



Draft, Work
in Progress

Whitepaper:

The state of Agile

(using maps)

Philippe Guenet | October 2018

Executive Summary

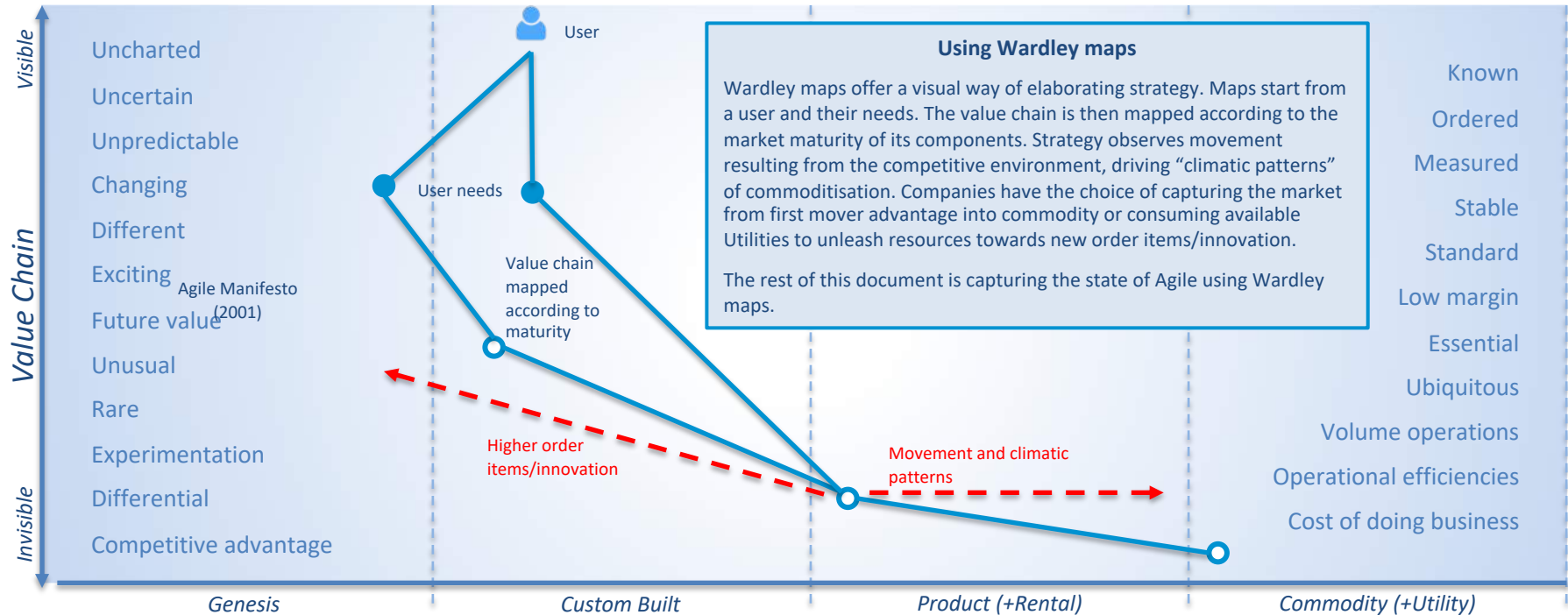
- Agile is in a state of transition
- From doing Agile to being agile
- Being agile calls for a new set of emerging practices and skills
- A chasm is opening between traditional Agile and the emerging practices
- Is Agile about to hit crisis point?

- Agile is a means, not a goal
- It is about transforming enterprises into Digital businesses
- A systemic approach to agility of strategy, organisation, operations and leadership is needed
- New approaches will also require new ways of deploying them
- Existing leadership has to be at the centre of driving the change

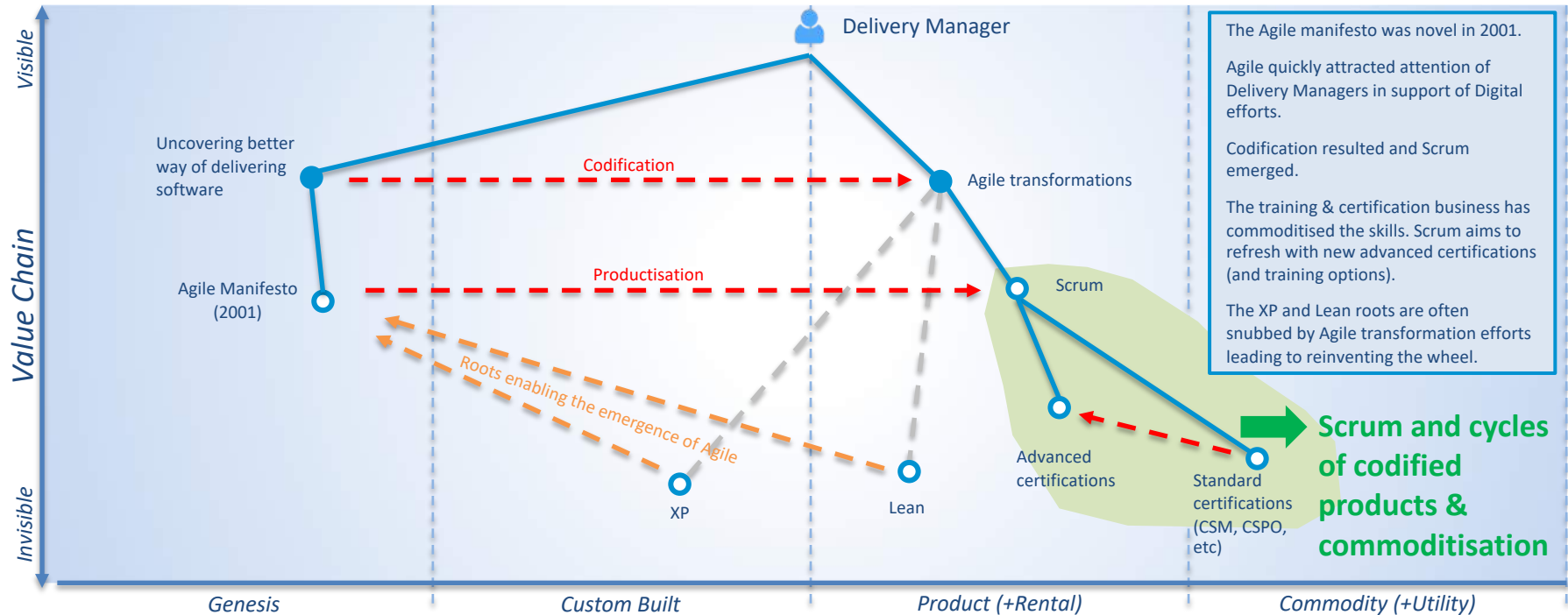
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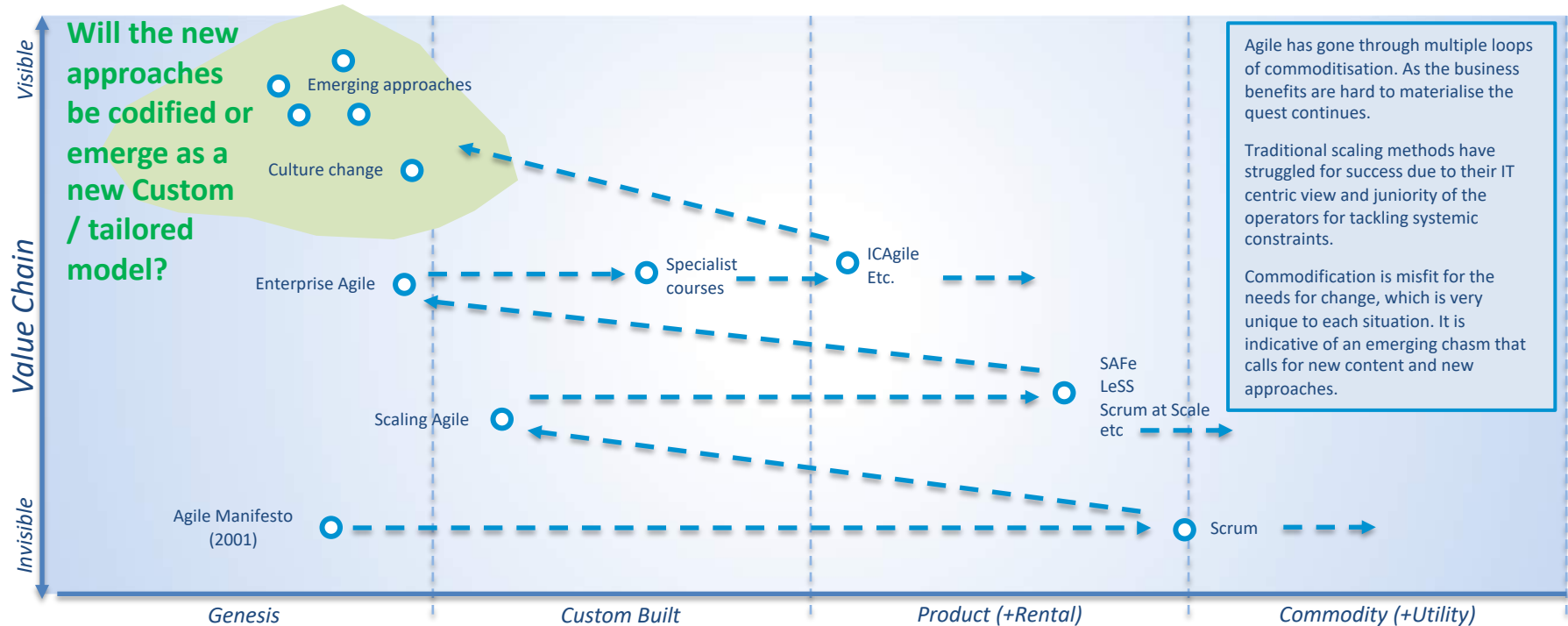
About Wardley maps



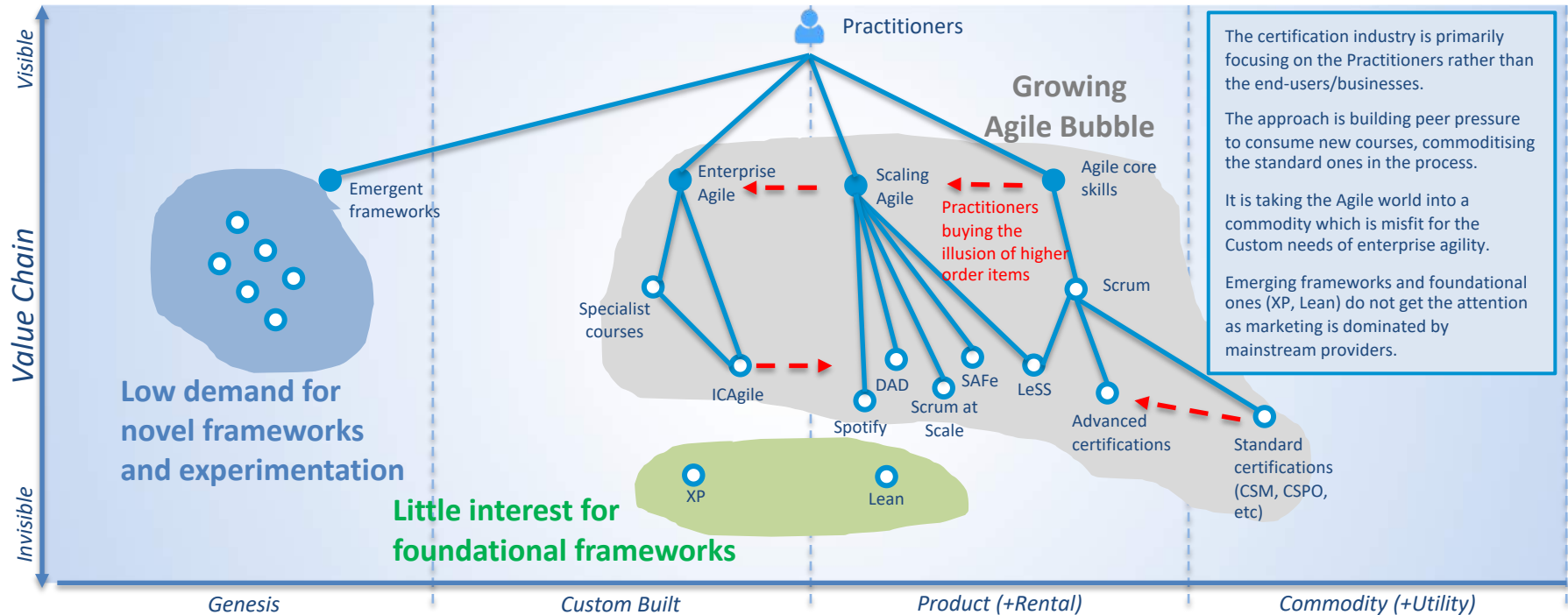
Commodification of Agile



The quest of “being agile”



The Agile bubble



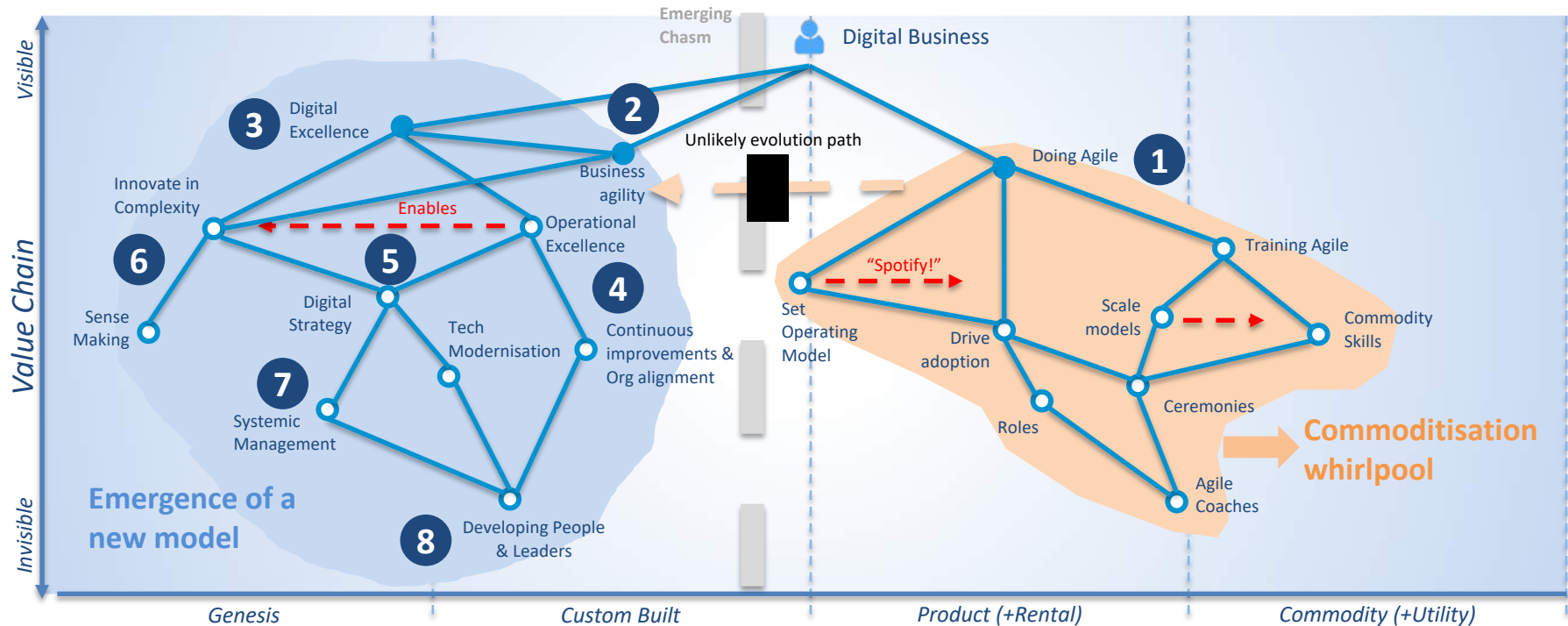
The Agile certification industry

Agile has become a bubble. The certification industry is creating a whirlpool of commoditisation, primarily aimed at driving revenues from practitioners, rather than realising business impact for the clients.

- The certification industry has taken over the Agile brand.
- It is supported by traditional procurement in corporates clients looking for codified solutions.
- Leading signatories of the manifesto have publicly detached themselves from what Agile has become*.
- Agile is a growing bubble. Business benefits are hard to materialise, but everybody has to be seen doing it.
- Those are the characteristics of a Ponzi scheme.

* Ref: Martin Fowler and the State of Agile Software in 2018. Arie van Benekum and Agile Agnostic.

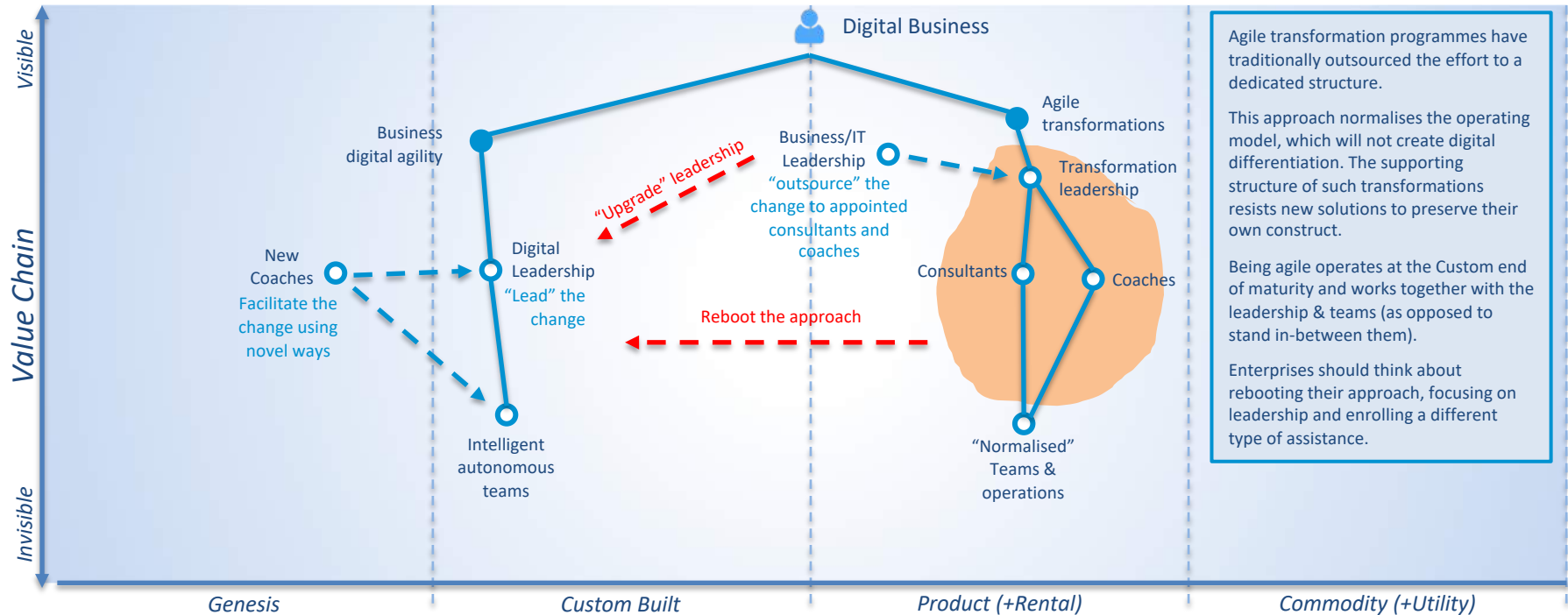
Doing Agile vs being agile



Doing Agile vs being agile

- 1 The traditional Agile support system has fixated on driving wholesale process adoption, resulting in commoditisation and regimented roll-outs.
- 2 Doing Agile has not resulted in agility at enterprise level. A new approach is needed delivering real business agility.
- 3 Together with business agility, the true purpose is to be competitive in a digital world requiring alignment of business and technology.
- 4 Operational excellence is an essential foundation enabling flow from a culture of continuous improvements and an adaptive organisation.
- 5 Strategy is elaborated from an accurate situational awareness (using mapping) and is central to deploying and prioritising the efforts.
- 6 An experimental approach to innovation in an increasingly Complex business environment is informed by SenseMaking & feedback loops.
- 7 A new way of managing systemically the organisation and the teams is underpinning a successful digital business.
- 8 Developing people & leadership, and with them, developing a learning organisation, are at the core of progressing and sustaining the change.

Leadership of “being agile”



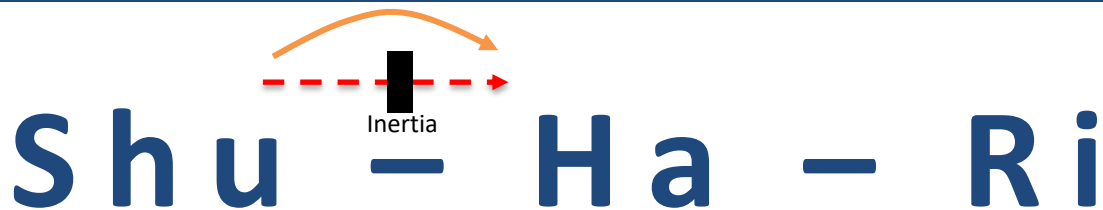
Agile transformation programmes have traditionally outsourced the effort to a dedicated structure.

This approach normalises the operating model, which will not create digital differentiation. The supporting structure of such transformations resists new solutions to preserve their own construct.

Being agile operates at the Custom end of maturity and works together with the leadership & teams (as opposed to stand in-between them).

Enterprises should think about rebooting their approach, focusing on leadership and enrolling a different type of assistance.

Moving on from Shu-Ha-Ri



Follow the process

Improve the process

Develop a novel approach

- The industry has long justified a codified approach from the Shu-Ha-Ri principle. At the beginning (Shu) trainee should learn new processes before being able to improve them. This has resulted in a religious enforcement of methods and a strong inertia for progressing to the next stage.
- Lean Thinking and Kaizen culture would recommend to start from where we are and improve thereon. Jumping therefore straight to the Ha. It is not about doing Agile but about improving Digital abilities.
- Such an approach naturally connects Leadership and teams whilst stimulating the collective intelligence and creativity.

Emerging new practices beyond the chasm

- Agile is in crisis. The Agile certification industry has developed a commodification machine, which cannot recover to deliver differentiated approaches for businesses. Many corporations have started Agile transformation programmes, which have become self-sustaining although not evidencing business value.
- A chasm is growing between "doing Agile" and "being agile". A novel approach needs to emerge, built with the leadership at the centre in the Custom end of maturity. It will enable digital differentiation from strategy, innovation, technology, organisation and operations, all supported by new ways of leading.
- The supporting ecosystem needs a new way too, facilitating the connection of the leadership and the teams rather than standing in-between them.



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