The 7 Benefits of Scaling Agile

KEY STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS YOUR ORGANIZATION

planview™

Organizations today understand the need for greater agility across the enterprise, reaping the benefits of faster time to market, and fostering the innovation needed to stay ahead of the competition. The benefits gained from increasing enterprise agility across the organization directly correlates to opportunities for better market share, position, and dominance. To realize these benefits and create true differentiation and competitive advantage, organizations must begin to understand, adapt, and scale Agile beyond software development and IT to the rest of the business. Lean and Agile practices are a proven approach to achieving greater business agility.

For organizations piloting pockets of Agile or exploring Lean-Agile principles, this guide will help you understand the benefits of scaling Agile and how to implement it across your organization.

The Lean-Agile Groundwork For Scaling Agile

Culture Shift

One of the main causes of an Agile transformation failure is the inability to make a culture shift. Successful Agile adoption and implementation require entire organizations to think, act, and respond differently. This includes everything from how work is planned, managed, and completed, to how employees are engaged to understand the changes. For organizations to embrace new ways of working, change must be supported at the highest levels of the organization with leadership leading the way. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to understand the Lean-Agile mindset before they can challenge the status quo and support new ways of working. A Lean-Agile mindset prioritizes value, flow, and continuous improvement over milestones and requirements. This mindset shift is important to how work is approached and completed. The Lean-Agile mindset introduces the concepts of failing fast and embraces change to promote ongoing learning.

*A **value stream** is defined as an end-to-end business process and the associated steps an organization takes to deliver customer value. It is also defined as a line of business that delivers value, typically a product or solution, to a customer. As organizations evolve, the shape of their value streams often evolves, too.*

Another piece of the culture shift requires leaders to look at their management style. Instead of a command and control environment, a Lean-Agile mindset fosters servant leadership. Senior leaders create strategic objectives that set the stage for company-wide alignment. Management further informs strategy by deciding how much capacity to allocate to each value stream. From there, teams are empowered with a high degree of autonomy regarding how business objectives are met. These teams are able to self-manage and self-organize to achieve the maximum amount of customer value. This level of accountability and autonomy is the life-blood of scaling Agile, yet without servant leadership to enable these principles, culture change stalls.

Work Management Shift

In addition to a culture shift, work management must transform as well. Traditional approaches to work and project management assume that by defining all the requirements upfront, organizations can reduce risk and achieve success. Leaders estimate how many people and other resources are required to do the work and how long it will take, trying very hard to keep the scope unchanged.

Lean-Agile thinkers start from a different premise, that every potential opportunity is a hypothesis. Instead of assuming the answer or hypothesis is correct up front, organizations do not know what is required until something is built. Then feedback is gathered, incorporated and the product or feature goes through iterations to create the right increment of value.

In the Lean-Agile model, scope becomes less predictable; there is a high premium on learning. That premium is placed on teams staying together to preserve and build knowledge. Organizations create a steady cadence of iterations in which to build, measure, learn, and repeat so time also becomes fixed. Teams and teams of teams finish what they can, given the fixed capacity and defined iterations. Incomplete work is evaluated in light of customer and market feedback and reprioritized. It may or may not roll into the next iteration.

By experimenting and emphasizing the need for feedback quickly, as opposed to completing a pre-defined project scope, organizations are nimbler.
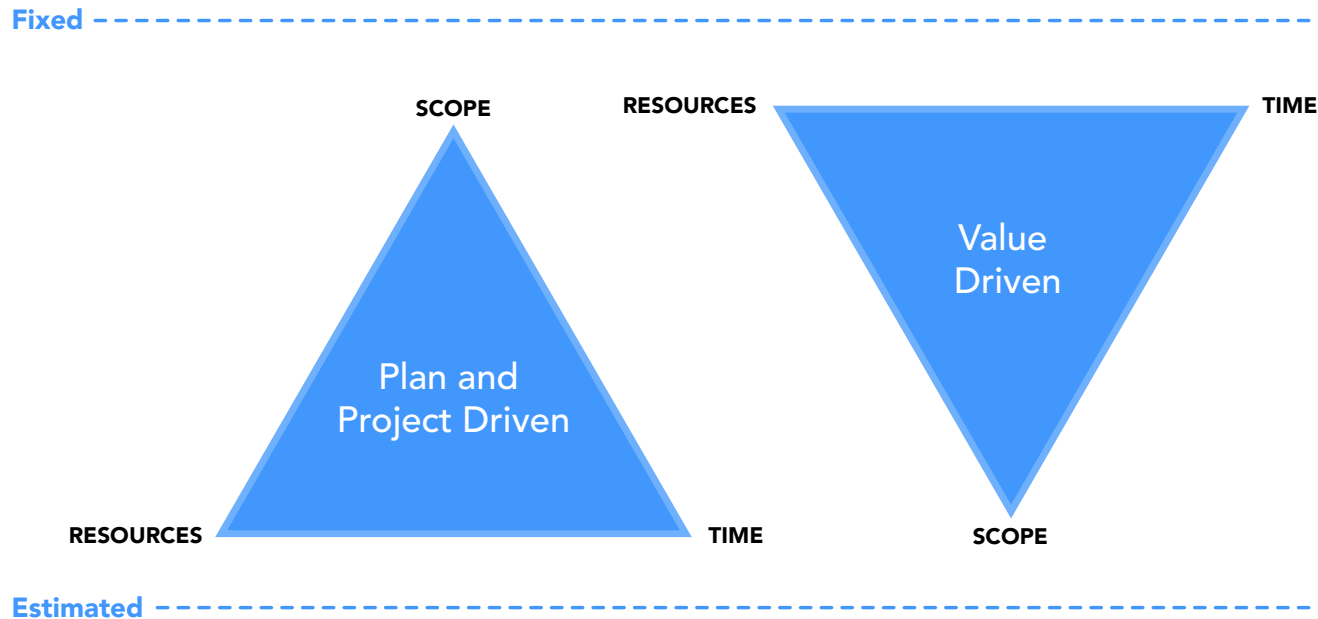
Technology Shift

Transforming into a more Lean-Agile organization also requires technology to support the shift. As Agile transformations and scaling moves beyond teams, it's imperative that organizations use technology to support their strategic plans from the top to the teams, creating accountability, visibility, and alignment. It's likely that your organization has a myriad of tools for different parts of the strategic plan. Perhaps your organization captures financials, capacity, and corporate objectives in one place, but have Agile and traditional project teams tracking delivery in another or multiple tools. How does your organization understand ROI and delivery against your highest-level corporate goals?

Think about what you need an Agile solution to do for your organization. Businesses with many Agile teams already, may gain value in a solution that can roll up and connect their disparate Agile teams (which are working in different tools) for better data visibility. Other organizations may need to go beyond team and teams of teams' visibility to truly understand how Agile work maps to the portfolio. For organizations in the latter set, look for a Lean and Agile solution that enables your organization to map strategic plans down to the Agile teams, and roll up the work, impact, and financial contributions to the strategic objectives. With the ability to see how the organization is performing against strategic goals, the entire enterprise is aligned from strategy to delivery and poised for greater agility.

There are plenty of tools that can help your enterprise effectively scale Agile delivery, but to get true insight into how your business is doing, you need to connect all parts of your enterprise. Look for a Lean and Agile *solution* that embraces agility and transformation in a way that fits your organizations terms and timeline.

The 7 Benefits of Scaling Agile and Key Steps to Implemention

1. Strategically Align the Entire Enterprise

Scaling Agile both across and up the organization creates a way to focus on and deliver against the organization's strategic objectives. By organizing around value streams, delivery teams are aligned to what produces value for customers. The organization fosters transparency and cross-team coordination, giving the entire organization faster response times and the ability to quickly pivot if priorities change or the market shifts.

How to implement:

- Set shared priorities at the highest level of the organization

- Build strategic plans to translate key objectives and outcomes into roadmaps

- Utilize enterprise Kanban boards to visualize the progress and relationships between high-level goals, business milestones and initiatives

- Roll up status from the team to the top to understand how work is mapping and delivering to strategic objectives

2. Fund the Value Streams that Matter Most

Values streams are built around the products, processes, and solutions for customers, either internal or external, and are a component to scaling Agile across the enterprise. When funding is aligned to value streams, organizations fund areas of the business that have the potential to deliver or greatly improve value delivery. Organizations grant dollars to the value streams and allow them to determine how to best achieve the defined objectives. Future funding decisions are made by evaluating associated KPIs, not the completion of the deliverables (as in traditional projects).

How to implement:

- Break down strategic objectives by value stream

- Analyze past spending by value stream and then adjust based on go-forward priorities

- Create Lean business cases to identify opportunities for the organization

- Determine which epics to pursue based on potential business impact, alternatives and trade-offs

- Measure progress and value delivered, adjust funding and capacity based on internal and external factors

3. Capacity and Resource Management

Capacity management is easier when people are aligned consistently to value streams, each with clear success metrics as guidance to the work to complete. The balance of capacity by value stream is revisited as feedback comes in and priorities evolve. The best practice is to refocus and reevaluate quarterly. The quarterly cadence provides an opportunity to reflect and rebalance with minimal disruption to organizational flow.

How to implement:

- Determine the team and the teams of teams aligned to your value streams and their available capacity

- Plan solution, release train, and team capacity against epic, feature, and story backlogs

- Balance capacity and demand by team, skill, location, and other factors

- Evaluate capacity and prioritization trade-offs based on business and organizational impacts

4. Facilitate Teams of Teams Planning

Scaling Agile throughout the enterprise promotes the inclusion of people across multiple functions, either across the entire business (end-to-end value chain) or within a department (Dev and Ops). These people and teams need opportunities to create alignment, coordination, and roadmaps for success. Quarterly planning, also known as Program Increment (PI) Planning in the Scaled Agile Framework, creates an opportunity for teams of teams to build plans that deliver against corporate goals and highlight potential dependencies and risks these teams may have when delivering value. Quarterly planning is instrumental in scaling Agile as it promotes the connection of the delivery teams to the organization's strategy, giving everyone across the business clear visibility into quarterly deliverables.

How to implement:

- Present leadership's business vision, and context and establish key business priorities

- Collaborate with stakeholders and create capacity-based plans

- Visualize cross-team dependencies and identify risks

- Commit to the plan for the next quarter and establish key organizational meeting cadences to present progress and maintain alignment

5. Enable Enterprise-wide Visibility

By visualizing the work from all the teams aligned to the value stream(s), leaders and managers can see bottlenecks and impediments, creating opportunity to reallocate work to deliver on-time. As organizational priorities pivot, leadership evaluates shifting teams among value streams, managing the cross-team dependencies and comparing alternatives. Leadership also gains insight into how value streams are delivering, their progress, and financial impacts.

How to implement:

- Connect the work of disparate Agile teams into a shared view via an enterprise Kanban board

- Manage dependencies across teams with multiple, interconnected boards and dependency visualizations.

- Roll up the work of all teams of teams to see program and financial progress against the value streams and strategic objectives

6. Engage Employees

Team autonomy is critical to scaling Agile across multiple teams and teams of teams. Those closest to the work need empowerment to make decisions about how their work is delivered. Servant leaders provide guidance to the value streams through strategic goals and business context, allowing employees to understand how their work maps to the highest-level business goals. By providing light-weight guidance and purpose, leaders enable autonomy. Organizations with higher levels of servant leadership and more team autonomy generally see happier and more engaged employees.

How to implement:

- Relinquish command-and-control management to promote servant leadership

- Share the strategic objectives, allowing teams to connect their work to the bigger picture

- Enable self-organization and team autonomy to make decisions about how work is accomplished

- Connect users within and across teams with a flexible, connected approach to work delivery

7. Real-time Reporting and Analytics

Realizing the benefits of scaling Agile would be incomplete without real-time reporting and analytics. Without the right technology in place, organizations cannot move as fast as their delivery engines and likely lag in their ability to fund the right priorities at the right time. By investing in the right technology to support Agile at scale, organizations can bridge the strategy to delivery chasm and understand the impact of the work against the strategic objectives. Reporting and analytics enables all parts of the value stream to understand how their work matters and contributes to the bottom line.

How to implement:

- Set up dashboards to track the progress of current value stream delivery

- Review real-time metrics at regular intervals to discuss ROI and financial investments

- Determine if value stream funding needs to be reprioritized based on strategic goals and objectives

- Communicate with the organization to create transparency across the enterprise

Scale Agile with the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe®)

As your organization expands their Agile transformation, structure and guidance is needed. Frameworks help enterprises at all phases of their Agile transformation to scale Agile beyond a few teams or beyond software development and IT. There are many different Agile frameworks to choose from, and they should be evaluated carefully to understand how they apply to your organization. The Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe®) provides a solid guide post for enterprises looking to scale Agile across the organization. And

is a good foundation for organizations with a commitment to scaling Agile, wherever they are on the journey today.

At the enterprise level, SAFe provides guidance for organizations on the types of leaders, management teams, and operational structure needed to transform. Beyond the enterprise level, SAFe provides direction on the roles, team structure, ceremonies, and planning cadences to drive the alignment and collaboration needed to achieve Agile at scale.

Scaling Agile is difficult, knowing where to start is often the hardest part. The seven benefits and key steps to implementation above provide a starting point for your organization. Couple those keys steps with a solid framework to increase transformation speed, and provide your organization with a clear roadmap for how to scale Agile across the enterprise.

About Planview's Lean and Agile Delivery Solution

Planview's Lean and Agile Delivery Solution provides a scalable enterprise-level Lean Portfolio Management, value-stream planning and Agile delivery platform that enables planning and value delivery from the strategic portfolio level to the Agile team. With transparency into how portfolio initiatives and value streams are progressing across the business and key insight into changes needed across financials, capacity and delivery, the entire organization can more fluidly shift to deliver better business outcomes.

To learn more, read about the **Planview Lean and Agile Delivery Solution**.

planview™