepare for future sprints in refinement meetings.

## The sprint ends as planned.



On the last day of a sprint, teams and stakeholders come together to review the outcomes of the sprint, collect feedback, and improve the outcomes accordingly. The Tribe Leader also attends these sessions, reminds the tribe of its priorities and vision, and provides feedback if necessary.

After collecting feedback from stakeholders, teams move on to the Sprint Retrospective, where they reflect on themselves and provide feedback to one another and identify the areas for improvement in line with the principles of continuous improvement.

This marks the end of the sprint. The next one begins immediately afterwards.





# Teams working in cohesion like clockwork

In order to be efficient and productive, team members need to work in harmony both with each other and with other units. Synchronization meetings tailor-made for tribes are the most efficient way to achieve this harmony.

In addition to Scrum rituals, we achieve synchronization with other units within and outside tribes through further agile ceremonies designed within Allianz.



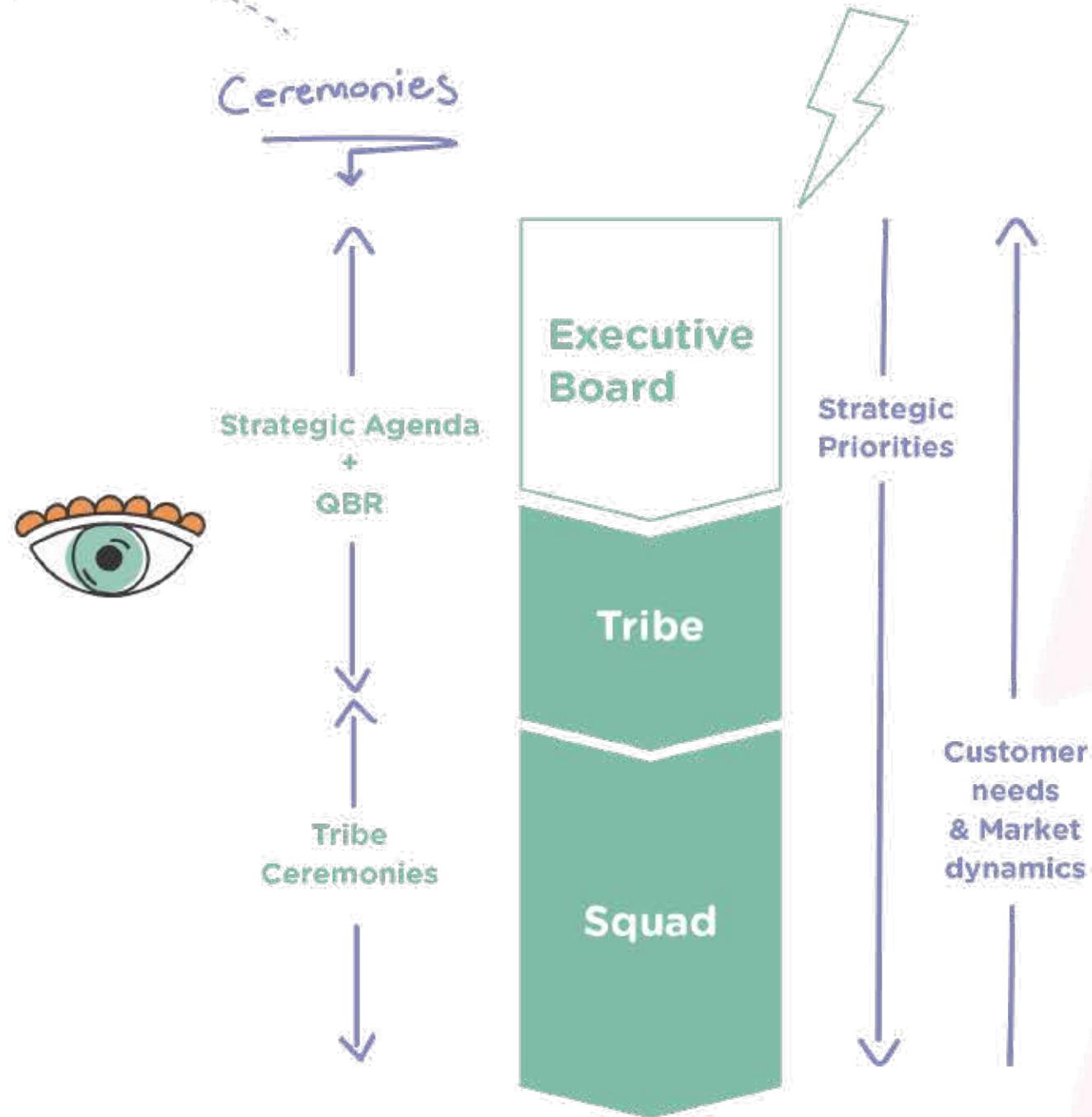
## Quarterly Business Review (QBR):

It is a ceremony where the tribe shares its quarterly results with the Executive Board. The tasks completed are reviewed, and market dynamics and the tribe's plans and goals for the near future are discussed. It is one of the most critical rituals as tribes are synchronized with the top management and other units, and opportunities and areas for improvement are evaluated. The outputs of QBR are added to the backlog as new tasks on a quarterly basis.

Quarterly  
Business Review  
(QBR)

Tribe Review  
Sales & Operations Synchronization  
Product (PO&CL) Synchronization  
Chapter Synchronization





### Tribe Review:

This ritual allows teams in a tribe to share the artifacts they produced and the lessons they learned during past sprints and create the new roadmap together.

### Sales & Operations Synchronization:

In this ceremony, product tribes meet with critical stakeholders from Sales & Operations to discuss customer needs, market updates, and areas for improvement in processes and review opportunities and focus areas. People with different perspectives come together and define the steps forward.

### Product & Chapter Lead (PO & CL) Synchronization:

It is the main synchronization meeting where squad backlog and tribe priorities are defined and revised. Dependencies and resource allocation within the tribe are reviewed, and the requests received are considered.

### Chapter Synchronization:

Experiences are shared within the chapter. Best practices, accomplishments, and lessons learned are described.

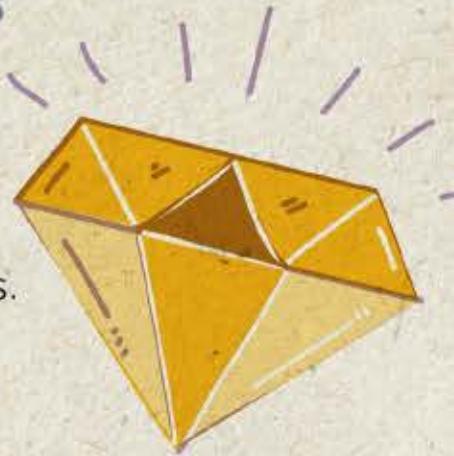


# The Tribe method is collecting rewards

Our way of working and the small details of our working model impact the outcomes more than our work does.

Tribes have end-to-end responsibility for their products. This end-to-end responsibility means that they track profitability, customer satisfaction, productivity, innovation, and sustainability. They organize their own work and act autonomously in order to achieve these targets.

- They can change their squad structure and form new squads when necessary.
- They identify and accommodate their own resource and capability requirements.
- Decisions related to pricing, product management, and sales and marketing campaigns can be made within a tribe without being referred to a committee. We have reduced the number of committees at Allianz by 30 percent with this framework.



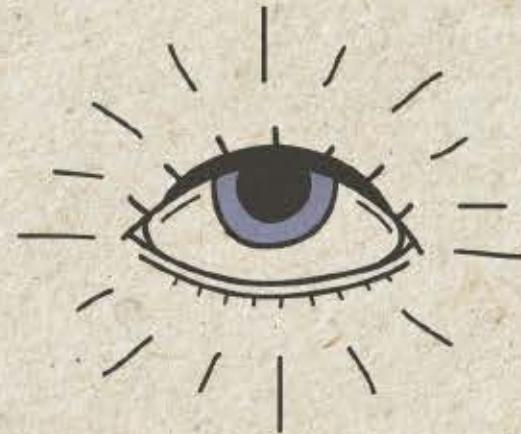
Thanks to this empowerment, tribes quickly and efficiently adapt their priorities and backlogs to changing needs.

The Tribe Leader's attendance to Sprint Reviews, held at the end of each sprint, supports the efficient communication of the strategy to the team and accelerates the decision-making process.

Transparent backlogs on which the whole team collaborates boost harmony.

All ceremonies, held with either internal or external parties, increase harmony and ensure fascinating orchestration of work. Concurrent rituals and sprints of tribes increase the rhythm of work.

The success of our agile organization lies in such details.





# Support Teams & Self Managing Teams

We apply the agile working model not only to tribes but also to Support and Self-Managing teams. We created new roles and rituals in this context.

They have a similar composition to squads in tribes. They focus on change processes and ensure the seamless and continuous execution of processes. Similar to squads, they follow Scrum rituals.

Examples include Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Corporate Communications, Internal Audit, and Marketing.

These teams are led by **Business Owners (BO)**.

BOs communicate the vision and allow the team to prioritize efficiently. They cooperate with the team.

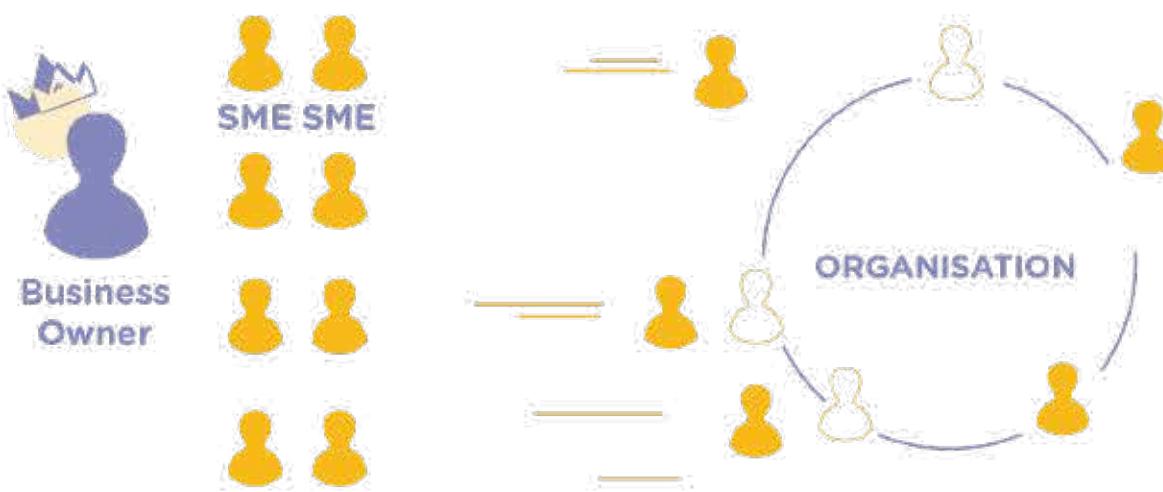
They maximize resource utilization to cater to the business plan and resource requirements.

BOs set development targets and identify the right training for each team member.

Another important role in these teams is the **Subject Matter Expert (SME)**, who is the most knowledgeable person in a particular business area. SMEs support BOs in preparing and improving the backlog in their area and keeping it up to date. They provide guidance to team members in their area of expertise.

## Support Teams

These teams support other business functions in the organization.





# Self Managing Teams

Composed of members with similar areas of expertise, these teams carry out recurring and high-frequency tasks. Increasing productivity and output is the main motivation and focus of these teams.



Cell Owner



Cell Owner (CO) is the leader of a Self Managing Team and supports the team in fulfilling their duties and performing at their best.

They help team members to align with the strategic agenda.

CO asks the right questions and gets to the root of problems.

They believe in continuous improvement and encourage team members to get involve in process improvement.

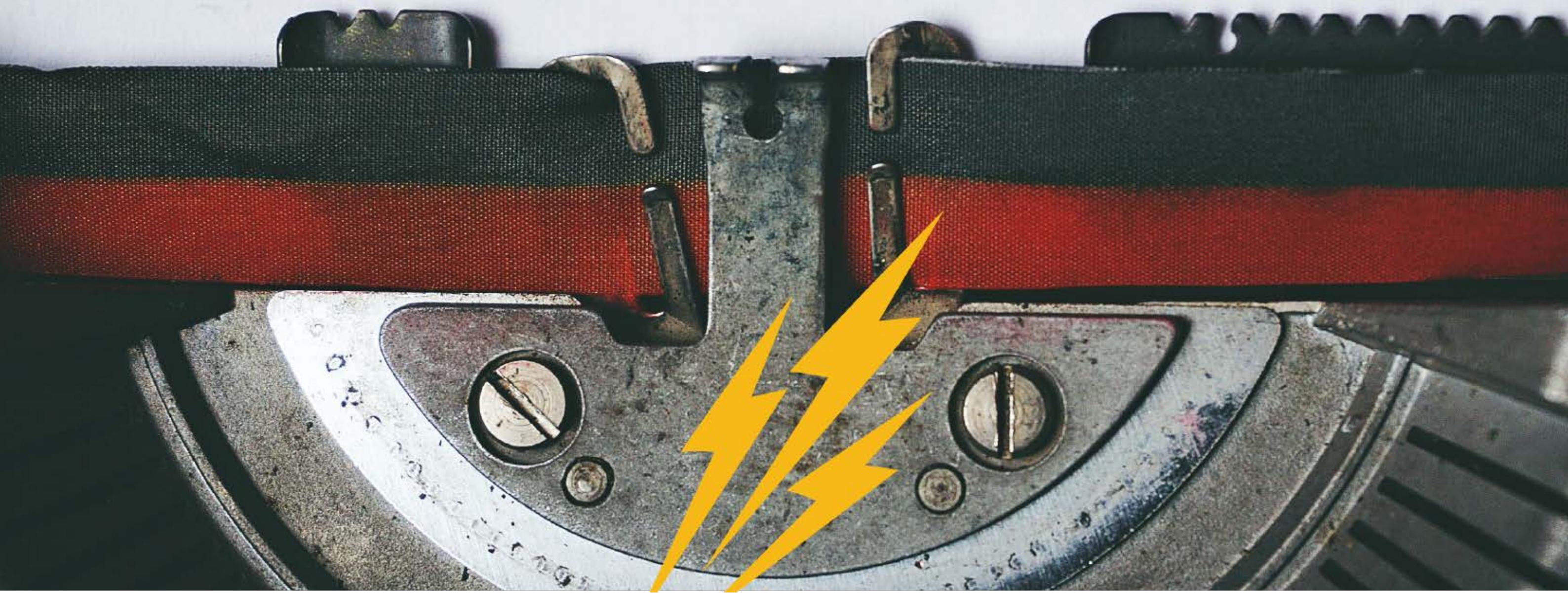
They learn lessons from the errors in processes and identify the problems in areas for improvement in order to initiate enhancement plans.



Stay tuned for our next book for further details on these lean-fueled, agile-savvy teams.



How has HEY! Changed Us?



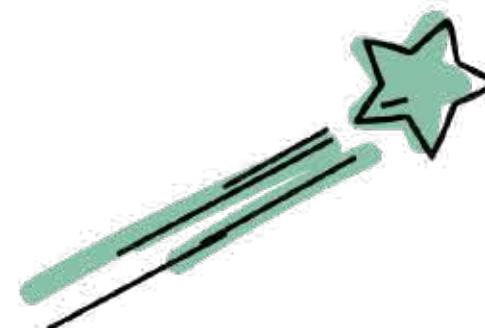


# How has “HEY!” changed us?

Our agile working model has been launched after a comprehensive preparation process. Here, we describe the benefits that this model has provided in the short term.

We started prioritizing easily adaptable and flexible outcomes over one-off projects and business outputs as we adopted the principle of continuous improvement.

We reaped the benefits of forming cross-functional teams with members who used to work in separate business functions.

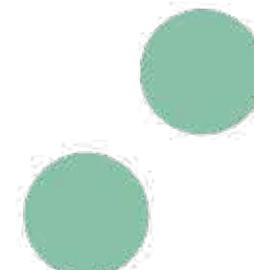


## We completed 6 months' worth of work in 2 months

In the early days of our transition to “HEY！”, we signed an agreement on the first phase of a partnership with a popular e-commerce company.

As you may know, it takes time to align the changing agenda for IT improvements, reassess priorities, update the business plan, and bring business units and software development teams together on a common ground in such complex digital integration projects.

In this experience, the members of the Online Sales and Lead Management team in our Digital Tribe were self-sufficient throughout the process thanks to their different backgrounds in fields such as marketing, business analysis, software development, and customer experience. Thus, we could initiate the necessary improvements right away.





Initially, we were planning to integrate 5 products. Thanks to "HEY!", we divided all the function and integration improvements in the project into multiple phases.

We decided to start with 3 top priority products and delivered our first MVP in one and a half sprints. Then, we included the other 2 projects in the same process.

We carried out the contract, development, and test phases in only 2 months, even though they usually take six months. We owe this success to cross-functional teams. Thanks to this flexible model, we can now respond to multiple partnership processes simultaneously.

Most importantly, such improvements used to be overshadowed by larger transformation projects, which was the biggest obstacle for our teams to gain experience in the digital world and reach customers through alternative channels. Now that our agile teams have all the resources they need within themselves, they can make quicker decisions and experiment with different MVPs in areas for improvement to gain further insights in the digital ecosystem.

**Turkey's first individual green insurance product was delivered in 2 weeks (1 sprint). This would have taken 2 months with traditional project management.**

One of our agencies requested a Solar Panel Insurance with the new coverage needs of its customers. As we had limited time to meet our customer's expectations, we had to act quickly.

Our 3 squads in the Non-Motor Tribe needed to work in coordination to accommodate the request. The relevant stakeholders from Customer Journey Development, Retail Product and Process Management teams responded rapidly and prioritized the backlog as per customer needs and requests. We focused on an existing product, updated it quickly, and enhanced it with a new insurance structure.

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## Achieving system integration by meeting all the accumulated requests with efficient prioritization

We had Turkey's first **individual green insurance** up and running in a single sprint; that's just two weeks!

It used to take 2 months of effort to launch a product of this scale.

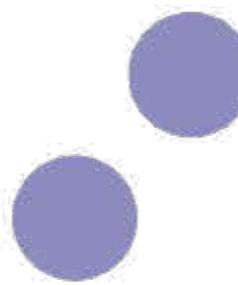
Focusing on the right priorities as a team, working together towards a common goal to solve customers' problems, and gathering a range of expertise in a single team without any external dependencies allowed teams to set their own pace and achieve all these results in such a short time.

It is just another example of the benefits "**HEY!**" has provided to us.

The Life Insurance & Pension Tribe's backlog had over 200 improvement requests of different levels of complexity, some of which were pending prioritization for more than 3 years, and new requests were piling up. Although these requests were mostly submitted by the customer support teams and had a critical and significant impact on customer satisfaction, these could not be planned due to larger projects taking priority in the pre-agile era.

The multidisciplinary team structure of "**HEY!**" broke this cycle. Squads within the Tribe first standardized the request-gathering process.

They clarified needs by inviting the individuals and teams who submitted the requests to rituals such as planning and review and writing or improving user stories together. They kept revising the prioritization of the backlog based on the value to be created, considering customer feedback.



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Dependencies were reduced as all the skills required for improvements were present within the team. Teams were able to act according to their own priorities and capacities.

Thus, we managed to finalize all outstanding backlog items, both long-standing and newly-added ones, in only 10 sprints. The value we deliver to our customers and the synergy we created increased in this process.

## Thinking outside the box: Bolstering our position in an increasingly competitive market

One of the biggest advantages of "HEY!" is that teams can freely decide on the action they should take to achieve their goals. This freedom also accelerates the integration of new perspectives into our business models. It also enables iterating and learning by experimenting.

The Motor Tribe, which aimed to increase its market share and profit margins by making price adjustments in the competitive market, was the first to experience agility.

The Renewals and Actuarial Modelling teams worked together with a fresh perspective and came up with a new segmentation to adjust the pricing strategy. Team members collected and analyzed the necessary data and estimated the impact. Once the software development, which was finalized quickly, went live, we started to observe the results.

The impact was amazing. The new methodology had improved not only the renewals but also the acquisitions. The renewal rate increased by 5 to 8 points, and the conversion rate doubled.

The empowerment and end-to-end responsibility of teams accelerated the decision-making process and reduced the lead time. "HEY!" boosted the team's flexibility and motivation and encouraged them to generate innovative ideas.



## **When you start a new role, getting to know your colleagues and spending time with them makes your life easier. But what if you are working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

COVID-19 changed everything, and the world of business was no exception. It forced us to work from home. Imagine that you are starting a new job in such an environment and need to work towards the same goals with your colleagues without meeting them in person.

This is exactly what the Business Expansion squad in the Health Tribe experienced.

A Product Owner and team members who joined Allianz Turkey in the first half of 2020 met in the Business Expansion squad.

Would that be a problem as all the squad members started their job remotely during the pandemic and had never met face to face and that none of them had experience in the market?

They overcame this problem.

How did they do that?





They started to make the most efficient use of agile ceremonies and synchronization meetings from the get-go. They also had catch-ups outside of "HEY!" routines in order to get to know each other better.

Then, they started bringing their findings to the table and worked on improving the big picture.

With the transparency of agile, they were able to access and track their backlog easily and determined their priorities and focus areas quickly in line with stakeholder feedback.

In such a short time period, they got familiarized with "HEY!", adopted our organizational culture, and started experimenting with new practices in the company.

Throughout this process, they learned by experimenting.

All three of them had different backgrounds and areas of expertise and worked in different companies and industries, which enriched product outcomes. This is the most significant benefit "HEY!" has presented to them.

Now, they do not only know each other but also see the results of their remote work and analyze it together.

They have not spent a day together in the office yet, but they adapted to their new job quickly and have already been making an impact with the guidance of "HEY!".



# Is agility contagious?

As the number of agile teams started to increase in the organization, teams that had not experienced agile yet started their own evolution.

At Allianz, agile transformation took place one step at a time. The teams gradually embarked on this journey.

Therefore, we often had teams who were in different phases of the journey. The teams who had not experienced agile started to improve themselves as they worked with agile teams.

Our Legal team is a great example.

When they had not yet experienced agile ways of working, they pioneered other teams by taking the initiative to change their working model to serve the tribes better. They developed the Legal Partnership model in order to adapt to Tribes' approach, which is focused on creating value continuously and delivering quick business outcomes. They improved this model, which they designed as an MVP, in line with feedback, in order to accelerate the value generation cycle of each Tribe. As a result, they could succeed each other, deliver cross-team outcomes, and work together in the business unit.

They started expanding the horizons of the tribes by attending their ceremonies, which allowed teams to deliver value faster.

Currently, our entire Legal Team is using Scrum. They have been improving the agile model at each step of their agile transformation journey, which started a year ago, and sailing towards perfection.





# Lessons learned while overcoming obstacles

Sometimes a journey does not go as planned. Still, what matters is not to let any roadblocks get in your way. This is exactly what we did: We solved problems and achieved success.

We are telling this story as if it was all roses, but did it really go so smoothly? It certainly did not. There were surely several setbacks on the journey of "HEY!" from good to great. No matter how thoroughly you plan, there are always risks and crisis.

What matters is to collect regular feedback, course-correct along the way to keep going without any problem, and turn crisis into opportunities.

Below are some of the issues we faced and the solutions we found:

When we first formed our tribes, some of our colleagues needed to act both as Product Owner and Chapter Lead. As these two roles have different standpoints and full-time responsibilities, this problem slowed down our teams. We improved the skills of our squad members and decoupled these roles as soon as possible.

Dedication is crucial for building team spirit and maintaining focus. Due to the projects that were already in flight at the beginning of our journey, we had resource constraints where some team members were spread thin across tribes. We created value-oriented teams and allocated all the tasks that were not included in the backlog of a given team to other teams.

We set out to create a fluid structure that would cater to our ever-changing needs. With the change the tribe model had brought,



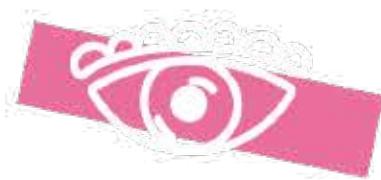


we disbanded some of the teams that had become redundant in the new model. We formed new teams or merged existing ones, and we did it all without bureaucracy. Tribes called the shots, and they still do.

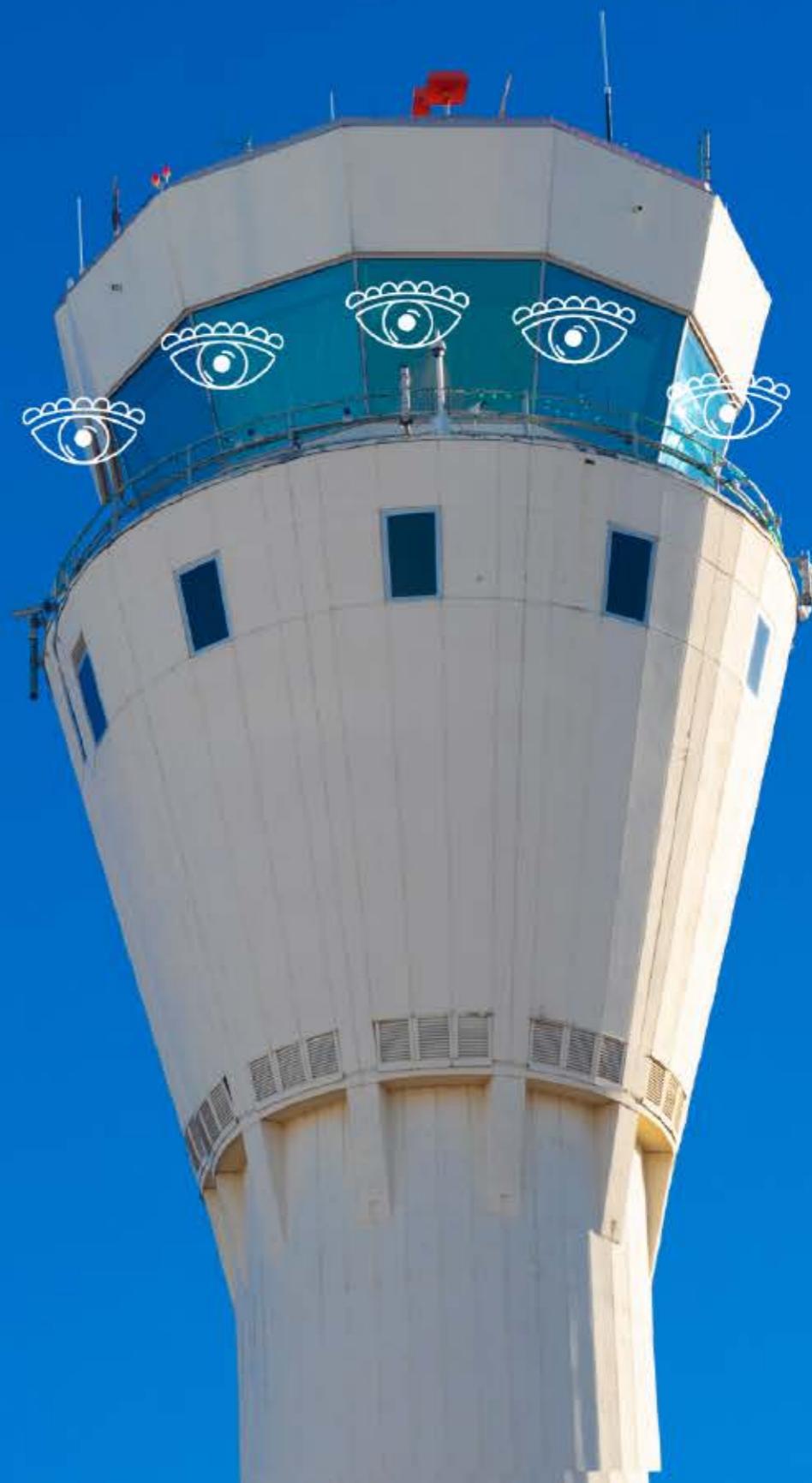
- ★ We optimized the synchronization meetings between tribes and non-tribe teams and involved critical stakeholders and catalyzing roles for decision-making in synchronization meetings.
- ★ We implemented QBR processes and brought the tribes together. Thus, we created a workflow where the QBR strategy translates into user stories.
- ★ We invited all the tribe members to squad sprint reviews in order to achieve full transparency by ensuring that everyone is aware of the work and developments in other squads. Having said that, we made the attendance optional.
- ★ We developed a partnership model to reduce dependency on business units such as Legal and Finance and accelerate processes. We involved Legal and Finance Business Partners in tribe rituals, and fostered instant feedback.

★ We recalibrated our campaign management, customer experience, and third-party processes. Together with the teams, we redesigned roles and requirements.

★ We designed Agile Development Program in collaboration with ATA (Allianz Turkey Academy). We supported teams to develop both hard and soft skills and appointed all our agile coaches as owners and instructors on this journey.



# New Management Approaches with HEY!





# Agile Office leads the transformation

You keep hearing about Agile Office because it is at the forefront of this transformation. So, what is the role of the Agile Office? How is it structured?

At Allianz Turkey, the Agile Office leads the identification of the strategy of “**HEY!**” and the execution, improvement, and coordination with stakeholders. It manages the transformation successfully and keeps it on track.

As the Agile Office manages the entire transformation process from design to execution, it is the single point of contact for agile for any business unit, whether already working agile or not. They are the custodians of agile within the organization.

Therefore, we find the following qualities critical for the Agile Office:

ability to analyze the change and the needs and the expectations of the organization and removing roadblocks when needed,

owning the communication of the agile vision and the cultural transformation,

being flexible and continuously learning and evolving to respond to the changing needs of the organization, and

having a neutral stance and being able to see the organization objectively,

internalizing the processes and experiencing them first hand by running sprints and holding other ceremonies, just as a Scrum team.





# What makes Allianz Turkey's Agile Office different?

At Allianz Turkey, we consider agility as a people-oriented, long-term transformation. As such, it is extremely valuable to focus on the transformation agenda, manage it consistently, and deliver continuous value. For that exact reason, we did not design our Agile Office as a transformation office, but we embedded it into our HR function as a permanent department, because we expect the Agile Office to improve agile maturity of the entire organization and be on the lookout for further opportunities.

The Agile Office's main purposes are to develop the strategy, manage the transformation agenda, instill an agile perspective, and implement the agile working model at organizational scale.

Monitoring the outcomes of the transformation and the development needs and level of agile maturity of the teams and the organization have an important place on the Agile Office's agenda. This, in turn, allows us to assess the

success of the whole process and devise plans to remove the obstacles.

The Agile Office defines the principles, framework, and management of the transformation and monitors it through an ever-evolving playbook.

It assesses and updates the organizational design and HR processes with HR Business Partners and relevant HR units. It makes sure that the organization operates according to the defined HR framework.

ATA (Allianz Turkey Academy) with agile coaches design and hold workshops and training and development programs for the internalization of agility in the organization.

In collaboration with Corporate Communications and Employee Experience teams, the Agile Office defines the agile communication language, management, and content for the organization and involves pertinent stakeholders.





It works in bi-weekly sprints in order to experience agility, just as the other agile teams in the organization. It conducts experiments and learns by doing in order to increase efficiency.

Agile coaches with diverse and complementary skillsets and backgrounds make the Agile Office a tight-knit team. They monitor the conditions on the field and shape the strategy accordingly.

The members of the Agile Office work in continuous cooperation with each other and the key stakeholders along this process. In this context, they hold regular meetings with the key stakeholders and exchange ideas with them.

During every sprint, agile coaches have Pulse Check meetings to identify the best practices and areas for improvement in agile teams.

They have deep-dive discussions and brainstorm ideas in Agile Storming sessions.

Furthermore, they hold Agile Coach Synchronization meetings during every sprint to improve the backlog of Agile Office, celebrate achievements, and remove obstacles.

Once in an average of every two sprints, the Agile Office meets with HR business partners, the Organizational Design team, and Allianz Turkey Academy to coordinate their efforts on joint activities.

In addition to monthly Tribe Leader Synchronization meetings, they also hold regular one-on-one meetings with tribe leaders to support knowledge sharing. They also attend Executive Board meetings on a regular basis to ensure organizational improvement and synchronization.

They improve cohesiveness with the team meetings they hold with Chapter Leads and Product Owners.

The success of this team, who also manage Allianz's "HEY!" transformation, is a critical factor in the effectiveness of the transformation.

# Here is our strategy

Our agile journey still continues.  
We are following a strategy to  
lock on our targets

It is time to talk about  
our future steps on this journey.

The strategy we defined when we decided to be agile comprises a long journey. In the previous chapters, we described our progress and experiences on this journey.

Our journey still continues. As we always say, it is a journey from good to great. We continue our efforts to achieve excellence and deliver the best experience.

One of the main goals of the Agile Office is to enable agile transformation and build an agile culture within the organization. Our ultimate goal is to become a lean, fast, and efficient organization that creates value for customers and finds and recruits talents.

In short, we aim to be

Fast  
Efficient  
Empowered

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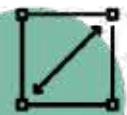




We encapsulate our strategy in  
4SSS:

**Scale,**  
**Strengthen,**  
**Steer,**  
**Share.**

Let's elaborate on 4S.



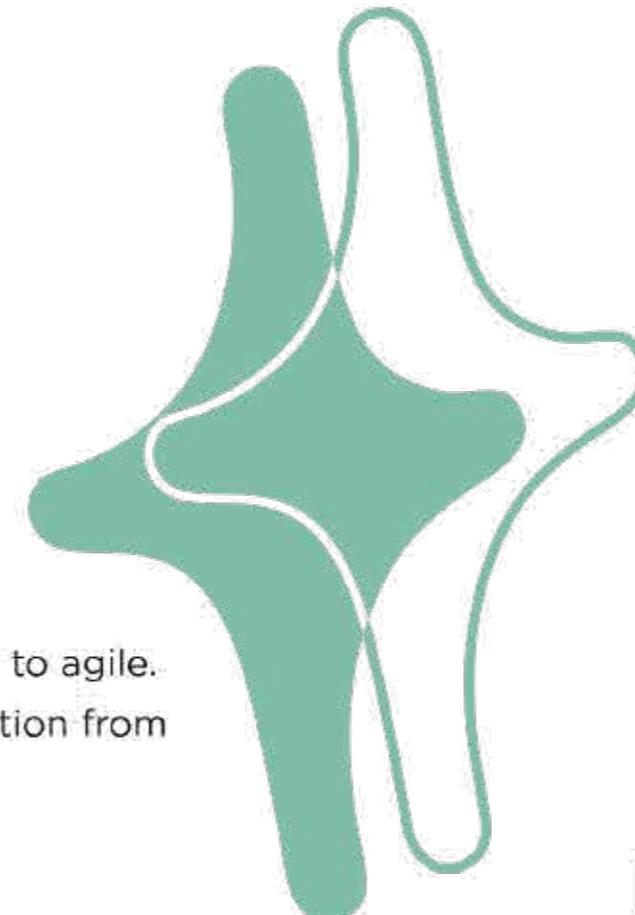
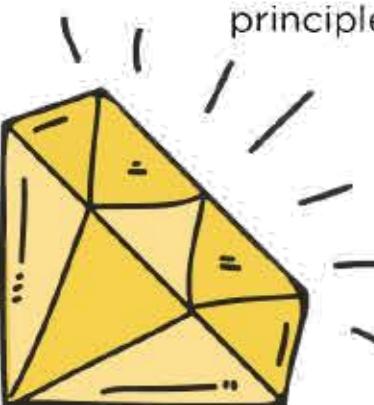
### Scale:

We have been transitioning the entire organization to agile. We do what it takes to go through a smooth transition from organizational design to employee applications.



### Strengthen:

We aim to ensure that our teams internalize the agile mindset and make it a part of their lives. Therefore, we inspect and improve all the processes and development programs that involve our employees, in line with the principle of continuous learning.



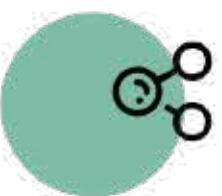
### Steer:

We closely monitor our business and agile performance to remove the obstacles that get in the way on our journey to transformation and success. Agile coaches lead us on this path to agile maturity.



### Share:

We aim to share our experiences on our transformation journey with those who are involved or interested in the agile world, both in our country and on international platforms. This book about our "HEY!" journey, our website [www.heyallianz.com.tr](http://www.heyallianz.com.tr), our company-wide and public webinars, and the experiences shared by the leaders of our agile transformation on the events they attend are all part of this effort.



In summary, 4S determines our success on our journey from good to great.





# How does a journey start for a team?

We added six more tribes to our journey, which began with the Motor tribe. We took another step further and set out to change all the building blocks of our organization. So, how does a team's agile journey begin?

Even though there are minor differences in the steps we take during the transformation of a team, depending on the model, these steps are crucial in ensuring the transformation of the system. Teams go through four phases throughout their agile transformation:

Design      Preparation & Training      Initiation      Execution



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**Design Phase:** The purpose of this phase is to decide on the organizational design and roles together with the business units and their leaders. The number, size, type (tribes or support/self managing teams), structure, purpose, current and future backlog, KPIs, decision-making mechanisms, and ways of working of teams are all discussed and determined in this phase. This phase also includes the identification of the required skillsets, areas for improvement, and resource allocation.

The Agile Office, HR teams and involved business units work together in this phase.

**Preparation & Training Phase:** It aims to teach employees the framework, mindset, processes, and roles in the agile model. The concepts and new methodologies are explained in this phase.

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First, the Agile Office holds a gamified team coaching session with hands-on Agile Workshops. Team members get to know each other better and understand the norms and values of each other. They internalize their mission and goals as a team. They learn about the experiences of other teams and their leaders who have been through similar phases.

Following the Agile Workshop, trainers walk the team through agile principles in the Fundamentals of Agile training.

Then, an “agile survey” covering 10 key areas is sent to the team. The survey assesses the current state and sets a benchmark to improve upon. The same survey is repeated three months later to analyze the progress. The comparison of the results allows for early identification of the progress and areas for improvement.



**Initiation Phase:** The teams who complete the training are ready to work on the backlog. Despite not being part of the official Scrum Guide, Sprint 0 helps us prepare for the very first sprint. Team members hand over their existing tasks and hit the ground running with their agile coach.

Team rituals, their time and location, and definition of done criteria are clarified.

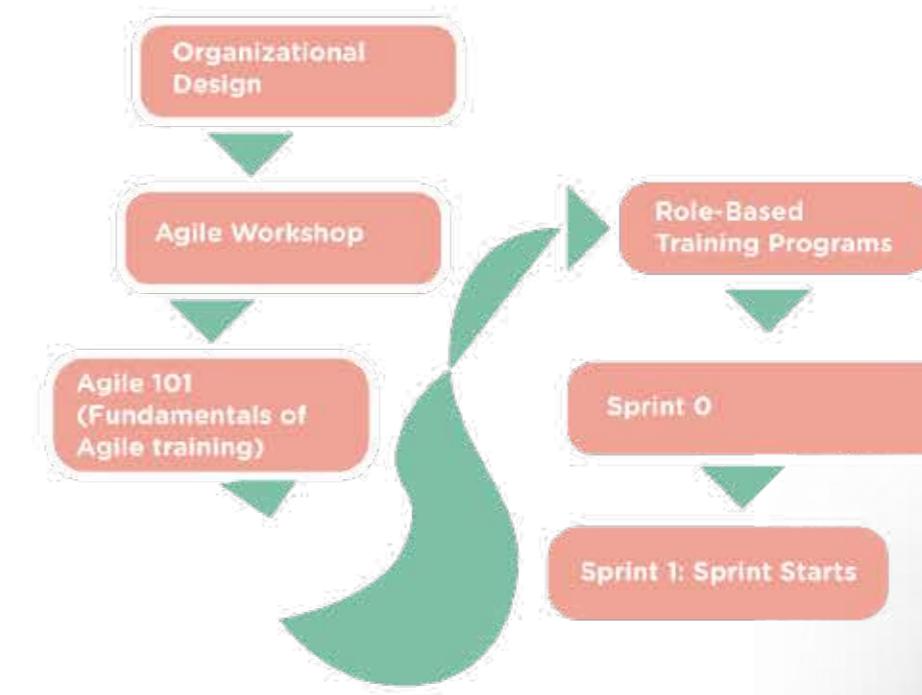
A backlog worthy of a few sprints is created. Dependencies are reviewed and minimized as much as possible.



**Execution Phase:** Finally, the first sprint begins. Once the teams start running, the situation on the field is checked to see the first results of the transformation. The mood of the team members is monitored, and the challenges in the way are reviewed. The obstacles are analyzed, and the team members are supported in finding solutions.

In actual fact, most teams cannot achieve the expected results in the first sprint. This is exactly what we want. We huddle up and discuss the areas for improvement and the steps to be taken to make progress before each sprint. Then, we get back on our feet and aim to do better. We improve sprint by sprint.

This continuous journey from good to great is what we call **HEY!**





# Did you think it was over when you start running?

**We inspect not only business outcomes  
but also the level of internalization of  
agility.**

Agile transformations are long-running processes. It is important to measure success at each step in order to devise the next steps.

At Allianz Turkey, we consider the following when reviewing our transformation journey:

★ We adopt a holistic approach. Rather than focusing on a few specific areas, we assess the whole journey considering Team Members, Processes, Technology Tools, and Rituals.

★ We take into consideration the feedback from the teams and team members, as well as the metrics and insights from the agile coaches.

★ As the Agile Office, we continuously and transparently share our evaluations.

★ with the members of our office in Pulse Check meetings held during each sprint,

★ with agile team leaders in monthly Tribe Leader Synchronization Meetings, and

★ regularly with the Executive Board.

Moreover, as we believe in the importance of experience sharing, we ensured that our sprint review and synchronization meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend.

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We allow teams to evaluate themselves with HEY!Retro, which we conduct every quarter.

Perhaps most importantly, we do not only measure the results, but we also analyze them by team, tribe, or company from a holistic perspective and take action to improve them in line with our action plan.

HEY!Retro allows us to identify the level of internalization of the 10 core values of “HEY!” by teams. While teams evaluate themselves based on the criteria we shared via an online assessment tool, Agile Coaches ensure that the process runs smoothly. Team members share their views on the 19 aspects defining “HEY!” by rating the level of achievement on a scale of 3: We aim to allow everyone to share their views openly.

While teams evaluate themselves, team members get everything off their chests. The assessment process runs in a trust-based environment where opinions are expressed freely and different ideas are not criticized but rewarded.

## What is HEY!Retro then?

Even though it is possible to measure your achievements using quantitative metrics, it is not easy to measure your progress. We created HEY!Retro (Agile Maturity Index) with core “HEY!” values in mind, and we improve it every year.



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## CRITERIA

## QUESTIONS

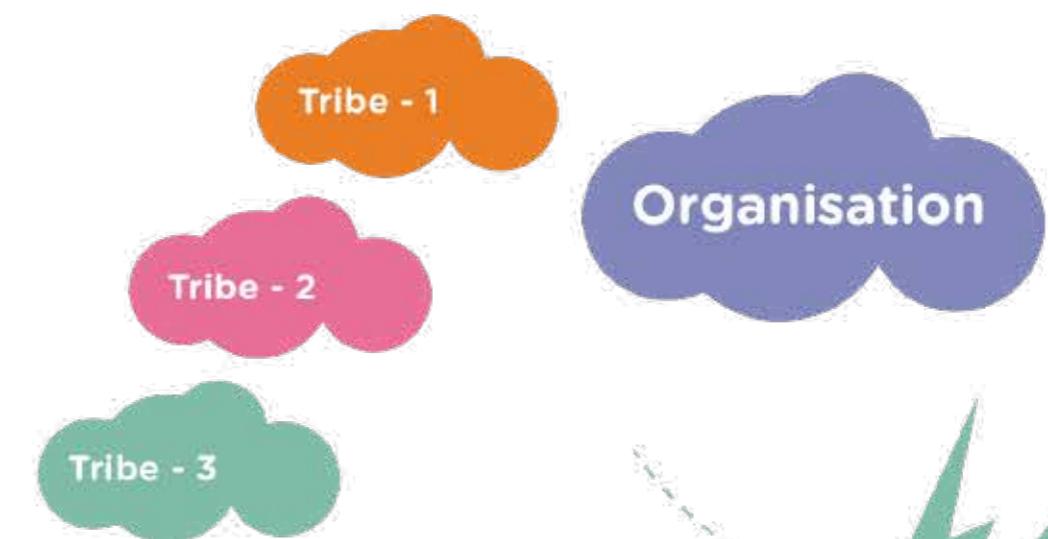
Adapting to agile events and processes	We have internalized agile from its artifacts to its events and have been reaping the benefits of it.
Collaboration	We work collaboratively.
Having a commercial mindset	The purpose of all our improvements is to add commercial value to Allianz and increase its revenue.
End-to-end responsibility	We have end-to-end responsibility for delivering quick business outcomes for our product/service.
Experimenting	We have an appetite for continuous improvement. We constantly try new approaches, products, and services.
Learning from mistakes	We own our mistakes as a squad, discuss their root causes transparently, and implement countermeasures to prevent them from recurring.
Minimum Viable Product mindset (MVP)	We deliver the most valuable and leanest product and service with maximum efficiency. We adapt as per customer feedback.
Time to market	As a squad, we deliver rapid outcomes to respond to the needs of the market instantly.
Customer focus	Wherever possible, we seek customer opinion on what we deliver.
Innovation	We consider different perspectives and constantly add new features to our products and processes.
Performance monitoring	We monitor our performance metrics regularly and take informed actions to improve continuously.
Shared vision	The Squad has a clear and shared vision that informs our prioritization efforts.
Strategic awareness	Squads are well-aware of the vision and strategy of the company and the Tribe and follow them when doing their work.
Capability building	While improving my competency, I also make suggestions and take action to improve the competency of my colleagues.
Ownership	As a squad, we feel empowered to do our job.
Feedback culture	We are comfortable giving both positive and negative feedback to each other as we see feedback as a way to improve.
Motivation	We work happily and for a purpose.
Hierarchy Level	There are no silos or hierarchy within the tribes. Everyone communicates and shares their views transparently and openly.
Transparency	We clearly attribute what is done to why it is done and discuss the outcomes openly.

Fast

Efficient

Empowered

For each criterion, we review the results based on the percentage of satisfied employees. Then, we group teams by maturity levels and identify the development needs in teams, tribes, and the organization. We strive to solve problems and improve through training sessions, workshops, and coaching activities.



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## What was the impact of HEY!Retro?

Even the sole existence of HEY!Retro increased the level of awareness.

The areas for improvement presented themselves in retrospective sessions and started getting traction. As a result, Agile Coaches could describe the level they want the teams to reach.

Transparent feedback and open-mindedness improved the teams.

Problems and focus areas were identified at both organizational and team level.

**These steps are critical to catalyzing the journey from good to great.**



# How do we share this transformation?

**As the winds of change surround Allianz, some have already begun to transition to agile, while others are still waiting their turn. We carry out various activities to describe this culture and support both those who have already begun to transition and those who will start this journey.**

The agile transformation will take place across Allianz, but it did not start in all units at once. Some teams have already begun to evolve, while some have not started the journey yet.

Talking about **HEY!** is a big part of our lives, and we schedule regular activities to do that.

## Agile Webinars (Çebinar):

We named our vision webinars on agility Çebinars (“Çevik+Webinar”; “Agile+Webinar”). We host external keynote speakers who are the best in their fields, and choose various topics to talk about. Our seminars focus on many different topics such as innovation, entrepreneurship, startup ecosystem, user stories, MVP, and Liberating Structures. We hold these 30-minute seminars every two months.



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## HEY! Talks:

In this activity, agile team members share agile principles, roles, and success and failure stories with non-agile teams in order to enable them to listen to their experiences first hand. HEY! Talks are 30-minute sessions held every two months.

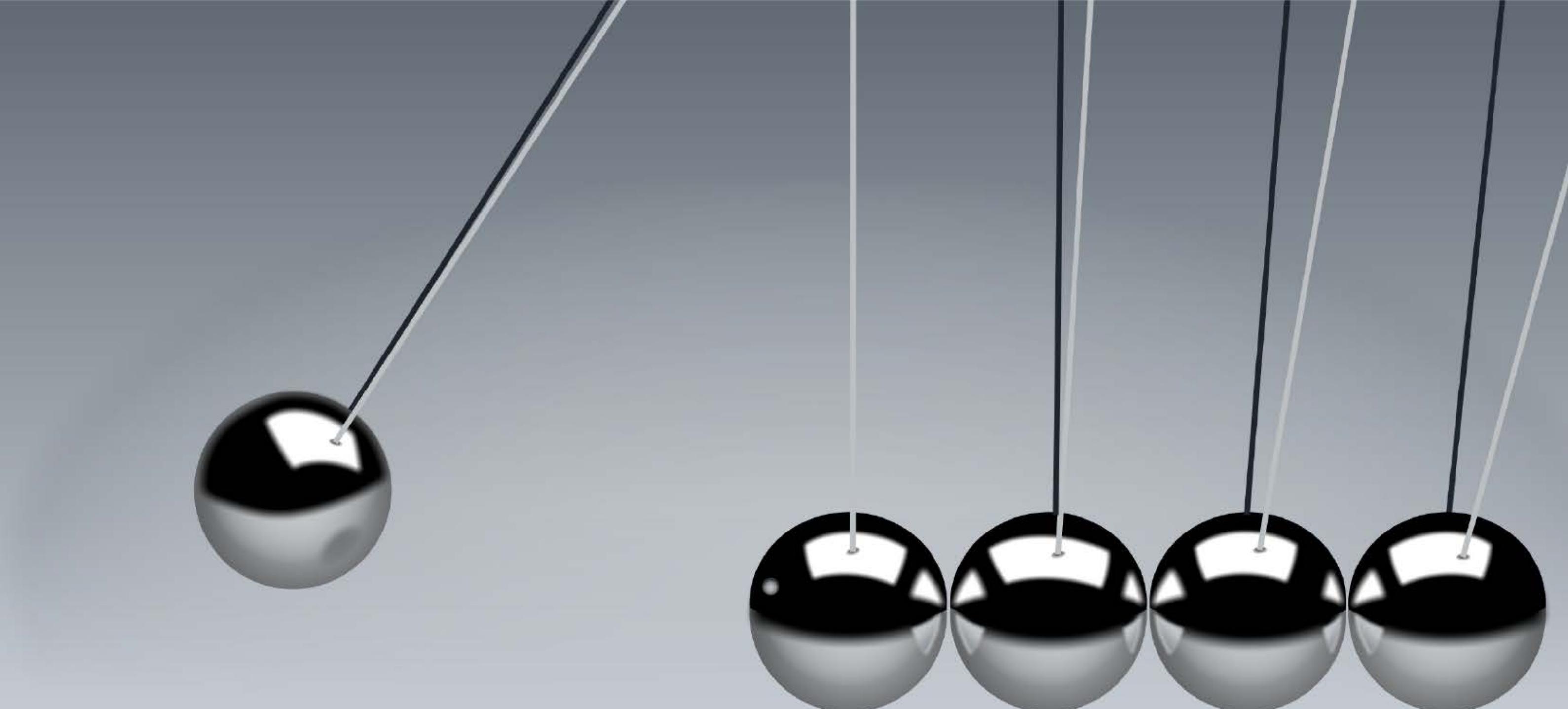
## Tea & Learn:

In these meetings, agile teams talk about literally everything. The conversation is not limited to work-related subjects. This 30-minute session is held once a month and focuses on a wide variety of topics such as bikes, TV shows, sports, or hobbies.

## Social Media Posts:

We post agile-related content on our closed social media group Tutkuyla Yürüyenlerin Yolu (The Path of Those Who Walk with Passion). We share video or book recommendations, ask Prized Questions as part of HEY! Challenge, and hold HEY! Ask A Coach sessions to answer the questions addressed by employees to agile coaches.





# How Do Agile and HR Processes Work in Tandem?





# We could not have done this without cultural transformation!

**At Allianz Turkey, the significant change in our ways of working has triggered a cultural change, which was crucial for the continuity and internalization of the transformation.**



The primary catalyst of the cultural shift was the agile transformation process. Initially, we were planning to transform the agile teams only. However, as we experienced agility and understood its benefits, we decided to apply it across the organization for the new Allianz we wanted to create.

Let's walk through it step by step.

**We first formed the Culture Squad** with 9 members from different functions. They abandoned their existing duties and dedicated all their effort to the Cultural Squad for the next six months. They visited over 13 local and global startups as well as well-established giants. They listened to first-hand accounts of the cultures and practices that make these companies different. They interviewed the employees and observed their workplaces.

Meanwhile, they collaborated with **325 colleagues from 81 different units** at Allianz. They identified our areas for improvement in order to create the new Allianz and to accomplish the cultural transformation. Under the sponsorship of eight Executive Board members, they evaluated employee feedback and requests and benchmark results with the executive team.

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## As a result of this intensive exercise,

we identified our strengths.

- ★ Brand equity and reputation,
  - ★ customer focus,
  - ★ leadership,
  - ★ responding to change,
  - ★ encouraging diversity, and
  - ★ work environment
- stood out as our strengths.

Then, we identified the areas for improvement on which we wanted to focus to achieve excellence.

These areas were as follows:

- ★ Growth mindset,
- ★ ownership,
- ★ collaboration,
- ★ knowledge sharing,
- ★ performance,
- ★ appreciation, and
- ★ feedback.

Our path was clear at that point. We started focusing on these 7 Focus Areas in all our processes, including hiring. These areas underpinned our cultural transformation efforts, which was called “**7 Passions at Allianz**” and supported our brand proposition “The Path of Those Who Walk with Passion.”

Revealing these 7 features of the members of the Allianz family who walk with passion was all we needed to do.

We follow a 7-step action plan in this context:



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## Our cultural manifesto is ready, and so are we!

We called this transformation “7 Passions at Allianz” and listed the common features of the members of the Allianz family.

### A passionate Allianz employee is who



Now, we are working in the most efficient way under the guidance of the 7 Passions at Allianz. We constantly question whether we are working on these areas. We take them into account in every decision we make and plot our path accordingly.

We also keep in mind that cultural transformation is not a project but a transformation that will be internalized by the company and will become its character and take the company to the future.

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## We established overall transformation principles in line with what we learned from the pilot project.

Since the beginning of our organizational agile transformation, we knew that it is a people-oriented transformation, and we can confidently say that “**HEY!**” and the new Allianz culture that we want to build is not only an element of this transformation but the very essence of it.

At Allianz Turkey, we have a people-oriented, open-minded, modern and innovative culture. We have been investing in this culture for a long time, and we will continue to do so. You can feel it in the air when you walk into the Allianz Tower and Allianz Campus. Our culture has been the enabler in the transformation process. We managed this process successfully while retaining our employees thanks to the trust-based environment we have established.

The pilot project was also significant for the transformation's success. The challenges we faced during the pilot project allowed us to identify our areas for improvement. Thus, we diverted our attention to articulating the benefits of agile transformation, sharing agile knowledge, and improving processes. We redesigned our training sessions accordingly. The positive feedback provided by employees, especially after the pilot project, made prospective members of tribes believe in this transformation and feel excited to be part of it.

Every transformation requires individuals to handle uncertainty and leave their comfort zone. In order to navigate through uncertainty, it is essential to focus on the right areas, follow principles, and maintain transparency.

After the pilot project in the Motor Tribe, we reviewed all our HR processes and adapted them to Agile Working principles in line with the global principles of the Allianz Group.

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## Below are the main principles we established for the transformation:

### Career Management:

We kept all lines of work intact in the transforming teams.

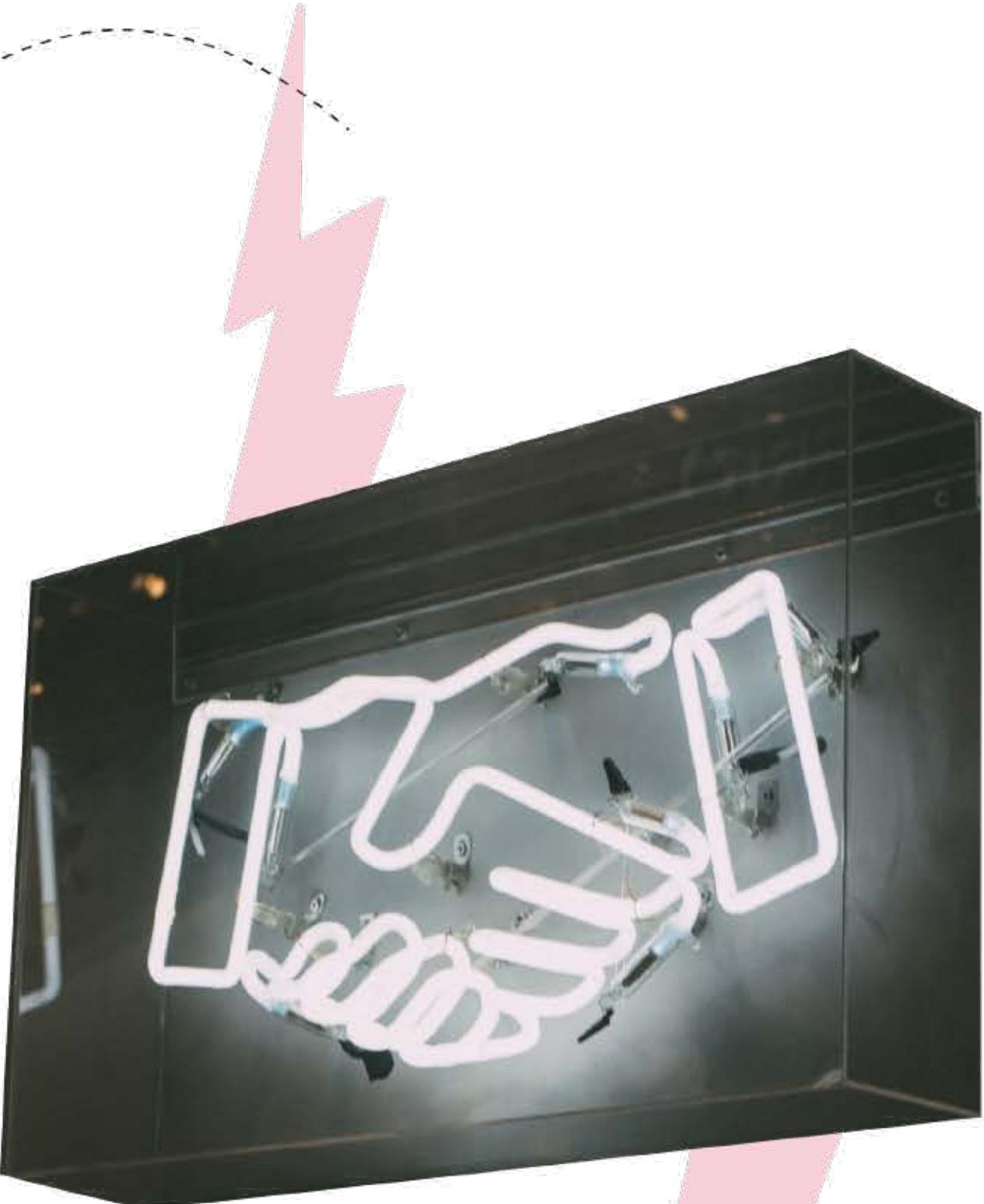
We evaluated the candidates for the agile teams based on their capabilities and eligibility for agile roles rather than their titles.

### Rewarding:

We maintained the existing remuneration, perks, and side benefits of all our employees.

We decided not to make any change in existing promotions, pay raises, and perks, in order to ensure fairness in the entire organization.

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## The steps we incorporated into our HR processes are as follows:

### **Titles:**

We retained the existing titles.

We reiterated that in the Tribe, everyone is a team member and has a role in line with their responsibilities. We emphasized that there is no hierarchy.

We told them that they were allowed to put any title or role on their LinkedIn profiles.

We would like to elaborate on this topic as we are frequently asked about it. Yes, we retain the titles, but we work independently of them. For instance, Chapter Leads, Product Owners, and Team Members have different titles and ranks, but the title or rank is not a prerequisite to fulfill responsibilities.



### **Hiring:**

We established new agile competency criteria and embedded them into our performance review processes. We applied it to both newcomers and promotions.



In hiring processes, we determined the responsibilities of the Chapter Lead, Product Owner, and Tribe Leader.

To accelerate the onboarding, we planned the first 90 days of newcomers down to the last detail. We closely monitored this process, which is owned by the Agile Coach and HR Business Partners.

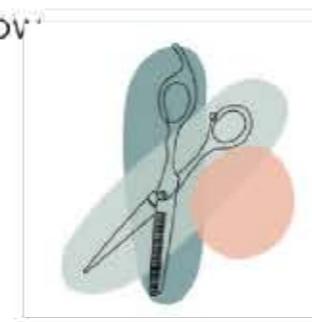
## Organizational Design and Roles:

We designed a network-like structure where there is no hierarchy or bureaucracy and information will flow through the business transparently.

We reduced the number of intermediary steps.

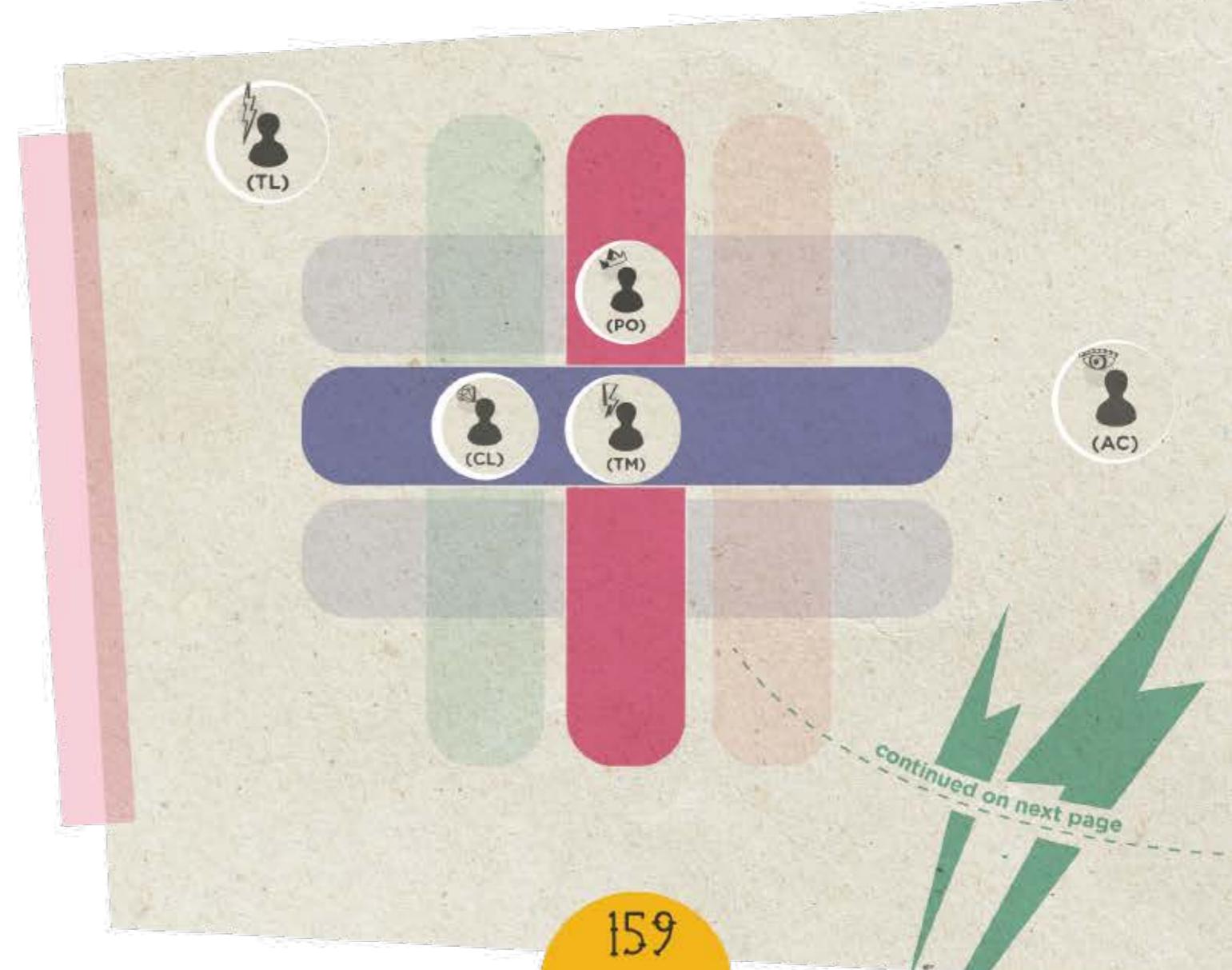
We reviewed career paths, and instead of strict career paths, we designed a structure where competencies and skill development are taken into consideration, and everyone has equal opportunities.

We proved that career growth can be achieved by horizontal movements, as well as vertical ones.



We viewed the responsibilities of the roles from an interactions perspective as well as a business perspective. We constantly supported this approach with our communications. We provided personal Career Consultancy for our employees with the program **"My Career Path."**

In addition to managing the chapters, Chapter Leads are responsible for supporting and mentoring their chapters.





## Performance Management:

We have been experiencing the difference that agile has created across the business. However, “**HEY!**” also had an impact on performance.

Let's elaborate on this topic:

In the previous working model at Allianz Turkey, many decisions were solely made by top managers. Therefore, the top management's decision was the ultimate decision.

In “**HEY!**”, a committee assesses the performance of the team members.

In the review process, both the work, how it is done and their outputs, what it is done are assessed.

The review committee is named after the roles it includes: PO-CL-AC.

Product Owner, Chapter Lead, and Agile Coach.

All team members can give feedback to this committee, and the committee assesses all tribe members without exception.

## How are the performance review meetings conducted?

HR business partners facilitate the meetings to ensure the objectiveness of POCLAC.

In this committee, Product Owners, Chapter Leads, and Agile Coaches focus on outcomes, the expertise, and the agile approach, respectively.

- Contribution of each team member,
  - the support provided by the team in achieving financial and operational goals,
  - reviews of the peers,
  - insights and feedback from tribe members,
  - self-assessment score, and
  - results of the personal development plan
- are some of the parameters that the committee takes into account.

Feedback sessions are held following a POCLAC meeting.

POCLAC openly and transparently shares their 360-degree feedback about each team member in committee meetings.

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Product Owners and Chapter Leads also assess one another.

The performance assessment results are then represented as a performance curve and shared with the Tribe Leaders. The Tribe Leaders give the final sign-off, which marks the annual performance outcomes of team members.

It is essential to ensure transparency in the assessment process. This is how performance meetings are conducted for agile teams.

## Training and Development Programs:

We developed the Agile Development Program under the leadership of Allianz Turkey Academy (ATA).

In this program, we focus on developing the competencies of team members by improving technical skills and developing cross-capability, as well as the fundamentals of agile and their implementation.

We see the learning process from a holistic perspective and offer opportunities not only for classroom learning, but also for social learning, experience sharing through interaction, quick adaptation through gamification, and 24/7 access to digital solutions from anywhere.

We support the development of our employees through Micro Learning sessions, which we design and prepare; Çebinars with guest speakers with aforementioned qualities who talk about their vision and tell inspiring stories; **HEY! Talks**, which encourage peer learning through the sharing of agile transformation experiences; and Tea & Learn sessions, which help us get to know each other better.

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## The Agile Development Program includes comprehensive courses on each area of expertise.

### Work Environment

Designing the physical workspace for team collaboration was one of our highest priorities. We expanded our open office layout to support communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration.

Agile teams started to work in a fair and productive environment until COVID-19 forced us away from our offices.



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Remote work experience and our observations throughout the pandemic helped us create our new agile structure and working model called "This Is Allianz. Life Is Different Here!" We listened to our colleagues and shaped our new model based on their responses, demands, and feedback. Our model is built on flexibility, productivity, well-being, and sustainability.

We increased the number of remote work days and reduced commute time significantly, allowing us to make more time for ourselves and our loved ones. Thanks to meeting-free days or time slots, we increase productivity during working hours. Well-being and sustainability provide the necessary physical support for our employees to feel ergonomically comfortable at home, while the mental health program supports their mental well-being.

We acknowledge that many changes await us in the world of business in the coming years. Therefore, we will keep our HR processes at the center of the transformation to adapt our new model to new trends, needs, and expectations.



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# Different shades of saying, “This Is Allianz. Life Is Different Here!”

We already had a work-from-home day for many years, but we adapted to the challenges brought by COVID-19 and started working from home every day. But which qualities helped us in this process? What were our shortcomings?

Let's take a look into it.



## The advantages of agile in remote working are as follows:

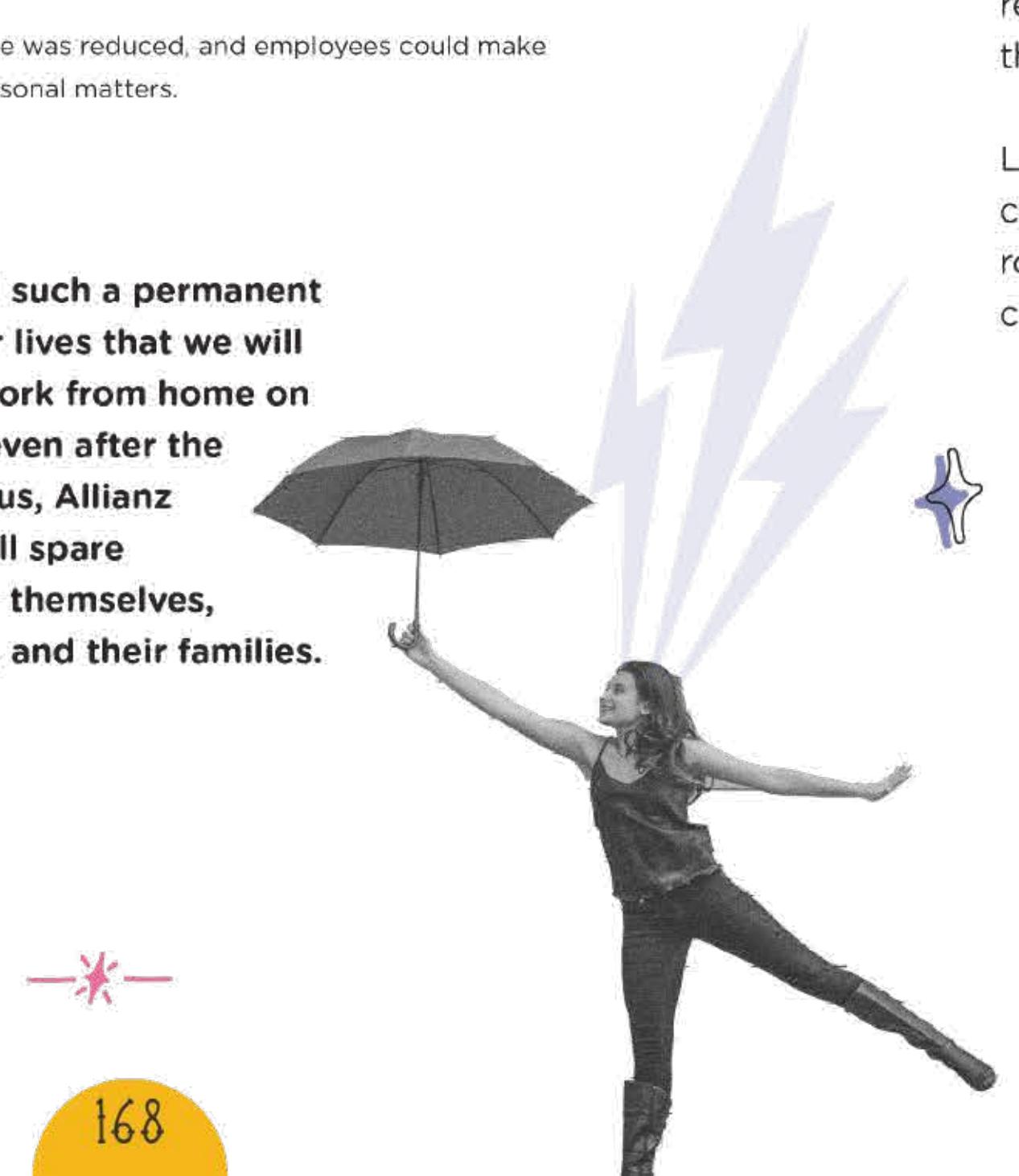
- ★ Cross-functional teams helped us reduce cross-team dependencies and allowed for faster delivery of outcomes with end-to-end responsibilities.
- ★ Teams' ability to set their priorities for a common purpose with an open and transparent communication kept them focused despite the uncertainty.
- ★ When working remotely, we further realized the benefits of small teams for communicating faster.
- ★ Thanks to the guardrails that agile rituals placed around processes, we did not compromise velocity or productivity.
- ★ Bi-weekly sprints helped us take measured risks in an ambiguous environment.
- ★ Daily Scrums helped teams synchronize and align daily, which also set an example for non-agile teams and even let them to include Daily Scrums in their routines.
- ★ Synchronization meetings held when working with different teams and functions were instrumental in ensuring cross-team alignment when working remotely.

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- ★ Online tools such as JIRA created transparency for everyone to monitor tasks when working remotely.
- ★ We created various communication platforms for employees to engage with the top management more frequently when working remotely. This step was critical for the management of the uncertainty as it ensured that the announcements are shared directly with employees.
- ★ The commute time was reduced, and employees could make more time for personal matters.

**COVID-19 had such a permanent impact on our lives that we will continue to work from home on certain days even after the pandemic. Thus, Allianz employees will spare more time for themselves, their hobbies, and their families.**



## The challenges that remote working presented

The health and safety of our people is of paramount importance. Therefore, even though we mainly focused on the advantages of remote working, we still faced challenges along the way.

Let's see the challenges we faced, apart from cats walking on desks, kids walking into study rooms, family members walking by, and couriers ringing the doorbell:

Onboarding and adaptation of newcomers have not been easy. We faced the challenges of virtual meetings. In order to make adaptation easier, we updated our onboarding processes to align with "HEY!".

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Teams occasionally had difficult times trying to adapt to simultaneous changes, such as the entire organization's transition to remote working, the use of technology tools, and unexpected change of environment.
- 

When all training processes were moved online, we adapted to this change in an agile manner and reassessed our training processes and their durations to maximize the participation and interest in online training and increase its efficiency.
- 

Additional meetings were needed to ensure communication with large teams and different departments at the company. We allowed teams to participate in the reviews of other teams and ensured that Tribe Reviews are held regularly.
- 

The number of meetings and their durations increased. We needed to hold meetings for issues that would have been solved via short face-to-face conversations. In order to improve teams' focus, we introduced Meeting-Free Days and Time Slots.
- 

Teams' bonding suffered from the reduced interaction at work due to remote working. In order to solve this problem, we introduced digital happy hours and coffee sessions. Tribe Leaders, Chapter Leads, Agile Coaches, and HR Business Partners had both team and one-on-one sessions to support this process.





# COVID-19 has changed everything

**All the plans turned upside down when the COVID-19 pandemic began.**

**Thankfully, we leveraged agile in planning, yielded great results in decision-making and adaptation, and continued our operations without any setbacks during the pandemic.**



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The COVID-19 outbreak, which started locally, spread all around the world so quickly that it immediately became a hot topic. It was inevitable for COVID-19 to be at the top of everyone's agenda in the world of business.

The entire situation proved life can change in an instant and present itself with a concerning ambiguity. In times like these, it is necessary to make quick and determined decisions and take quick action.

Only people-oriented organizations with quick reflexes can achieve that, as they have the necessary organizational structure, human resources, and culture to adapt to such surprises.

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## What should such an organization do?

- It should be able to adapt its strategic priorities to changing demands.
- It should have fluid resources that can be adapted to changing priorities.
- It should empower the teams that manage the processes in day-to-day business.
- Meanwhile, it should create an operating rhythm across the organization.

Otherwise, organizations will have difficulties in responding to changes and fall behind the competition.

Allianz Turkey adapted very quickly to remote working and said, "This is Allianz. Life is different here." Let's elaborate on the factors that helped it to go through this process as undamaged as possible.

## The impact of “HEY!” on remote working

**Rituals:** Scrum rituals support teams in working together remotely. Ceremonies, if applied correctly and strictly, keep teams responsive to change and ensure that they build valuable products and act in accordance with the priorities of the company.

**Grooming/Refinement and Planning:** They support backlog transparency and enable team members to identify the priorities together and learn about their responsibilities.

**Daily Scrum:** Meeting every day creates a team rhythm, which is particularly critical for remote teams.

**Sprint Review:** It provides a forum for team members to communicate their progress with teams. Attendance of Tribe Leaders, key stakeholders, and customers makes great difference in these sessions. All team members are allowed to describe the value they created for the company.

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**Retro:** All team members evaluate the Sprint and give feedback to one another in **Brutal Transparency**, the favorite expression in the Agile World, which allows team members to discuss their areas for development and bond as a team even though they are apart.

**Flat Organization:** Processes need to speed up to support proactive decision-making in uncertain conditions, and this can only be achieved by flattening the hierarchy.

All Tribe Leaders are also members of the Executive Board, which is critical as it ensures that the strategy is directly communicated to teams and that meetings are held with all squads during every sprint to provide a perspective.

This organizational structure helped fast and transparent communication of our evolving strategy to teams throughout COVID-19.

It also allowed the Executive Board to assess and respond to the needs of the teams just as quickly.

**For instance, at Allianz Turkey, agile team members are only 3 levels away from the CEO.**

## Roles

**Tribe Leaders** focused on the agenda, while **Chapter Leads** ensured a collective focus on the strategic agenda and put emphasis on the development of skills and the efficiency of resources to navigate through change.



**Product Owners** worked on maximizing the quality of the outcomes and helped create an operating rhythm.

**Agile Coaches** helped teams adapt, removed roadblocks and supported problem-solving.

**Agile Office:** The incorporation of the Agile Office into HR helped manage the business impacts of COVID-19.

We established new lines of communication in order to optimize the communication between the HR team and Agile Coaches and take quick action to meet the needs. This effort was followed by activities where Agile Coaches and the HR team come together with team members and provide emotional support to them.

**Technology:** None of these steps could have been taken without an adequate IT infrastructure. Long-term infrastructure investments enabled online work and continuous processes.

**Thanks to the well-established structure of “HEY!”, Allianz Turkey managed to adhere to these principles and continued its operations during the COVID-19 pandemic without any major problem.**

# Outro





# Here's your agile recipe

When all agile operations complete their transformations, agile will take over the world of business. If you ever decide to be agile, there's your recipe.

We tried to summarize our experiences on the **HEY!** journey. Then, we took another step further and put together a recipe to compile these experiences in an organized way. We would like to share our steps and experiences on this journey, hoping that they will help you if you ever embark on the agile transformation journey.

Let's start with the ingredients in our agile transformation recipe. It has four key ingredients:

**Purpose, Plan, Action, and Continuity.**

Let's delve into these categories.

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## What should you aim for?

Start with an executive-level roadmap and vision.

Ask employees across the organization for feedback on the vision and areas for improvement. It is critical to reach a consensus on the next steps of the transformation.

Clarify the purpose of the transformation and the path forward using comprehensible and simple expressions.

Build consensus around an agenda for change in the organization, identify the KPIs, and communicate the roadmap transparently.

Make sure that the senior leadership team and the executives who will lead the transformation have a sound understanding of the agile mindset and principles.

Learn from the experiences of other organizations that have been through this transformation. Their stories will inspire you on this journey.

Make sure that your leadership team communicates consistent messages and storytelling to align the entire organization around the goals of the transformation.

## How should you plan the transformation?

Identify the fundamentals and key principles of the transformation.

Form a team to lead the transformation and work in sprints through well-structured reviews. Experiment with this way of working to inspect and adapt as you go.

You need to instill an agile mindset. In order to do that, arrange workshops, schedule training sessions, create digital content, and track it under a master development program.

Introduce development programs that improve cross-functional skills. Start a buddy program where employees tell each other about their work and learn from one another.

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## What actions to take?

Develop a communication plan that involves the entire organization, not just the teams that are nominated as the first ones to transform. Having a visible roadmap and communicating all the developments clearly will help build trust.

Define new roles and responsibilities clearly and share new career paths transparently.

Review and redesign goal-setting, performance management, and incentive processes through an agile lens.

Design a playbook and keep your working model up to date.

Defining a future state, even as a draft, will help you throughout the transformation.

Form a cross-functional team who will lead the entire transformation processes. Take the early steps towards introducing an Agile Office. If possible, position this structure under the HR umbrella.

Conduct small experiments, starting with a pilot project.

You should learn and calibrate the model in the pilot stage. This will hold true for the entire transformation journey, and you will need to inspect and adapt.

Track the progress of the pilot closely with the project team and sponsors, remove the obstacles, and move forward boldly. If you do not remove the obstacles in the pilot stage, your problems will multiply as you scale up your approach.

Continuous communication is as important as its transparency. Use all available communication channels to get your messages to resonate with your employees.

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Make the right tools and methods available to establish a healthy feedback loop with the transforming teams.

Ask for active support of agile-savvy employees and leaders who would like to lead the transformation. They will be your change agents and will work wonders in convincing skeptical people.

Establish an Agile Office and communicate the longevity of this path.

## How will you retain all this change?

Keep the communication clear and transparent across your organization.

Invest in people and help them develop new skills for new roles.

Measure continuously to ensure the long-term continuity of change. Identify your shortcomings and act fast to eliminate them.

## We would like you to keep the following in mind:

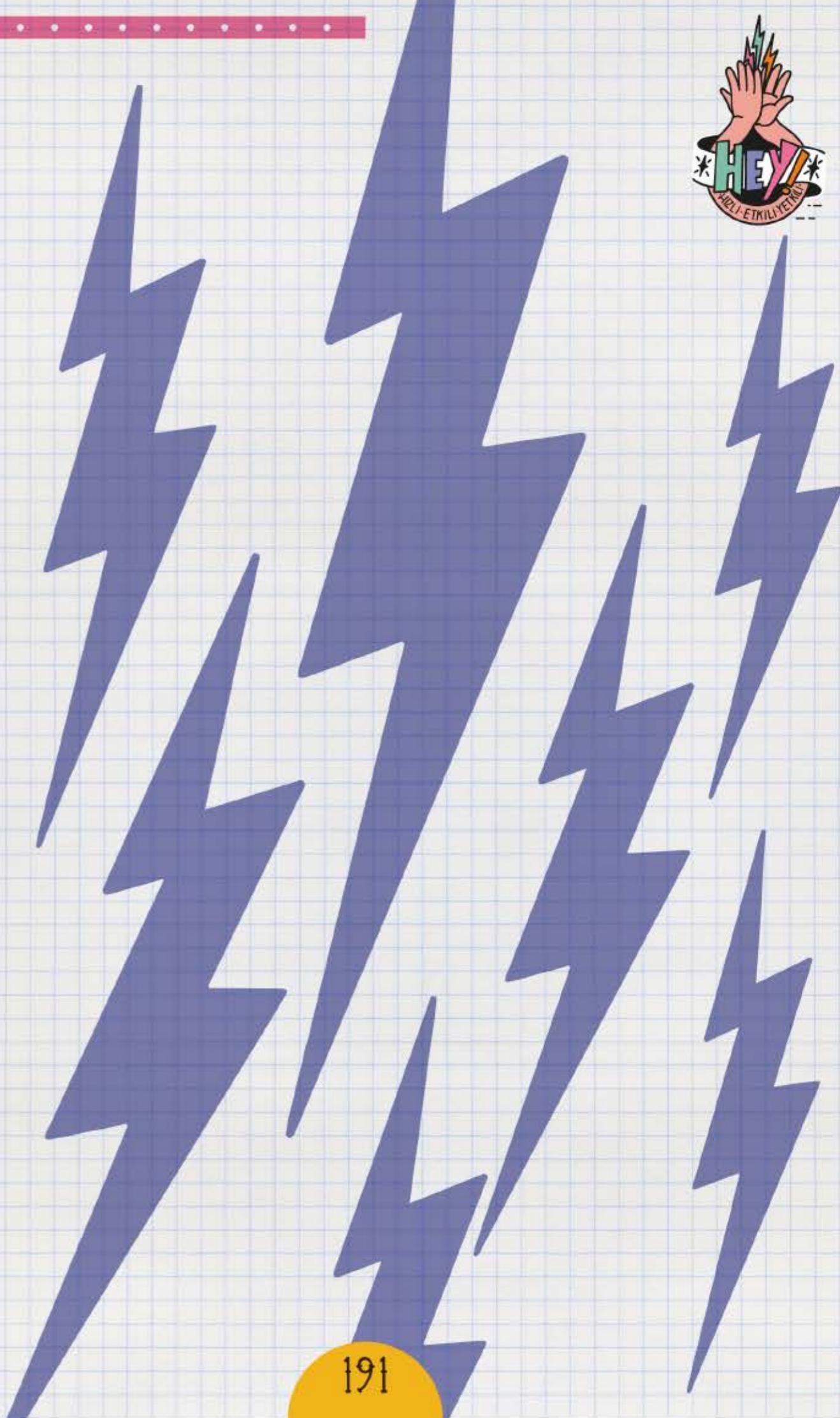
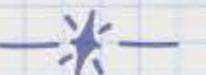
- Agile transformation needs full buy-in from your leadership team. You will spot gray areas along the way; therefore, it is important to have a solution-oriented approach at all times.
- Positioning the Tribe Leader role as part of the Executive Board and the top management is extremely helpful for communicating the strategy of the top management to teams and ensuring that the top management experiences and supports the environment created within teams.
- People are at the heart of this transformation. Therefore, leading this process through an Agile Office that operates within the HR function is a good practice.

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- Endorse the transformation organization-wide. An agile model lays the foundation for faster adaptation to change in both culture and ways of working.
- Embrace the rituals as they are critical for creating an operating rhythm.

We wish you the best on your  
transformation journey!





# Agility in Numbers



# Awards for Agility



As of December 2021



Agile team members:

1100+

Tribes:

7

Squads\*:

90+

Internal Agile Coaches:

13

Benchmark companies for HEY!:

60+

Sprints:

85+

3+ continents,  
10+ countries

\*Total number of Tribes, Support Teams  
and Self-Managing Teams

192

2021



**STEVIE International Business Awards**

Best Blog (Gold)

Company of the Year (Bronze)

Best Results of a Learning Program (Bronze)

Communications or PR Campaign of the Year (Bronze)



**PRIDA Communication Awards**

Change Management and Internal Communications (2nd)



**SARDIS Awards**

Best Integrated Corporate Communications (Gold)

Best Internal Communications Project (Silver)



**FELİS Awards**

Best Internal Communications (Success)



193



# HEY! Dictionary

There are many foreign words in our "HEY!" guide.

We can almost hear you ask why there are too many English words and whether their Turkish equivalents could have been used. Here, we have an explanation.

Agility is a global, language-agnostic philosophy with a unique terminology with many components. It is a way of working that is independent of place and borders and allows teams with different native languages across the globe to deliver results together.

However, there is not yet an accredited academic institution that has translated the agile terminology in our language. We could have translated it ourselves, but that would not mean much outside Allianz. Since it will not acquire a universal and national character, it can disappear as it will not be internalized. Therefore, it was important to use a common terminology when sharing our experiences beyond Allianz.

If an accredited academic institution translates the terminology into Turkish, we will take immediate action to use it.

**Below is the glossary of terms related to agility:**

**Agile:** Agility is an approach that has been used in IT for over decades and has created significant value for companies. It consists of 4 values and 12 principles. It is a value-oriented approach that aims for frequent delivery of outcomes and offers the flexibility and ability to adapt to changes quickly. It is a new methodology wherein self-organized teams with minimal supervision inspect and adapt to develop the optimum solution.

**Agile Coach:** They are the custodians of the agile mindset and agile processes.

**Backlog Refinement:** It is an instrumental Scrum ritual for reviewing the Product Backlog, discussing the backlog together with all team members, identifying the steps to be taken, continuously improving the backlog, estimating its scope, and developing "ready" backlog items.



**Business Owner:** They are part of support teams. They communicate the vision and ensure that the team prioritizes tasks and uses the resources in the most efficient way in line with the backlog and resource requirements. They are responsible for identifying the personal development goals and training needs of each team member.

**Cell Owner:** They are part of self-managing teams. They support the teams in their work and aim to improve team performance. They help teams understand their role in implementing the business strategy.

**Chapter:** It is a community of practice with a particular area of expertise within the tribes. Chapters share best practices, enhance knowledge sharing, and set standards in their area of expertise.

**Chapter Lead:** They are experts in a specific function, provide professional guidance, and play an active role in operations. They are responsible for the development of chapter members and setting standards for the whole chapter.

**Daily Scrum:** It is a 15-minute time-boxed event that is held every morning to discuss the tasks to be carried out during the day with all squad members. The purpose of the Daily Scrum is to plan the day ahead, inspect progress toward the Sprint Goal, and identifies the obstacles. With the latest update to Scrum Guide in November 2020, the prescribed daily scrum structure has been removed. However, asking the following questions is still a good and common technique:

1. What did I work on yesterday to contribute to the squad's achievement of the sprint goal?

2. What will I work on today to contribute to the squad's achievement of the sprint goal?
3. Is there any impediment that prevents me or the squad from achieving the sprint goal?

**MVP:** It is a version of a product with just enough features to be usable by early customers who can then provide feedback for future product development. It stands for Minimum Viable Product.

**POCLAC:** It is a review committee that consists of the Product Owner (PO), Agile Coach (AC), and Chapter Lead (CL) and assesses the performance of tribe members. While Product Owner provides guidance on "what" needs to be done, AC and CL inform on the "how" side of it. The name of the committee is an acronym derived from the initials of the titles of its members.

**Product Backlog:** The Product Backlog is an emergent, ordered list of what is needed to improve the product. It is the single source of work undertaken by the Scrum Team.

**Product Owner:** The Product Owner is responsible for the value-oriented prioritization of the backlog items related to the product. PO manages the product backlog, puts the backlog items in order, and prioritizes them. PO also gives voice to customers.

**Sprint:** They are the most widely used agile practices and the heartbeat of Scrum. These work events last one to four weeks and underpin the continuous and frequent delivery of customer value. Teams decide on a sprint length that is aligned with their delivery cycle.



**Sprint Backlog:** It is a list of committed deliverables in an active sprint and a subset of the Product Backlog. It is updated every sprint.

**Sprint Planning:** Sprint Planning initiates the Sprint by laying out the goal of the sprint, the work to be performed for the Sprint, and how it will be performed. This resulting plan is created by the collaborative work of the entire Scrum Team.

**Sprint Retrospective:** During this event, team members discuss team dynamics and how they can work more efficiently as a team, and make action plans for improvement solutions. The Sprint Retrospective covers all the topics related to the area of the expertise of the squad, including product backlog, prioritization, the Definition of Ready and Done, relationships within the team, value orientation, and communication and interaction with stakeholders.

**Sprint Review:** Sprint review focuses on the product. The purpose of the sprint review is to demonstrate the outcome of the sprint to the stakeholders.

**Squad:** A squad is a cross-functional group that unites complementary skill sets towards the same strategic goal. A squad should ideally have 10 or fewer people. Squads work independently, have end-to-end responsibilities, and are empowered to make decisions.

**Tribe:** It brings together squads with shared goals. It has customer focus and a broad vision along with decision-making authority over production, profitability, and any other area that is related to a particular line of business.

**Tribe Leader:** TL is responsible for the management and all the business outcomes of its tribe, as well as the achievement of the goals of the tribe.

**Tribe Member:** They are product developers.

**User Story:** They are written from the perspective of an end-user of a product. User stories are a natural way of describing a feature to be used by the end-user and the related tasks to be performed during the sprint.





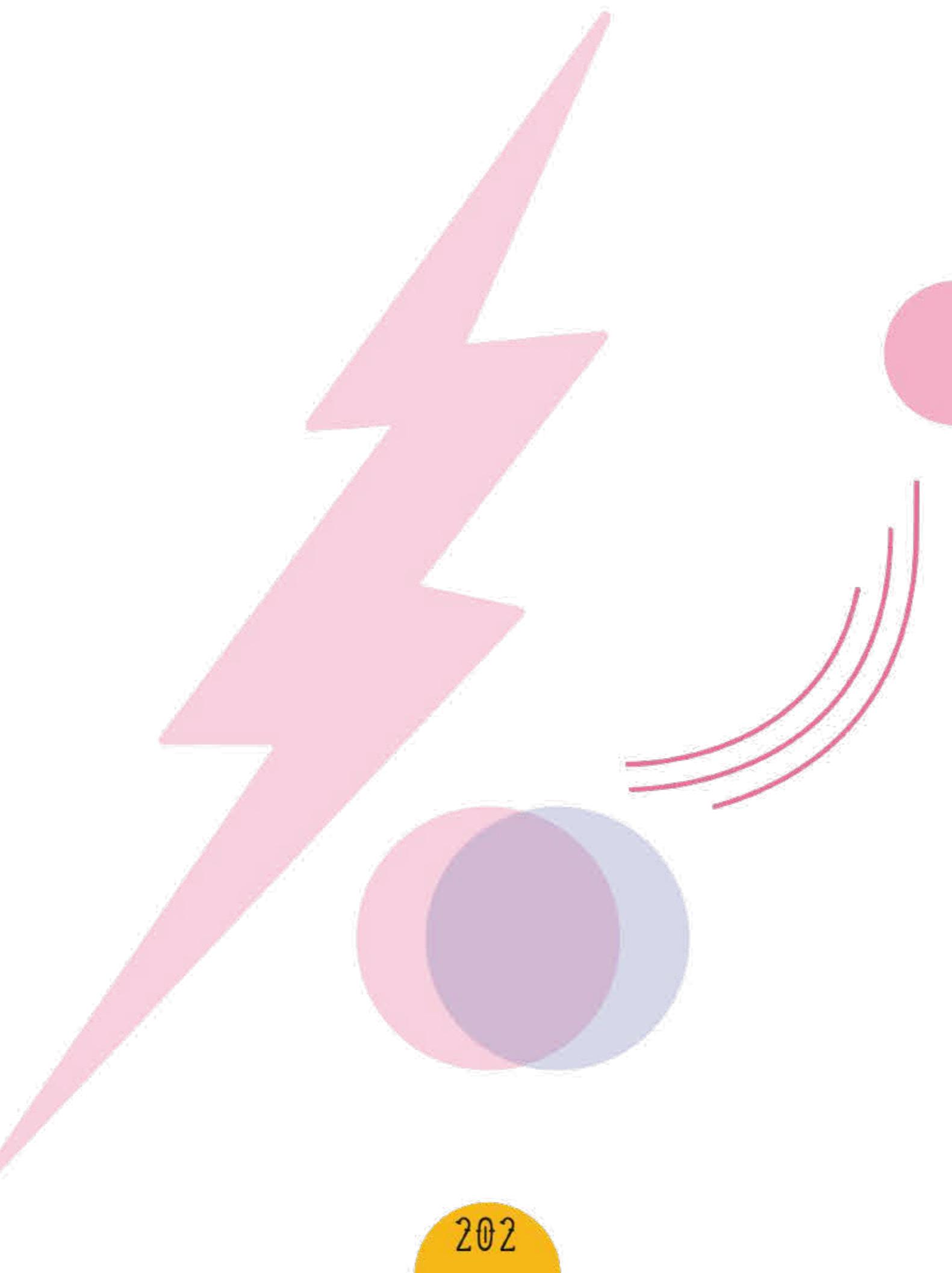
we listen to team  
members who have  
recently transitioned  
to Agile



# What did the agile transformation change?

None of this would  
have been possible  
without them

The comments  
of agile team  
members:





“

**Our flexibility to adapt  
to transformation  
has increased.**

”

**Arif Aytekin / Deputy CEO**

Our agile working model and new ways of doing business, brought by **HEY!**, have increased our flexibility to keep up with the transformation we experience in a different dimension every day.

Our colleagues from different disciplines are brought together in agile teams and are working towards common goals with great team chemistry. These teams, where all team members fully support each other, share tasks and duties, and create added value together, achieve great success.

across the organization. They make their music, rhythm, and harmony resonate across the organization, almost like an orchestra.

Reinforced by our 7 passions, this synergy supports Allianz's journey from good to great in every field.





“

**Independent  
but coordinated...  
Just like a start-up.**

”

**Ayhan Bahar** /Chapter Lead, P/C Commercial Tribe

The agile working model is valuable as the team members are empowered and therefore take more ownership of their work.

With the agile transformation, we significantly flattened the hierarchy in the organizational structure and eliminated the cumbersome processes, which are natural consequences of the hierarchy, by dividing the company into smaller, independent but coordinated units with the startup mindset.

Agile working made our work more

balanced and organized. While we were solely focused on execution before, we now work just as much on accurate/effective planning and evaluation of results to improve the ways of working. Instead of trying to find perfect solution over a long period of uncertainty, we focus on the best solution we can produce in a reasonable time.

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“

**I am now glad  
that we are working  
this way.**

”

**Aysegül Özbek / Team Member, Health Tribe**

My husband works for an engineering company with approximately 80 employees. The company develops projects for other companies and has very detailed processes where employees are required to work in coordination. My husband and I talk about our days in the evening.

He mainly complains that the project leaders are not clear and that they are not given sufficient information about the progress of the projects. After a while,

I realized that the team members working on the project were actually unaware of the activities of others. Then, I asked him, "Why don't you have a quick meeting every morning, just like we do? You can align everything and make progress more quickly by making 15 minutes for this meeting."

When I shared other details about the process with him, he liked it. Then, I realized that the rituals are actually very important, even though they seem difficult at the beginning. I believe that although the agile transformation seems scary at first, team members will definitely say, "I am glad that we are working this way."





“

**We are similar to the orchestra of a music school.**

”



“

**Our secret was our focus on success.**

”

**Bahar Demir /** Tribe Officer, P/C Retail Tribe

The transformation we are experimenting with reminds me of the orchestra of a music school. Instruments that have different sounds alone can produce much more impressive and powerful sounds when they are brought together and played in harmony. Musicians with different talents can practice together and find the opportunity to develop themselves, each other, and their compositions.

With the agile transformation, we created a work environment where team members with different areas of expertise can evaluate a task from all aspects. This environment allows us to assess issues quickly, make quick decisions, and share responsibilities. We all feel responsible for profitability.

**Bircan Çağlayan /** Chapter Lead, Digital Tribe

Agile is a never-ending journey for us. It is a marathon where we run towards a common goal in close contact with the “Build-Measure-Learn” cycle. In marathons, focusing on success ensures sustainable performance and proper acceleration. This is what we tried to do as a team.

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“

**We attach great importance to this journey, which we embarked on by embracing our value of being a pioneer.**

”

**Damla Özer /** Business Owner, Organizational Development, Talent Management and Employee Experience

As Human Resources, we attach great importance to this transformation journey, which we embarked on by embracing our value of being a pioneer. It is a great opportunity to be part of the agile transformation, which meets the expectations of the new generation and ensures adaptation to the changing world with a model that gives end-to-end responsibility to fully empowered teams in a lean organization that is completely free from hierarchy. We are happy to see the positive impact of this transformation on our colleagues and to be faster, more efficient, and more empowered.



“

**The perception that ‘it cannot be done’ has been destroyed.**

”

**Derya Çeliker /** Product Owner, P/C Retail Tribe

The most visible benefits of our agile transformation are the culture of responding quickly to the market and the elimination of prioritization issues or uncertainty we were facing while working towards the same goal. We can both identify the problem, suggest actions, make a decision, and implement it during the same sprint. This work is the collaborative effort of several individuals with different skills.

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The prevailing perception in the pre-agile era that “it cannot be done” has been destroyed. Thanks to the agile transformation, several projects that could not be implemented as they were “very difficult” or required “great effort” can now be implemented very quickly. We can now be bolder with big projects. We can get more work done in the same amount of time without sacrificing quality. New ideas are highly valued in “HEY!”, and all team members are encouraged to come up with new ideas. There are many different platforms where every member can express their opinions.

“HEY!” proved to be particularly advantageous in the management of “crisis.” A corporate culture of continuous learning and innovation has been embraced by more motivated employees.



“

**Structured sharing instead of meetings.**

”

**Emrah Gökmen /** Chapter Lead, Health Tribe

This fundamental transformation journey is similar to the transformation a caterpillar into a butterfly. It had a positive impact on every aspect. A caterpillar’s transformation into a butterfly is very difficult process and takes time.

This transformation both improved team bonding and established a closer relationship between CLs and ACs, as it creates a sense of togetherness and unity. I think this communication made a significant difference.

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Even though it seems that we are now having more meetings, I consider them as structured sharing activities and tools for proper and productive sharing.

The close monitoring of market dynamics, competition, and customer needs, as well as the ability to respond quickly, facilitated proper prioritization. “HEY!” also enabled teams to work together and be aware of each other's work and improved team spirit.

As a CL, it is my duty to make sure that team members are on the right track on their development journey towards their goals, to motivate them, to remove the obstacles in their path when necessary, to raise awareness about strategic priorities, and to ensure coordination in the tribe in line with these priorities. With “HEY!”, it is easier to fulfill these duties.



“

**It was critical to design together.**

”

**Engin Ormancı /** Chapter Lead, Life & Pension Tribe

I believe that our “HEY!” journey resembles an effort to develop a powerful machine that delivers 99.9 percent efficiency every day. In the IT Department, working closely with other business units is a great advantage for us. It was critical to clearly understand the reasons and rationale behind business needs and design the process step by step with other business units from the very beginning.



One of the most memorable events during this transformation was the New Year's celebration dinner held at the end of 2019, before the pandemic, and attended by many employees. I hope that we will once again celebrate our achievements happily, peacefully, and in good health after the pandemic.

The greatest benefits of “HEY!” are the understanding of the business strategy and the rationale behind it, the opportunity to clearly observe the impact of the support we provide as the IT Department, and the ability to quickly design and continuously develop the desired products and modules together with other business units in line with the MVP mindset from the very beginning.



**Evren Ayorak /** Chief IT Officer

**We transformed by internalizing organizational agility.**

The next generations will categorize the events and organizational models in the world of business as pre-pandemic and post-pandemic and will mark the pandemic as a milestone. Traditional hierarchical structures had already begun to dissolve as a result of the dizzying digital transformation and striking competition in the recent years. The pandemic clearly showed that these traditional structures were no

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longer functional, especially in the location-independent world of business. Anticipating this change is actually an organizational capability. Organizations that adopted agile approaches and made an effort to integrate them into their culture not only mitigated their losses during the pandemic, but they also emerged from it stronger.

The transformation began in the field of information technologies. Thus, technological transformation projects became the success stories of business units and models and ultimately led to the transformation of the entire organization.

We internalized organizational agility day by day and transformed our entire organization over time. As an organization, we learned new things every day, applied our knowledge to our work, never gave up despite our failures, and defined transformation as our most important value.

This transformation is worth any challenge, given its advantages such as the promotion of taking ownership, responsibility, and initiative and making bold attempts without the fear of making mistakes, as well as the satisfaction of bringing marketing, product, actuarial, customer experience, and software development teams together around a common goal and producing results together.

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“

**The ability to finish  
a meeting  
in 15 minutes...**

”

**Feral Sunar / Agile Coach**

I have recently had great experiences with “Daily Scrums” in two teams. During Sprint 0, members of one of the teams transitioned to agile under my guidance kept saying that they might not be able to finish the Daily Scrums in 15 minutes. Then came Sprint 1, and they finished the first Daily Scrum in 15 minutes. I thought it was beginner’s luck and that the following Daily Scrums would last longer. Several sprints went by, but they can still finish the Daily Scrums in 15 minutes.

Another team transitioned to agile under my guidance first said, “We cannot finish Daily Scrums in 15 minutes.” When they finished the first two Daily

Scrums in 45 minutes, I realized that the duration would not shorten on its own. I reminded them that they should not think of Daily Scrums as a department meeting, and asked them to pay attention to the duration of the meeting the next day. I did not have much hope, but surprisingly, the team finished the Daily Scrum in 15 minutes the next day. They are still just as focused. I never thought that both teams would be able to adapt so quickly. I still smile when I think about them.

In my opinion, the most visible result of the agile working model is the significant improvement in “job satisfaction” and “sense of achievement.”



“

**All employees are  
the leaders of  
their work.**

”

**Fisun Koç Doğan /** Chief L/P Officer

In the Life and Pension branch; the market, regulations, and customer needs are changing more rapidly than ever. A roadmap to be created by the top management is now essential to follow, adapt, and lead. All employees should be the leaders of their work.

Forming small teams that have end-to-end responsibility, make decisions in line with the strategies, take action, observe the results, and revise their strategies and actions contributes to the development of the leadership skills of employees and increases the success of the company.

Allianz, which resembled a powerful but slow-moving truck in the past, now responds to the market with

agile solutions, just like a passenger car, and identifies problems more quickly, while also maintaining its customer focus, thanks to its agile transformation.

As I mentioned, there has been a rapid change. The regulation that came out of nowhere and included persons under the age of 18 in personal pension schemes is a recent example. Our Tribe entered the market much faster than before, thanks to our confident decisions, our technical superiority in devoting resources to this topic, and our determination to bring all the relevant teams together around this topic. Our tribe structure was a major contributing factor. We have reaped the benefits of our agility with our outstanding performance in the market. I would like to congratulate those who contributed to this achievement. I believe that we will add more and more agile achievements to our record.



“  
Learning from  
each other  
while working  
for the same purpose.  
”

**Meltem Gürses /** Team Member, P/C Commercial Tribe

Before I started working agile, one of the greatest challenges I faced at work was to contact a developer. It is great to work for the same purpose as developers and to watch them contribute to the business while hearing their point of view. It feels like we are building a wall together brick by brick. Suddenly, you find yourself analyzing database tables and even making suggestions about coding. That is what agility is all about! It feels as if we were not working for a corporation but running our own business.



“  
We can get involved  
in everything,  
just like a  
quick-reaction force.  
”

**Mesut Ateş /** Product Owner, P/C Retail Tribe

In my opinion, the agile transformation itself is like a “play watched with great interest” because of the bewilderment and wonder of the teams or companies watching the first teams transition to this model.

Thanks to my past experiences at Allianz Turkey, I had the opportunity to serve as PO in 3 different squads. As a PO, contributing directly to business results helped me improve as I both gained experience and

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“



**“We worked closely with individuals in different roles and with different skills and responsibilities.”**

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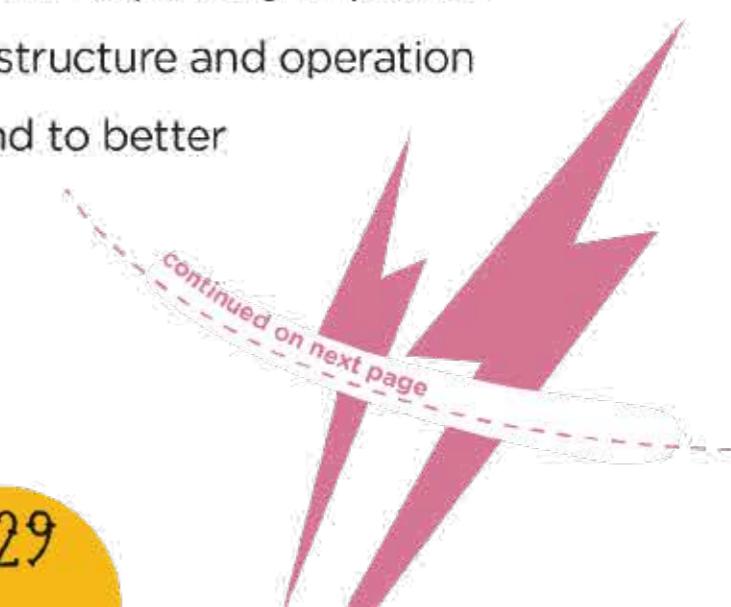
**Nadide Dinç /** Product Owner, Digital Tribe

found motivation. “**HEY!**” also made a difference in creating backlogs, understanding corporate strategies, and focusing on targets.

Our role in the organization can be defined as a “wildcard” as it requires contact with several functions such as Product, Actuarial, Operations and Finance.

We assumed a cross-functional role in “**HEY!**”, just like military teams known as “Quick Reaction Force”.

“**HEY!**” allowed me to see and experience how the business and processes can become more efficient. I believe that the main factor behind the increase in efficiency is the ability to take quick action and run the processes as quickly as possible, which is a result of the agile working model. The new working model gave us the opportunity to work together as teammates with individuals in different roles and with different skills and responsibilities, which especially improved our ability to see the entire structure and operation from a wider perspective and to better understand the processes.





“

**We are breaking new ground and asking questions over and over again.**

”

**Okan Özdemir /** Chief Health Officer

Today, since change and transformation have become the norm rather than the exception, agile perspectives and practices are indispensable for corporations.

Organizations that have internalized agility are one step closer to success. I believe that the main factor behind this success is our ability to break new ground by challenging past views and ask questions over and over again and again in line with agile perspectives.

Thanks to “**HEY!**”, we adopted this approach and made and continue to make significant progress in lead time, simplicity, and customer satisfaction. The factors behind this achievement were our competent teams who are capable of taking responsibility and initiative and have a well-developed commercial mindset, as well as our bold attitude, which leads us to try new things without fear, and our culture of open and transparent communication. We constantly develop by learning from each other and through experience.

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“

**Who wouldn't want  
to have these  
competencies?**

”

**Onur Kirci /** Chief Marketing & Digital Officer

Even though the concept and practice of agility seem like a way of working at first glance, it is actually an expression of corporate culture. A customer-oriented perspective, empowered employees, joint decision-making, an increased pace, and the ability to stay up-to-date... Who wouldn't want to have these competencies today? In my opinion, HEY! is the greatest cultural transformation that meets the need for change on this path.



“

**Thanks to ‘HEY!',  
we respond to changes  
much more quickly.**

”

**Öktem Örkün /** Chief P/C Commercial Officer

The pace of change in our personal lives and in the world of business is dizzying. Even though technological developments are prominent in this process, our way of addressing issues and our needs is changing radically. Now, expectations are changing much more rapidly, and our interaction with others is being re-established accordingly. We now need to make new ideas, services, or products available in the

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market very quickly; to collect customer feedback; and to find ways to adapt to this new situation. After the unexpected challenges in 2020, we realized that the investments of our organization in agility yield results and provide us with a significant competitive advantage. Thanks to the “**HEY!**” journey, which we embarked on together, our organization is now able to respond to changes much more quickly, and we are proud of this ability. I believe that this great cultural transformation, which is the first of its kind in our industry, will become further embedded in our DNA over time and will provide a much broader perspective.



“

**A planned, shared,  
and interactive  
working experience**

”

**Özlem Yanmaz Ateş /**

Business Owner,  
ATA (Allianz Turkey Academy)  
and Human Resources Business Partners

Agile working model supports each of my colleagues in acquiring expertise in different areas and learning from each other. Not only it provides us with a clear view of disciplines, concrete work outputs, and the value created, it also offers an opportunity for self-realization as it gives end-to-end responsibility to individuals. Agile transformation also contributes to





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**It makes difference  
in work output  
and speed.**

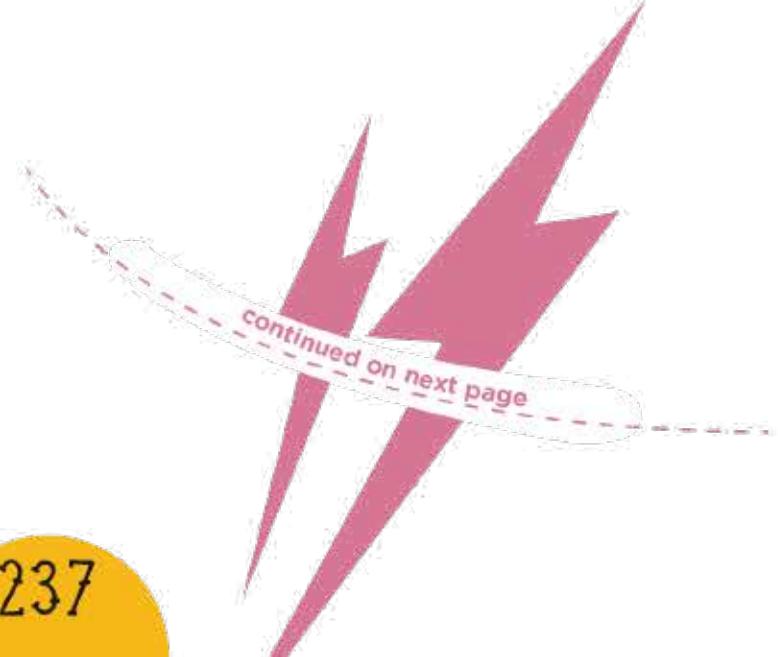
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the efficiency of the hybrid working process by offering a more planned, shared, and interactive working experience to all professionals, especially when adapting to new working models.

**Seçil Göker Aycan /** Chapter Lead, Digital Tribe

The agile organizational structure visibly improves the competence of the team by ensuring that the work is executed by teams from end to end. “HEY!” team members, who can take initiative and stand stronger on their own feet, make a difference in work output and speed.





“

**‘Agile learning’ has become indispensable to us.**

”

**Sena Türker /** Product Owner, Health Tribe

I remember asking “How are we going to do it,” before the agile transformation journey. I was worried about whether we would be able to complete the tasks in two weeks and deliver our work without any problem. It has been nearly 2 years since we had such worries. Now, our agile working model reminds me of Formula 1 races. Everyone is a part of a large organization, and it is not possible to reach the finish line without everyone

contributing to the work. Pit stops are user stories in which everyone contributes to the value created by the team, and the goal is to cross the finish line as a team rather than reaching there first.

In the agile transformation journey, after finding the answer to the question “How will we do it,” I answered the question “What are we going to do,” in different teams and different roles. Therefore, I can say that the greatest contribution of this journey is the ability to gain competence and experience outside of my area of expertise. I met many new people and gained significant experience. Furthermore, agile learning has become indispensable to me.

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**Agile like a panther  
but not vulnerable.**

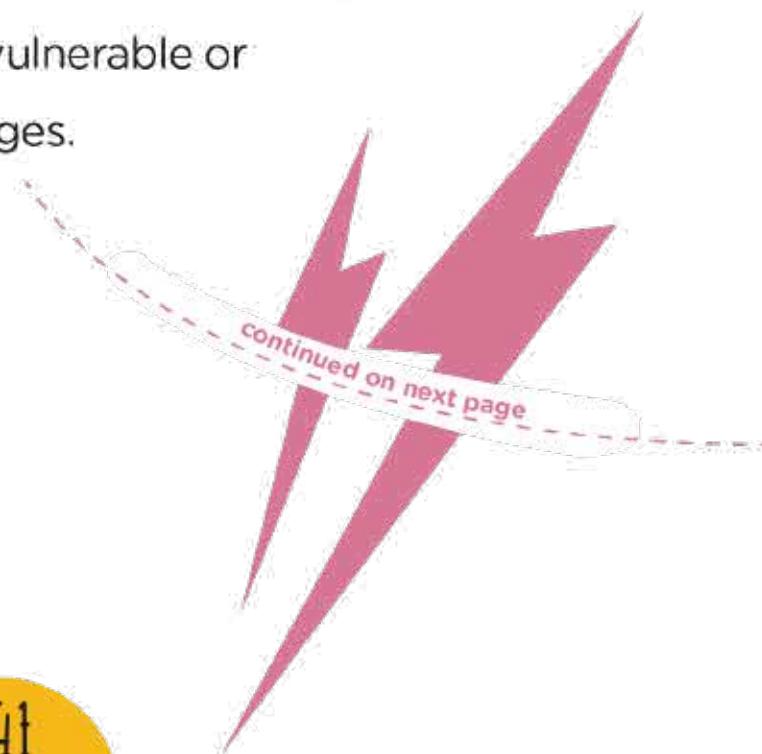
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**Suat Didari / Chief P/C Retail Officer**

I believe that the agile working model strengthens two muscles in the company: planning ability and flexibility. It leads you to plan the entire month or even the year in order to manage dependencies, plan the resources to be devoted to projects, and calculate the effort, while also being flexible enough to navigate through uncertainty and be prepared for unexpected events.

We hope that we will always be fast, efficient, and empowered.

I believe that our agile transformation resembles a panther: It is agile but not vulnerable. The most common complaint across all organizations is the change of priorities. We had similar complaints, but they have been resolved. Our teams are ready to embrace the changes, which are the natural consequences of this transformation. Therefore, we are as agile as a panther and not vulnerable or demotivated to adapt to changes.



It is important to me to be available to my 58 team members and have the chance to contact and listen to everyone.

I understand that we moved on to the next level in customer focus in the agile model.

“**HEY!**” contributed to the introduction of the concept of end-to-end responsibility for profitability in lines of business. As squads were also formed accordingly, we have become a performance-oriented organization.

This transformation provided great advantages for the longevity of our business.

For instance, we held a dinner for an important series of portfolio actions and finished the analysis before the breakfast. Then, we made a decision at the breakfast. After lunch, we aligned with our stakeholders and prepared for the practice before dinner. We implemented it while everyone was asleep.



“

**I proudly watch  
teams with  
end-to-end responsibility.**

”

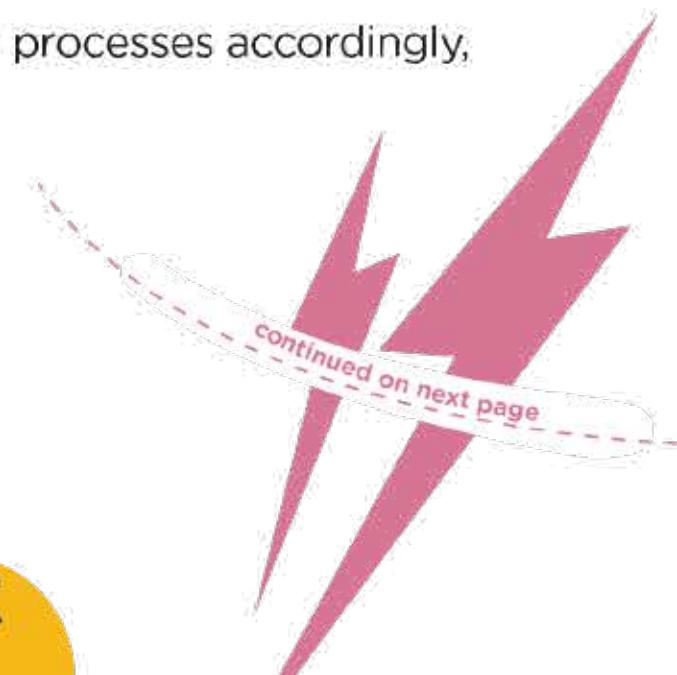
**Taylan Türkölmez /** Life Insurance & Pension  
and Bancassurance General Manager

While maintaining our leading position among loyalty programs in Life Insurance and Pension, we started to manage the changes required by both the market dynamics and legislation, with an agile team that has an increasing end-to-end responsibility and guides the top management. I am proudly watching how members from all areas of expertise are prioritizing tasks in a strategic manner, coming up with more and more new business ideas in this context, and guiding the organization of our Life Insurance and Pension companies.

Sprint Reviews are also open to us, and I try to attend them whenever I am available. I witnessed how the

Agile model increased transparency tremendously and allowed us to see all the phases of the business down to the last detail. I can easily see that each member's level of experience and contribution to the business is increasing day by day. I am very happy to see that agility increases curiosity, courage, discipline, and stability in all teams.

There has been a significant increase in knowledge sharing and collaboration both within teams and between different teams. As agility became widespread across the company, teams began to adapt more easily to each other's ways of working and plans. Of course, we still have a long way to go: We have areas for improvement. I look forward to the emergence of Allianz Turkey as a customer-oriented "Agile Giant" that improves its processes accordingly, after the transformation of the few remaining teams and the necessary IT investments are completed.





“

**We used to be heavy like the Titanic, but now we are speedboats.**

”

**Uğur Tatlı /** Product Owner, Life Insurance & Pension Tribe

In my opinion, this transformation bears some resemblance to a chameleon because we can change quickly. When necessary, we can work on different projects with different teams and achieve results that meet the needs of that project. Working with the IT Department in particular accelerated many of the steps we took during the transformation. Now, we can move faster but more deliberately. In short, we used to be heavy like the Titanic, but we have managed to turn into a maneuverable speedboat.



“

**Our team spirit is reinforced.**

”

**Vesile Kurun /** Chapter Lead, P/C Retail Tribe

Our agile transformation journey reminds me of Tesla.

In this process, I have experienced tremendous changes in communication, openness, transparency, cooperation, and efficiency. Every moment we spent as a team was a sweet memory for us. Our communication and team spirit improved. We started to get work done more quickly as a team, and our employee engagement increased.



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## We continue to transform all functions in our organization.

We also made a “teaser” by compiling feedback from the members of Support Teams and Self Managing Teams who have experienced the transformation in their own functions. Details will be shared in our next book.

**Coming soon!**

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“

We implemented  
a holistic  
transformation!

”

**Abdullah Akkurt/** Bancassurance, Strategy  
and Channel Management Director

Our new structure enables us to fully understand our common goals, our current status, and our agenda as a team, and to implement a holistic transformation without any gray areas.

The feedback provided by our colleagues so far is exactly as we imagined and expected, which indicates that our Agile Office is taking the right steps.

Every day we follow these principles, we feel more and more confident that we will eliminate the shortcomings on our transformation journey thanks to the agile transformation, and that this transformation will bring us closer to our collective dream and the ideal structure more quickly.

continued on next page



“

**I am glad that we broke new ground.**

”

**Ahu Ekşi /** Chapter Lead, P/C Commercial Tribe

Agile transformation is one of the things I am grateful for. Agile working made a great contribution to our ability to work as a "team" when we suddenly went home due to the pandemic, transitioned to remote working, and could never see some of the newcomers face to face. I am glad that we broke new ground and started our agile transformation journey. Thus, we were ready to face the challenges and maintain our success as a self managing team, just when flexibility and agility were needed most.

Together with the Agile Office, we started with a design that will meet our needs, and we felt their support throughout the journey. We would like to thank the Agile Office.

*continued on next page*



**“  
My level of  
empathy increased  
”**

**Caner Sevki Ohri /** Team Member, Investment Management

Imagine that you have the wind at your back and sail away from the shore and that you feel nervous about sailing in the open sea but are also happy to discover something new. That is exactly how I feel this about the agile transformation. We all transitioned to Agile, thinking what will happen, wondering whether the transformation will be “Epic or Lyrical,” and feeling confused about the concepts. I reached the following conclusions: I realized how important empathy is, what everyone on the team is going through, how they feel while working, what their roles are in the big picture, and what stages they go through while fulfilling their roles.



**“  
Our synergy spread  
across the  
organization.  
”**

**Ertuğrul Yücenur /** Chief Sales and Distribution Officer

The transition of the Tribes we work with to the agile working model also strengthened our sales teams in the field. We started to produce more efficient results with our customer-focused, market-leading pioneering products and services and quick solutions. We observed the experience even more closely as our Sales Support teams started to use the agile framework.

We will get one step closer to the unique customer experience we have always desired, by spreading in waves the synergy and energy created by agile working in our organization.





“

**More transparent,  
more skeptical...**

”

**Ersin Pak /** Chief Financial Officer

It is very pleasing to see that in addition to the organizational change, our working culture and way of working became also more transparent, more skeptical, and more embracing of problems as a result of the agile transformation.



“

**We are one of  
the companies that  
fresh graduates  
most want to work for.**

”

**Fahri Kaan Toker /** Chief Operations Officer

I believe that the agile way of working resembles cloud computing. Instead of a closed-circuit system in which a single host computer runs, it is a transparent working model that can grow and shrink rapidly according to needs, consists of parts serving the main purpose, and reduces costs and increases productivity when used with the right business model. I believe that the agile way of working is not a goal, but a method that aims to promote innovation, productivity, and employee satisfaction.



“

I believe that  
‘HEY!’ means  
efficient teamwork  
and quality work outputs.

”

**Şebnem Karaduman /** Chief Legal Officer

I believe that the integration of the functions served by support departments into the way of working is critical for efficient teamwork and achieving quality work outputs. As the legal department, our achievements on this journey, which we embarked on for the abovementioned purposes, are not limited to these.

The journey is the transformation story of a legal team that can take initiative more easily, internalize its role in the Company's general goals and strategies, and see products and processes from the perspective of a business partner.



“

The word ‘me’  
was replaced by  
the word ‘we’.

”

**Şirin Vargün /** Team Member, Corporate Communications and Sustainability

I believe that our “HEY!” journey is similar to a hourglass. It resembles the story of the sand, which has been flowing down for a long time and starts to flow to the opposite side when the bottle is turned over. What we are experiencing is the change itself. Adapting to it and trying to be the change itself is both challenging and different. It is a process that adds value as traditional methods lose their functionality, more voices are heard, teamwork becomes more important than individual work, and the word “me” is replaced by “we.”





“

**We are also leading the industry.**

”



“

**Our work has become even more enjoyable with HEY!**

”

**Türkan Yalçınkaya /** Business Owner, Internal Audit

An agile audit mechanism is an important part of the agile working culture adopted by our company. We started to implement our agile audit model, which is a leading model in the industry, for an audit environment that will provide assurance, especially in cases of increasing uncertainty and crisis in the new world order.

**Uğur İzzet Çomoğlu /** Business Owner, Operation Support

This is the story of an Agile transformation focused on ownership and learning.

It is a journey where team members provide information, take responsibility and initiative, take joint decisions, ask questions, are eager to learn about different jobs, and most importantly, allow us to enjoy our job more in order to meet the expectations of our internal customers.

As speed and continuous development are very important today, agile lights our way.



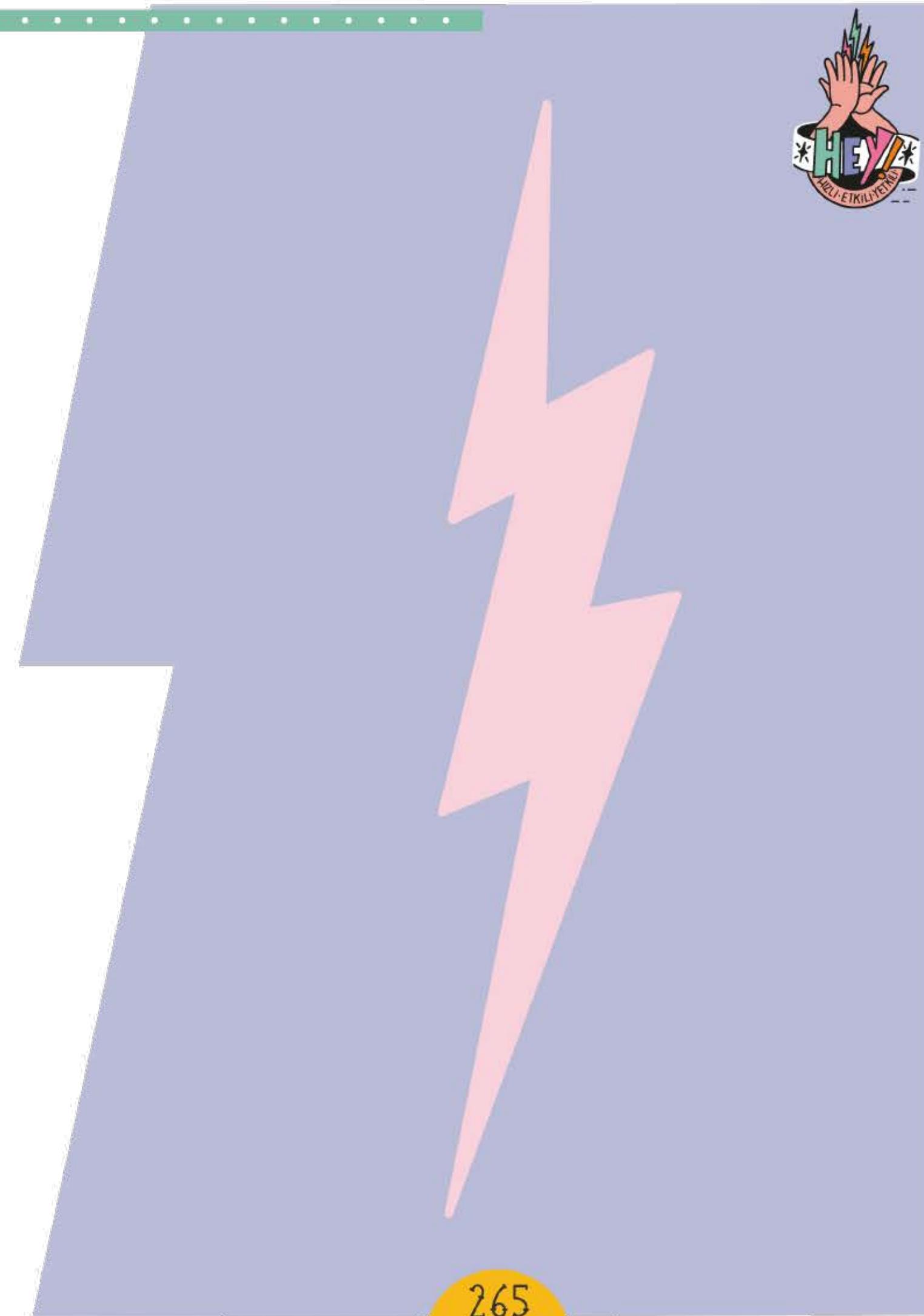
“

**Agile transformation  
also strengthened  
our team communication.**

”

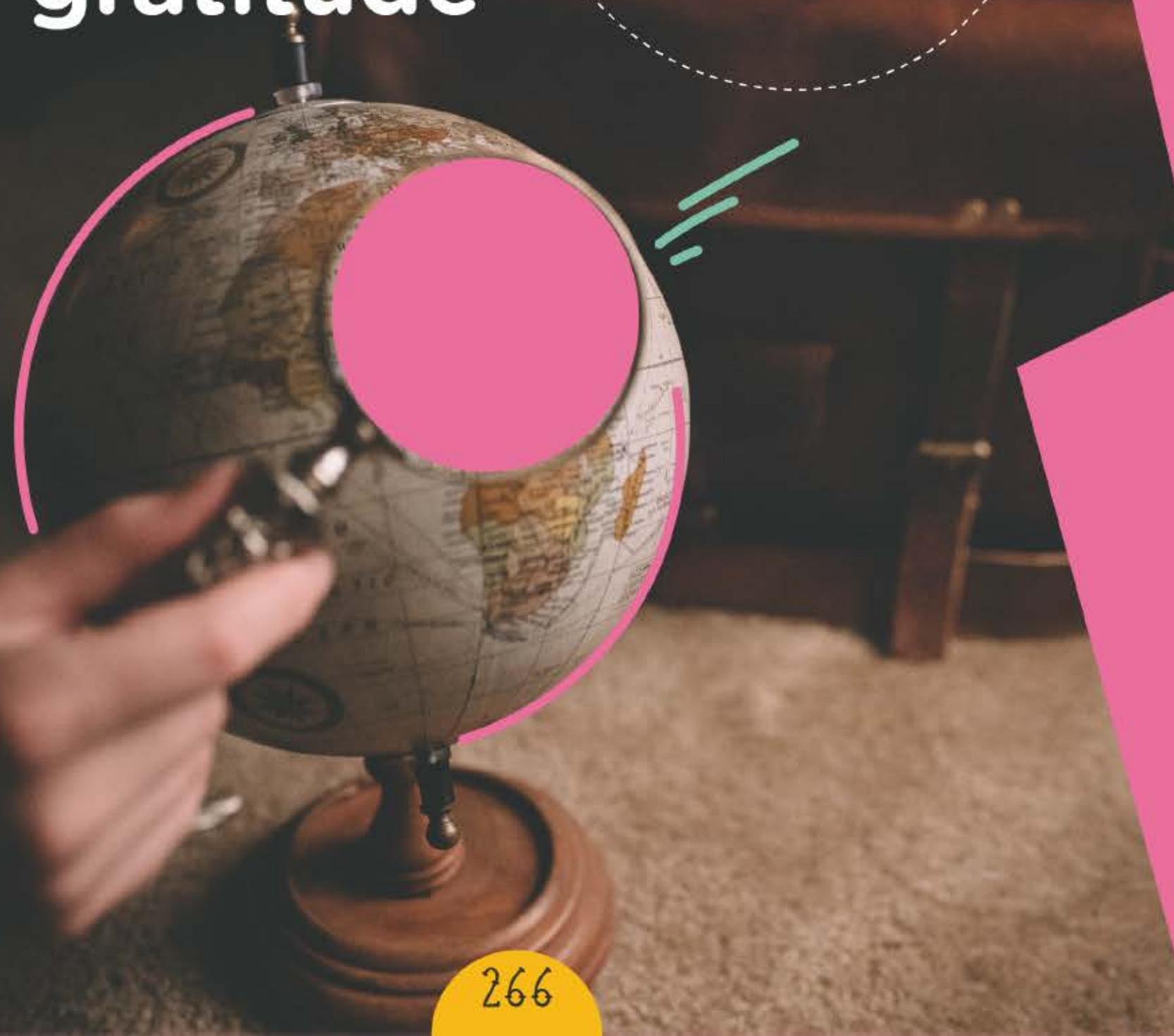
**Ulaş Öztürk /** Corporate Elementary Sales,  
Strategy and Business Development Director

Before the agile transformation, we had questions about how the new model would be adapted to our current way of working. I am glad to see that agile transformation not only energized our team, but also strengthened our team communication. It improved the speed and quality of our work, especially when we were experiencing extraordinary times such as the pandemic. In my opinion, one of the most important advantages of this process was to see how quickly our teams adapted to the agile working model. From now on, my goal will be to spread the agile working model across our organization.





# We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude



to all our colleagues and agile coaches who walked with us,

to all our leaders who supported and guided us, and

to all our stakeholders who worked in collaboration with us to enable the transformation on our agile transformation journey!



# Allianz HEY!

The Story of an Agile Transformation



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