

Case Study

Agile Training Programme Supporting Teams and Practise Groups at Elsevier

with
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Elsevier is a world-leading provider of information solutions that help their customers make better decisions, deliver better care and make groundbreaking discoveries in science, health, and technology.

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Elsevier had identified the need to improve its product delivery approach including the adoption of agile methods to help them achieve their goal of being more responsive to changes in market demands.

Challenges

Elsevier had commissioned formal training but they couldn't understand why there was still little evidence that agile methods were achieving any significant benefit. Agility in Mind was invited by Elsevier to provide coaching to the various teams. We quickly identified that, through discussion with individuals and observations of team activities, that the original training was holding them back.

Whilst there was no indication that the quality of the training courses was unacceptable, it was clear that people had returned to their offices and teams with a lack of confidence in how to put agile, Scrum specifically, into practice. The established working environment conflicted with many of the "rules" of Scrum, and this prevented many people from getting started.

To remedy this, Agility in Mind developed and delivered a training programme that was focused upon supporting teams and practice groups to begin to use agile techniques with confidence. With teams, we used our Introduction to Agile training course to help them understand agile principles and how they could be applied to achieve effective product delivery in an environment where stakeholders and delivery teams were separated by geography and there were significant dependencies upon outsourced practices.

For practitioner groups such as business analysts, project managers and product managers, we used other courses to help individuals understand their role better in the context of the organisation. The programme has also extended to the product management group based in the Netherlands, where we used our Release Planning course to show how products should be planned and made visible to improve the outcomes of product delivery.

Outcomes

For Elsevier, the impact of the training was clear: teams and individuals quickly began to establish agile ways of working adapted to the constraints in their environment.

Project managers were confident that they did not have to remove all constraints before they could begin; product managers understood that collaboration with teams was going to be the most effective way of working; managers realised they needed to be active in removing blockers for teams.

The reasons for success are clear: we took a people-centric approach to identify what got in the way of better delivery; we adapted material for the organisation to ensure we placed the emphasis in the right area; we built confidence in the individuals and teams so that they could begin to work differently and we showed managers how they could have a positive impact on the effectiveness of teams.



Using agile to deliver effective product delivery for dispersed stakeholders



Collaboration with teams is the most effective way of working

Agility in Mind is a business agility transformation consultancy.

We use agile principles and practices as enablers for change to help our clients respond better in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Our services include business agility consulting, coaching and training, combined into a high impact agile transformation model that achieves rapid results.

We work with people throughout an organisation: we help leadership teams better understand the challenges they need to face in a changing world; we show individuals and teams how to better organise their work to fulfil strategic objectives; and we instil a sense of belief that change is possible and action is needed.

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