

AGILE WORKING

in small and medium-sized enterprises

**What you need to know before you make
your team agile, and why you should do so.**

With support from



EDITORIAL

STARTING A NEW WORKING WORLD – with a few old virtues

PAGE

3

CHAPTER

1

What is 'agile'? And why is it important?

-  The beginning: the Agile Manifesto by and for programmers
- The breakthrough: agility as a survival strategy

Worksheet:

-  How complex is your market and how do you react to it? An orientation

PAGE

5
7

8

CHAPTER

3

How does a team start agile work?

-  The agile toolbox: scrum, kanban and more
- Every man and woman on board: a new team with new roles
- Athletic ambition: one sprint after another

Worksheet:

-  Ready for the first sprint? Checklist

PAGE

15
16

17
18

CHAPTER

2

What are the prerequisites for agile working?

-  What must change: it's all a question of attitude
- What can be arranged: space, tools, time
- What needs to be said: openly, transparently, respectfully

Worksheet:

-  Where are you leading your team? Test yourself

PAGE

10
11

12
13

CHAPTER

4

Helping the team become agile

-  The learning curve: learning with and from each other
- Hacks and tricks for learning together

Worksheet:

-  Where is best to start? A categorisation test

PAGE

20
21

22
23

CONCLUSION

**Everything changes.
If we make the change, it's a good thing.**

PAGE

24

Contents



Agile. The word is not new, but had become a bit dusty. It comes from Latin and means quick, flexible and dexterous. Today, it's the talk of the town and – having come back to Europe across the Atlantic – represents a new work philosophy.

It is the current management buzz word.

The principle being: companies who work in an agile way have a future, those who don't work in an agile way will have problems in future. But it's not as simple as that. Agility is not a panacea and is not a recipe for success in and of itself. Above all, agility is an attitude. That is not something you can buy or simply decide upon. You have to have your own approach. Only then does agility help companies to survive in these times of upheaval and to develop faster, better and successfully.

ING Bank has been shaking up its overall organisation worldwide for some time with One Agile Way of Working (OAWOW). ING Netherlands pioneered the transformation. There, teams in IT had been working in an agile way, gladly, for some years – but without effect. That is why the management introduced agile working for all in 2015. Not for every function, but for everyone's thinking. A kind of cultural revolution. Success became tangible and measurable. They became faster, more flexible and more productive, and it showed on the balance sheet. For the bank, agility means the focus of their work is back on the customer. They develop innovative products more quickly and the employees are more engaged.

Is that something new? No, certainly not. But it is missing in many companies. Somewhere along the line, these virtues of entrepreneurship got lost amid

the bureaucracy, processes and hierarchies. Are they missing from your team, too? The genuine interest in the customer, the joy of quickly achieving tasks, the desire to have ideas and bring something new to the market? Then we would like to motivate you to become agile with this workbook.

Agility is not a destination, it is a path, which can be laborious and difficult, and probably long, too. Like a climb to a summit over various stages. Once you have made it, you will enjoy the vista and wonder why you didn't head out sooner.

We wish you many astounding discoveries on the way to agile working.

The Job Wizards

Starting a new working world – with a few old virtues



*Good to know –
know what could happen*



*Good to do –
manage changes professionally*

The concept of Job Wizards workbooks

The Job Wizards workbooks are published four times a year. They offer entrepreneurs and decision makers up-to-date facts, content and inspiration on important subjects in the world of work. In workbook number two, we have put together the most important information on agile working for you. Not every entrepreneur or manager can afford a coach or adviser in turbulent or unsettled times. Perhaps you, too, would like to find out about the topic of agility. This workbook communicates central topics relating to agile organisations and provides important stimulus when it comes to the introduction of agile methods in small companies in particular.

Of course, it can't replace a professionally planned and implemented system design for agile working created by experts, but it can provide inspiration:

- In the knowledge section **„Think ahead – good to know“** the workbook explains the basics of agile working in small companies to you.
- In the practical section **„Work smart – good to do“** worksheets help you implement the freshly acquired knowledge of agility in your own company.

How to read this workbook.

CHAPTER

1

WHAT IS 'AGILE'? AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



In spring 2001, 17 software developers from the USA with project experience published the 'Manifesto for Agile Software Development', or 'Agile Manifesto' for short. In it, they defined four values for agile software development, in order to find solutions in a quick, customer-oriented and creative way.

- **Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools.
- **Working software** over comprehensive documentation.
- **Customer collaboration** over contract negotiation.
- **Responding to change** over following a plan.

The authors all had experience with conventional project management, where a detailed plan was first set up, then endlessly programmed and tested before a product came to market. In view of the increasing complexity of tasks, this method was too slow, too inefficient and not in the customers' interest. That is why the writers considered under what conditions software developers could successfully work flexibly and as required. That is how agile working as we know it today began.

Today, agile working in software development is standard. In addition to the four values of the manifesto: individuals, products, collaboration and response, 12 agile principles have been defined, which describe in practical terms how these values can best be made effective in work.

The beginning: the Agile Manifesto by and for programmers



But why have these guidelines long since influenced other companies and industries? The answer is simple: carrying on as before is not an option for many companies. We live in a VUCA world. That is an American acronym that describes the conditions under which we have to make decisions today:

V = volatility
U = uncertainty
C = complexity
A = ambiguity

The pressure to change is also considerable for small and medium-sized companies.

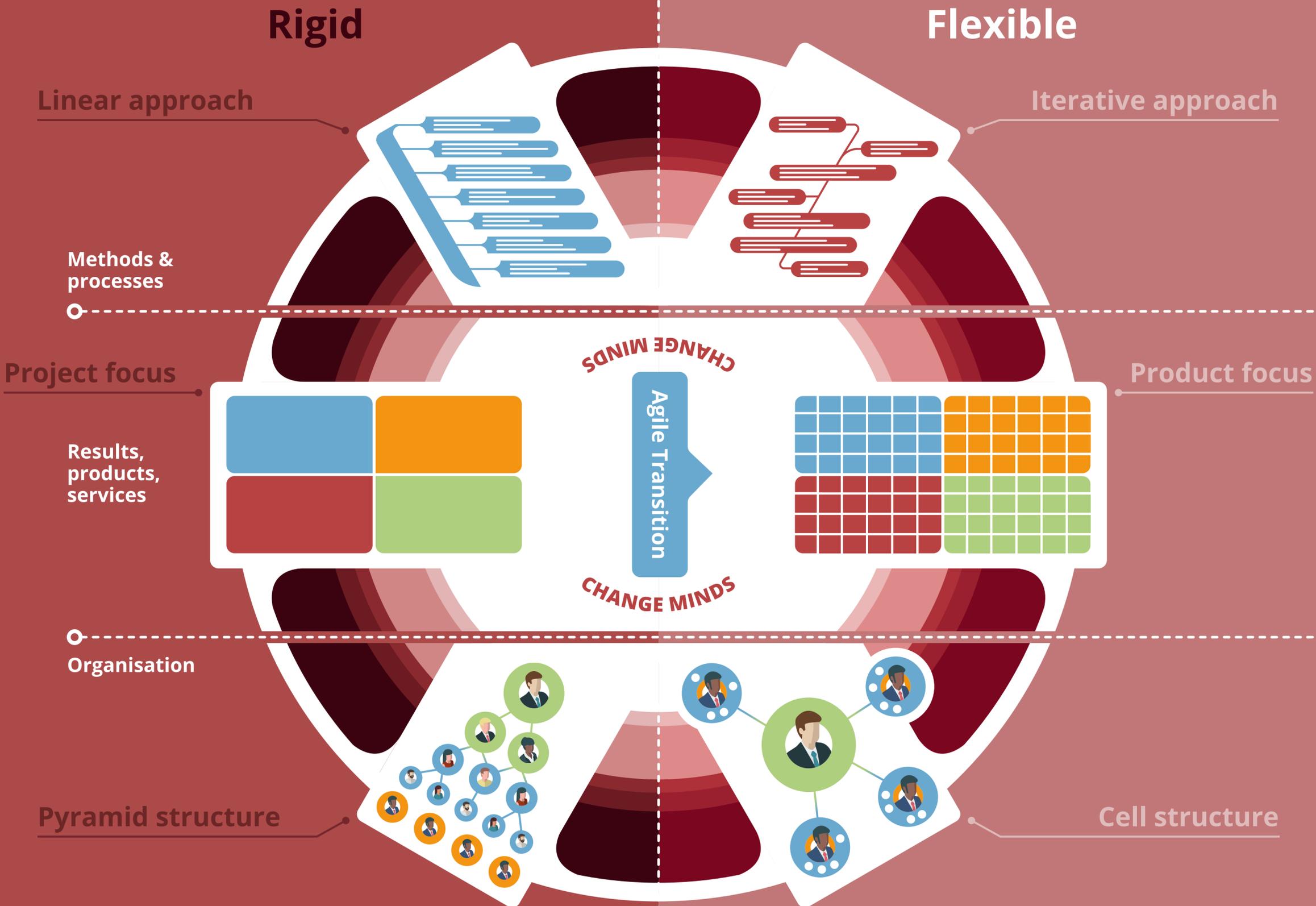
Because:

- ① The digital transformation is taking place everywhere.
- ② Rigid processes, strong hierarchies and detailed planning make things slow and sluggish.
- ③ Without genuine collaboration, there is a lack of ideas, productivity and responsibility.

If you are nodding silently as you read because you recognise all of this, you have probably been wondering for a while what you could and want to do in order to set you and your team up appropriately for these stormy times, right? The following graphic shows the three dimensions of change when you and your company want to become quicker, more flexible and more engaged. That is what could be referred to as agile. But you don't have to. The main thing is to get you and your team moving.

The breakthrough: agility as a survival strategy in today's complex world





Agile management

It is often still the case these days: the boss says how things are going to be. Then that is what happens. Everyone waits for things to be finished. And for the working day to end. That is everyday activity in many companies. But the joy of work is limited under those conditions.

Perhaps the boss doesn't enjoy working like that, either? Maybe things are moving too slowly for the customer? Could it be that the most capable employees always hand in their notice because they feel stifled? Perhaps the sector is changing? Maybe you need more orders?

Those are all good starting points to build on, to ask questions, to question yourself. And to consider the first steps of an agile change, because that could alter a lot in your company: the motivation, the tempo, the flexibility, the responsibility, and most importantly: what you offer your customers.

Agile management



The future is a calculation with many unknowns. How do we know how to prepare ourselves for it? Ideally, by coolly and analytically observing the present. The Welsh scientist Dave Snowden developed a knowledge management model that clarifies potential actions under different conditions. This Cynefin framework describes five domains to which all tasks and problems in a company can be allocated. They make clear which context or system we need to act in and which strategies we can use to progress.

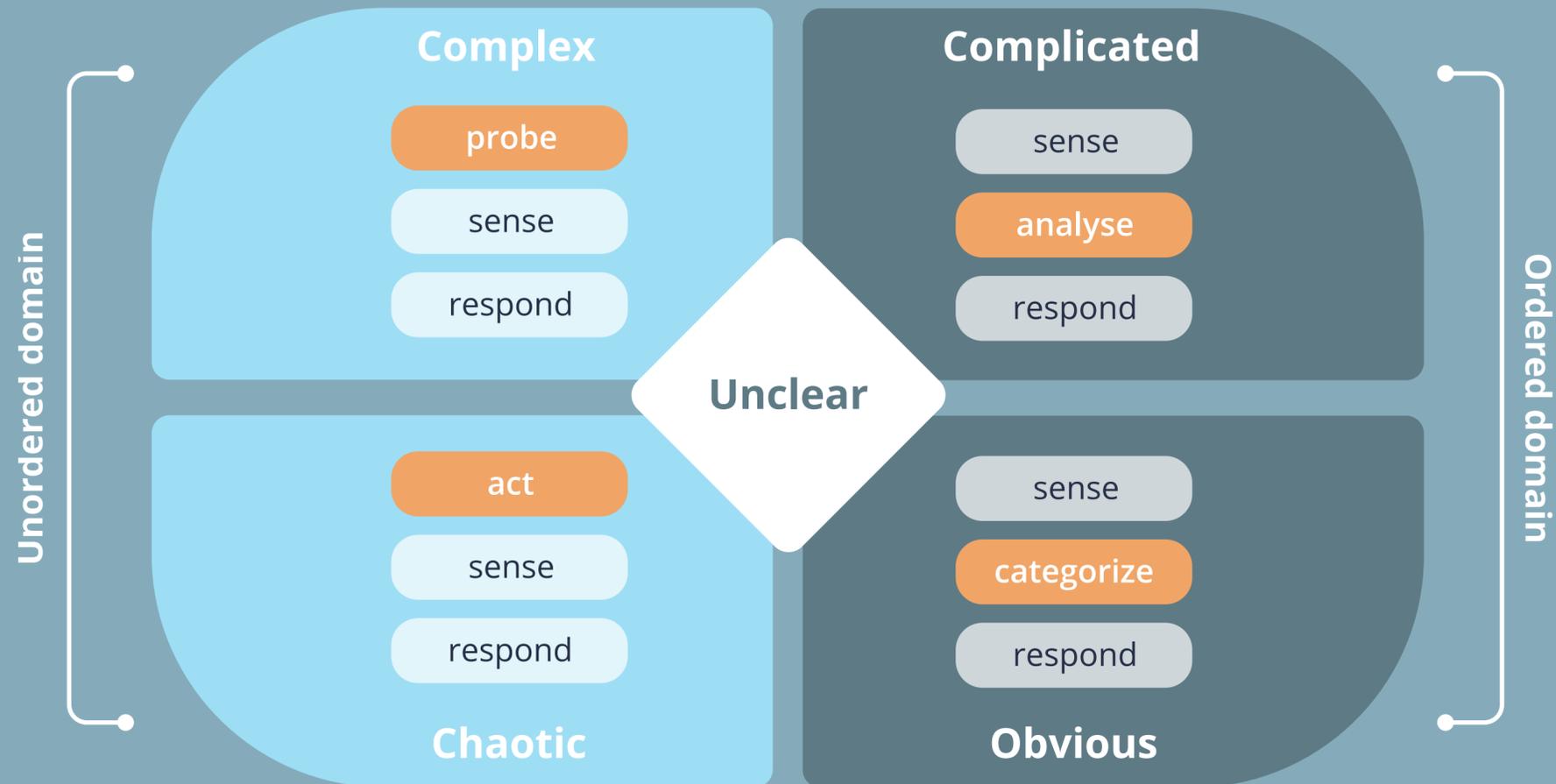
The Welsh word Cynefin means 'habitat' or 'origin'. In other words, everything that characterises us, and thus our thoughts and actions: in professional, cultural, familial and social terms, because that influences our view of the world and how we perceive reality. You can use the Cynefin framework to establish whether your strategies are the right ones to resolve the tasks and problems faced by your company.



How is your market developing and how do you react to it?

An orientation



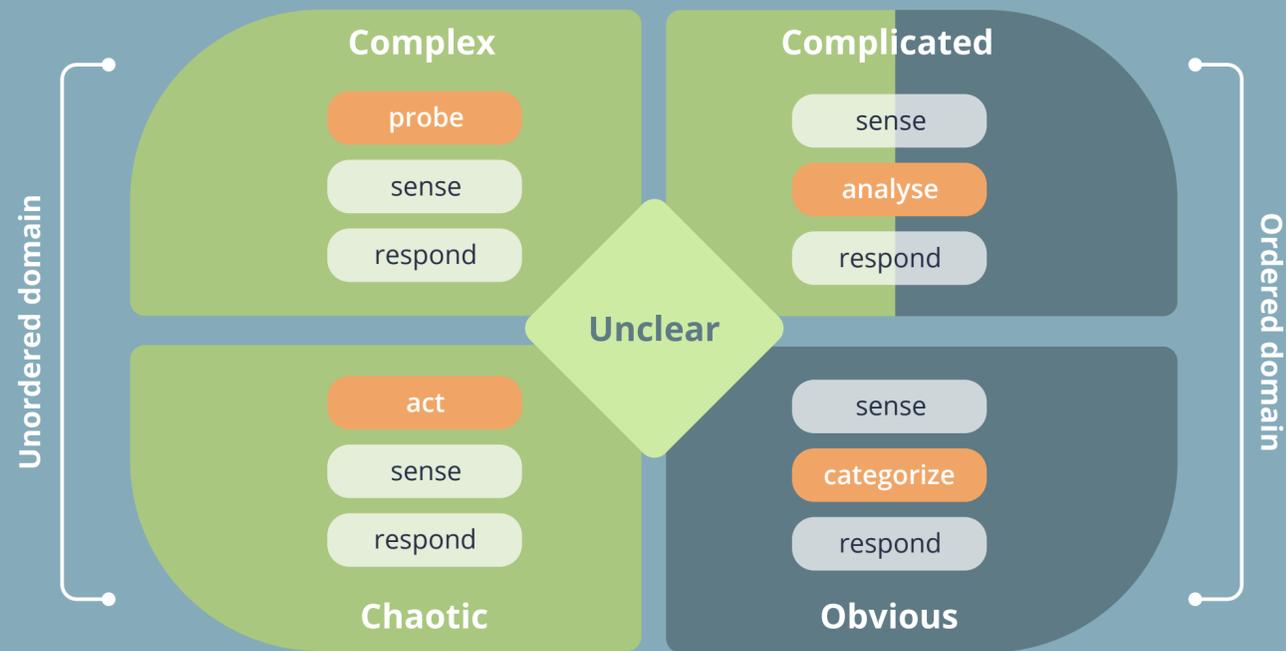


- **Is it obvious?** If so, it is clear what the cause and effect are.
- **Is it complicated?** If so, it is harder to identify the cause and effect, because there are many factors involved. But it is possible.
- **Is it complex?** If so, the cause and effect relationship cannot be clearly established; it is constantly changing. But there is no time for more detailed analysis.
- **Is it chaotic?** If so, you lose sight of the cause and effect relationship. The system is probably in a state of emergency and immediate action is needed.
- **Is it unclear?** Yes, if too little is known about these tasks or problems to allocate them to a different domain. In that case, they stay here.

The Cynefin framework



Think about the current challenges for your company. Note down the three biggest tasks or problems you would like to resolve. Then answer these questions for each of the tasks.



Green: new strategies are required here, because quick, flexible and inventive action is needed.

What happens next?

Do you find yourself in the ordered domain?

If you primarily have obvious tasks, the best idea is to continue as before. That can also work with complicated tasks. But the transitions between domains are fluid in both directions, so complicated systems can also benefit from more flexibility and agile methods.

But be careful: it can be the case that a situation that appears obvious suddenly becomes chaotic because it was incorrectly evaluated. Then there is no way back – you have to take control of the chaos first.

Do you find yourself in the unordered domain?

If you work in complex and chaotic systems, you will not progress with conventional, linear methods. In this case, it is important to try out new things and act immediately. Intuition and experience help with this. Then you need to observe the result and to discard or change the approach accordingly, but certainly to keep trying things and learning from them.

Is everything unclear?

According to David Snowden, we mostly find ourselves in this middle domain. We don't know what kind of system is in place and we don't recognise it, because everyone looks through the lens of their experience, opinion and culture. If you work bureaucratically, for example, you see all problems as being solved through more processes. The fire brigade leaves the station once the blaze has started.

The only solution is to take a step to one side, look closely at everything, listen carefully, ask the right questions and then to reach an evaluation that moves the situation into another field.

The Cynefin framework

Evaluation





CHAPTER
2

WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES
**FOR AGILE
WORKING?**

Agility begins in the mind. It is a mindset, an attitude: to yourself, your colleagues, your customers and your tasks. It is not about right or wrong, truth and science, but about the underlying assumptions and doctrines that guide our thoughts and actions. These well-beaten tracks of our personality need to be looked at more closely if we want to think and act in an agile way. By you alone, together with management and with the team. Is that possible? Yes: everyone can and wants to learn and develop. Psychologist Carol Dweck calls this dynamic attitude a 'growth mindset'. The opposite of that is a 'fixed mindset', which says 'I am the way I am'. It doesn't believe in its own development or that of others.

Underlying assumptions that have been common up to now include: every project needs a good plan. The bosses have to make the decision. Efficiency is everything. If something goes wrong, someone is to blame. If you don't know what you're talking about, you should stay quiet. These are quite widespread attitudes within companies. They led to success in the Industrial Age, but will do so less in future.

This attitude inhibits willingness to take risks, desire to try new things, trust that the team can take responsibility for its own decisions, time for in-depth discussion, courage to learn from mistakes and try things out, respect and faith that every perspective can contribute something of value.

So what could be new underlying assumptions for agile thinking?

- Our customers expect more **agility** and flexibility from us.
- Bottlenecks slow things down. We become faster when everyone takes on **responsibility**.
- **Small** teams work in a more agile way than big ones.
- Mistakes happen. They are important for us because of what we **learn** from them.
- Every **perspective** is valuable and helps us to work better.

If that is to become reality, in the next stage you derive values and principles that suit you and your sector from your agile underlying assumptions. Ideally together with everyone you need for the change.

You will then have completed an important stage: a strong argumentation that explains why you want to work differently and will follow new paths – your very own Agile Manifesto. And now, make time for it – ideally five minutes every morning – and make yourself conscious of how you practiced the new values and principles the previous day and how you will work with them today. After all, every new attitude needs to be practiced daily until it is internalised.

What must change: it's all a question of attitude



MAKE SPACE:

If you want to work in an agile way, you need to tear down walls. Individual offices are no longer needed. The principalities known as departments are discarded or changed, because the principle to be applied is that all disciplines working together on a project sit in the same room. From customer advisers to product designers. Maybe even at the same desk. The set-up should support quick interaction, shared responsibility and transparent work.

It is good if the space itself can also be quickly and flexibly changed. The room should have a lot of empty wall space to make tasks, progress and results transparent for all. The setting within the company should include zones for concentration, discussion, telephone calls and relaxation.

YOUR TOOLS OF CHOICE:

Because you could say simplicity is also an important agile principle, only the essentials: computer, tablet, smartphone with Wi-Fi and a printer in the network. Pens, markers, Post-its, paper, adhesive strips, scissors, a board and a large empty wall are needed for transparent work. Digital agile tools such as Trello, Monday.com or Jira, which also depict the team's boards and projects, are also useful for flexible mobile work.

A social collaboration tool such as Yammer or Slack is helpful to simplify communication with and without physical presence. Emails are slow, not suitable for discussions and make knowledge exchange hardly transparent at all. But, as always, these are only options. You decide for yourself what the team really needs for agile project work.

TAKE YOUR TIME:

Agile working is a process. Start where it makes sense, where it is needed, where you want and need to change something. Don't expect everything to work perfectly from one day to the next. And don't expect to reach your target the day after tomorrow. On the contrary, trial and error, looking back and forward, new approaches and lots of repetition will hopefully allow the team to find a level of self-organisation that can really be called agile.

Even then, you have not reached any finish line, but need to keep your eye on the ball. Staying on the move towards new ideas, new products and new services. ING started in 2010 and has now been working on the fundamental transformation of the global organisation for three years. Learning needs to be learned, too. And, as with small children, it requires patience.

What can be arranged: space, tools, time



The more the digital world infiltrates our life, the more important humans become. They are not machines and don't want to be. Not a cog in the machine or a grey mass, but individuals with strengths and weaknesses. With heart and understanding. People whose knowledge, creativity, productivity and awareness of responsibility are required in a company. And who also have the right to a personal life, to stay healthy and to enjoy work.

Those are the people at the core of agile transformation. A lot will change: how we work together, with whom we work together, how we like to do it. Everyone gets to know new roles, structures and methods for everyday work (*more about that in chapter 3*). Good communication is decisive for this serious change to be successful and the team to really begin open, cooperative work. Everyday communication with each other should be motivational, focused and appreciative.

Personal exchange and direct conversation involve everyone in the team. Active listening, asking follow-up questions and letting people speak are also important qualities for communication. As are the honest admission 'I don't know', and a genuine 'Thank you for your support'. Communication with each other should be characterised by these three features:

Open: Everyone knows what is going on, what is happening when and why it is important. And at the right time, entirely, honestly and sincerely. Comprehensive information helps you make well-founded decisions.

Transparent: Relevant decisions and results are presented and justified. Words and deeds match up. This generates credibility and increases trust.

Respectful: Everyone is different and brings different experiences to the table. Being different is welcome and progressive. But the attitude also needs to be able to withstand pressure and difficulties. Accusations are not helpful.

What needs to be said: openly, transparently, respectfully



Among other things, the agile method scrum (see chapter 3) involves a succession of compulsory meetings. That makes clear how important communication is to good cooperation.



SPRINT PLANNING:

This is the kick-off meeting for the agile project. The entire team sits together, including the customer. This is where the team gets the briefing and mutually defines and prioritises intermediate steps that can be separately developed in the sprint.

SPRINT REVIEW:

Once a sprint is completed, the whole team meets with the customer to view, check and test the finished result of the sprint.

DAILY STAND-UP:

This is how the day starts for the team. With seven people, 15 minutes should be enough. Everyone stands to speed things up. Everyone reports on

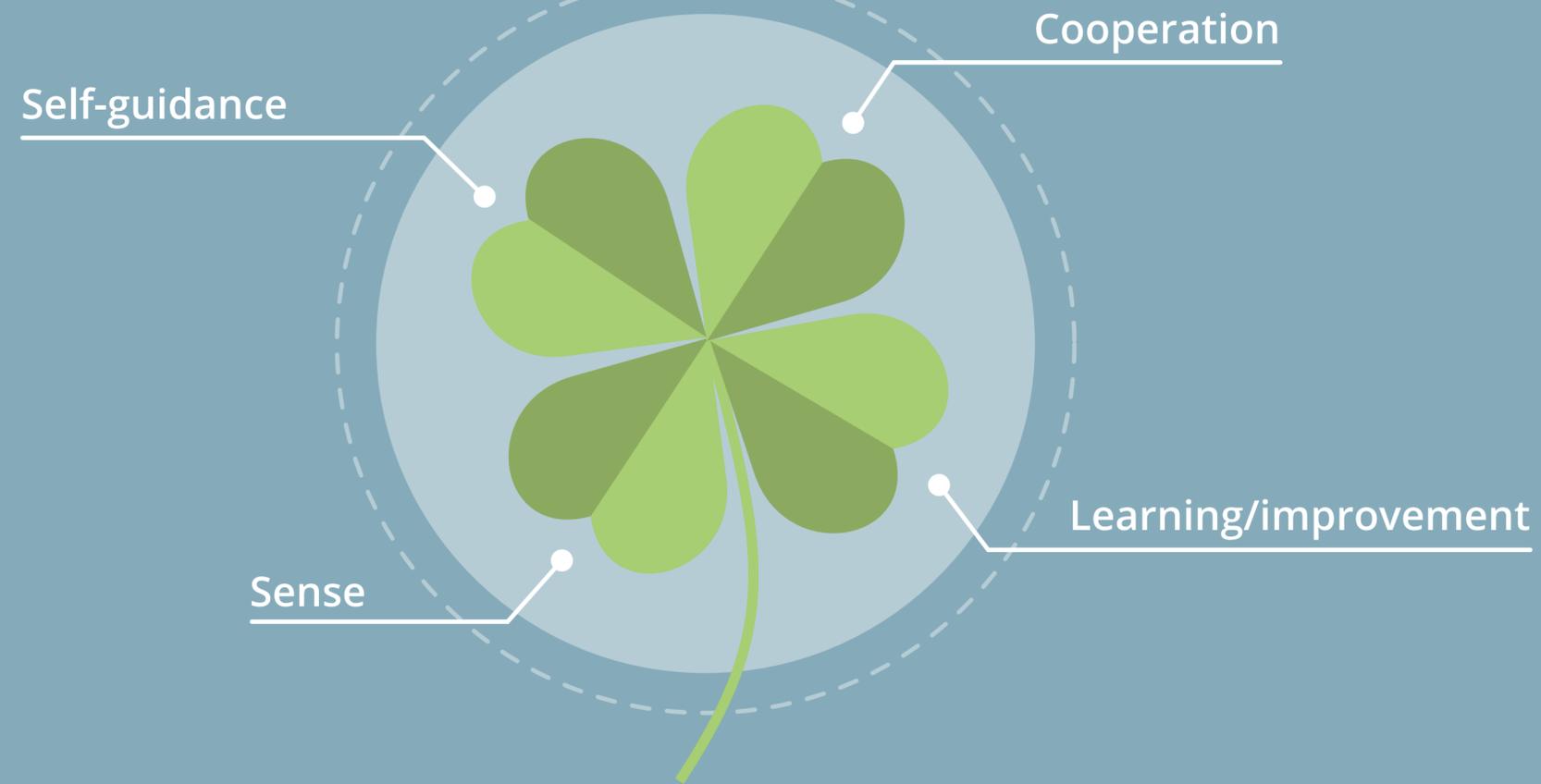
- a) What they have done since the last stand-up,
- b) What they have planned for today,
- c) If they see obstacles or problems for which they require help.

RETROSPECTIVE:

The team comes together at regular intervals and looks back on things to see what they can learn from them. What went well and what didn't? Open interaction about conflicts and difficulties, fairly and constructively, in a safe space, forms the foundation for improvements. Here, the team develop measures for what should be done differently and better next time. 'Inspect and adapt' is one of the most important principles of scrum.

What needs to be said: openly, transparently, respectfully





Where are you leading your team?

A self-test on four competencies that are important for agile work. (Daily five-minute training)



How much time: five minutes daily – before or after work

What is the task: reflect and note

With: pen and paper

Agile work requires a lot of practice so that the thinking and actions become habit. The four agile competencies are sure to be fundamentally present, but at different levels. If you want to introduce agility to your everyday work, strengthen these competencies in you and your team.

Raise your awareness of how well you use these competencies already. Take five minutes to do so and note down in your work diary what you have experienced and how difficult or easy it was to use those competencies today. In retrospect, you will recognise the progress you have made.

Self-guidance: This is the ability to motivate and organise yourself and to demonstrate awareness of your responsibility for the common goal.

- What have I been responsible for today?
- What ideas have I developed?
- Where have I shown initiative?

Sense: This is the ability to make something happen with our work: for the customer, for their concern, for success. But in the context of our society, the environment and the earth, too – to be respectful in my actions.

- What have I contributed today to improve our result?
- How did customer feedback influence my work today?
- Which customer question still needs a new answer?

Cooperation: This is the ability to commit yourself to the team and the company constructively and collaboratively. Especially when it comes to the crunch and things are not going well. But also: how do I build and use networks for my own learning internally and externally?

- How did I support my team today?
- Who could I learn from today?
- For whom am I a valuable partner – in the project or in the network?

Learning: This is the willingness to continually pick up new knowledge and abilities that serve the project and improve work.

- What did I learn today?
- Whom did I help to learn today?
- What do I want to learn next and how am I going about it?

Where are you leading your team?

These questions will help.



CHAPTER

3

HOW DOES A TEAM START AGILE WORK?

You now know what agile working is about. You have checked whether it could help you master the challenges of your company. You are aware of the important prerequisites to become an agile company. Now it is time to become familiar with the tools that help your team work in an agile way. We present two of the best-known ones, which, above all, should increase the productivity, flexibility, self-organisation and continual improvement within the company.

Other approaches to agile working include design thinking, design sprint, lean start-up and business canvas. And, of course, approaches can also be combined, such as in ScrumBan.

In the following section, we present the basic principles of scrum. The use of this framework for agile working has been widespread for a long time. It has a lot in common with kanban, but goes a step further in some stages, making it exciting to use.

SCRUM

The agile framework is well suited to complex projects. Scrum requires a cross-functional team with various roles to be able to work on the customer order independently all the way to handover. After the briefing, the product backlog and the requirements (user stories) are defined and prioritised in a list. Each requirement is noted down on the task board.

The tasks that create the most value for the customer and thus have the highest priority are processed first in a sprint. By the end of the sprints, after a few days, the solution should be ready for testing.

After feedback and evaluation, the team starts the next sprint. The short sprint cycles allow changed requirements or new customer wishes to be quickly incorporated.



Summary: Requires a lot of change, with very thoroughly agile results.

KANBAN

This approach has its origins in the Toyota Production System (TPS), which the car manufacturer used to efficiently organise its production in the 1950s. Kanban has few prerequisites and can be introduced without difficulty wherever the team is located.

At the core of the method is the kanban board, where all the tasks, the workflow in the team or the flow of materials in production are visualised.

The simplest kanban board divides the workflow into three steps:

To Do | In Progress | Done. Here, too, self-organised work is essential – with absolute transparency in tasks and assessment of capacities. Employees take a card on their own initiative, complete the task, and move it into the next column. Ideally, a flow develops and there are no disruptions or interruptions. Kanban also supports the aim of continually improving the product or task.



Summary: Can be introduced gradually, generates agility slowly.

The agile toolbox: scrum, kanban and more

Companies including Spotify, Adidas and Zalando work with their own version of scrum – throughout the company.



Scrum brings a breath of fresh air into your company. Or others might say: disturbance. Some will be enthusiastic about it, others will view it sceptically, because a scrum team is put together from different functions – with five to nine employees from different departments. The customer is at its core: what do they need, what do they want, what would they like? The task for the team is to create value for the customer. In this context, three roles that need to be filled in every scrum team are defined.

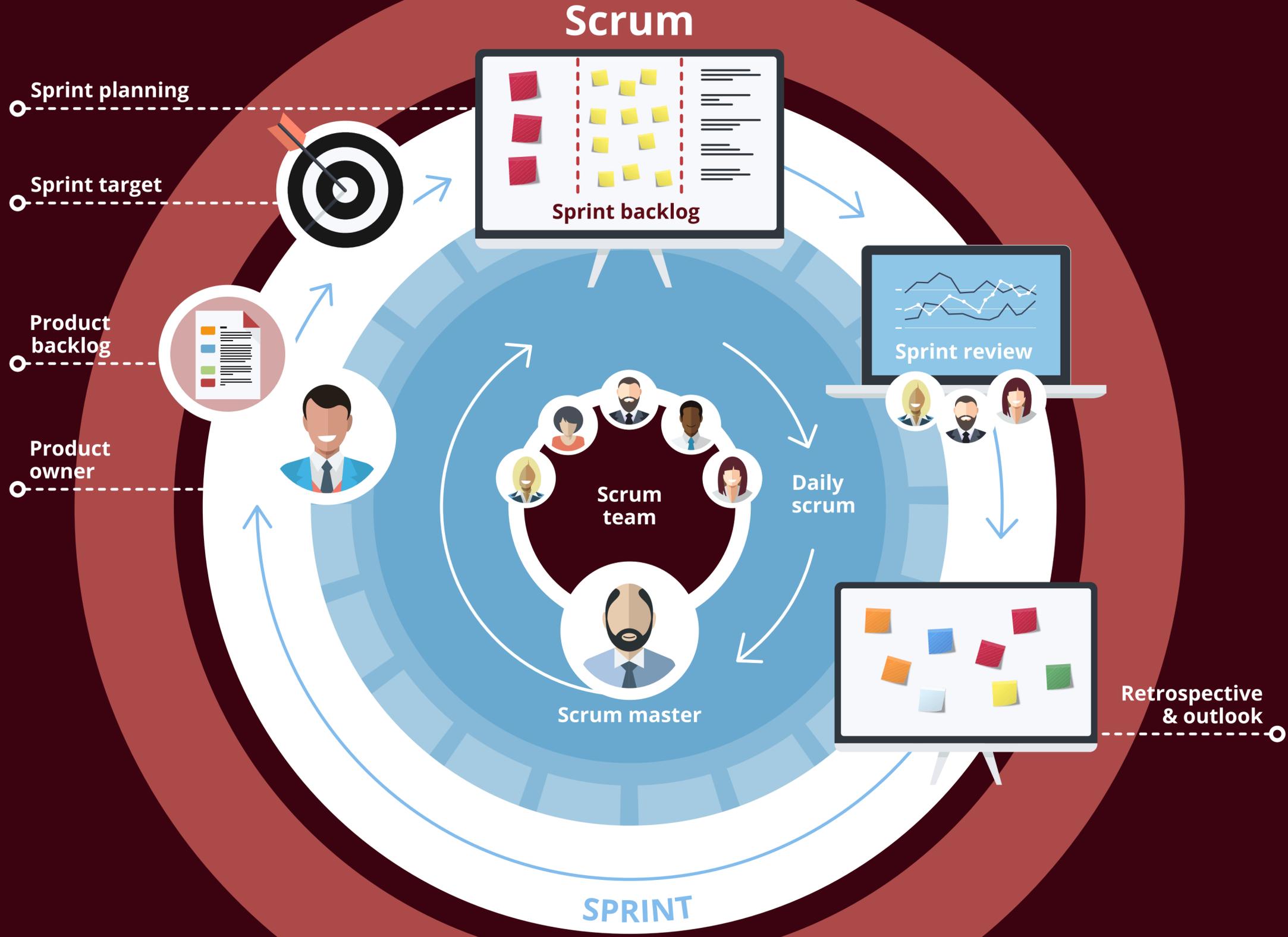
Scrum master: He or she primarily takes care of the team. For example, the scrum master ensures that the meetings (daily, review, retrospective) take place regularly and on time. That everyone is able to work well and make good progress. That the technology works and the required material is available. But the tasks also include conflict resolution and moderation of meetings.

Product owner (PO): This is the ‘voice of the product’. They represent the interests of the customer in the team. As product owner, they take care of the task list (backlog) and, after discussion with the team, decide what priority each is assigned. They make notes of the user stories for each of the partial tasks. Ideally, they sit in the scrum room on sprint days, so they can react quickly to questions and make ad hoc decisions.

Scrum-team: This is everyone who fulfils the tasks in the team. Depending on the project, they bring different qualifications. They mutually take responsibility for the project and undertake to achieve the defined goals.



Every man and woman on board: the scrum team and its roles



**Athletic ambition:
one sprint after another**



Work in the scrum team is a continuous cycle of improvement, learning and development. There are a few scrum principles that provide security in the new way of working, especially in the early stages. The most important rule is 'time boxing' or 'time for everything'. That strengthens discipline to start meetings on time and not to overrun.

Once a sprint has begun, it cannot be changed at short notice, even if the team has nothing complete to show for it. In that case, everyone must work out why that happened. With time, the estimations of what a team can and cannot achieve in a sprint should become more realistic.

EVERY SPRINT INVOLVES THESE FIVE STEPS



Athletic ambition: one sprint after another



What do you need to be aware of for sprint 0?

This list provides an overview. The team are all present. Watches have been synchronised.

Good luck defining and preparing the sprint!

Prepare the tasks:

- ① Has the team understood the strategy?
- ② Have we created an overview of all tasks (backlog)?
- ③ Have we prioritised the tasks?
- ④ Have we established which tasks should go into the sprint?

Plan the sprint:

- ① How many hours does each team member make available?
- ② How much capacity does the team have overall?
- ③ What special difficulties could put a strain time planning?
- ④ How long should the sprint last?

Assign stories:

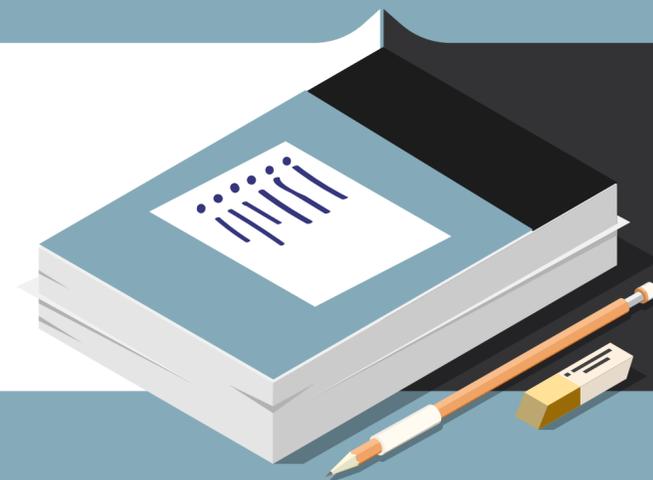
- ① Which team member works on which task?

Additional questions:

- ① Which additional targets or obstacles influence the sprint?
- ② What else can we think of to work smarter / more efficiently / more economically?

Ready for the first sprint?

Checklist



CHAPTER

4

HELPING THE TEAM BECOME AGILE



It is courageous for someone to try something new and fundamentally change their way of working. It is helpful if there are allies in the team who want to follow the agile path with them, because it involves obstacles, stumbling blocks and mistakes. That's not nice, but it is normal.

We learn from mistakes. Or at least we should. Unfortunately, until now that has been a taboo in companies. There would be a search for the guilty party and the mistake was corrected. Agile working requires mistakes: brave ideas that don't work out, unusual paths that lead to dead ends. Then we investigate as a team: why? How could that happen? 'Who' is irrelevant.

The first sprints in particular will probably be unsuccessful. That's OK. It takes time for the various tasks to be successfully completed and for everyone to correctly evaluate their performance. So a lot of patience is also required.

There are some companies who are aware of this and once a month hold a Failure Friday where wrong decisions are presented and celebrated by the management. Or at least the courage to share failure with everyone is. Laughing about it together also makes it easier – about your own weaknesses or a mistake. Laughing is likeable and human. Adults only laugh 15 times a day, children 400 times.

If you work in an agile way, you must and will learn. Agility in a company leads to a lot of people learning, and thus almost to a learning organisation. According to the 70:20:10 rule, we learn most at work from difficult projects, around 70 per cent, about 20 per cent from colleagues and 10 per cent from specialist literature and seminars. All that will be intensified.

Through a community of practice – processing knowledge together within the company. Through Working out Loud (WOL) – a framework for learning in the network. Through meet-ups in the environment of the topics that you are dealing with. Through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), bar camps and open space ad hoc conferences

Perhaps learning and working will be used synonymously one day – in an agile company that operates as a fixed point in a dynamic, complex environment?

The learning curve: learning with and from each other



Empower rather than delegate

As a manager you become a companion and coach who supports the team in developing projects. Try not to meddle and not to dictate decisions – as you may have done in the past. Instead, listen, ask good questions and help the team to find the steps towards a solution to a conflict or problem for themselves.

Brown-bag lunch

This is a lunch invitation for the team with a specific topic. Generally a professional one that is helpful to everyone, but not specifically connected to the current project. This is about learning something new together in a relaxed environment, or getting to know each other better. If somebody wants to talk about their cycling tour through Norway, that is also a good variant.

Make aims comprehensible

If team members don't correctly understand the tasks, it can be helpful to list what needs to be done together once more. These newly formulated tasks are added to the to-do list. Often, the task is too big and needs to be broken down into partial aims. That feels like more work, but in the end the clarity and improved understanding make the process more efficient.

Say thank you and mean it

Feedback is important, particularly in the form of recognition – in public if you like, but also personally in the form of a greetings card at the workplace. Being thankful for what you have received, big or small, changes the working atmosphere and gives everyone a positive feeling of being appreciated and contributing something essential to the company's success.

Open space

Give your employees space to do what they consider most valuable for the company: interacting and sharing new knowledge. Open space, a regular ad hoc conference, helps this. Everyone contributes topics or questions that are important for work. Together, everyone decides and the sessions that find support are then worked on in smaller groups. At the end, everyone comes together and presents the findings from their session.

Celebrate progress

Feedback is important – positive feedback in particular. Consciously celebrate successes – both big and small. Go for lunch together as a team, buy ice cream for everyone or a round of beers after work. Invite people to a table football tournament or another activity that brings the team together and can be seen as recognition for all.

Hacks and tricks for learning together



TRADITIONAL

<input type="radio"/>	Requirements known at the start	Requirements uncertain at the start	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Changes to requirements during the project difficult	Changes to requirements during the project anticipated	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	High costs for last-minute changes to requirements	Moderate costs for last-minute changes to requirements	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Specifications from a technical point of view (features)	Specifications from the customer's point of view (use cases)	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Sequential development process	Iterative development process	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Rigid project management process	Continuous process improvements	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Customer only sees the end result	Customer evaluates intermediate results	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	If deadlines get tight, milestones likely to be postponed	If deadlines get tight, complexity likely to be reduced	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Large teams possible	Relatively small teams necessary	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Clear hierarchy	Self-organised teams	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Many specialists in a team	Lots of shared responsibility	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Team sits separated and is involved in several projects	Team sits together and focuses on one project	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tasks allocated from above	Tasks taken on independently	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Lots of communication via documents and long meetings	Lots of informal communication and stand-up meetings	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Outlay estimated by project leader or experts	Outlay estimated together by the team	<input type="radio"/>

AGILE

Where is best to start?

A categorisation test. Just tick one box in each line on the matching side.



Evaluation

More crosses on the left:

You still work in the traditional way of one thing after the other, where everyone knows what they have to do but the responsibility is in the hands of the superiors. The first thing to do is find companions who are keen to develop an agile mindset and consider how the change to agile working in your company can begin. Establishing a pioneer group and doing things, testing out ideas and learning from them is a good start.

Equal:

You are in the middle of a change. That means you need more patience and perseverance to slowly but surely be able to place more crosses on the right. It's totally normal for this change to take time. At least two years. Don't overwhelm yourself and your team; stick with it. It is important to be able to let go and have faith that you will all learn to share responsibility and work in a self-organised way. You could strengthen yourself and your motivation by consulting an agile coach or meeting up with like-minded people.

More crosses on the right:

You have been on your way to becoming an agile company for some time. That is good. So look primarily at the aspects where the cross is missing and consider how you can become agile there, too. Apart from that, just keep going! Keep looking at what is happening, what are we doing, how well are we doing it, what could be done better? It should be enjoyable to see how far you have already developed as an agile team. If not, then consider how you can improve satisfaction and engagement for yourself and your team.

Where is best to start?

A categorisation test.



Our world is complex, sometimes chaotic. The digital transformation is leading to upheaval everywhere. New services and products will change our everyday work when everything is connected with the Internet of Things (IoT). The question is: what to do? In small and medium-sized companies, many tasks are personally allocated by the boss and he or she makes the final decision. You, too, have the opportunity to follow new paths with your employees, become agile and work in an agile way.

If you take the first steps as an example and pioneer, you will begin the change together. There are numerous books, workshops and seminars about agile working. An agile coach can accompany the transformation and create the structures that will make your company agile together with you.

But you can and must do the most important things yourself: prepare yourself, be open and encourage the transformation. In that way, you become an architect of change and are not steamrollered by it. Half solutions frustrate everyone and change little.

Hybrid solutions, where agile methods are practiced alongside conventional ones, also create more uncertainty and frustration. Of course, not everything should change at once. But when a group pushes forward, becomes part of the transformation and visibly and transparently changes the way of working, colleagues become curious and ask: what are you doing? How does it work? And more and more want to take responsibility for their own work, performance and results. Because every 'fixed mindset' can become a 'growth mindset'.

We wish you plenty of courage, perseverance and success in the transformation to an agile team.

Everything changes. If we make the change, it's a good thing.

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