Case Study

Moving from continuous coping to continuous improvement

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Creating a tech product-led, value-driven, digital first culture for a national supermarket.

The Challenge

When Agility in Mind was approached by a national supermarket to help them create a tech product-led, value-driven, digital first culture, we couldn't wait to get started.

We communicate through digital channels. Even supporting services such as shelf-stacking and checkout are powered by digital communication transactions. The leadership team knew that the culture of the digital product teams was still one of continuous coping: meeting targets and hero-efforts maintaining old systems instead of one of continuous improvement and constant experimentation. The supermarket was operating with an out of date mindset in fast-moving and super-competitive world.

*The Agility in Mind team knew that impact was needed fast and there was no time to waste.*

Our Approach

Regardless of how many customers we pair up with, we're never foolish enough to think we know the answers, so first we listened. The pattern of challenges became clear quickly, this is how we addressed them:

- We made all the current in-flight work visible. Straight away it was obvious to everyone that there was too much work in progress and that some low value work needed to be stopped in order to get some high-value work delivered.

- We crafted a simple and focussed products vision, with clear and measurable outcomes. This was commonly understood and helped delivery teams understand focus, direction and value making prioritisation easier and more efficient.

- We defined roles and responsibilities. There hadn't been much clarity on this before, which led to lengthy ineffective meetings, with many attendees and few decisions being made. In addition, there was little separation of work, meaning too many of the team members were stepping on each other's toes, getting frustrated.

- An operating rhythm was implemented, based around quarterly and monthly planning in addition to the usual sprint cycle. This build transparency in what was being done and the ability to report the true status of progress to business leaders.

- We led teams by outcome instead of driving them to targets. This allowed a culture of experimentation and customer service design to get established. Teams became increasingly autonomous, needing less day-to-day command and control management.

- We led on developing and implementing a 'future of product' approach which brought about structural changes in the business, reposting lines and company culture. This served to liberate potential of the staff, who now put their energy in to serving customers instead of getting frustrated with 'continuously coping'.

> **66**
> **The shining light was an impressive performance in their online proposition**
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> *Richard Lim* **99**
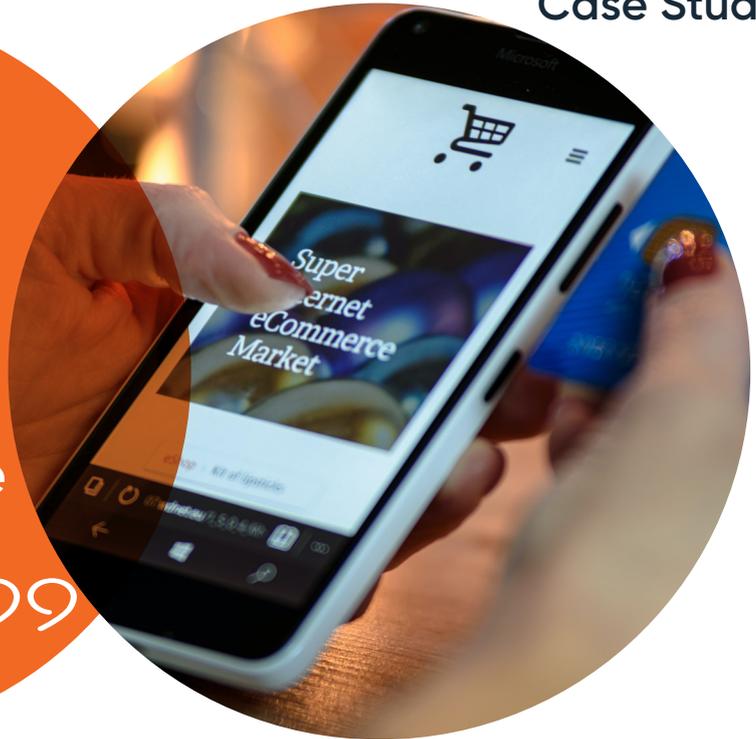
Outcomes

The argument about who saw Covid19 coming or not will have to be left to the historians, but one thing we can say for sure is that the work we did undeniably helped this supermarket respond to change in a time of national crisis. The product and delivery teams now with an outcome-based philosophy embedded were able to take the changes in their stride and the business leaders were able to see how they were able to switch from store to delivery with almost total clarity.

By the time we had got the teams working so well they no longer needed our support, grocery sales were up 90.1% YOY (+50.1% on forecast). The most online orders ever taken in one week stood at 95,932 and the app also developed at pace, reaching a competitor busting 4.7 stars on the App Store.
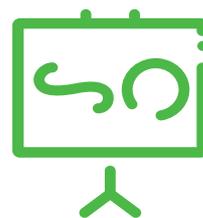
We even got a mention in Retail Week after Christmas 2019 with Richard Lim, CEO of Retail Economics said: "The shining light was an impressive performance in their online proposition".

Clear and measurable outcomes

Providing clarity with defined roles and responsibilities

Implemented quarterly and monthly planning sessions

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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