

To: Mcindoe Risk Advisory, LLC(nada@mcindoeriskadvisory.com)
Subject: U.S. Trademark Application Serial No. 97120229 - AGILE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY
Sent: August 23, 2022 11:31:23 AM EDT
Sent As: tmng.notices@uspto.gov

Attachments

[screencapture-www-lexico-com-en-definition-development-16612668208171](#)
[screencapture-www-agilebusiness-org-general-custom-asp-16612669198421](#)
[screencapture-www-business2community-com-strategy-5-reasons-why-companies-are-turning-to-agile-teams-02168702-16612669579031](#)
[screencapture-www-mckinsey-com-business-functions-mckinsey-digital-our-insights-a-business-leaders-guide-to-agile-16612670609131](#)
[screencapture-www-mckinsey-com-business-functions-people-and-organizational-performance-our-insights-the-five-trademarks-of-agile-organizations-16612671274371](#)
[screencapture-www-nojitter-com-what-being-agile-company-means-and-why-it-matters-16612672266771](#)
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United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Office Action (Official Letter) About Applicant's Trademark Application

U.S. Application Serial No. 97120229

Mark: AGILE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY

Correspondence Address:

MCINDOE RISK ADVISORY, LLC
1400 W LOMBARD ST., STE. A PMB 377
BALTIMORE MD 21223 UNITED STATES

Applicant: Mcindoe Risk Advisory, LLC

Reference/Docket No. N/A

Correspondence Email Address: nada@mcindoeriskadvisory.com

NONFINAL OFFICE ACTION

The USPTO must receive applicant's response to this letter within six months of the issue date below or the application will be abandoned. Respond using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS). A link to the appropriate TEAS response form appears at the end of this Office action.

Issue date: August 23, 2022

Introduction

The referenced application has been reviewed by the assigned trademark examining attorney. Applicant must respond timely and completely to the issue(s) below. 15 U.S.C. §1062(b); 37 C.F.R. §§2.62(a), 2.65(a); TMEP §§711, 718.03.

Summary of Issues

- Search Results - No Conflicting Marks Found
- Section 2(e)(1) – Merely Descriptive Refusal
- Advisory regarding Amendment to the Supplemental Register to Overcome Refusal

Search Results - No Conflicting Marks Found

The trademark examining attorney has searched the USPTO database of registered and pending marks and has found no conflicting marks that would bar registration under Trademark Act Section 2(d). 15 U.S.C. §1052(d); TMEP §704.02.

Section 2(e)(1) – Merely Descriptive Refusal

Registration is refused because the applied-for mark merely describes a feature, characteristic, purpose, or function of applicant's services. Trademark Act Section 2(e)(1), 15 U.S.C. §1052(e)(1); *see* TMEP §§1209.01(b), 1209.03 *et seq.*

A mark is merely descriptive if it describes an ingredient, quality, characteristic, function, feature, purpose, or use of an applicant's services. TMEP §1209.01(b); *see, e.g., In re TriVita, Inc.*, 783 F.3d 872, 874, 114 USPQ2d 1574, 1575 (Fed. Cir. 2015) (quoting *In re Oppedahl & Larson LLP*, 373 F.3d 1171, 1173, 71 USPQ2d 1370, 1371 (Fed. Cir. 2004)); *In re Steelbuilding.com*, 415 F.3d 1293, 1297, 75 USPQ2d 1420, 1421 (Fed. Cir. 2005) (citing *Estate of P.D. Beckwith, Inc. v. Comm'r of Patents*, 252 U.S. 538, 543 (1920)).

Here, applicant has applied to register the mark AGILE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY for use in connection with “Business management consulting and advisory services” in Class 35.

First, the attached evidence from *Lexico* dictionary shows this wording means “a method of project management...that is characterized by the division of tasks into short phases of work,” and the attached evidence from *Agile Business Consortium, Business 2 Community, McKinsey & Company, No Jitter,*

and *Wikipedia* shows that the word AGILE is commonly used in connection with similar business consultation services to mean that the consulting and advisory is in the field of the agile business method. Indeed, applicant itself describes its services as intended to "advise, develop, and deliver **agile** and adaptive programs to client to help their business navigate stresses . . ." See applicant's specimen of record. Thus, the wording merely describes applicant's services because the field or subject matter of applicant's consulting and advisory services is AGILE methods for business operations.

Moreover, the attached white paper from RSA shows that the wording OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY is "the ability of an organization to absorb changes and adapt in an evolving environment, so it can deliver its objectives, and survive and prosper". Moreover, the attached article from *TechTarget* further explains that "the goal behind operational resilience is to identify potential problems before they happen and come up with a plan to either mitigate the effects or to allow the organization to quickly recover". Further, the attached evidence from *Castellan and PA Consulting* shows that the wording OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE is commonly used in connection with similar business consulting services. Additionally, as shown by the attached evidence from applicant's website, applicant's services allow consumers to "enhance how [their] organizations manage operational risk". In other words, applicant is providing business and consulting services which promote OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY. As such, this wording is merely descriptive of a feature or purpose of applicant's services.

Taken together, the collective wording AGILE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY immediately conveys to consumers that applicant is providing services intended to enable its clients to swiftly adapt, respond to, and prepare for market changes, consumer demand, and risks.

Generally, if the individual components of a mark retain their descriptive meaning in relation to the services, the combination results in a composite mark that is itself descriptive and not registrable. *In re Fat Boys Water Sports LLC*, 118 USPQ2d 1511, 1516 (TTAB 2016) (citing *In re Tower Tech, Inc.*, 64 USPQ2d 1314, 1317-18 (TTAB 2002)); TMEP §1209.03(d); see, e.g., *DuoProSS Meditech Corp. v. Inviro Med. Devices, Ltd.*, 695 F.3d 1247, 1255, 103 USPQ2d 1753, 1758 (Fed. Cir. 2012) (holding SNAP SIMPLY SAFER merely descriptive for various medical devices, such as hypodermic, aspiration, and injection needles and syringes); *In re Fallon*, 2020 USPQ2d 11249, at *12 (TTAB 2020) (holding THERMAL MATRIX merely descriptive of a heat-responsive, malleable liner that is an integral component of an oral dental appliance).

Only where the combination of descriptive terms creates a unitary mark with a unique, incongruous, or otherwise nondescriptive meaning in relation to the services is the combined mark registrable. See *In re Omniome, Inc.*, 2020 USPQ2d 3222, at *4 (TTAB 2019) (citing *In re Colonial Stores, Inc.*, 394 F.2d 549, 551, 157 USPQ 382, 384 (C.C.P.A. 1968); *In re Shutts*, 217 USPQ 363, 364-65 (TTAB 1983)); *In re Positec Grp. Ltd.*, 108 USPQ2d 1161, 1162-63 (TTAB 2013).

In this case, both the individual components and the composite result are descriptive of applicant's services and do not create a unique, incongruous, or nondescriptive meaning in relation to the services. Specifically, as explained above, each respective term and phrase, that is, AGILE and OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY, retains its ordinary meaning even once combined.

Ultimately, when purchasers encounter applicant's services using the mark AGILE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCY, they will immediately understand the mark as indicating a feature, characteristic, purpose, or function of the services, and not an indication that applicant is the source of the services. Therefore, the mark is merely descriptive, and registration is refused pursuant to Section 2(e)(1) of the

Trademark Act.

Response Options to Refusals

Although applicant's mark has been refused registration, applicant may respond to the refusal(s) by submitting evidence and arguments in support of registration.

Advisory regarding Amendment to the Supplemental Register to Overcome Refusal

The applied-for mark has been refused registration on the Principal Register. Applicant may respond to the refusal by submitting evidence and arguments in support of registration and/or by amending the application to seek registration on the Supplemental Register. *See* 15 U.S.C. §1091; 37 C.F.R. §§2.47, 2.75(a); TMEP §§801.02(b), 816. Amending to the Supplemental Register does not preclude applicant from submitting evidence and arguments against the refusal(s). TMEP §816.04.

Although registration on the Supplemental Register does not afford all the benefits of registration on the Principal Register, it does provide the following advantages to the registrant:

- (1) Use of the registration symbol ® with the registered mark in connection with the designated goods and/or services, which provides public notice of the registration and potentially deters third parties from using confusingly similar marks.
- (2) Inclusion of the registered mark in the USPTO's database of registered and pending marks, which will (a) make it easier for third parties to find it in trademark search reports, (b) provide public notice of the registration, and thus (c) potentially deter third parties from using confusingly similar marks.
- (3) Use of the registration by a USPTO trademark examining attorney as a bar to registering confusingly similar marks in applications filed by third parties.
- (4) Use of the registration as a basis to bring suit for trademark infringement in federal court, which, although more costly than state court, means judges with more trademark experience, often faster adjudications, and the opportunity to seek an injunction, actual damages, and attorneys' fees and costs.
- (5) Use of the registration as a filing basis for a trademark application for registration in certain foreign countries, in accordance with international treaties.

See 15 U.S.C. §§1052(d), 1091, 1094; J. Thomas McCarthy, *McCarthy on Trademarks & Unfair Competition* §§19:33, 19:37 (rev. 4th ed. Supp. 2017).

Response Guidelines

For this application to proceed, applicant must explicitly address each refusal and/or requirement in this Office action. For a refusal, applicant may provide written arguments and evidence against the refusal, and may have other response options if specified above. For a requirement, applicant should set forth the changes or statements. Please see "[Responding to Office Actions](#)" and the informational video "[Response to Office Action](#)" for more information and tips on responding.

Please call or email the assigned trademark examining attorney with questions about this Office action. Although an examining attorney cannot provide legal advice, the examining attorney can provide additional explanation about the refusal(s) and/or requirement(s) in this Office action. *See* TMEP §§705.02, 709.06.

The USPTO does not accept emails as responses to Office actions; however, emails can be used for informal communications and are included in the application record. *See* 37 C.F.R. §§2.62(c), 2.191; TMEP §§304.01-.02, 709.04-.05.

Advisory regarding Hiring Trademark Attorney

Because of the legal technicalities and strict deadlines of the trademark application process, applicant is encouraged to hire a private attorney who specializes in trademark matters to assist in this process. The assigned trademark examining attorney can provide only limited assistance explaining the content of an Office action and the application process. USPTO staff cannot provide legal advice or statements about an applicant's legal rights. TMEP §§705.02, 709.06. See [Hiring a U.S.-licensed trademark attorney](#) for more information.

How to respond. [Click to file a response to this nonfinal Office action.](#)

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RESPONSE GUIDANCE

- **Missing the response deadline to this letter will cause the application to [abandon](#).** The response must be received by the USPTO before midnight **Eastern Time** of the last day of the response period. TEAS maintenance or [unforeseen circumstances](#) could affect an applicant's ability to timely respond.
- **Responses signed by an unauthorized party** are not accepted and can **cause the application to [abandon](#).** If applicant does not have an attorney, the response must be signed by the individual applicant, all joint applicants, or someone with [legal authority to bind a juristic applicant](#). If applicant has an attorney, the response must be signed by the attorney.
- If needed, **find [contact information for the supervisor](#)** of the office or unit listed in the signature block.



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development

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NOUN

- 1 The process of developing or being developed.
'she traces the development of the novel'

[+ More example sentences](#) [+ Synonyms](#)

- 1.1 A specified state of growth or advancement.

'the wings attain their full development several hours after birth'[+ More example sentences](#)

- 1.2 A new and refined product or idea...
...purpose by conserving earnings or making use of its resources.

'land suitable for development'[+ More example sentences](#)

- 1.5 An area of land with new buildings on it.

'a major housing development in Chicago'[+ More example sentences](#) [+ Synonyms](#)

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WORD OF THE DAY

kickshaw/ˈkɪkʃə/
NOUN

Verbs

Which of these words is a verb?

 belief believe[NEXT](#)

2 The process of starting to experience or suffer from an ailment or feeling.
'the development of brittle bones'

[+ More example sentences](#)

3 The process of treating photographic film with chemicals to make a visible image.
'agitation is carried out while a film is processed to ensure even development'

[+ More example sentences](#)

4 *Chess*

The process of bringing one's pieces into play in the opening phase of a game.

'I sought to take advantage of Black's defective development'

[+ More example sentences](#)

Pronunciation 

development

/də vələpmənt/ /də vətləpmənt/ 

196/11
0/10

TRENDING WORDS

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1. woven
2. poignantly
3. Herculean
4. imminence
5. guard of honour

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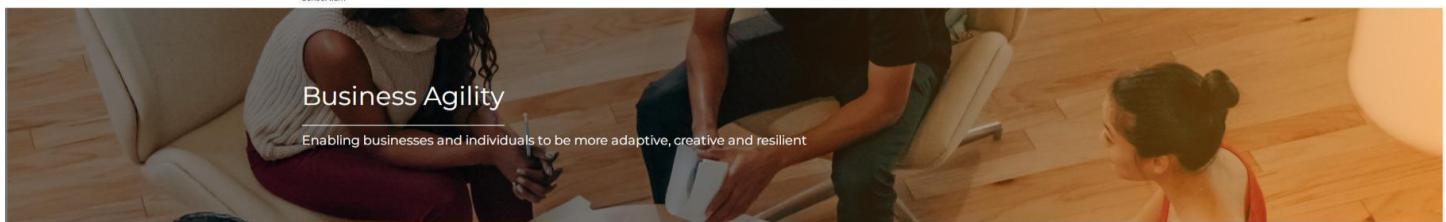
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Business Agility

Enabling businesses and individuals to be more adaptive, creative and resilient

What is Business Agility?



Business Agility is defined as agility in an organisation's culture, leadership, strategy, and governance that adds value to all stakeholders who operate in uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments.

What is an Agile Business?



An agile business can respond quickly and effectively to opportunities and threats found in its internal and external environments (be they commercial, legal, technological, social, moral or political).

Why Agility?



So, why agility? The future is unpredictable, and with the world and its technology changing ever faster, it is creating greater uncertainty to our needs and requirements. Businesses that embrace agility are able to adapt faster; delivering regularly, testing the environment and remaining customer focused.

The Framework for Business Agility

Agile Culture	Agile Leadership	Agile Strategy	Agile Governance	Agile People	Operational Agility	Business Change Agility
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The Framework for Business Agility

The Framework for Business Agility has been created to help organisations survive and thrive in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment. It's been shaped by the real-world experiences of Consortium members and other agile professionals.

At its heart lie the five elements that can combine to make an organisation truly agile: its leadership, strategy, governance, people and culture.

The agility of each element will influence the way the organisation operates and evolves in response to the ever-changing needs of its customers and stakeholders.



Agile Culture

How Agile is Your Culture?

Discover how agile your culture is with Pulse, the agile culture survey tool, and determine whether your culture is transformational, surviving, or somewhere in between.

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White Paper: The 9 Principles of Agile Leadership

Business agility and agile teams require agile leaders. Learn about the principles of agile leadership and download our free white paper.

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White Paper: Towards an Agile Culture

To be truly agile, an organisation needs to operate in a very different way, with leadership, values and norms all reinforcing the culture.

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Agile Culture Development Matrix

Do you want to know how agile your team's culture is, and how to develop it? The Agile Culture Matrix allows you to easily understand your team's culture using five stages and the seven DNA elements of cultural agility.

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About Us

The Agile Business Consortium is the professional body for business agility. We're all about community – whether you're a multinational working through a large-scale transformation, a new start-up, or a contractor, we can support you to achieve more, to grow more, and to build your business agility.

As a global not-for-profit organisation that's been around for over 25 years, our knowledge and experience around agile competencies and behaviours can offer you the guidance you need to reach your agility goals. Together with our partners, we create and share agile research, case studies, resources and tools that help you compete in today's uncertain world.

We're the world's longest-standing agile-orientated organisation and the brains behind AgilePM®, AgileBA®, AgilePgM®, AgilePM™ and AgileDS™. Over 189,000 AgilePM® exams have been taken worldwide. Based in the UK, we have members in over 30 countries around the world.



5 Reasons Why Companies are Turning to Agile Teams

Connor Brooke

Last updated: 8 February 2019



Increase Accountability

Agile teams are constantly reviewing their progress, both through daily standup meetings and weekly or bi-weekly sprint planning. The public task board makes it clear who is responsible for key deliverables and which assignments are dependent upon others. When a team member is unable to deliver, the rest of the team knows about the problem immediately. If someone is consistently unable to complete their tasks, the workflow can be adjusted to accommodate the situation or other solutions can be identified. Since agile teams assign and complete tasks over a relatively short period, there is less chance for accountability problems to go unnoticed. This high level of transparency also facilitates better communication over workflow and how the team is pursuing its key goals.

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Enhance Collaboration

The characteristics of a typical agile team place a lot of emphasis on communication. Daily standup meetings allow team members to share information about short term objectives and impediments while longer planning meetings encourage them to discuss how effectively the team is working toward its long-term goals. Better communication allows for more effective collaboration. Everyone is made aware of the team's challenges, so each member is in a position to help be a part of the solutions. Since tasks are being broken up into smaller components, team members often need to work closely with one another to ensure deliverables are handed off properly. The increased interaction between team members can also help build trust over time, which is one of the key requirements for effective collaboration.

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by Connor Brooke



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by Connor Brooke

Manage Shifting Priorities

In today's fast-moving economy, organizations in all industries face rapidly shifting demands from clients, partners, and customers. Teams sometimes need to change their focus quickly, adapting their strategy to accomplish a new set of goals. For traditional teams, this can be a rather traumatic experience. If a team has been working on a project for several months, simply abandoning that work can make people feel like their time was wasted and causes them to rethink how they approach their new tasks. But agile teams experience change almost constantly. Every new sprint workflow brings with it a different set of tasks; they just move on to the next thing. This makes it easier for agile teams to adapt to change and accommodate shifting priorities within an organization.

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Get Rapid Feedback

Agile teams are all about deliverables. Every workflow task is associated with a specific deliverable, which not only makes it easy to track progress toward a goal, but also makes it easier to evaluate work quality in the process. Rather than waiting until the project is nearly completed to get feedback, agile team members get almost immediate feedback on their work from their peers. This allows them to make adjustments and improve quality rather than using a cumbersome review process that could take many months to gather enough data to make an evaluation. By quickly identifying successes

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7 Team Types That Make Business Possible
by Connor Brooke

and many months in your own time to make an evaluation. By quickly identifying successes and areas of concern, team members can address problems before they threaten the team's effectiveness. Incorporating rapid feedback allows them to make improvements and deliver better overall results.

Agile teams have fundamentally changed the way many organizations manage their workplace. As more and more companies outside the software development industry incorporate agile methodology into their team structures, employees will surely come to appreciate working in an environment that emphasizes communication, accountability, and collaboration. The productivity and versatility gains associated with agile teams will no doubt be attractive to organizations looking to deliver quality results faster and more efficiently.



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Connor is a Scottish financial expert, specialising in wealth management and equity investing. Based in Glasgow, Connor writes full-time for a wide selection of financial websites, whilst also providing startup consulting to small businesses. Holding a Bachelor's degree in Finance, and a Master's degree in Investment Fund Management, Connor has

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Personality Type?

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A business leader's guide to agile

July 25, 2017 | Article

By [Santiago Comella-Dorda](#), [Krish Krishnakarhan](#), [Jeff Maurone](#), and [Gayatri Shenai](#)

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Agile promises rapidly evolving software and substantial business benefits, but it requires new habits from everyone: from IT and from business partners.

Agile development has largely become synonymous with digitization: senior business leaders have realized that their companies cannot take full advantage of digital tools and technologies without having new, amped-up processes for managing them. The value of these processes is immense.

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Article (PDF-2MB)

Senior executives need only look at two recent examples in the banking industry to understand

what's at stake: ING and South Africa's Standard Bank have both incorporated digital technologies and agile ways of working into their operations, and both are achieving positive results. ING is releasing software features to its web and mobile sites every two or three weeks rather than five or six times a year. As a result, the company's customer-satisfaction scores are up by multiple points. Standard Bank has improved the quality of its new mobile applications by rather than five or six times a year. As a result, the company's customer-satisfaction scores are up by multiple points. Standard Bank has improved the quality of its new mobile applications by finding and fixing potential bugs earlier in the software-development process—building more trust with employees and customers in the process.

What may be less clear to senior executives is the role they can play in jolting their own business units and IT organizations to break from the status quo and realize similar advantages. "This was one of the toughest challenges," says Mike Murphy, CTO at Standard Bank. "A lot of staffers at the bank were comfortable with the ways things were. They didn't want to change their daily routines. They were focused on simply getting the job done."

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Senior executives often tend to assume that after they set overarching digital goals, it's up to IT to deliver on them quickly through a range of initiatives. In their view, agility is something for R&D engineers and software developers only. The business units hold fast to tried-and-true methods for communicating with IT—throwing their requirements "over the wall" and waiting for IT to build and deliver finished products. The IT organization ends up operating with limited information from the business, the business units lose their opportunity to steer technology development toward desired goals, and agility stalls.

Agile development cannot be a priority solely for the technology organization. Senior business executives must include it on their agendas as well, thereby signaling the importance of making the required technology and cultural changes. The top team's attention will make it clear that software development is a joint process. It entails frequent interactions between business and IT groups, and it requires widespread acceptance of a test-and-learn approach.

Senior executives need to actively promote agile concepts across business and technology teams and to link those concepts directly to business-related outcomes. Because of the unique perspective the CIO and other technology leaders have—with one foot in the C-suite and another among the technology stacks—they can help senior executives establish six work habits that promote joint ownership of the software-development process, daily collaboration among business and IT stakeholders, and a culture of continuous learning.

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Creating agile habits

In discussions in the boardroom, on the shop floor, and everywhere else, senior business and technology leaders should emphasize the following six habits, which are critical for companies to realize the promise of agile.



1. Put some skin in the game. In an agile environment, some business-unit leaders will be tapped as product owners—that is, the business-unit stakeholders most accountable for shaping the products. These leaders must make the development and success of a product their highest priority—and they must be given the leeway to do so. That might mean shifting schedules and commitments so product owners can attend key agile meetings: scrums, sprint reviews, and sprint planning sessions (see the sidebar “Speaking agile”). Additionally, senior management may need to redeploy resources so that business units can assign product owners to individual agile-development initiatives.

Product owners not only set the aspirations and vision for the product but also colead decision making about features and development goals with colleagues in IT. They should be able to live in two worlds. They must have some understanding of technology and the ways it is transforming their industries. They must also have a strong sense of market needs and the product features that would be most valuable to end users. (Typically, that’s not an issue for most product owners who come from the business, because they interact more frequently with end users than IT managers do.) Product owners can pair this market knowledge with the engineers’ feedback on the technical feasibility of specific product features to create a clear development plan.

2. Shape the product together. Under traditional approaches to product development, IT leaders interview business-unit leaders once to collect business requirements—for instance, what novel features are required in the new software or applications being created, and on which platforms

will the new applications need to run? IT managers capture these requirements in jargon-filled documents, and the next time they reach out to the business unit, it's with a mostly completed prototype in tow.

By contrast, agile product development is less about taking orders and more about sharing information. The business and the IT organization must codevelop products every day, side by side, in an ongoing process. Senior business leaders can establish this level of collaboration by investing in tools to improve interactions—for example, visual aids instead of lists of requirements.

At one company, a product owner from a business unit and a technology leader used sketches to trade feedback on software under development. IT professionals sketched a prototype that the product owner could page through. The product owner could circle what he liked or draw alternative versions of the elements he didn't. The team refined the design together in a way that everyone could understand and contribute to.

3. Cheer for your own team. Leaders in the C-suite and the heads of business units have a critical role to play as evangelists for the software products they codevelop: they must hold product owners from the business units accountable for the successful rollout of any new release and its effect on the business. They should encourage product owners and IT engineers to educate their business colleagues about the benefits of new software and reasons to adopt it. Agile teams can share introductory videos at the launch of a product, demonstrate it at town-hall meetings for employees, and listen to their colleagues' frustrations with and ideas about it. All the while, they should explain that this input is valued—and demonstrate that it is by incorporating feedback into product revisions. Such transparency, encouraged and modeled from the top down, can produce a culture in which joint efforts at problem solving, rather than complaints about IT, are the norm.

4. Think like a user. Sometimes, senior business leaders may very well be the users of the product they are shaping—if it's an executive dashboard, for instance. But usually they are not. To help build software and products that transform the way a company operates or appeal to customers, product owners from the business must be unwaveringly committed to users' needs. Senior executives can encourage this kind of outlook by asking targeted questions during product reviews. Who are the users? How are they using the product? Do they primarily work in an office or remotely? What are their biggest frustrations? Software-development teams should also think through these questions as they design tools and experiences to ensure that they are addressing the idiosyncrasies of end users.

5. Learn to live with 'good enough.' Senior executives are typically a risk-averse group. Traditional product-development models emphasize multiple check-ins at various stages of development—a time-intensive but comprehensive way to ensure that products include all the desired features

and don't contain bugs and other flaws. By contrast, agile development emphasizes a test-and-learn approach—for instance, releasing a minimally viable product that delivers value to end users in the short term but is expected to change on the fly.

In this case, chief information officers may need to help senior business executives come to terms with the release of a good-enough product by redefining their expectations and thresholds for risk. A CIO could, for example, highlight agile success stories—instances where a company released a good-enough product, shifted strategy midstream in response to feedback, and ultimately delivered a winning solution. In addition, the CIO can be open about accepting minimally viable releases refined by IT line managers—prompting similar behavior across the company. And at least initially, technology leaders could press for time-to-market schedules that give the business units no option but to pursue good-enough products.

The CIO should also help senior business leaders understand that even under a good-enough approach, agile teams will not deliver everything immediately. The process is actually more rigorous than most executives can see. Agile teams must work exhaustively to collect feedback to determine what's working, what's not, and how to make incremental improvements that will enhance the product or the customer's experiences with it. And they must repeat this process over and over again.



6. Broaden the mandate. As scrum teams ramp up their performance and experience, they will inevitably bump up against slower teams and processes elsewhere in the organization. These slower teams, such as high-volume sales organizations, use more traditional, rigid work processes. To maximize the impact of agile methods, senior leadership must consider ways to transfer lessons from agile teams to different areas of the company. Working with the CIO and other technology professionals, senior business executives can identify the processes and products that are most critical for delivering business value to customers and consider which agile principles would help to speed things up (see the sidebar "Making the case for agile").



An operating model for company-wide agile development

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Closing the gap

Agile requires a commitment of time and attention, which can be jarring to business leaders already juggling many priorities. But with some guidance from CIOs and other technology professionals in the IT organization, senior business executives may gain a more digestible view of the shift from traditional to agile development processes. Senior business leaders will better understand the technical terms associated with agile, and can help identify the technologies and skill sets required to operate successfully under an agile model. Perhaps even more important, business executives can turn anecdotal evidence into hard metrics reflecting the ways agile work flows create positive business outcomes—for instance, a more engaging customer experience, streamlined internal processes, and a thriving, collaborative corporate culture.

There should be no order givers or takers, no “us versus them” dynamic between the business units and the IT organization. There should be just one team, building innovative software that transforms the work of those who use it and enables ever-closer connections to customers and business partners.

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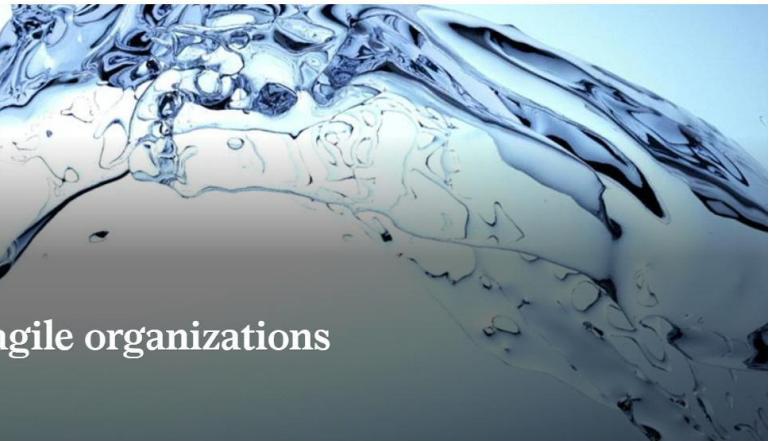
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The five trademarks of agile organizations

January 22, 2018 | Report

By [Wouter Aghina](#), [Karin Ahlback](#), [Aaron De Smet](#), [Gerald Lackey](#), [Michael Lurie](#), [Monica Murarka](#), and [Christopher Handscomb](#)

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Agile organizations—of any size and across industries—have five key elements in common.

This article was written collaboratively by the McKinsey Agile Tribe, a group of over 50 global colleagues bringing expertise from the digital, operations,

This article was written collaboratively by the McKinsey Agile Tribe, a group of over 50 global colleagues bringing expertise from the digital, operations, marketing, and organization disciplines. They integrate their deep experience and thought leadership to extract the best from McKinsey's global experience as it helps organizations transform themselves into agile organizations.

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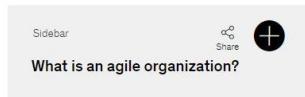
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Our experience and research demonstrate that successful agile organizations consistently exhibit the five trademarks described in this article. The trademarks include a network of teams within a people-centered culture that operates in rapid learning and fast decision cycles which are enabled by technology, and a common purpose that co-creates value for all stakeholders. These trademarks complement the findings from “[How to create an agile organization](#).”

The old paradigm: Organizations as machines

A view of the world—a paradigm—will endure until it cannot explain new evidence. The paradigm must then shift to include that new information. We are now seeing a paradigm shift in the ways that organizations balance stability and dynamism.



First, the old paradigm. In 1910, the Ford Motor Company was one of many small automobile manufacturers. A decade later, Ford had 60 percent market share of the new automobile market worldwide. Ford reduced assembly time per vehicle from 12 hours to 90 minutes, and the price from \$850 to \$300, while also paying employees competitive rates.^[1]

Ford's ideas, and those of his contemporary, Frederick Taylor, issued from scientific management, a breakthrough insight that optimized labor productivity using the scientific method; it opened an era of unprecedented effectiveness and efficiency. Taylor's ideas prefigured modern quality control, total-quality management, and—through Taylor's student Henry Gantt—project management.

Gareth Morgan describes Taylorist organizations such as Ford as hierarchical and specialized—depicting them as machines.^[2] For decades, organizations that embraced this machine model and the principles of scientific management dominated their markets, outperformed other organizations, and drew the best talent. From Taylor on, 1911 to 2011 was “the management century.”

Disruptive trends challenging the old

paradigm

Now, we find the machine paradigm shifting in the face of the organizational challenges brought by the “digital revolution” that is transforming industries, economies, and societies. This is expressed in four current trends:

- *Quickly evolving environment.* All stakeholders' demand patterns are evolving rapidly: customers, partners, and regulators have pressing needs; investors are demanding growth, which results in acquisitions and restructuring; and competitors and collaborators demand action to accommodate fast-changing priorities.
- *Constant introduction of disruptive technology.* Established businesses and industries are being commoditized or replaced through digitization, bioscience advancements, the innovative use of new models, and automation. Examples include developments such as machine learning, the Internet of Things, and robotics.
- *Accelerating digitization and democratization of information.* The increased volume, transparency, and distribution of information require organizations to rapidly engage in multidirectional communication and complex collaboration with customers, partners, and colleagues.
- *The new war for talent.* As creative knowledge- and learning-based tasks become more important, organizations need a distinctive value proposition to acquire—and retain—the best talent, which is often more diverse. These “learning workers” often have more diverse origins, thoughts, composition, and experience and may have different desires (for example, millennials).

When machine organizations have tried to engage with the new environment, it has not worked out well for many. A very small number of companies have thrived over time; fewer than 10 percent of the non-financial S&P 500 companies in 1983 remained in the S&P 500 in 2013. From what we have observed, machine organizations also experience constant internal churn. According to our research with 1,900 executives, they are adapting their strategy (and their organizational structure) with greater frequency than in the past. Eighty-two percent of them went through a redesign in the last three years. However, most of these redesign efforts fail—only 23 percent were implemented successfully.^[3]

The new paradigm: Organizations as

The new paradigm: Organizations as living organisms

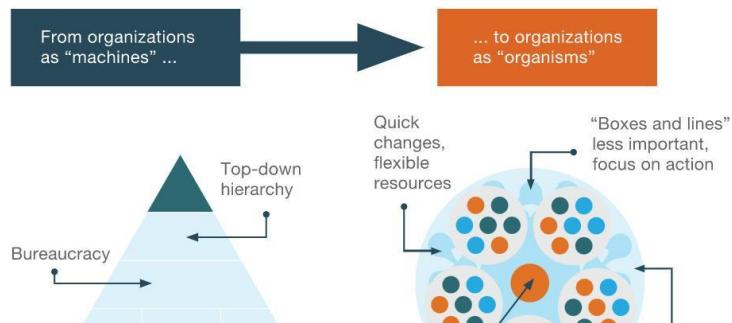
The trends described above are dramatically changing how organizations and employees work. What, then, will be the dominant organizational paradigm for the next 100 years? How will companies balance stability and dynamism? Moreover, which companies will dominate their market and attract the best talent?

Our article "[Agility: It rhymes with stability](#)" describes the paradigm that achieves this balance and the paradox that truly agile organizations master—they are both stable and dynamic at the same time. They design stable backbone elements that evolve slowly and support dynamic capabilities that can adapt quickly to new challenges and opportunities. A smartphone serves as a helpful analogy; the physical device acts as a stable platform for myriad dynamic applications, providing each user with a unique and useful tool. Finally, agile organizations mobilize quickly, are nimble, empowered to act, and make it easy to act. In short, they respond like a living organism (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

The agile organization is dawning as the new dominant organizational paradigm.

Rather than organization as machine, the agile organization is a living organism





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When pressure is applied, the agile organization reacts by being more than just robust; performance actually improves as more pressure is exerted.^[4] Research shows that agile organizations have a 70 percent chance of being in the top quartile of organizational health, the best indicator of long-term performance.^[5] Moreover, such companies simultaneously achieve greater customer centricity, faster time to market, higher revenue growth, lower costs, and a more engaged workforce:

- A global electronics enterprise delivered \$250 million in EBITDA, and 20 percent share price increase over three years by adopting an agile operating model with its education-to-employment teams.
- A global bank reduced its cost base by about 30 percent while significantly improving employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and time to market.
- A basic-materials company fostered continuous improvement among manual workers, leading to a 25 percent increase in effectiveness and a 60 percent decrease in injuries.

As a result agility, while still in its early days, is catching fire. This was confirmed in a recent *McKinsey Quarterly* survey report of 2,500 business leaders.^[6] According to the results, few companies have achieved organization-wide agility but many have already started pursuing it in performance units. For instance, nearly one-quarter of performance units are agile. The remaining performance units in companies lack dynamism, stability, or both.

However, while less than ten percent of respondents have completed an agility transformation at the company or performance-unit level, most companies have much higher aspirations for the future. Three-quarters of respondents say organizational agility is a top or top-three priority, and nearly 40 percent are currently conducting an organizational-agility transformation. High tech,

telecom, financial services, and media and entertainment appear to be leading the pack with the greatest number of organizations undertaking agility transformations. More than half of the respondents who have not begun agile transformations say they have plans in the works to begin one. Finally, respondents in all sectors believe that more of their employees should undertake agile ways of working (on average, respondents believe 68 percent of their companies' employees should be working in agile ways, compared with the 44 percent of employees who currently do).

The rest of this article describes the five fundamental "trademarks" of agile organizations based on our recent experience and research. Companies that aspire to build an agile organization can set their sights on these trademarks as concrete markers of their progress. For each trademark, we have also identified an emerging set of "agility practices"—the practical actions we have observed organizations taking on their path to agility (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

There are five trademarks of agile organizations.

	Trademark		Organizational-agility practices ¹
Strategy	North Star embodied across the organization		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared purpose and vision• Sensing and seizing opportunities• Flexible resource allocation• Actionable strategic guidance
Structure	Network of empowered teams		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, flat structure• Clear accountable roles• Hands-on governance• Robust communities of practice• Active partnerships and ecosystem• Open physical and virtual environment• Fit-for-purpose accountable cells
Process	Rapid decision and learning cycles		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid iteration and experimentation• Standardized ways of working• Performance orientation• Information transparency• Continuous learning



¹The 5 trademarks include 23 practices for organizational agility; 18 are based on survey research. Five additional practices are included that have emerged from recent experiences with large global companies transforming into agile organizations.

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The five trademarks of agile organizations

While each trademark has intrinsic value, our experience and research show that true agility comes only when all five are in place and working together. They describe the organic system that enables organizational agility.

Linking across them, we find a set of fundamental shifts in the mind-sets of the people in these organizations. Make these shifts and, we believe, any organization can implement these trademarks in all or part of its operations, as appropriate.

1. North Star embodied across the organization

Mind-set shift

From: "In an environment of scarcity, we succeed by capturing value from competitors, customers, and suppliers for our shareholders."

To: "Recognizing the abundance of opportunities and resources available to us, we succeed by

co-creating value with and for all of our stakeholders.”

Agile organizations reimagine both whom they create value for, and how they do so. They are intensely customer-focused, and seek to meet diverse needs across the entire customer life cycle. Further, they are committed to creating value with and for a wide range of stakeholders (for example, employees, investors, partners, and communities).

To meet the continually evolving needs of all their stakeholders, agile organizations design distributed, flexible approaches to creating value, frequently integrating external partners directly into the value creation system. Examples emerge across many industries, including: modular products and solutions in manufacturing; agile supply chains in distribution; distributed energy grids in power; and platform businesses like Uber, Airbnb, and Upwork. These modular, innovative business models enable both stability and unprecedented variety and customization.

To give coherence and focus to their distributed value creation models, agile organizations set a *shared purpose and vision*—the “North Star”—for the organization that helps people feel personally and emotionally invested. This North Star serves as a reference when customers choose where to buy, employees decide where to work, and partners decide where to engage. Companies like Amazon, Gore, Patagonia, and Virgin put stakeholder focus at the heart of their North Star and, in turn, at the heart of the way they create value.

Agile organizations that combine a deeply embedded North Star with a flexible, distributed approach to value creation can rapidly *sense and seize opportunities*. People across the organization individually and proactively watch for changes in customer preferences and the external environment and act upon them. They seek stakeholder feedback and input in a range of ways (for example, product reviews, crowd sourcing, and hackathons). They use tools like customer journey maps to identify new opportunities to serve customers better, and gather customer insights through both formal and informal mechanisms (for example, online forums, in-person events, and start-up incubators) that help shape, pilot, launch, and iterate on new initiatives and business models.

These companies can also allocate resources flexibly and swiftly to where they are needed most. Companies like Google, Haier, Tesla, and Whole Foods constantly scan the environment. They regularly evaluate the progress of initiatives and decide whether to ramp them up or shut them down, using standardized, fast resource-allocation processes to shift people, technology, and capital rapidly between initiatives, out of slowing businesses, and into areas of growth. These processes resemble venture capitalist models that use clear metrics to allocate resources to initiatives for specified periods and are subject to regular review.

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Senior leaders of agile organizations play an integrating role across these distributed systems, bringing coherence and providing clear, *actionable, strategic guidance* around priorities and the outcomes expected at the system and team levels. They also ensure everyone is focused on delivering tangible value to customers and all other stakeholders by providing frequent feedback and coaching that enables people to work autonomously toward team outcomes.

2. Network of empowered teams

Mind-set shift

From: “People need to be directed and managed, otherwise they won’t know what to do—and they’ll just look out for themselves. There will be chaos.”

To: “When given clear responsibility and authority, people will be highly engaged, will take care of each other, will figure out ingenious solutions, and will deliver exceptional results.”

Agile organizations maintain a stable top-level structure, but replace much of the remaining traditional hierarchy with a flexible, scalable network of teams. Networks are a natural way to organize efforts because they balance individual freedom with collective coordination. To build agile organizations, leaders need to understand human networks (business and social), how to design and build them, how to collaborate across them, and how to nurture and sustain them.

An agile organization comprises a dense network of empowered teams that operate with high standards of alignment, accountability, expertise, transparency, and collaboration. The company must also have a stable ecosystem in place to ensure that these teams are able to operate effectively. Agile organizations like Gore, ING, and Spotify focus on several elements:

- Implement *clear, flat structures* that reflect and support the way in which the organization creates value. For example, teams can be clustered into focused

performance groups (for example, “tribes,” or a “lattice”) that share a common mission. These groups vary in size, typically with a maximum of 150 people. This number reflects both practical experience and Dunbar’s research on the number of people with whom one can maintain personal relationships and effectively collaborate.^[7] The number of teams within each group can be adapted or scaled to meet changing needs.

- Ensure *clear, accountable roles* so that people can interact across the organization and focus on getting work done, rather than lose time and energy because of unclear or duplicated roles, or the need to wait for manager approvals. Here, people proactively and immediately address any lack of clarity about roles with one another, and treat roles and people as separate entities; in other words, roles can be shared and people can have multiple roles.
- Foster *hands-on governance* where cross-team performance management and decision rights are pushed to the edge of boundaries.^[8] It is at this interaction point that decisions are made as close to relevant teams as possible, in highly-productive, limited-membership coordinating forums. This frees senior leaders to focus on overall system design and provide guidance and support to responsible, empowered teams that focus on day-to-day activities.
- Evolve functions to become *robust communities of knowledge and practice* as professional “homes” for people, with responsibilities for attracting and developing talent, sharing knowledge and experience, and providing stability and continuity over time as people rotate between different operating teams.
- Create *active partnerships and an ecosystem* that extends internal networks and creates meaningful relationships with an extensive external network so the organization can access the best talent and ideas, generate insights, and co-develop new products, services, and/or solutions. In agile organizations, people work hands-on and day-to-day with customers, vendors, academics, government entities, and other partners in existing and complementary industries to co-develop new products, services, and/or solutions and bring them to market.
- Design and create *open physical and virtual environments* that empower people to do their jobs most effectively in the environment that is most conducive to them. These environments offer opportunities to foster transparency, communication, collaboration, and serendipitous encounters

between teams and units across the organization.

Like the cells in an organism, the basic building blocks of agile organizations are small *fit-for-purpose performance cells*. Compared with machine models, these performance cells typically have greater autonomy and accountability, are more multidisciplinary, are more quickly assembled (and dissolved), and are more clearly focused on specific value-creating activities and performance outcomes. They can be comprised of groups of individuals working on a shared task (i.e., teams) or networks of individuals working separately, but in a coordinated way. Identifying what type of performance cells to create is like building with Lego blocks. The various types (Exhibit 3) can be combined to create multiple tailored approaches.

Exhibit 3

There are different types of agile building blocks.

Agile blocks	Description	Nature of work	Process
1. Cross-functional teams	Coordination among product owners on priority and vision; coordination across teams on how to deliver Teams composed of different functional expertise and from different levels of the organization	Typically team-based, connected, and integrated	Product development, product launch
2. Self-managing teams	Stable teams define their ways of working and are jointly accountable for end-to-end performance against key performance indicators	Typically team-based, stand-alone, repetitive	Customer services, sales, manufacturing
3. "Flow to work" pools	Pool of individuals staffed to different tasks full-time, based on priority of needs; tasks can vary from hours to months	Typically individual, stand-alone, repetitive	Corporate services, (HR, legal, etc)

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The three most commonly observed agile types of performance cell today include:

- *Cross-functional teams* deliver 'products' or projects, which ensure that the knowledge and skills to deliver desired outcomes reside within the team. These teams typically include a product or project owner to define the vision and prioritize work.
- *Self-managing teams* deliver baseload activity and are relatively stable over time. The teams define the best way to reach goals, prioritize activities, and focus their effort. Different team members will lead the group based on their competence rather than on their position.
- *Flow-to-the-work pools* of individuals are staffed to different tasks full-time based on the priority of the need. This work method can enhance efficiencies, enable people to build broader skillsets, and ensure that business priorities are adequately resourced.

However, other models are continuously emerging through experimentation and adaptation.

3. Rapid decision and learning cycles

Mind-set shift

From: "To deliver the right outcome, the most senior and experienced individuals must define where we're going, the detailed plans needed to get there, and how to minimize risk along the way."

To: "We live in a constantly evolving environment and cannot know exactly what the future holds. The best way to minimize risk and succeed is to embrace uncertainty and be the quickest and most productive in trying new things."

Agile organizations work in rapid cycles of thinking and doing that are closely aligned to their process of creativity and accomplishment. Whether it deploys these as design thinking, lean operations, agile development, or other forms, this integration and continual rapid iteration of thinking, doing, and learning forms the organization's ability to innovate and operate in an agile way.

This rapid-cycle way of working can affect every level. At the team level, agile organizations radically rethink the working model, moving away from “waterfall” and “stage gate” project-management approaches. At the enterprise level, they use the rapid-cycle model to accelerate strategic thinking and execution. For example, rather than traditional annual planning, budgeting, and review, some organizations are moving to quarterly cycles, dynamic management systems like Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), and rolling 12-month budgets.

The impact of this operational model can be significant. For example, a global bank closed its project-management office and shifted its product-management organization from a traditional waterfall approach to a minimal viable product-based process. It moved from four major release cycles a year to several thousand product changes monthly; it simultaneously increased product development, deployment, and maintenance productivity by more than 30 percent.

There are several characteristics of the rapid cycle model:

- Agile organizations focus on *rapid iteration and experimentation*. Teams produce a single primary deliverable (that is, a minimal viable product or deliverable) very quickly, often in one- or two-week “sprints.” During these short activity bursts, the team holds frequent, often daily, check-ins to share progress, solve problems, and ensure alignment. Between sprints, team members meet to review and plan, to discuss progress to date, and to set the goal for the next sprint. To accomplish this, team members must be accountable for the end-to-end outcome of their work. They are empowered to seek direct stakeholder input to ensure the product serves all the needs of a group of customers and to manage all the steps in an operational process. Following this structured approach to innovation saves time, reduces rework, creates opportunities for creative “leapfrog” solutions, and increases the sense of ownership, accountability, and accomplishment within the team.
- Agile organizations leverage *standardized ways of working* to facilitate interaction and communication between teams, including the use of common language, processes, meeting formats, social-networking or digital technologies, and dedicated, in-person time, where teams work together for all or part of each week in the sprint. For example, under General Stanley McChrystal, the US military deployed a series of standardized ways of working between teams including joint leadership calls, daily all-hands briefings, collective online databases, and short-term deployments and co-location of people from different units. This approach enables rapid iteration, input, and creativity in a way that fragmented and segmented working does

not⁺

- Agile organizations are *performance-oriented* by nature. They explore new performance- and consequence-management approaches based on shared goals across the end-to-end work of a specific process or service, and measure business impact rather than activity. These processes are informed by performance dialogues comprised of very frequent formal and informal feedback and open discussions of performance against the target.
- Working in rapid cycles requires that agile organizations insist on full *transparency of information*, so that every team can quickly and easily access the information they need and share information with others. For example, people across the unit can access unfiltered data on its products, customers, and finances. People can easily find and collaborate with others in the organization that have relevant knowledge or similar interests, openly sharing ideas and the results of their work. This also requires team members to be open and transparent with one another; only then can the organization create an environment of psychological safety where all issues can be raised and discussed and where everyone has a voice.
- Agile organizations seek to make *continuous learning* an ongoing, constant part of their DNA. Everyone can freely learn from their own and others' successes and failures, and build on the new knowledge and capabilities they develop in their roles. This environment fosters ongoing learning and adjustments, which help deliverables evolve rapidly. People also spend dedicated time looking for ways to improve business processes and ways of working, which continuously improves business performance.
- Agile organizations emphasize *quick, efficient, and continuous decision making*, preferring 70 percent probability now versus 100 percent certainty later. They have insight into the types of decisions they are making and who should be involved in those decisions.^[8] Rather than big bets that are few and far between, they continuously make small decisions as part of rapid cycles, quickly test these in practice, and adjust them as needed for the next iteration. This also means agile organizations do not seek consensus decisions; all team members provide input (in advance if they will be absent), the perspectives of team members with the deepest topical expertise are given greater weight, and other team members, including leaders, learn to "disagree and commit" to enable the team to move forward.



Why agility pays

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4. Dynamic people model that ignites passion

Mind-set shift

From: "To achieve desired outcomes, leaders need to control and direct work by constantly specifying tasks and steering the work of employees."

To: "Effective leaders empower employees to take full ownership, confident they will drive the organization toward fulfilling its purpose and vision."

An agile organizational culture puts people at the center, which engages and empowers everyone in the organization. They can then create value quickly, collaboratively, and effectively.

Organizations that have done this well have invested in leadership which empowers and develops its people, a strong community which supports and grows the culture, and the underlying people processes which foster the entrepreneurship and skill building needed for agility to occur.

Leadership in agile organizations serves the people in the organization, empowering and developing them. Rather than planners, directors, and controllers, they become visionaries, architects, and coaches that empower the people with the most relevant competencies so these can lead, collaborate, and deliver exceptional results. Such leaders are catalysts that motivate people to act in team-oriented ways, and to become involved in making the strategic and organizational decisions that will affect them and their work. We call this *shared and servant leadership*.

Agile organizations create a *cohesive community* with a common culture. Cultural norms are reinforced through *positive peer behavior* and influence in a high-trust environment, rather than through rules, processes, or hierarchy. This extends to recruitment. Zappos, the online shoe retailer acquired by Amazon changed its recruiting to support the selection of people that fit its culture—even paying employees \$4,000 to leave during their onboarding if they did not fit.^[10]

People processes help sustain the culture, including clear accountability paired with the autonomy and freedom to pursue opportunities, and the ongoing chance to have new experiences. Employees in agile organizations exhibit *entrepreneurial drive*, taking ownership of team goals, decisions, and performance. For example, people proactively identify and pursue opportunities to develop new initiatives, knowledge, and skills in their daily work. Agile organizations attract people who are motivated by intrinsic passion for their work and who aim for excellence.

In addition, talent development in an agile model is about building new capabilities through varied experiences. Agile organizations allow and expect *role mobility*, where employees move regularly (both horizontally and vertically) between roles and teams, based on their personal-development goals. An open talent marketplace supports this by providing information on available roles, tasks, and/or projects as well as people's interests, capabilities, and development goals.

5. Next-generation enabling technology

Mind-set shift

From: "Technology is a supporting capability that delivers specific services, platforms, or tools to the rest of the organization as defined by priorities, resourcing, and budget."

To: "Technology is seamlessly integrated and core to every aspect of the organization as a means to unlock value and enable quick reactions to business and stakeholder needs."

For many organizations, such a radical rethinking of the organizational model requires a rethinking of the technologies underlying and enabling their products and processes, as well as the technology practices needed to support speed and flexibility.

Agile organizations will need to provide products and services that can meet changing customer and competitive conditions. Traditional products and services will likely need to be digitized or digitally-enabled. Operating processes will also have to continually and rapidly evolve, which will require *evolving technology architecture, systems, and tools*.

Organizations will need to begin by leveraging new, real-time communication and work-management tools. Implementing modular-based software architecture enables teams to effectively use technologies that other units have developed. This minimizes handovers and interdependencies that can slow down production cycles. Technology should progressively incorporate new technical innovations like containers, micro-service architectures, and cloud-based storage and services.

In order to design, build, implement, and support these new technologies, agile organizations integrate a range of *next-generation technology development and delivery practices* into the business. Business and technology employees form cross-functional teams, accountable for developing, testing, deploying, and maintaining new products and processes. They use hackathons, crowd sourcing, and virtual collaboration spaces to understand customer needs and develop possible solutions quickly. Extensive use of automated testing and deployment enables lean, seamless, and continuous software releases to the market (for example, every two weeks vs. every six months). Within IT, different disciplines work closely together (for example, IT development and operations teams collaborate on streamlined, handover-free DevOps practices).

In summary, today's environment is pressing organizations to become more agile; in response, a new organizational form is emerging that exhibits the five trademarks discussed above. In aggregate, these trademarks enable organizations to balance stability and dynamism and thrive in an era of unprecedented opportunity.

The next question is how to get there? In a rapidly changing commercial and social environment, some organizations are born agile, some achieve agility, and some have agility thrust upon them. To learn more about how to begin the journey towards an agile transformation, stay tuned for another paper in the dynamic Agile Organization series, "The journey to an agile organization."



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ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT

What Being an Agile Company Means (and Why it Matters)

In this sponsored post from AVI-SPL, learn about the kind of collaboration technology companies choose in order to achieve agility.

July 02, 2018

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Within the business context, agility means being able to respond to consumer or market changes at a moment's notice -- or make adjustments proactively ahead of them. It means that even remote workers can fully participate in meetings, brainstorming sessions, and projects. It means a company can adapt to changing conditions and reinvent itself for continued success.

The agile business is one that can respond quickly to market changes, customer and client demands, and its own accelerated timelines. It can make decisions quickly, and take action on those decisions. It can move easily from project to project.

Agility also arises out of the collaborative environment, and leads to further innovation and adaptability. An agile enterprise gains competitive advantage by responding faster to internal and external changes, being more productive, getting products and services to market rapidly, and responding quickly to customer feedback and needs.

 In the **'2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends'** study, 94% of companies surveyed reported that "agility and collaboration" are critical to their organization's success. In CA Technologies' **"The State of Business Agility 2017"** survey, 84% of



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companies said they valued agility because they believed that fast responses to new opportunities would give them an advantage over their competition. That belief is supported by **additional CA research** showing that implementing organization-wide agility initiatives can result in 60% higher revenue and profit growth.

Think about what the availability of collaboration technology would do for your company culture, and how much more innovative your company could be if it had the tools to bring people together quickly. Colleagues would be able to work on projects in real time or asynchronously, building on a project as each team member finds the brief amount of time required to give his or her input.

Such collaboration requires tools that empower teams to work together and share ideas on demand. Technology should allow team members a real-time view of the status of shared projects, and it should enable them to collaborate on those projects.

These collaboration tools support agility by empowering people to access their projects and work on them anytime, anywhere from their mobile devices or using a room system while also maintaining company security. The technology creates an easy user experience by giving users the tools that function as they expect.

A key way to increase your company's agility is to update your digital workplace solutions, allowing employees to be more productive. This may involve unifying disparate conferencing technology, and there are many questions to consider. Get expert advice on how to create a unified collaboration environment in the AVI-SPL whitepaper, **"How to Unify Your Multi-Vendor Collaboration Environment."**

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Overview [edit]

Businesses which lack adaptability may be left paralyzed when faced with changing markets and environments. To counter this, business agility can be developed in the enterprise, making change a routine part of organizational life.^[4] An agile enterprise may be able to nimbly adjust to and take advantage of emerging opportunities in a perpetually changing environment. The agile enterprise can be viewed as an integral component of a larger system whose activities produce a ripple effect of change within both the enterprise itself and the broader system.^[5]

The discipline of enterprise architecture supports business agility through techniques including layering, separation of concerns, architecture frameworks, and the separation of dynamic and stable components. The model of hierarchical complexity—a framework for scoring the complexity of behavior—has been adapted to describe the stages of complexity in enterprise architecture.^[6]

One type of enterprise architecture that supports agility is a non-hierarchical organization without a single point of control.^[7] In such an organization, individuals function autonomously, constantly interact with each other to define the organization's vision and aims, maintain a common understanding of requirements, and monitor the work that needs to be done. Roles and responsibilities are not predetermined but in flux, and emerge from individuals' self-organizing activities. Projects are generated across in the enterprise and sometimes from outside affiliates. Key decisions are made collaboratively, on the spot, and on the fly. Because of this, knowledge, power, and intelligence are spread through the enterprise, making it capable of quickly recovering and adapting to the loss of any key enterprise component.

In business, projects can be complex with uncertain outcomes and goals that can change over time. Traditionally these issues were dealt with by planning experts who would attempt to pre-determine every possible detail prior to implementation; however, in many situations, even the most carefully conceived projects will be impossibly difficult to manage. Agile techniques, originating from the software development community, represent an alternative approach to the classic prescriptive planning approaches to management. The main focus of agile methods is to address the issues of complexity, uncertainty, and dynamic goals, by making planning and execution work in parallel rather than in sequence to eliminate unnecessary planning activity, and the resulting unnecessary work.

Pragmatic methods for achieving organizational agility should start from an organization's competitive bases and the organization's mission, vision, and values.^{[8][9]} Agile methods integrate planning with execution, allowing an organization to find an optimal ordering of work tasks and to adjust to changing requirements. The major causes of chaos on a project include an incomplete understanding of project components, incomplete understanding of component interactions, and changing requirements. Sometimes requirements change as a greater understanding of the project components unfolds over time. Requirements also change due to the changing needs and wants of the stakeholders. The agile approach allows a team or organization of collective trust, competence, and motivation to implement successful projects quickly by focusing on only a small set of details in any change iteration. This is in contrast to non-agile in which all the details necessary for completion are generally taken to be foreseeable and have equal priority inside of one large iteration.

[History](#) [edit]

A concept of "agility" as an attribute of business organizations arose in response to the requirements of modern business to operate in predictable ways in the face of extreme complexity. In particular, software development organizations have created a specific set of techniques known as agile methods to address the problems of changing requirements, uncertain outcomes due to technological complexity, and uncertain system dynamics due to overall system complexity. Some of the ideas that have shaped thinking in the agile community arose from the studies of complexity science and the notion of complex adaptive systems (CAS).

As with CAS, the outcomes or products of agile organizations such as software teams are inherently unpredictable yet will eventually form an identifiable pattern. Despite their unpredictability, agile enterprises are thought to be best positioned to take advantage of hypercompetitive external environments.

Agile enterprises exist in corporate (e.g. W. L. Gore & Associates and Oticon), non-profit (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous), community (e.g., Wikipedia, the Burning Man festival), and even terrorist (e.g. Al Qaeda) environments. [citation needed]

[Topics in agile enterprise studies](#) [edit]

[Comparison with complex systems](#) [edit]

Interactions, self-organizing, co-evolution, and the edge of chaos are concepts borrowed from complexity science that can help define some of the processes that take place within an agile enterprise.

Interactions are exchanges among individuals, etc. holding a common vision and possessing the necessary resources, behaviors, competence, and experience in aggregate. They are an important driving force for agile enterprises, because new ideas, products, services, and solutions emerge from the multiple exchanges happening over time. The interactions themselves, rather than individuals or the external environment, are significant drivers of innovation and change in an agile enterprise.

Self-organizing describes the spontaneous, unchoreographed, feedback-driven exchanges that are often found within agile enterprises. Vital initiatives within the agile enterprise are not always managed by one single person; rather all parties involved collectively make decisions without guidance or management from an outside source. The creativity and innovation that arises from this self-organizing process give the agile enterprise an edge in developing (and redeveloping) products, services, and solutions for a hypercompetitive marketplace.

Co-evolution is a key process through which the enterprise learns from experience and adapts. The agile enterprise is constantly evolving in concert with (and in reaction to) external environmental factors. Products and services are in a constant state of change, because, once launched, they encounter competitors' products, regulators, suppliers, and customer responses that force adaptations. In one sense, nothing is ever completely "finished," although this does not mean that nothing is ever made, produced, or launched.

The *edge of chaos* is a borderline region that lies between complete anarchy or randomness and a state of punctuated equilibrium. The agile enterprise ideally operates in this region, needing the tension between constant change and the constraints that weaken change efforts to keep the organization perturbed enough for innovation and success. In other words, the edge of chaos is the space in which self-organizing and co-evolution flourish.

[Comparison with bureaucracies](#) [edit]

There are several key distinctions between the agile enterprise and the traditional bureaucratic organization.

The most notable is the agile enterprise's use of fluid role definitions that allow for dynamic decision-making structures. Unlike the rigid hierarchies which characterize traditional bureaucracies, organizational structures within agile enterprises are more likely to fluidly adapt to changing business conditions, forming them into structures that support the current direction and any emergent competitive advantage.^[10]

Similarly, agile enterprises do not adhere to the concept of sustained competitive advantage that typifies the bureaucratic organization. Operating in hypercompetitive, continuously changing markets, agile enterprises pursue a series of temporary competitive advantages—capitalizing for a time on the strength of an idea, product, or service then readily discarding it when no longer tenable.^[11]

Lastly, the agile enterprise is populated with individuals pursuing serial incompetence;^[12] they work hard to obtain a certain level of proficiency in one area but are driven to move on to the next "new" area to develop expertise. There are no subject-matter experts specializing for years in one topical area, as found typically in a traditional bureaucracy.

[Operating at the edge of chaos](#) [edit]

Although agile enterprises by definition include numerous constantly co-evolving and moving parts, they do require some structure.

The enterprise must develop specific structures (also called system constraints) to serve as a counterbalance to randomness and anarchy, keeping the enterprise optimally functioning on the edge of chaos. These structures including a shared purpose or vision, resource management aids, reward systems, and shared operating platforms. These often emerge from three key organizational processes: strategizing, organizing, and mobilizing.^[13]

Strategizing is an experimental process for the agile enterprise, in which individuals repeatedly generate ideas (exploration), identify ways to capitalize on ideas (exploitation), nimbly respond to environmental feedback (adaptation), and move on to the next idea (exit).

Organizing is an ongoing activity to develop structures and communication methods that promote serial execution. It often includes defining a shared vision, as well as systems and platforms, that ground the enterprise.

Mobilizing involves managing resources, ensuring the fluid movement of people between projects, and finding ways to enhance internal and external interactions. Typically, enterprise values, personal accountability, and motivational and reward systems are a key output of this process.

See also [edit]

- Agile software development
- Complex systems
- Complexity
- Emergence
- Holacracy
- Participatory organization
- Self-organization
- Spontaneous order
- Wikinomics

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External links [edit]

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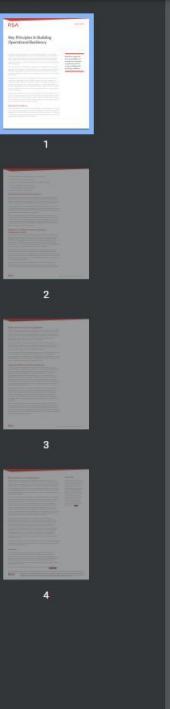
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Key Principles In Building Operational Resiliency

It is hard to find an organization not impacted by the pandemic or other recent disruptions—whether natural, man-made or cyber disruptions, or a combination of several. Impacts from these events have resulted in employee health and safety issues, supply chain disruption, physical damage, loss of customers, reputational damage and increases in the cost of doing business—and the financial impacts have been astronomical.

Of all the disruptions in 2020 so far, the pandemic has impacted the most people, geographies and industries, including hospitality, travel, transportation, healthcare and retail. Opportunistic cyber breaches have also increased in 2020, impacting the safety, security and business value of organizations of all sizes, in all industries and locations.

Operational resiliency has become a regulatory, corporate and board-level topic within many organizations due to the liability and loss they have experienced and that has been inflicted on economies worldwide. The nature, frequency and magnitude of disruptions have caused organizations to evaluate their abilities to properly identify threats, analyze the risk and implement plans to avoid or recover from them. With the increasing frequency of disruptive events, it is impractical to rely on recovery alone.

Resources are spread thin even with one disruption, let alone concurrent events that tax not only the resiliency team but also the rest of the organization. To shift from a reactive to a proactive posture, resiliency must be built into the very fabric of the organization—from its culture to how the company operates both internally and across the extended third-party ecosystem.

Operational resiliency

Operational resiliency is the ability of an organization to absorb changes and adapt in an evolving environment, so it can deliver its objectives, and survive and prosper. Operational resiliency includes, but is more than, business resilience; it is a chance in

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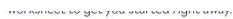


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United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

USPTO OFFICIAL NOTICE

Office Action (Official Letter) has issued
on August 23, 2022 for
U.S. Trademark Application Serial No. 97120229

A USPTO examining attorney has reviewed your trademark application and issued an Office action. You must respond to this Office action in order to avoid your application abandoning. Follow the steps below.

- (1) [**Read the Office action.**](#) This email is NOT the Office action.
- (2) **Respond to the Office action by the deadline** using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS). Your response must be received by the USPTO on or before 11:59 p.m. **Eastern Time** of the last day of the response period. Otherwise, your application will be [abandoned](#). See the Office action itself regarding how to respond.
- (3) **Direct general questions** about using USPTO electronic forms, the USPTO [website](#), the application process, the status of your application, and whether there are outstanding deadlines to the [Trademark Assistance Center \(TAC\)](#).

After reading the Office action, address any question(s) regarding the specific content to the USPTO examining attorney identified in the Office action.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- [**Check the status of your application periodically**](#) in the [Trademark Status & Document Retrieval \(TSDR\)](#) database to avoid missing critical deadlines.
- [**Update your correspondence email address**](#) to ensure you receive important USPTO notices about your application.
- [**Beware of trademark-related scams**](#). Protect yourself from people and companies that may try to take financial advantage of you. Private companies may call you and pretend to be the USPTO or may send you communications that resemble official USPTO documents to trick you. We will never request your credit card number or social security number over the phone. And all official USPTO correspondence will only be emailed from the domain “@uspto.gov.” Verify the correspondence originated from us by using your Serial Number in our database, [TSDR](#), to confirm that it appears under the “Documents” tab, or contact the [Trademark Assistance Center](#).

- **Hiring a U.S.-licensed attorney.** If you do not have an attorney and are not required to have one under the trademark rules, we encourage you to hire a U.S.-licensed attorney specializing in trademark law to help guide you through the registration process. The USPTO examining attorney is not your attorney and cannot give you legal advice, but rather works for and represents the USPTO in trademark matters.

User: Gabrielle Rennie

Statistics for Case 97120229						
#	Search	Total Marks	Dead Marks	Live Viewed Docs	Live Viewed Images	Status/Search Duration
1	97120229[sn]	1	0	0	0	0:00
2	*{v}{"gj"} {"iey"}l*[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	4220	0	0	0	0:04
3	*p{v}r{v}{"sct"1:2}{v1:2}n*[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	6478	0	0	0	0:03
4	*r{"iey"} {"scz"1:2} {"iey"}l{"iey"}n*[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	31	0	1	1	0:02
5	*r{"iey"} {"scz"1:2} {"iey"}l{"iey"}1:3}n*[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	684	0	79	79	0:02
6	2 and 3 and 5	1	0	1	1	0:03
7	2 and (3 5)	11	0	11	11	0:03
8	3 and 5	5	0	5	5	0:02
9	"agile"[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	540	0	0	0	0:01
10	9 and "035"[cc]	420	0	0	0	0:01
11	9 and ("035" "042" a b "200")[ic]	298	0	298	298	0:01
12	"resiliency"[bi,ti] not dead[lid]	72	0	72	72	0:01

Session started 08/23/2022 10:19 am

Session ended 08/23/2022 10:30 am

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Session duration 10 minutes 49 seconds

Adjacency Level 1

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