

How to Drive Agile Adoption in the Workplace



The value and benefit of Agile work practices, seeking to improve collaboration and increase decision velocity have gained almost universal recognition, especially in industries connected with technology (which is basically all of them these days). They have transformed the way organizations function, looking to replace a top-down hierarchy with a flexible approach that empowers individual teams to have an outside-in approach, i.e. reacting to and delivering what customers need.

Millions of businesses around the world, including major corporate behemoths such as Netflix, Amazon, USAA, and Tesla all work through virtually whole-company Agile practices.

Driving Agile adoption in the workplace

To achieve Agile adoption across all levels, from management to the coalface, several things need to change in how work is performed. Getting buy-in from the various stakeholders involved won't always be easy, but here are some of the best ways to go about it.



THE PROBLEMS WITH IMPLEMENTING AGILE

Though it's such a widely accepted and successful methodology, getting your department or organization to adopt Agile can often face stiffer resistance than might be expected. These issues can be both structural and personal, including:

- Difficulty of adopting constant reiteration into all processes beyond shallow, one-time attempts.
- People enjoying the comfort that all responsibility lies in extensive documentation rather than unique and constant decision-making.
- Management and C-suite executives can find it difficult to relinquish oversight and final say over processes.
- The executive goal of "maximizing shareholder value" places profit as the goal, whereas Agile places maximizing customer value as the goal, with profit coming as a result.

1. Outline the advantages of Agile practices

As a term, Agile is flung around with ever-increasing prevalence, but that doesn't necessarily mean that everyone knows what it means or the benefits it can deliver in their specific context. A first step to getting people on board with Agile is explaining exactly what they are buying into. Whether it's cross-functional teams, decentralized and nimbler decision-making or the adoption of continuous learning, the stakeholders involved will need to know what it means for them in practical terms.

2. Make a clear plan of introduction

Creating Agile teams or altering processes to align them with Agile practices doesn't need to be as disruptive in implementation as it is in outcome. Creating a precise plan of what changes will occur on an individual and team level, as well as a timeline sequence for those changes will increase individual agency. It will also make tracking progress through Agile-focused project management software like Clarizen Go quicker and easier.

3. Test and learn

One of the core principles of Agile is the constant reiteration of practices to incrementally improve them. This process of “test and learn” also applies to the original implementation of the methodology across an organization. Learning needs to be maintained as an integral part of your organization’s DNA and thus, introducing it early helps both the adoption process as well as functioning as a learning method in itself. McKinsey & CO. says maintaining a North star as a guiding point for where you want the organization to grow towards is an effective way to ensure constant alignment across all teams.

4. Categorize responsibilities clearly

Establishing a structure that will support Agile adoption is essential to effect lasting change in your organization. One way of doing this is to establish a clear taxonomy of teams, namely:

- Business Process Teams
- Customer Experience Teams
- Technology Systems Teams

The visibility and integration of these teams make collaboration easier and clarifies the ownership of specific task fields. As Carl Liebert, the COO at USAA, explained in his interview with HBR: “If you don’t have a really good taxonomy, you get redundancy and duplication. I want to walk into an auditorium and ask, ‘Who owns the members’ change-of-address experience?’ And I want a clear and confident response from a team that owns that experience. No finger-pointing.”

One of the best ways to ensure Agile adoption is successful in your workplace, is by using the right tools for the job.

Clarizen Go has been created to allow teams to collaborate easily as well as giving greater visibility over their processes.

[Learn more here.](#)

ABOUT CLARIZEN

Clarizen delivers cloud-based enterprise collaborative work management solutions built on the vision of business agility. Clarizen’s PPM solution was named a 2018 Gartner Peer Insights Customers’ Choice for Project Portfolio Management, Worldwide, and is the winner of the prestigious 2018 SIIA CODiE and 2018 Gold Stevie® awards for Best Project Management Solution. Fortune 500 companies like Dell, Newell Brands and Shaw Industries are just some of the more than 2,000 customers across 124 countries that rely on Clarizen to help them quickly adapt to changing market conditions and achieve their business goals. In the last five years, Clarizen customers have completed more than 25 million milestones and 1 million projects. To learn more, visit www.clarizen.com