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FOREWORD

As the second decade of the 21st century draws to a close, we're inundated with constant reminders of how much—and how quickly—change can occur across all major human endeavors.

Forces for change and innovation buffet the business world from all corners of the market, with even the world's oldest and best-known brands daily confronting new challenges from traditional competitors, regulators, policymakers and well-funded, tech-driven upstarts. And when change is this constant—and this meaningful—only the most Agile can thrive.

The companies that are winning in this new era are those that can respond to change with agility—not by resisting it, but by harnessing its forces to rally and augment their own. When the market shifts, they evolve along with it. When competitors emerge, they bring greater innovations to consumers in newer, better ways. They operate like ships that can maneuver around troubled storms, rather than trains that plow straight ahead on a predetermined course that no one—not even the engineer—can change.

For years, certain corporate functions have operated under this paradigm. These "Agile" groupings could be found in the IT department, among software developers and in product teams. As this new way of working has begun to show immense gains in productivity, there has been a growing awareness that these same ways of working could be adopted and adapted by the larger organization.

This Forbes Insights report provides the first detailed look into the broader "Agile transformations" now taking place within companies in every industry and around the globe. The survey data provides a rich source of information about where and how these transformations are occurring, while the accompanying interviews provide real-world advice and lessons learned from those heading the charge.

A key finding of this report is the importance of C-suite-level buy-in for any transformation to be successful. For companies already in the midst of their own Agile transformations, this report provides an important look at the breadth and pace of change in other companies. For leaders of companies still standing on the edge of the pool, waiting to see if they should dive in, this report should be an excellent conversation starter.

Most companies realize they need to change, but they may not know how. Here's where the learning can begin—or continue.



Eric Engelmann
Chairman of the Board,
Scrum Alliance

INTRODUCTION

Many organizations are undergoing major transformations in reaction to changing customer needs, fluctuating market demands, competitive pressures and disruptive technologies. But less than half of executives (47%) believe they can extract sustainable value from these transformations, according to research from Forbes Insights. In addition, only half of executives (51%) believe they can create short-term transformation wins.

Complicating matters is that, at any given point, a third of all large companies are experiencing a severe deterioration in total shareholder value, and successful recovery from this deterioration is the exception rather than the norm: Only one-quarter of companies are able to outperform their industry in the short and long run after the point of deterioration, according to findings published on the MIT Sloan Management Review website.

Part of the problem is that many organizations continue to function under rigid vertical organizational structures—vestiges of the industrial era. Today's modern, digital, networked businesses must acknowledge the innate ineffectiveness of traditional management while recognizing the urgent need for greater agility, an organizational approach defined by quick iterative cycles and empowered cross-functional teams engaged in discovering and delivering customer value.

To better understand this approach and its advantages, Forbes Insights, in collaboration with Scrum Alliance, surveyed more than 1,000 C-level executives from around the globe and from a range of

DEFINING LEADERS AND LAGGARDS

When looking at the adoption, understanding and implementation of Agile approaches, responses varied significantly among surveyed executives. To highlight these key differences in behavior, our report divides respondents into two main categories: leaders and laggards.

These segments are defined as follows:



Those who responded:
"We are Agile in both strategy and
execution" and "culture is definitely
an asset to achieving agility."



Those who responded:
"We are not Agile in both strategy
and execution" and "culture is an
obstacle to achieving agility."



industries. Questions explored executives' overall view on the importance of agility, how it correlates with success in transformation efforts, and how far along companies are with implementing these frameworks. We also conducted in-depth interviews with leading C-level executives from top-tier organizations including GE Healthcare, Nokia, J. Walter Thompson Company, Toyota Connected, Unisys and Team WIKISPEED.

Based on our research findings and conversations with top executives, we discovered that Agile frameworks—Scrum in particular, which 77% of leading organizations currently leverage—can help spur growth and support digital transformation in an era of fickle customers and fast-emerging market trends. In fact, for organizations that succeed at achieving greater agility, the rewards are plentiful, including: faster time to market (60%), faster innovation (59%), improved non-financial results such as customer experience and product quality (58%), and improved employee morale (57%). These benefits are being realized on a global basis, from Asia-Pacific to the Middle East.

Agility also delivers bottom-line benefits, as 17% of leading companies (see Defining Leaders and Laggards, pg. 5) have experienced revenue growth of more than 20% over the past year, compared with 10% of laggards. Beyond revenue figures, leaders differ from laggards in that they've successfully translated agility from a software development methodology into a highly valuable management strategy across their business domain.

This report illustrates the increasing importance of agility as an organizational approach and explores how organizations can achieve end-to-end agility in a highly competitive world.

AGILITY VERSUS AGILE

Agility

A property of an organization to sense and respond to market changes and continuously deliver value to customers.

Agile

An organizational approach and mindset defined by the values and principles of the Agile Manifesto, often practiced through a framework like Scrum.



KEY FINDINGS



For those that succeed at achieving greater agility, the rewards are plentiful: Faster time to market (60%), faster innovation (59%) and improved non-financial results (58%).

Many organizations are adopting an ad-hoc approach to Agile: 21% of respondents use Agile when/where needed, and 23% use it within specific functions. However, adoption needs to be enterprise-wide (and consistent) to realize real results.

The C-suite plays an integral role in driving adoption of agility across the enterprise: 35% of survey respondents say the CEO is responsible for organizational agility, and 87% view the CEO as the biggest proponent of organizational agility.

Not everyone eagerly embraces agility: Longtime employees (29%) are the biggest detractors of organizational agility and may stand in the way of widespread adoption. This is a prime opportunity for senior-level executives to address employee concerns and shift mindset.

As the role of the C-suite changes, organizations must find the right mix of talent—from all business functions—to drive transformation and collaborate with stakeholders: 83% of leaders cite the right talent and/or skills as being key to a successful transformation.

Education and awareness are central to converting agility from a framework into a management strategy: 54% have trained and/or utilized employees to lead the Agile transformation, and 58% say they need to learn more about Agile.

Culture is key to supporting an Agile enterprise: 65% of survey respondents agree that their culture is an asset to the organization, and 66% consider agility an essential part of their company's DNA.

Many organizations eliminate hierarchy in the hopes of increasing agility: 44% of survey respondents have introduced a flatter structure to become more Agile. But that may be premature; Agile is about creating the right dynamics for teams to iterate quickly, not simply moving boxes around on organizational charts.

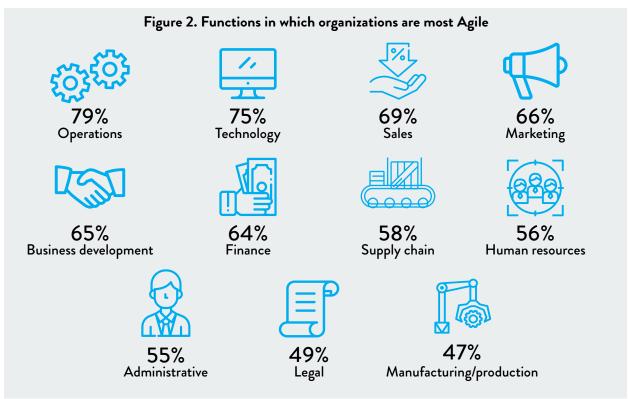
As agility gains traction around the world, regional differences begin to arise. Asia-Pacific executives say being Agile is very important, but they don't assess themselves as being particularly good at it. North American executives do, but they don't necessarily say it's more important. Latin American executives, on the other hand, characterize their organizations in general as the most disruptive. Despite these nuances, the survey reveals a global consensus among executives on the need to become more Agile.

THE STATE OF AGILITY

A vast majority of organizations recognize the importance of agility and its rewards. Yet agility can be elusive: Many are struggling to translate this nearly 20-year-old software development strategy into a broader management concept. To successfully transform, today's organizations need to embrace agility from strategy to execution, and enterprise-wide.

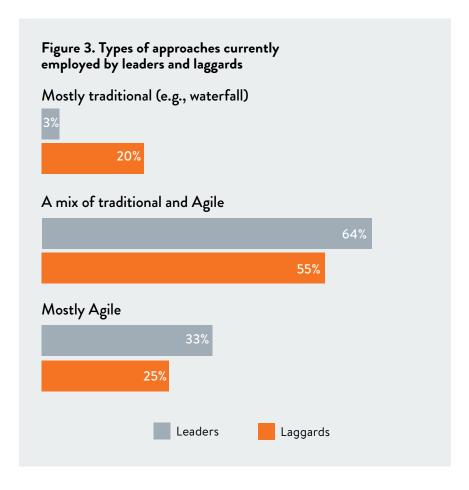
The time to do so is now. Our survey findings indicate that two-thirds (66%) of organizations have experienced less than 10% growth in revenue over the most recent fiscal year. Trends like this make the ability to react quickly to emerging trends, design better products, enhance team morale, and meet sky-high customer expectations more critical than ever.





Organizations already recognize the value of agility to the enterprise. A staggering 81% of all survey respondents consider it to be the most important characteristic of a successful organization. And 82% of respondents consider agility to be very or extremely important to an organization's success and competitiveness. Among the most popular Agile approaches selected by respondents: Scrum, cited by more than three-quarters (77%) of leaders.

"Agility is a prerequisite to stay competitive in the long run; it is not optional," says Joerg Erlemeier, chief operating officer of Nokia, a Finnish multinational telecommunications and consumer electronics company. "Being Agile enables us to respond faster and better meet our customers'



requests." Agile initiatives at Nokia include redesigning business processes, creating a customer-centric supply chain and introducing smaller, more nimble teams.

There's good reason for the popularity of organizational agility. For those that succeed at achieving greater agility, leaders and laggards see many benefits, including faster time to market, faster innovation and improved non-financial results, to name just a few.

Toyota Motor Corporation is just one company reaping the benefits of increased agility. By working "in small batches" and creating continuous process flows like the Toyota Production System, Nigel Thurlow, chief of Agile for Toyota Connected (the global technology strategy business unit for Toyota), says the company's Kentucky manufacturing plant can upgrade systems that support the plant machinery in six days—a fraction of the seven weeks once required for the exact same task. "When you're working in short sprints and small batches, you're able to see the value delivered more rapidly," he says. "But more importantly, you're able to catch your mistakes more rapidly, change your mind and make decisions based upon emerging requirements."

Such flexibility is imperative in today's business environment, as the rapid pace of technology, innovation and development requires organizations to deliver results faster than ever. But agility is about more than getting products out the door faster than your competitors. Agile began as a response to the failings of traditional software development. Faced with blown budgets and missed deadlines, organizations turned to Agile to increase the rate at which they could create new products and roll out updates.

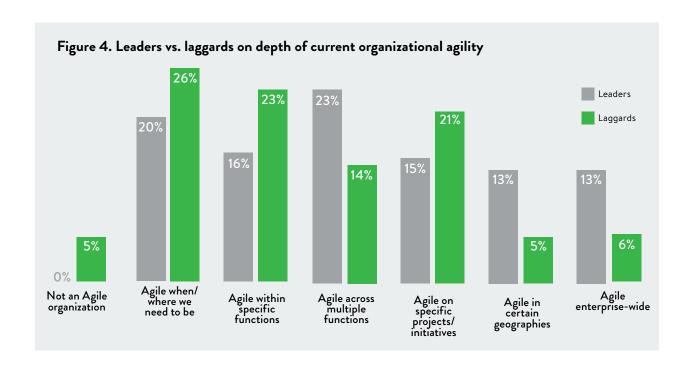
Indeed, using a Scrum framework can speed up product development. But there's little value if the advertising department can't translate new products into modern vernacular, or if the marketing team can't build a campaign in time. Even today, survey respondents say one of the areas their organization is most Agile in is technology (76%).

Yet agility belongs in the enterprise as a powerful management strategy—not isolated within one department—if it's to move organizations forward into the future of workplace and cultural innovation. In fact, enterprise-wide agility sits at the heart of what separates today's leaders from laggards.

"When companies are Agile from stem to stern, they're able to make decisions of any size in less than an hour" for greater "profit, revenues, project success, promotion and market-share growth," says Joe Justice, founder and CEO of Team WIKISPEED, a green, automotive-prototyping company that relies on Scrum for everything from human resource decisions to product design for modular cars.

So how can organizations extend agility from software to marketing, product design, manufacturing and other business units? It's a question many are asking, especially since scaling Agile from a single department to an entire organization isn't easy. While the vast majority of Forbes Insights/Scrum Alliance respondents still rely on a mix of traditional and Agile approaches, leaders are doing a much better—and faster—job of embracing Agile. Approaches currently employed by leaders include a mix of traditional and Agile (64%), mostly Agile (33%) and mostly traditional (3%).

Another impediment to enterprise-wide adoption of agility? Many organizations are adopting an ad-hoc approach to Agile, embracing it on an as-needed basis rather than applying it on regular, consistent terms. Overall, 21% of respondents use Agile when/where needed, and 23% use it within specific functions. Yet only 9% of respondents apply Agile enterprise-wide. Clearly, consistent and widespread application of Agile principles is critical to business success, as leaders are twice as likely to be Agile enterprise-wide as laggards.



THREE STEPS TO INCREASE AGILITY

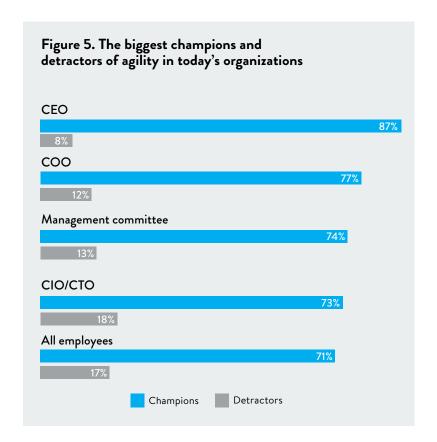
So how can organizations reach beyond a general desire to be more adaptable and achieve enterprise-wide agility? Our survey findings and in-depth interviews highlight the critical role agility plays in shaping highly competitive, innovative leaders and the dangers of slow adoption, including stagnant revenue growth and unsatisfied customers. Based on this data, we recommend organizations take the following three steps to increase agility for a distinct competitive edge:

- 1. Create a C-suite with an Agile mindset
- 2. Hire and develop the right mix of talent
- 3. Foster an Agile-friendly culture and organizational structure

These strategies enable organizations, many of which are being upended by innovation, to expand agility throughout the organization for sustainable business growth and transformation success.

1. CREATE A C-SUITE WITH AN AGILE MINDSET

To navigate a world in constant flux, organizations need Agile leaders. The executive level is certainly no exception. C-suite executives have a bird's-eye view of a company—a vantage point that allows them to assign meaningful leadership roles and shift the dynamics of the work environment.



"Top executive support of agility is worth the highest return on investment for almost any type of company," says Justice. "Executives that are comfortable with Agile approaches, such as product backlogs and sprint backlogs, have a tremendous impact on what gets done and how fast."

And the pressure is on: 35% of survey respondents view the CEO as responsible for organizational agility. A staggering 83% of respondents cite an Agile mindset/flexibility as the most important characteristic of today's C-suite—more than an ability to manage/attract talent (79%) and to be a great communicator (76%). Additionally, 87% of respondents view CEOs as the biggest champions of organizational agility.

But when it comes to building an Agile enterprise, C-level responsibilities can vary. At Toyota Connected, executive action team members and leadership meet daily, where their role is to resolve impediments such as corporate bureaucracy and financial decision making—issues that often surface during Scrum activities.

At GE Healthcare, a \$19 billion American manufacturer of medical products and technologies, C-level executives increase organizational agility by provoking thought, challenging ideas and fostering a more Agile mindset. Says Terri Bresenham, chief innovation officer for GE Healthcare: "Top management encourages our teams by asking, 'What assumptions are we making for an idea to work? How can we test these ideas across different cultures, different continents, different sophistication levels of healthcare? Did we think through the whole workflow?'" By testing thought processes, Bresenham says, the C-suite can stimulate an atmosphere of teamwork and foster greater innovation—factors that contribute to better products and happier customers.

But not all employees promote agility. According to our survey findings, the biggest detractors of organizational agility are longtime employees (29%)—workers who are comfortable in their current roles and staunchly resistant to change.

Says Upinder Phanda, CIO of Unisys Corporation: "We have a risk-averse culture. We want all the 'I's' dotted and 't's' crossed before we say yes. But in today's business environment, there's no time for that. You need to take risks. My role as CIO is to help associates make those risky decisions faster." Even executives, frightened by the rising need for rapid decision making and greater risk taking, can cling to traditional management approaches against an overwhelming track record of poor results.

In response, a growing number of C-suites are undergoing a sea change. Departments once considered support branches in a large organization are being encouraged by C-level executives to stake their claim as shapers of corporate strategy. From entry-level HR representatives to supply chain managers, more and more employees are finding

themselves contributing to, and often spearheading, major corporate initiatives. As a result, another form of leadership is emerging from departments such as HR and IT—influencers of Agile adoption.

Among these different functions, HR can work with C-level executives to eliminate common organizational roadblocks to agility and nurture interdepartmental communication. IT teams can also help expand agility throughout an organization. Once relegated to server rooms and office cubicles, today's IT leaders oversee the cloud, automation and data analytics systems that power most major business functions.

"IT is changing its role in a company from just being a provider of systems to orchestrating among IT, the business and the vendor/implementation partner," says Phanda. At the same time, IT teams have been implementing Agile frameworks, such as Scrum, for decades. Together, this combination of leadership and expertise makes them the perfect partners for enabling an Agile culture.

However, partnership thrives on clear communication. Unfortunately, C-suite executives often don't think about issues or communicate ideas the same way as HR managers and IT directors.



Solving a client's issue may require many complex work streams, so we set up a sprint...lt's a way of getting people to be collaborative, take accountability and feel empowered."

TAMARA INGRAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
J. WALTER THOMPSON COMPANY

For example, a CEO may view a looming talent shortage as a long-term financial matter, whereas HR and IT teams are more likely to see it as an urgent need to better incentivize workers and reward hard work. However, by updating their thinking and the language they use, and by focusing on issues such as human interaction and customer value, senior executives can better work alongside business functions such as HR and IT to collectively enable a culture of agility.

2. HIRE AND DEVELOP THE RIGHT MIX OF TALENT

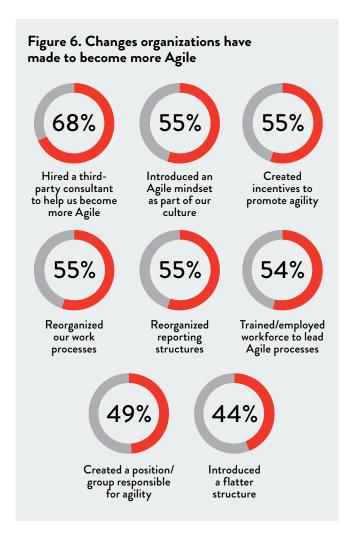
A respectable 66% of survey respondents say their transformations have been very or extremely successful. Central to this success are employees. More than three-quarters (83%) of leaders cite the right talent and/or skills as key to a successful transformation, while 81% point to communicating with all stakeholders. Conversely, 70% of leaders blame lack of engagement by senior executives and employees as the reason for an unsuccessful transformation.

Transformation understandably requires a new way of working. Enterprise agility can create an effective framework for learning and responding faster, reducing non-value-added work and consistently delivering the most value. But that work gets done by employees, many of which are accustomed to working in a certain way. How do leaders drive organizational agility?

Creating the right mix of talent is essential. This starts with nurturing a healthy pipeline. However, employee training and development are also critical to weathering the cultural shifts and new skills requirements that arise with organizational agility transformation. In fact, 54% of respondents have trained and/or utilized employees to lead the Agile transformation. And demand for education shows no signs of waning, as 58% of respondents reveal they need to learn more about agility.

"Agility-based training, coaching and consulting is well-documented as being of financial value to a company," says Justice. But it's not enough to simply educate frontline workers; senior-level executives must also be skilled in incremental Agile practices. "A traditional waterfall legacy project management executive can fail even with a whole bunch of Scrum teams trying to support him or her—just from lack of mastery of Agile."

Millennials are particularly well-suited to enhance an Agile enterprise's talent pool. By encouraging fast decision making, Agile approaches encourage self-organizing and self-managing teams of motivated individuals. Employees from entry-level workers to senior managers are not only empowered to make decisions but encouraged to express their values through their projects and positions, leveraging



their organization as a catalyst for change.

In addition to valuing individuals and allowing them to personally identify with an organization's mandate, organizational agility stimulates interaction and collaboration, reshaping the way teams of employees work together and deliver results. For example, at GE Healthcare, projects range from designing infant warmers with color-coded safety alarms to building ultra-low-dose CT scanners to increase patient safety.



For these initiatives and many others, GE Healthcare relies on FastWorks, a GE program that "leverages the concepts of Agile and Scrum Teams," says Bresenham. Multi-disciplinary teams work together throughout the entire life cycle of a product. "It's not just the technical engineering people but also the reliability engineer, the manufacturing team, the sourcing team, the marketing team and the regulatory team," says Bresenham. "They work co-located and develop a much more 360-degree understanding of what needs to happen. When decisions are made, they're made holistically, which is a really exciting way to solve different problems."

J. Walter Thompson is another example of a company that relies on "a culture of collaboration" and the right mix of people to build an Agile enterprise. "We borrowed from the philosophies of technology companies and actually use their software platforms to transcend different times zones and be borderless in our capabilities," says Tamara Ingram, chief executive officer of J. Walter Thompson, an American marketing communications company.

One way J. Walter Thompson embeds an Agile approach throughout the organization is by using Scrum in decision making and project management for all areas of the company.

"Our talent works at the speed of culture, coming together for innovation sprints that pull ideas together from different disciplines and regions to solve a specific problem in a short period of time," says Ingram, referring to a repeatable work cycle during which work is completed and ready for review. "We have evolved to more of a 'maker culture,' learning from the world of prototyping." Taking a page from software development, J. Walter Thompson now relies on Scrum not only to create products, but for HR and financial decisions.

3. FOSTER AN AGILE-FRIENDLY CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Agility is not a set of procedures; it's a mindset that prizes individuality, collaboration and adaptability. Most of that is about changing organizational culture and learning how to manage people differently. The good news is that 65% of survey respondents agree that their culture is an asset to the organization. And 66% consider agility an essential part of their company's DNA. Yet many respondents use phrases such as "ineffective communication" (59%), "resistant to change" (57%) and "lacking purpose" (58%) to describe their company's culture.

Part of the challenge is weaving agility into a company's cultural fabric. "Agility requires a huge organizational culture shift," says Erlemeier of Nokia. Employees must learn new behaviors, such as thinking independently, taking risks and collaborating across interdepartmental borders. Collective corporate instinct has been to do away with hierarchy, the thought being that fewer titles and positions will breed greater collaboration and stronger teams.

In fact, nearly half (44%) of survey respondents have introduced a flatter structure to become more adaptive, while 70% want an Agile executive to promote a non-hierarchical culture. And in the year ahead, nearly half (49%) of organizations are changing up organizational structures to support Agile approaches.

Agile is about creating the right dynamics for teams to iterate quickly and make rapid-fire decisions, not erasing spaces on an organizational chart. Certainly, a hierarchical structure can significantly impede progress for some companies. But the notion that an enterprise must be flat to be Agile is a myth. Agile enterprises don't just eliminate hierarchy; they rethink roles and provide individuals with the power and autonomy to maximize business value.

Nokia, for example, "rewrote its organizational structure" and the roles employees play by "removing two layers of management entirely," according to Erlemeier. As a result, he says, "decisions are made faster using a system of small squads and larger tribes." The company also identifies employees based on their expertise, not title or position—a modification that ensures "those closest to a problem are empowered to fix it," says Erlemeier. "This new setup is unique for companies of our size in our industry, and our Mobile Networks division can now test quickly and provide new releases 10 times faster than before."

Even the role of manager is changing from supervising people to influencing employee behavior and encouraging the retirement of traditional waterfall processes. However, replacing "command and control leadership" with an Agile-friendly culture isn't easy. Agile environments encourage employees to fail early and learn fast. But they

are also predicated on greater individual ownership and accountability, a prospect that can be daunting for some workers. Says GE Healthcare's Bresenham: "We are a very performance-driven culture, so it's a very unnatural act for our employees to try something, fail at it, and tell everybody about it."

To allay concerns, Bresenham says, employees meet on a quarterly basis, when they "recognize those teams whose projects didn't play out the way they wanted but who had the guts to try something new." More a celebration than a post-mortem, this exercise destigmatizes failure while opening up the lines of communication.

Another way GE Healthcare introduced greater acceptance of experimentation and innovation in the emerging markets was with DARE, an award presented to a self-nominated employee or team who had learned and wanted to share a valuable lesson from a failed endeavor or missed target. "What was so fascinating at the event was that there were more people raising their hands and saying, 'We were so convinced this was the right idea, but it wasn't. Here's what we got and why it didn't work.' The focus wasn't on failure but instead on learning," says Bresenham.



We borrowed from the philosophies of technology companies and actually use their software platforms to transcend different times zones and be borderless in our capabilities."

TAMARA INGRAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
J. WALTER THOMPSON

LOOKING AHEAD

With 75% of respondents working on transforming their organizational structure, a whole new approach to leadership is fast emerging. "Leadership in the next three to five years will be about thinking, creating and doing," predicts Ingram. "It won't be about leading from the front; it will be about participating. Leadership will be about knowing how to encourage collaboration by setting a clear vision for project solutions and putting the right talent in place."

But good leaders need enterprise agility to thrive. As innovation continues to upend industries, the demand for Agile transformations will grow. It's one thing to inch beyond traditional waterfall management. It's another to expand an Agile mindset, structures and approaches across an entire organization, from manufacturing plants to marketing departments.



To drive greater adoption of agility across an organization, many respondents are hiring third-party consultants (68%); others are creating incentives (55%) for change. "Third-party providers can have excellent collaborative success with companies by providing experience," says Justice. "Having more and more people with deep Scrum experience in a company is radical in terms of project delivery speed."

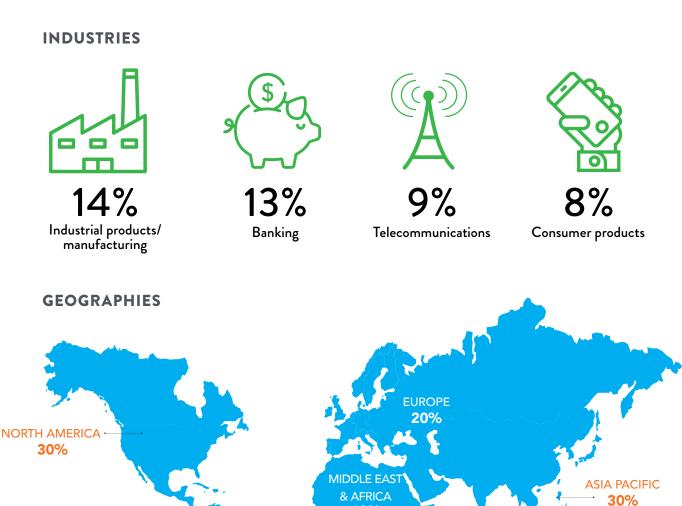
In addition to enlisting third-party expertise, our survey findings and in-depth interviews reveal three key requirements for successful Agile transformations, including a supportive C-suite, the right mix of talent and an Agile-friendly culture. Together, these critical factors can support an organization's transformation efforts in an era of economic fluctuations, demanding customers and digital disruption.

There's already cause for optimism. Looking forward, 31% of leaders believe their company will be significantly more Agile. But if agility is to be the lifeblood of a successful business, organizations must learn to apply its powers across interdepartmental borders.



METHODOLOGY

The research in this report is based on a Forbes Insights survey of 1,007 executives across the globe. Half of their organizations generate between \$100 million and \$1 billion in revenue annually; the other half generate \$1 billion or more in revenue. Respondents hail from a range of industries including industrial products/manufacturing (14%), banking (13%), telecommunications (9%) and consumer products (8%). Geographies represented in the survey include Asia-Pacific (30%), North America (30%), Europe (20%), Latin America (10%) and the Middle East and Africa (10%).



10%

LATIN AMERICA

10%



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For more information on agile thought leadership, please log on to www.scrumalliance.org/forbes

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