



Optimising IT organisations

Unleash the value of your IT

ThoughtWorks®

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Throughout our history, ThoughtWorks has successfully and consistently improved competitive advantage, innovation and growth for forward-thinking companies by helping them adopt collaborative and adaptive methods in software development projects.

Our customers find that the tools, processes and training that made their software projects resounding successes – often in the face of long odds – continue to deliver results well beyond the individual projects.

Optimising IT organisations focuses on bringing about these positive changes, helping our clients make the leap from service provider or order-taker to a true business partner. The term partner is easy to say, and so often claimed, but difficult to achieve. We help IT organisations create partnership by ensuring they repeatedly deliver on commitments and act with complete transparency.

From many starting positions

Perhaps you've already begun some initial trials of Agile that have worked well at small scale, and need help to expand them throughout the organisation, making sure they stick. Maybe you've been given the go-ahead to make the journey to Agile and Lean and want assistance from experts to make sure the transition is as fast, effective and well-received as possible – with measurable results. Or perhaps your organisation is just not performing up to its true, optimum capacity. We can help.

By transforming IT functions along Agile and Lean lines, organisations not only radically cut waste and speed time-to-benefit for projects – they change the ongoing working relationship with the rest of the business. The result is a value-driven and adaptive IT organisation.

Change that works



Transformative organisational change is not for the timid, but the improvements in IT productivity and quality are provable and dramatic. Our approach doesn't ignore the fact that large, often difficult changes are required, and offers a reliable way to deal with these difficulties based on practical experience across many types and sizes of IT organisations.

We challenge the accepted norms, including processes and conventions. What we replace them with - adaptive planning techniques, Agile project practices and collaborative software tools and training - are much better suited to the needs of users, the business, your customers and the pace of technology today. From the outset, the business becomes thoroughly involved in software projects and the IT staff are trained to focus obsessively on business value.

This collaboration immediately reduces waste by challenging whether seldom-used features should even be built and encouraging prioritisation driven by value. Introducing Lean thinking and process optimisation can dramatically improve throughput and drive down waste. We introduce iterative processes which embrace change, so teams are no longer mired in drawn-out requirements phases or end up delivering on obsolete needs. Delivery starts early and cycle time is reduced. Testing is no longer a phase, it's ongoing: quality is baked-in.



what's involved?

Managing the transformation



We set these changes in motion with care. Managing IT change is complex and deserves a systematic approach to control risk, communicate and measure benefits, and get it right the first time. Our experts will help tailor the transformation based on your unique starting point of staff skills, project mix, business priorities and challenges. Whatever your specific circumstances, our consulting team is geared towards meeting your pressing needs while tackling the long-term goals.

Our recommended way to navigate this path falls into in five steps.

Step 1: Assess

Software and technology change affect the whole enterprise – not just the IT division – so the planning process kicks off with an in-depth analysis of current IT performance and capabilities including skills and processes; business goals and obstacles; and the capacity for change. Collaboration between ThoughtWorks and client staff is at the heart of the process. Through workshops, interviews and extensive interaction, key individuals and teams are brought together to tease out and prioritise the critical issues. Together we scope the changes required, getting beneath the surface to understand exactly what it will take to achieve the business objectives.

Step 2: Envision

Based on the findings and priorities of the assessment, we shape the future vision for IT and its role within the organisation. This includes mapping target priorities to be achieved within the short, medium and longer terms. Care is taken to make sure that immediate tactical priorities are addressed while preparing for the long-term vision.

Measurable success criteria are agreed – these could include the ratio of projects delivered on time/budget; customer and employee satisfaction surveys; savings from low-value projects killed prior to significant investment; and business value delivered by projects. And yes, we have experience in tracking and measuring all of these.

Step 3: Plan

The next stage is to specify precisely how Agile and Lean methods will be implemented in a controlled way. We have a wide variety of experience in finding the right speed and scale of change and plotting how to build momentum in ways that will be most effective for the organisation, while ensuring that risk is managed at all times. This is an adaptive plan: a detailed roadmap for the short term with less detail in the longer term. Plans are refined and our course is adjusted regularly as we go forward.

Step 4: Execute

Roll-out might involve a mix of pilots, in-flight projects or organisation-wide changes. Each plan is unique to the client organisation but great emphasis is always placed on creating sustainable change. We provide concrete assistance: in-house mentors, resource centres for tools and processes, Agile training, and creation of ongoing communities. These approaches foster and facilitate further adoption of core skills and knowledge as the programme evolves.

Step 5: Expand

The success of Agile projects is as much about changing attitudes and culture as it is processes and tools. New skills are nurtured by seeding people into projects, introducing training plans, opening up cross-functional communications, creating communities for collaboration and continually evolving capabilities. By mentoring in-house personnel, we ensure that core skills and knowledge are transferred as soon as possible, in a way that advocates can continue to build on what has been learned and maintain the momentum for change and positivity.

next, the results...

Key outcomes

We help you become an IT organisation with:

Breakthrough performance

Measurable increases in productivity, quality, and morale

Sustainable improvements

Changes are made to stick, with a mix of in-house mentors, resource centres, training and communities

Improved IT status

Changing the role of IT within the business creates new possibilities for staff, customers and partners to work together in more effective ways

Satisfied teams

People, particularly high achievers, enjoy being part of positively contributing teams where they can see their contribution to the business.

Benefits of Agile and Lean transformation

- ✦ IT delivery cycle times are reduced: faster time-to-benefit
- ✦ IT teams deliver earlier and more often
- ✦ Projects are predictable and progress is transparent
- ✦ Quality is baked-in
- ✦ Waste is driven out of the process, with significant cost-savings and efficiencies created
- ✦ Existing talent within your organisation is amplified
- ✦ A customer-focused, sustainable learning culture is created
- ✦ Trust is built between IT and the business by IT delivering measurable improvements and bottom-line results.



Questions answered



Suncorp: Financial services

After leading financial services company Suncorp appointed CIO Jeff Smith in 2007, he established Agile as the de-facto way of working across the 1500-strong business technology division. The transformation challenge was complicated by the need to integrate group systems following Suncorp's multi-billion dollar merger with insurance company Promina.

Suncorp contracted ThoughtWorks to help plan and manage the transformation. A key goal was to drive cultural change, steering teams to become more resourceful and innovative. ThoughtWorks helped to develop and deliver Agile awareness sessions for all technology staff, which led to the creation of Suncorp's Agile Academy. Throughout the transformation ThoughtWorks' consultants were in place at key sites to help provide coaching, support and promoting collaboration.

Outcomes

The transformation helped Suncorp to meet its merger IT integration targets. Agile is now embedded within the IT division, where technology teams are starting to realise the long-term benefits. Suncorp's is now recognised as a workplace where creativity thrives and talented individuals can play their part to improve IT delivery performance across the group.

"Suncorp's adoption of Agile methodology has played a significant part in its ability to successfully deliver a challenging technology program over the last three years. When we were looking for a partner to help us move to the next level of Agile capability, ThoughtWorks were an obvious choice because of their thought leadership in applied innovation and software engineering excellence."

Jeff Smith, Group Executive, Business Technology, Suncorp



REA Group: Real-estate

Shortly after joining REA Group, owners of realestate.com.au and other market-leading online brands, new CIO Daniel Oertli engaged ThoughtWorks to assess IT's readiness to embrace Agile development practices, as part of a major transformation effort to radically lift innovation and tempo across IT.

A seven day Agile-readiness assessment was quickly followed with a year-long Agile coaching engagement to flip the switch from Waterfall to Agile across multiple development teams.

ThoughtWorks' role in embedding Agile practices played a key part in REA IT's ambitious programme of people, culture, partnership and technology transformation – and helping to ensure that REA achieved its goals of sustained growth and market-leadership, and quickly becoming an employer of choice for brilliant people who love to make a difference.

Outcomes:

- ✦ In just three months, REA Group saw marked improvements in the engagement levels and productivity of developer teams, now working more intimately and iteratively with marketing leads.
- ✦ Within six months, rapid improvements were being delivered to realestate.com.au every 90 days.
- ✦ In just over a year, a completely rebuilt web site was launched to REA's six million unique browsers each month.

World-class in Agile and Lean

ThoughtWorks is a global IT consultancy trusted by many of the world's leading businesses with their most complex and critical systems. We deliver consulting grounded in delivery expertise, build custom applications and help all manner of organisations improve IT efficiency.

Martin Fowler, ThoughtWorks' Chief Scientist, co-authored the Agile Manifesto. Our people continually adopt, adapt, innovate and share best practices worldwide based on frontline Agile and Lean experience in globally successful businesses and projects.

Our size and presence in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia allow us to provide big company services with small company interaction. We are large enough to make a significant impact, but small enough to dedicate executive attention to each of our clients and craft individually tailored solutions for them. Our consultants are experienced, creative and talented specialists who split their time between advisory and delivery work to ensure they are always connected to reality and remain at the forefront of their field.

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