

# CHANGE & BUSINESS READINESS



Life Esteem LLC

*Bridging the gap between current and future state*



**Delivering Transformational Change**

## Foreword

The challenge in delivering transformational change is responding to the client's immediate needs. To be successful in people, process, and technology change, organizations need to find ways to remain relevant and responsive to the high expectations of their customers and employees.

Both leaders and employees want to see valued solutions delivered quickly, design centered on the customer, with continuous improvement, and the flexibility to adapt to changing business needs. For large organizations, the challenge is significant. Encumbered by siloed structures, bureaucratic processes and complex legacy systems, organizations find it takes too much time and difficult to respond quickly to changing business requirements using traditional 'Waterfall' delivery approaches. This is why leaders are increasingly turning to an Agile approach to change, which has outgrown its software development roots and being more broadly applied to transformational change initiatives.

The Agile change approach has exposed weaknesses in conventional change management approaches. Traditional change management practices are becoming increasingly obsolete, and simply do not work in an Agile environment.

Using an Agile approach provides a rapid response methodology to handling change within organizations. This approach follows a group of principles and practices based on iterative and incremental development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing and cross-functional teams. It differs significantly from a traditional 'Waterfall' lifecycle as it focuses on flexibility and speed vs planning and predictability.



Source: [www.prosci.com](http://www.prosci.com)

You can deliver value earlier and provide decision makers with a more flexible approach, with the responsiveness to adapt, if priorities change.

<sup>1</sup> *Scrum teams: is a self-organizing, cross-functional, and highly productive teams that do the work*

## Change and Business Readiness

Teams that are designed to emphasize collaboration, result in team self-management and the flexibility to adapt to emerging business realities. Projects have a number of challenges including the:

1. Accelerated frequency of change impacting the business
2. Type and frequency of stakeholder engagement required
3. Routinely changing nature of user adoption considerations

### Frequency of Change

Faster and more frequent delivery of 'smaller' changes to customers and stakeholders, presents a unique set of change challenges. Delivery cycles are shorter; enterprise change impacts are higher, eliminating personal discretion.

So, the goal for business readiness teams is to continually prioritize activities that deliver value to their stakeholder groups. Examples of this might be

- focusing on a creating a positive 'pilot' experience and facilitating feedback loops
- aligning different Scrum teams to 'refocus' on the customer's experience of change
- ensuring that the delivery approach is consistent across different stakeholder groups to derive higher levels of adoption

The business readiness team, also, needs to think one step or 'sprint<sup>2</sup> ahead, ensuring a continually improving stakeholder experience from one release to the next while factoring in the broader change narrative.

### Stakeholder Engagement and User Adoption

Unlike conventional projects, where stakeholder engagement is managed through carefully planned information 'drops', the Agile approach to engagement is iterative, showcasing progress, seeking and responding to feedback. Transparency is encouraged for stakeholders to have better visibility of delivery progress. The business readiness team must support early and frequent engagement with the impacted groups. Each engagement 'moment' should be positive, from the initial piloting of a 'rough' solution, to the delivery of a full feature, while continually evaluating and re-aligning the engagement approach to facilitate fast feedback and improvement. A benefit of this approach is that stakeholders are involved and engaged in the development of the change, giving them a stake in it, rather than just being a recipient.

<sup>2</sup> *Sprint: is a time-boxed effort; that is restricted to a specific duration*

## Agile and Business Readiness Principles

The iterative nature of delivery requires a more flexible approach to managing organizational change. The Agile change approach provides greater transparency and visibility of progress. It requires greater cross-functional collaboration and discipline than traditional approaches.

### Agile principles

- Customer Satisfaction
- Welcome changing requirements
- Frequent delivery
- Business & delivery collaboration
- Motivated individuals
- Face-to-face interactions
- Output is the measure of progress
- Sustainable development
- Simplicity
- Self organizing teams
- Regular reflection and adoption

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*Agile change and business readiness provides a lean, flexible, and iterative approach to achieving sustainable change.*

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Agile business readiness is guided by a set of five principles that help change practitioners' focus efforts to the most important activities, determined by customer value and stakeholder impacts. It provides a lean, flexible, and iterative approach to achieving sustainable change.

### Agile Change principles

1. **Focus on the moments that matter** - Design the change experience for the stakeholder. *Change activities should be packaged and released in a targeted manner. This helps to bundle changes so impacted users do not become overwhelmed. Business and delivery teams co-design the change experience by focusing on the moments that matter. This ensures that the customers have the right knowledge and skills, at the right time, to use the new capability.*
2. **Be transparent to build trust** - Frequent and open stakeholder engagement. *Engage stakeholders, early, with regular feedback and allow them to see more of the process. Project progress reporting is highly visible, using visual management dashboards or Kanban boards<sup>3</sup>. This allows teams to break the activities into work packages and track progress, providing a much more engaging view of the work/change.*

<sup>3</sup> A **Kanban board** is a work and workflow visualization tool that enables you to optimize the flow of your work. Physical Kanban boards typically use sticky notes on a whiteboard to communicate status, progress, and issues.

- 3. Integrate Change with Agile - Align with the project team's way of working.**  
*Regardless of the project type, the business readiness team should always be aligned with the project team. The Agile change approach requires integration. Without the right integration, the business readiness team can fall out of sync with the project and delivery team, diminishing their ability to understand change impacts and provide stakeholders with the right information at the right time. Embed business managers into the team and share responsibility for driving change and adoption.*
- 4. Understand the Minimum Viable Change (MVC) - Define the MVC to achieve the desired outcome.**  
*The Agile philosophy encourages early and continuous delivery of working products to the customer/user. The concept MVC allows focus on the speed of delivery and getting 'basic' functionality or organizational changes out to the personnel quickly. MVC helps align efforts on key change activities that add the most value for stakeholders and end users, through stakeholder interactions.*
- 5. Embrace an Agile way of working - Help the organization understand the change.**  
*Many organizations have adopted the Agile approach to change, without fully embracing the "mindset". They need to welcoming changing requirements, engage in iterative process improvement, and have a relentless customer focus. The business readiness team has an important role to play in helping organizations understand how the change look and will be different. This starts with assisting project leaders to determine the best fit for the culture, processes, technologies, and governance of the organization. The business readiness team can, also, help build change resilience by equipping leaders with a compelling 'Case for Change' to connect the long term vision, setting expectations, co-defining key success factors, and ways of working together.*

Embracing Agile change principles can make your organization more effective, customer-focused, transparent, and collaborative, bringing faster and better outcomes.

# Key Contact



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Cathy is founder of Life Esteem's consulting practice, based in Southern California. She has over 20 years' experience delivering transformation for clients in the United States, Canada, and Guam. As a founding member of the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), Cathy participated on the development of the ACMP Certification Standards. She has proven experience leading large scale business readiness, and specializes in Agile change programs, executive coaching, operational readiness, and building change resilience.



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