A SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY: AGILE MANAGEMENT MATURITY MAP AM3

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Introduction

The ability of organizations to act in an agile manner is addressed by terms like Business Agility, Organizational Agility, and Systemic Agility.
Business Agility refers to an organization's capacity to quickly adapt to changing market conditions, customer demands, and internal challenges to gain or maintain a competitive edge. Its foundation lies in technologies such as cloud and edge computing, microservices, and artificial intelligence, which enable adaptable IT infrastructures. Business agility involves designing structures, processes, and technologies to be adaptive, with a shift from rigid hierarchies to flexible, team-based approaches like DevOps, Design Thinking, Agile methods, and Lean Management.
Key influences on business agility include:

- Agile Methods: Emerging in the 1990s, agile principles spread beyond IT to other business areas.
- Lean Management: Focuses on waste reduction and continuous improvement.
- Complexity and Systems Theories: Highlight the need for flexibility in complex, unpredictable systems.
- Digital Transformation: Rapid technological developments force companies to become more agile to remain competitive.

Organizational Agility or Systemic Agility is a broader concept that includes business agility and the overall ability to adapt in culture, processes, and structures. It emphasizes self-organization among employees and teams, promoting open communication, flat hierarchies, and collaboration. Such organizations foster experimentation and learning to adapt quickly, while focusing on innovation and creativity for long-term success. Growth depends on individual development and collective intelligence, with AI further enhancing these capabilities.
Park et al. [5] define Organizational Agility as a combination of Sensing, Decision-Making, and Acting Agility, supported by Business Intelligence and communication systems. The organization's size significantly influences its agility.
Bronlet [6] approaches Systemic Agility through six elements: Sense of Purpose, Management Practices, Organization Practices, Information Management, Agile Methods, and Agile Behaviors, within a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) environment. He uses Dynamic Causal Modeling (DCM) to describe nonlinear interactions between systems and their environments, with wellbeing at work being crucial to system performance.
In reviewing existing models for agile transformation, the authors found none fully met the need for a comprehensive systemic view and practical applicability. These two elements are integrated into the approach described here.

Agile Maturity Map for agile Organization

Conception

The Agile Management Maturity Map (AM^3) model, based on Hermann Haken's synergetics concept [7, 8], addresses Agile Management and its transformation process, as detailed in previous publications by Springer Verlag [1] and PMaktuell [2]. The model includes three system parameters: the organizational mindset (primary order parameter), the team mindset (sub-system), and the framework parameters, which describe the context of the organization or team. The control parameter, or intervention, is chosen to create resonance within the system for effectiveness.

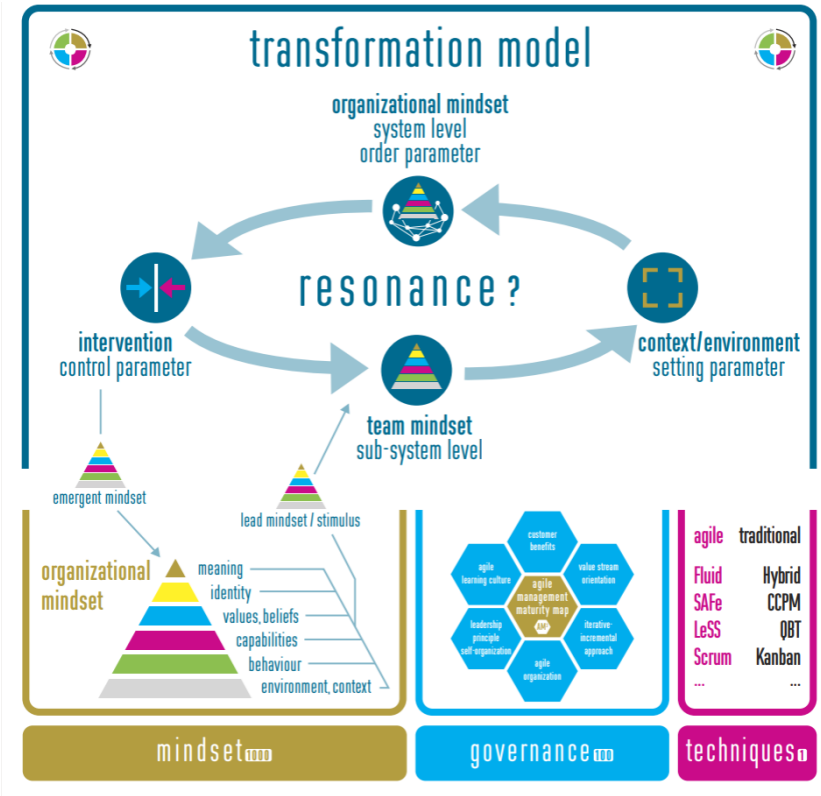

Figure 1: Transformation model for agile management [1]

The lower part of Figure 1 shows the triad of mindset, governance, and techniques. Developing an agile mindset is crucial, and this mindset is operationalized through leadership principles for agility (governance), as illustrated in Figure 2 across six AM³ dimensions. These dimensions provide a framework for leaders and organizations, forming an interconnected system that fosters agility when implemented consistently. The implementation approach varies by industry, or organization. The maturity levels guide the journey toward agility, with the desired target state defined in a strategic process. For example, a software company may aim for level 5, while a hardware company may find level 3 sufficient. The target state should be reviewed and adjusted over time.

The six dimensions focus on delivering customer benefits through cross-functional teams, aligning with the value stream for quick responses to market changes. The iterative-incremental approach enables timely product changes. The organizational structure should support decision-making at the point of action. Leadership must foster team/self-organization to unlock the organization's potential. A thriving agile learning culture is essential for growth in a complex, dynamic environment.

Agility must be channeled through coordinated agile transformation management [9], which engages people and addresses obstacles.

Figure 2: Dimensions of the Agile Management Maturity Map AM³

Methodological Approach

The Agile Management Maturity Map (AM³) is based on the authors' system-theoretical approach to Agile Management [1, 2]. To develop the dimensions of the maturity map, expert workshops with experienced practitioners were conducted over a 24-month period, with the core team consisting of the authors. The findings underwent periodic reviews by a larger group. In a second step, the maturity map was cross-checked and verified through a literature review.

The application of the maturity map follows a procedural model. The six dimensions create a framework for agile organizations, with each dimension described across five maturity levels. Agility increases from level 1 to level 5. In a strategic process, organizations must interpret this framework in terms of a desired target state, which can vary significantly by industry and company. The current state is then assessed through a self-evaluation. The gap between the current and target states defines the transformation path towards organizational agility. The AM³ model follows a systemic approach, offering guidance on the steps to reach the next maturity level. It is essential to understand that successful transformation relies on the complex interplay of framework, control, and order parameters across the dimensions, which can only be briefly outlined in this article.

The following sections provide a detailed explanation of the maturity levels across the different dimensions, starting with customer benefits as the foundation for the agile approach.

1. Customer Benefits

Collaboration with the customer is a central value in the Agile Manifesto and has become increasingly important in an era of constant change and rising innovation pressure. In the past, markets were often stable with little competition, but today companies face ongoing pressure to protect market shares and

drive innovation. This shift directly impacts how customer benefits is perceived and how companies collaborate with their customers. This chapter explores the different maturity levels of the customer benefits dimension and their significance in today's dynamic market environment.
At level 1, the focus is on basic customer needs, with companies aiming to meet demand. Products are pushed into the market (PUSH) with the expectation that demand will be secured, often in markets with little competition and strong market positions. At this stage, marketing and sales promotions are key to ensuring product sales.
As markets become more saturated and consumer preferences shift, companies must adjust their market strategies. Increasingly, businesses must evaluate consumer demand and align with it strategically, focusing more on customer benefits. At this stage, the goal is to make products known through mass media (PULL) to generate customer loyalty. By emotionally engaging customers with their products, companies draw attention and attract customers.

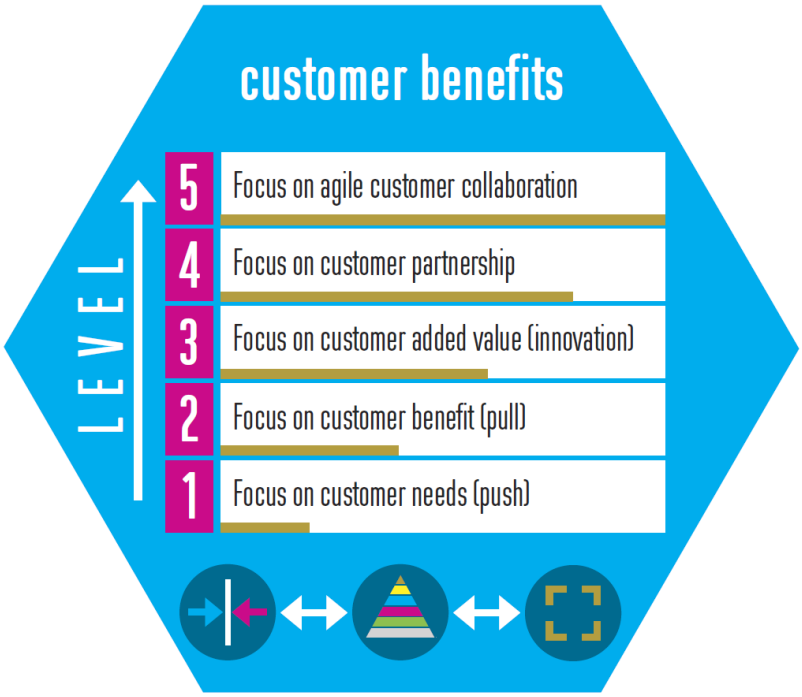

Figure 3: Dimension customer benefits

In the subsequent levels, companies adopt a more advanced customer benefits approach by focusing on added value and developing specific products for different customer groups. This requires closer customer relationships and a better understanding of their needs. Innovation becomes critical to gaining a competitive advantage globally, and even in consumer goods marketing, innovation plays a crucial role in success. For example, Audi's campaign "Vorsprung durch Technik" perfectly encapsulates this new marketing paradigm.
At level 4, companies operate in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) market environment, where continuous product and process innovations are essential. The focus shifts to customer partnerships, where companies collaborate with customers to develop products that meet or exceed their expectations. The goal is to integrate mutual interests into a beneficial partnership, focusing on customer pain points and opportunities for improvement.
At the highest level, companies form co-evolutionary partnerships with customers. Success is driven by innovation and customer-centricity. Products are developed jointly with customers as personalized solutions that exceed expectations and enhance the overall customer experience. This level represents a

deeper integration of the relationship between provider and customer, enabling continuous growth and development.

2. Value Stream Orientation

A core aspect of agility is creating real value, central to other agility-related approaches like Lean [29] and Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM) [30]. This value stream orientation focuses on how value creation is structured throughout the organization [31]. Organizations at lower maturity levels often follow a Tayloristic model, dividing the organization into functional areas aimed at high efficiency in specific tasks. Taylorism and Scientific Management focus on manageable processes and clear causal relationships, viewing workers as parts of these processes [32]. This model emphasizes strict division of labor and isolated task assignments, with optimization limited to local areas, ignoring broader value creation (Level 1).

More developed organizations focus on defined processes, creating a process-oriented structure. Workflows are organized, and roles are clear, balancing efficiency, effectiveness, and quality while adhering to internal standards (Level 2).

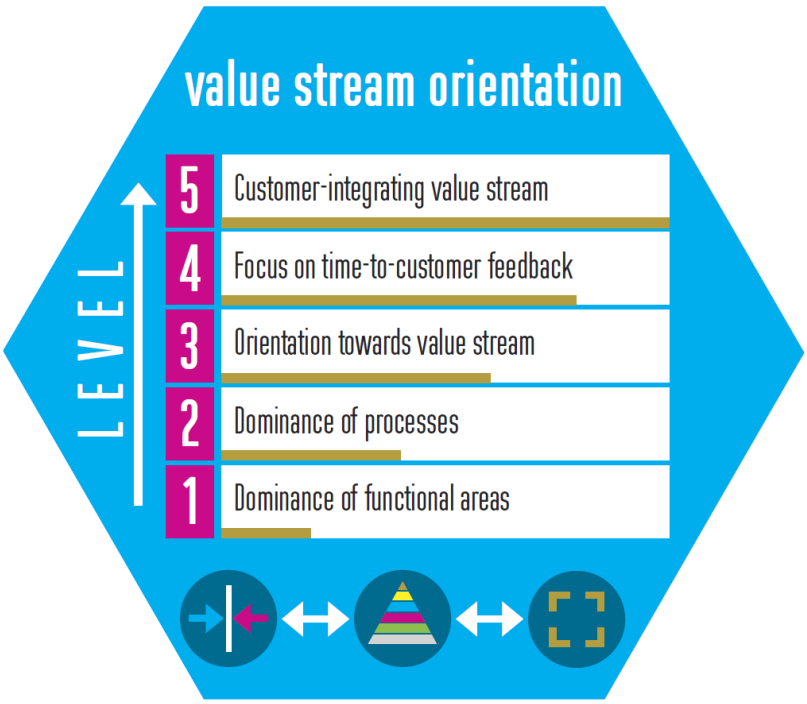

Figure 4: Dimension value stream orientation

Organizations seeking innovation, particularly in digital products, undergo a transformation, bringing value determination closer to the production process. The more creative and variable the output, the more significant this shift becomes. These organizations focus on value stream orientation, emphasizing customer benefits and encouraging employees to shape value streams actively (Level 3).

As rapid developments enable faster customer feedback, agility becomes critical, especially for digital products. This maturity level integrates customer feedback regularly. Organizations explore customer perceptions and expectations while employees develop a deep understanding of value streams, products, and markets. Optimization now includes reducing the time needed to obtain customer feedback on innovations (Level 4).

At the highest level, customer preferences are integral to co-creative, integrated value streams [34]. Self-organized collaboration across boundaries develops products, organizations, and value streams, with teams having the autonomy, resources, and authority to manage value streams as needed (Level 5).

3. Iterative-Incremental Approach

The increasing complexity of products and the rapid evolution of digital technologies challenge organizations to continuously adapt their product development processes [35, 36]. A key focus is the integration and effective use of rapid, cross-functional collaboration in value stream processes, especially leveraging digital opportunities. As communication and quick implementation drive digitalization and agility, the first level of the maturity model features clear, highly structured processes with established requirement management. Responsibilities are well-defined and supported by central standards.

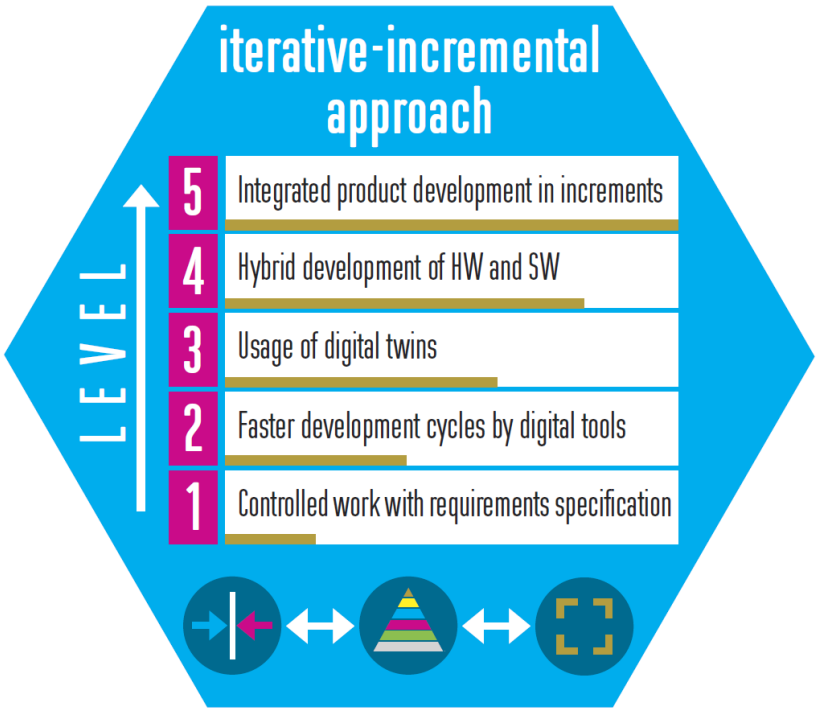

Figure 5: Dimension iterative-incremental approach

The second level marks the beginning of digitalization, where digital tools are partially used for modeling products and processes. The introduction of cross-functional teams promotes communication and cooperation, leading to faster delivery cycles. At this stage, product plans are created and stored digitally, with an increasing focus on working live on the current plan.

At the third level, Digital Twins are used to simulate products and production processes. This stage is characterized by the coordination of various development cycles and the integration of lifecycle responsibilities [37]. Digital Twins serve as a primary anchor across operational areas, supporting customer-centric and effective product development.

The fourth level integrates hardware and software development through synchronized cycles. The convergence and integration of Digital Twins enhance the connection between solutions, models, products, and components. Changes to product and production processes can be iteratively implemented across the entire lifecycle, supported by the seamless use of Digital Twins and real products.

At the highest level of the model, tools and Digital Twins are fully accessible. The continuous integration of various streams and the minimization of lead times for experiments and integrations are emphasized. The organization focuses on customer product bundles, with experiments using Digital Twins being essential for effective, iterative, and incremental development. The goal is to minimize work in progress to one and shorten time-to-market.

4. Agile Organization

The starting point for an organization aiming for full agility is its current level of agility, with "organization" referring to its structure. Many employees and leaders feel that traditional hierarchical work structures no longer suit today's world. Frederic Laloux, in *Reinventing Organizations*, advocates for a future-oriented, human-centered work environment, with self-management, decentralized decision-making, and an evolving purpose. Other authors discuss the transformation from traditional to agile organizations, potentially leading to sociocracy or holacracy, where hierarchies are replaced by transparent, participatory structures and roles or circles take the place of traditional leadership.

The organization's development through five maturity levels is outlined as follows:

At level one, the traditional hierarchical structure prevails, with a focus on functional silos, traditional management approaches, and efficiency optimization. At level two, agile elements are introduced, with cross-functional agile projects emerging, an agile strategy drafted, and the first agile training sessions initiated. A portion of the team works in an agile manner, fostering an agile mindset.

Level three represents a hybrid organizational logic, with fluid structures and the partial introduction of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) aligned with agile principles. Management promotes self-organization and agile goals, with a situational approach to involvement. A more widespread agile mindset emerges, especially among leaders, and shared values start to take shape.

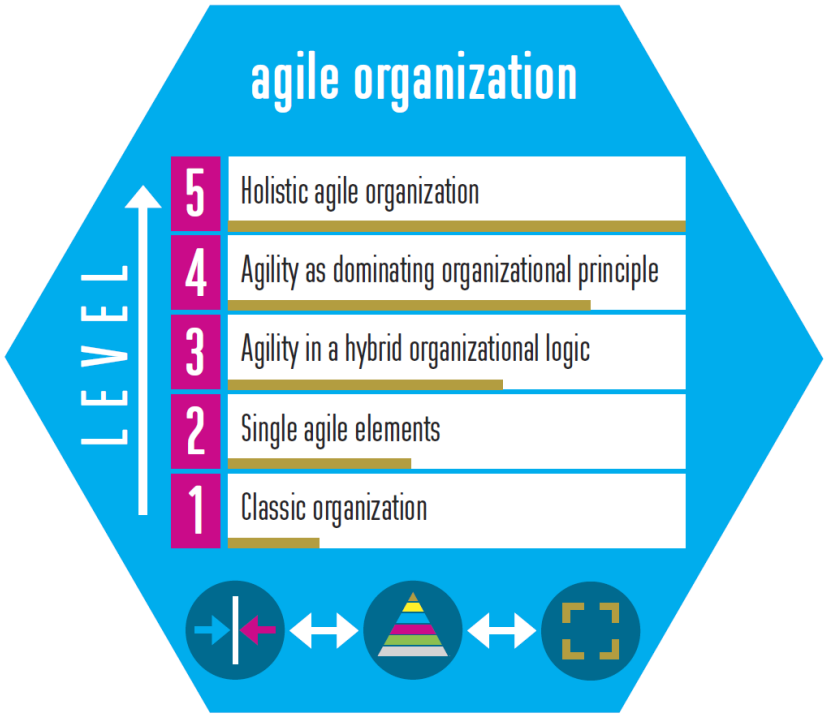

Figure 6: Dimension agile organization

At level four, agility becomes dominant, with processes adapted or introduced across the company. The KPI/OKR system aligns with agile principles, and agile units are integrated into the organization. Management's role shifts as part of the agile framework. This level marks the tipping point for an organizational agile mindset.

At level five, the organization is fully agile. Work is organized across functions and hierarchies, emphasizing cross-boundary collaboration within networks. Teams have decision-making authority, driving peak performance. Management embodies the agile mindset and fosters continuous development through self-reflection. A culture of openness and collaboration is firmly established.

5. Leadership Principle Self-Organization

This dimension focuses on leadership: What leadership principles does an increasingly agile organization need? Can traditional leadership principles still apply, or are new approaches required? These questions are addressed through the various levels of this dimension.

At level one, a traditional hierarchical leadership structure remains, where responsibility and decision-making authority lie solely with leaders. Leaders retain control over decisions and set goals without significant employee involvement. Self-organization is not considered effective, and a top-down approach dominates [47].

Level two introduces cross-functional team responsibility. Here, expert career models are created alongside leadership careers to strengthen knowledge acquisition within the organization. Experts contribute their expertise to goal-setting and decision-making, with leaders still holding the final decision-making power. The expertise of these professionals is valued as leadership support, but a top-down approach continues [48].

Figure 7: Dimension leadership principle self-organization

At level three, general cross-functional collaboration begins. The organization fosters incentives for knowledge sharing and an open community to support self-organization. Employees are empowered to make decisions within defined boundaries, and teams are accountable to multiple stakeholders. The organization encourages experimentation and initiative for self-organization, with leaders delegating partial responsibility to teams. Self-organization is now seen as beneficial and is actively promoted by leaders, who encourage proactive collaboration and cross-functional knowledge exchange [49, 53].

At level four, leadership actively promotes self-organization, integrating it into the organizational structure. Shared responsibility becomes a key leadership principle, with leaders allowing teams to take control of decisions within their areas of responsibility. Leaders collaborate with employees to set goals, and self-organization becomes an integral part of the leadership culture, with shared goal development being a key driver of employee motivation [50, 51].

At level five, the highest maturity level, the organization operates with company-wide agility. Self-organization and participatory leadership are embedded in the corporate vision, driving innovation, continuous improvement, and organizational transformation. The most competent person takes the lead

in each situation. Employees and teams work autonomously, with support from leadership and HR. Leaders focus on optimizing conditions for teams and coaching them. Self-organization and participatory leadership are now core values of the organization, shaping the company culture. Leadership and followership are highly adaptive concepts [54, 55].

6. Agile Learning Culture

Due to the evolving work environment, learning culture must adapt and become a core competence for future business success. As complexity and disruptive changes increase, learning must happen faster. Additionally, the need to initiate changes before final results are available requires employees to develop new meta-competencies and manage ambiguity. Learning becomes more demanding, time-consuming, and situational, necessitating individualized learning at the employee level [46, 51-54]. Below is a potential development of the learning culture across five maturity levels.

At level 1, learning is seen as training, organized for groups or individuals outside the work context. Management defines learning goals, and the training program aligns with organizational objectives. Learning is necessary but mainly considered a cost.

At level 2, the learning culture evolves into learning within daily work. Individual learning is complemented by expert group exchanges, and learning time becomes part of regular tasks. Employees are encouraged to pursue self-directed learning, with management emphasizing structured learning.

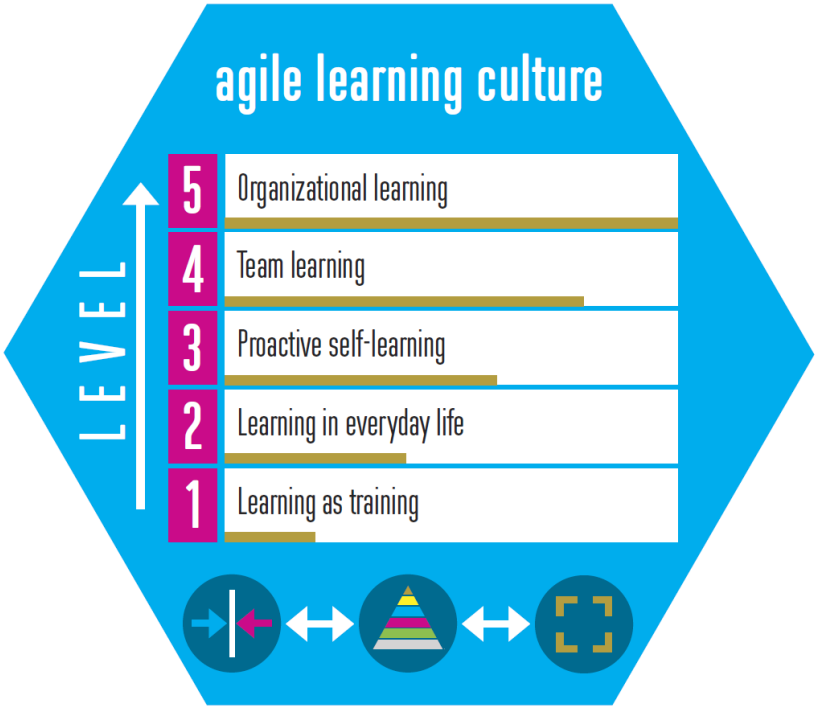

Figure 8: Dimension agile learning culture

Level 3 fosters proactive self-learning. Employees are incentivized to share expertise, often via digital platforms. Self-learning opportunities are available, and management encourages experimentation with learning behaviors and fosters a culture of failure. Learning becomes collaborative, cross-functional, and proactive.

At level 4, learning occurs within teams. Teams and employees independently decide on the type, content, format, and timing of learning. Learning is continuously integrated into the value creation process, with teams managing and prioritizing learning activities.

At level 5, organizational learning is achieved. Self-managed teams and communities learn within the work context. Learning support roles, like Agile Learning Coaches, are established within the organization.

Learning is self-directed, coordinated with teams, and supported by HR and management. At this level, learning is a core organizational value, driving growth at the organizational, team, and individual levels.

Conclusion

The Agile Management Maturity Map (AM^3) creates an agile framework for organizations aiming to develop organizational agility. The uniqueness of this approach lies in combining a holistic, systemic perspective with practical insights from the business world. From the reality of existing organizations, the logic emerges not to prioritize agility above all else, but to find a tailored approach that fits the specific external and internal context. However, to achieve sustained development into an agile organization, it is crucial to understand and consider the systemic dependencies. The AM^3 provides guidance for this process.

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Abstract (200 words):

The **Agile Management Maturity Map (AM³)** is a comprehensive framework designed to guide organizations on their journey toward agility. In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, agility is crucial for organizational success. The AM³ framework provides a systematic approach to assess and develop organizational agility across six key dimensions: **Customer Benefits**, **Value Stream Orientation**, **Iterative-Incremental Approach**, **Agile Organization**, **Leadership Principle Self-Organization**, and **Agile Learning Culture**. Each dimension is designed to help organizations evaluate their current maturity level, identify gaps, and implement strategies for improvement. The framework highlights the importance of aligning with customer needs, fostering cross-functional collaboration, promoting decentralized decision-making, and cultivating a culture of continuous learning. AM³ also emphasizes the need for an iterative approach to product development and the creation of agile leadership that empowers teams to self-organize and innovate. By leveraging the AM³ framework, organizations can build sustainable agility tailored to their unique needs, enhancing their responsiveness, innovation, and competitiveness in an ever-changing market. Ultimately, the AM³ framework serves as a roadmap for organizations to transition toward higher levels of agility, improving their efficiency and long-term success in the marketplace.

Keywords:

- Business Agility
- Organizational Agility
- Systemic Agility
- Agile Mindset
- Self-Organization