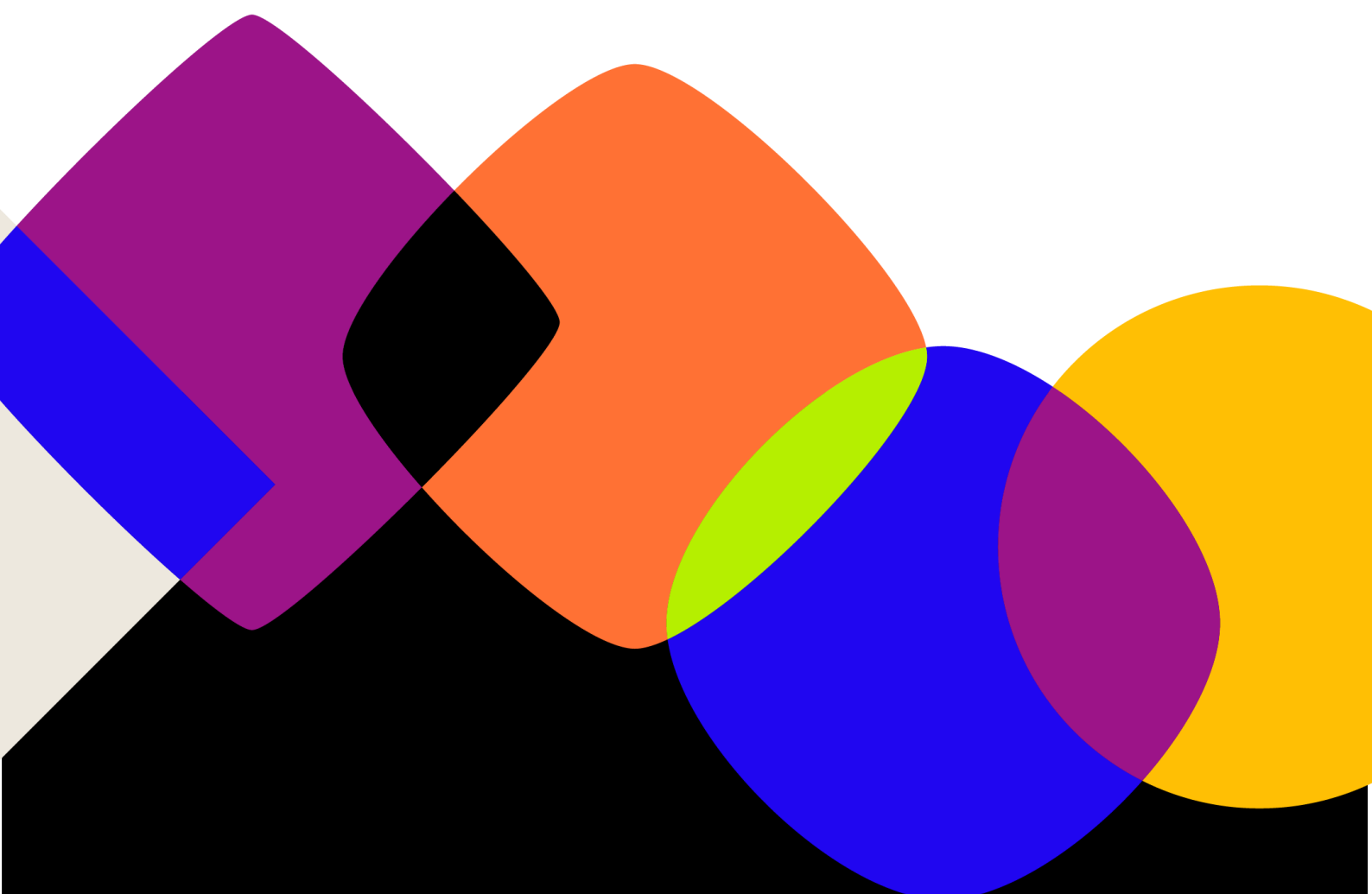


**Agile Business**  
Consortium

# Insights from the Agile Business Awards 2024



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AUTHOR(S)

**Agile Business Consortium**

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# Introduction

2024 has marked the second year of the Agile Business Awards, organised by the Agile Business Consortium, the independent, professional body for business agility (see appendix 3&4 for more information or have a look at [agilebusiness.org](http://agilebusiness.org)).

The world of business agility is changing, as we can also see in the latest reports from the [Business Agility Institute](#) and their [skills report](#), the [State of Agile Culture](#), the [State of Agility in Procurement and Supply](#) and many more. This topic is also discussed in conferences such as the Agile Alliance's annual world conference and the World Agility Forum etc. Agility as a method continues to become more commoditised and we are moving beyond framework implementations. Worldwide disruptions mean more and more organisations are faced with the need to embrace business agility — business agility as an organisational competence to deliver more value to customer, staff and (business) environment. Business agility to maintain (commercial) advantage in a changing world, to attract and keep staff, to ensure the ability to navigate unforeseeable futures. As is evidenced by the stories told by applicants, business agility can be a successful way to achieve these things if the focus is driven by leadership, with appropriate governance embracing empowerment, and in a culture which is embracing experimentation. Transformation initiatives powered by rigidity in applying frameworks, methods, tools, is *not* what we see as business agility, which might be the reason why some organisations are investing less in 'Agile'. Perhaps agility is already engrained in these organisations, or their change journey has focused on implementation rather than organisational need.

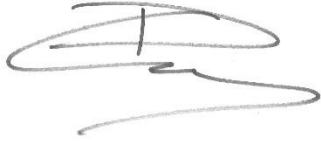
For the second year, the awards show organisations' success, with and without frameworks. They showcase successes built on the full awareness of business agility as a means to an end: delivering more value in a sustainable, adaptive manner. They show that one size doesn't fit all, not even all of one industry. A business agility journey is a journey towards becoming the best organisation you can be, by learning from, and with, others, by focusing on value and by investing into an organisational ecosystem where everyone is looking for win-win opportunities. In this report we share examples from all organisations participating in the awards, not only from those that have presented at the conference. We ensure no examples, good or bad, can be traceable to any particular organisation or reviewer.

We have had applications from all over the world – from Thailand to the US, from South Africa to Georgia. Most were based in Europe. As industries, we had applications from health care, banking/insurance, travel, logistics, infrastructure, energy, retail, technology, pharmacy and food. This shows the breadth of the business agility field, and shows it is no longer only IT / finance oriented.

Business agility, for many organisations, is a path to sustainable, ever-improving business success. This report highlights the achievements of this year's applicants and brings you qualitative learnings from organisations on their journey. Its aim is to provide inspiration, rather than simply reporting the state of agility based on extensive surveys and research that can be seen in other reports. We want to inspire and to showcase real-life examples, so you are able to learn and perhaps get some new ideas for your own journey.

Some of the applicants were invited to the awards conference, with the recordings of their presentations available on our website ([www.agilebusiness.org](http://www.agilebusiness.org)). We are now looking forward to the 2025 Awards and hope next time to receive applications from South and Central America, and from other industries (such as the utility industry or charities, as we did last year, or public government, or specific application areas (such as quality management or sales). We have seen great examples in these areas, industries and countries over the years, but have, as yet seen no applicants!

We trust this report will inspire you on your further journey towards organisational success. We hope that every now and then, you will pick it up again when you're looking for new improvement ideas, and you will find new nuggets of inspiration. And of course, we hope to welcome you next year as part of our awards process.



Peter Coesmans

Chief Agility Officer, Lead reviewer, Awards Product owner

Agile Business Consortium

# Management Summary

2024 has marked the second year of the Agile Business Awards, organised by the Agile Business Consortium, the independent, professional body for business agility (see appendix 3&4 for more information, or see [agilebusiness.org](http://agilebusiness.org)). We have seen more applicants from more industries. We have seen more reviewers and more supporters, we have seen more participants in the online conference, and an even higher appreciation score than last year. We have seen more interaction and more video downloads.

The agnostic Framework for Business Agility is the basis for the whole process. It is not an implementable framework; rather it provides a means to ask the right questions, and can be used to support any of the frameworks that the organisation has used to build its journey. More info is in appendix X.

Applicants conduct a retrospective and review on their business agility journey and upload their report (in a prescribed format based on the FBA). At least 3 independent reviewers then provide feedback in a feedback report (20 pages). Some of the applicants are chosen to present at our online awards conference and are supported before giving their TED-like presentation. The feedback they receive is of enormous value on their continuing journey to become a more valuable organisation.

On reviewing the applications and presentations we found 15 key takeaways that we believe are worth sharing:

Takeaway #1: Business agility is a means to an end, the end being to create sustainable value for your customers, your people and your ecosystem. Business agility is an organisational competence, not a method.

Takeaway #2: Agile transformations balance “doing agile” with frameworks, methods and tools and “being agile” through leadership, culture and governance; together with “delivering value” to customers, staff and the organisation’s ecosystem. Only “doing agile” i.e. implementing frameworks (whichever you choose), does not lead to success.

Takeaway#3: A business agility journey is an ongoing experimentation & learning journey, in collaboration with customers, staff and ecosystem.

Takeaway#4: Organisations that have been on their journey for a longer time sometimes develop “agile fatigue” and other improvements might become more pressing. Some of the organisations had to recover from this fatigue and found that the value achieved was decreasing rapidly. Maintaining a focus on continuous improvement of value delivery, process, culture and product is crucial in order to navigate changing circumstances.

Takeaway#5: Some managers are leaders, and some leaders are managers. Leadership is an organisational competency rather than a trait of some people high up in the organisation. Leadership is necessary on all levels for a transformation to be successful. “Actions speak louder than words.”

Takeaway#6: Leadership coaching at all management levels is a critical success factor for most of the applicants. Some have used the 9 principles of agile leadership as guidance. Support, visibility, transparency and approachability of management is crucial.

Takeaway#7: No blame, care for customers, value delivery, experimentation and collaboration, trust and a growth mindset were mentioned by all applicants as the most important aspects of an agile culture. Some applicants were supported by the 7 elements of agile culture that can be found in the pulse survey. How to grow an agile culture is still a developing area, with some organisations focusing on individual aspects, others experimenting with more social learning. And of course, leadership is crucial.

Takeaway#8: Agile governance is still a little less mature in most organisations. Especially in hybrid organisations, striking the right balance between different governance systems is an interesting, and sometimes difficult, process.

Takeaway#9: “Doing Agile”, operational agility, for many organisations is commoditised and engrained in their way of working. We don’t see so much innovation anymore, even though continuous improvements are a

mandatory part of the ways of working: Improvements in product, in collaboration in general, and in collaboration with, and creating value for customers.

Takeaway #10: Support Agility is growing. When supporting departments/processes do not support the agile way of working, they are an impediment to the journey to provide more value for customers, people and ecosystem.

Takeaway #11: Enhancing the agile change competency of the organisation is done in several ways: Improving projects and programmes (structures) and creating support through coaching, learning, and an agile culture. Supporting change through an agile transformation office is mentioned a number of times. Continuously developing this organisational capability is not done by everyone and might not be necessary for all organisations.

Takeaway #12: Providing value to customers is, for most organisations, the key driver for the business agility journey. For some, it is the internal customer, not the end customer. Applicants are starting to try to measure customer value and impact to measure progress, rather than measuring outcomes or even (still ...) outputs.

Takeaway#13: Taking care of staff and people in the “war on talent” and in the “war on attrition” is a driver for some organisations to become more agile, more purpose-driven, and more focused on delivering (sustainable) value. Others recognise that the true assets of the organisation are its talents. We are seeing more impact in this area.

Takeaway #14: The environment of the organisation, its organisational, regulatory, technological, ecological and social environment is for many the most important driver for change, expected and unexpected. Yet, this recognition is still in its infancy, with most organisational change paradigms still focusing on internal parameters such as efficiency. The need for collaboration to provide value is being recognised more and more, although for many organisations, this is still “terra incognita”. Innovations can be found in this area.

Takeaway #15: The need for agility in strategy becomes better understood. Embracing strategy as an organisational competency rather than as a set of documents is becoming the new normal. Defining, testing and measuring strategic hypotheses can be seen. Involving many people in this process, sometimes even external stakeholders and customers, can be observed and North Stars and OKRs are becoming more common.

Navigating unpredictably changing business environments is a growing challenge for many organisations. Business agility has helped the applicants to manoeuvre and be successful and to become the organisations they want to become, providing sustainable value to their customers, their people and their environment.

# Background

This report marks the second year of the business agility awards. Based on the learnings from last year, we have made many improvements to the process, and were able to launch the improved version of the Framework for Business Agility, which has acted as the basis for this year's awards. While writing this insights report, we recognise there must be many nuggets of wisdom for many organisations. We have written our own learnings and insights. We have decided to also include some of the valuable, anonymised statements from reviewers to applicants. We have found that these comments spark ideas for your ongoing journey, which is all this report aims to do. This is why we think it might be valuable to read the report and come back to it every couple of months, for more inspiration. And, if you are thinking of joining us for the Awards 2025, these are the sorts of quotes and the sort of report you'll be receiving. All organisations participating in the awards are invited into our Community of Business Agility Practice, where we meet up virtually each month and discuss mutually agreed topics. So our support doesn't stop, and most importantly these organisations can support each other.

Business agility is more relevant than ever because the world is becoming ever more unpredictable. Sharing good examples therefore is crucial to help organisations overcome the difficulties they face in becoming better and more valuable—valuable for their customers, their people and their organisational ecosystems. Getting feedback from independent experts is also important, which is why the Agile Business Consortium has set up the Agile Business Awards. Organisations get independent feedback on their full journey, and then are selected and supported to present a TED-like talk at the Agile Business Conference. Writing the application is not an easy task, but all applicants shared with us that it is a very rewarding one, since it is a true, valuable review and retrospective on their journey so far, including all the viewpoints that are important for an organisation's success. The feedback reports, based on at least three independent reviewers' comments, are seen as extremely valuable for these organisations on their onward journeys.

The Awards is a year-long process, which starts in the summer when we open the applications. Applicants can write their reports based on the Framework for Business Agility and the use of "Evidence Stories". They can contact us for help to better understand what they need to write. In December, we close the entries and work with the reviewers to get their feedback. Reviewers usually see a maximum of two applications. In a balancing meeting in January, we then compare the inputs of all reviewers and come to a general conclusion about whom to invite for the awards conference. We create feedback reports for all applicants based on reviewer input and support the invited organisations on how to present at conference. Post-conference work (on sharing the stories in other formats, and creating the Insights report) then begins, and all the feedback we have gathered (implicitly and explicitly) during the full-year process is used to start next year's preparations. If you want to join us as an applicant, reviewer or supporter, contact us! More info on last year's process can be found in Appendix 1. The deadlines for 2025 applications are on our website.

The basis for business agility is our Framework for Business Agility (FBA). See appendix 2. This framework is not something you can implement. It provides lenses, viewpoints, to assess the agility of your organisation and where to improve. It is the basis for the application reports and the reviews in the awards process, and the basis for this insights report. The framework has 4 circles. At the core is "being agile": agile leadership, agile culture and agile governance. In the circle surrounding the core is "doing agile": agile operations, agile support, agile change. The outer circle is the value circle: Which value is your organisation delivering to the outside world, what is your "why"? We recognise value for customer, for people (staff) and for the organisation's environment (ecosystem). While the need for business agility, and the restrictions regarding business agility rely heavily on the relationship with the business environment, this is still a relatively new area for many organisations. The fourth circle, connecting "being agile" and "doing agile" with value delivery, is the agile strategy circle. This circle provides the glue in the model.

The FBA has been used to assess and support agility in full enterprises, in functional departments, in programme teams and at all kinds of organisational levels. It is not a scaling approach, it is scalable without adjustments and can be used to assess scaling approaches, as can be seen in the applications. It is descriptive, not prescriptive — it will not tell you what to do, it will help you to ask the right questions. It is agnostic, so does not favour one framework over another. The FBA can be used to assess and help to improve any framework implementation, any business agility journey, whether early or late in the process. Because it is a set of lenses that is always

applicable, it will help you ask the right questions, and define which new experiments and improvements you might want to engage in.

For the last two years, we have had entries from departments – marketing, finance and HR teams; country organisations and full enterprises. Applicants have come from banks, insurance, chemistry, healthcare, B2B, B2C, logistics, food, infrastructure, telecom, tech etc. We have had applicants who are just over one year into their business agility journey and organisations who have been on their journey for over 5 years. This shows the broad applicability both of business agility and of our framework. In the upcoming years, we hope to see applicants from even more countries and industries. Rapid and unexpected change is permeating in all industries, so the need to be able to pivot and adapt is needed everywhere.

Why do applicants participate? Well, of course to tell the world that they are successful on their agility journey. Other feedback we received included:

“It is quite hard work to create the application report and the evidence needed. But that process has been very rewarding and gave us the opportunity to really reflect on everything we have achieved. Using the FBA also showed us some areas that we had overlooked.”

“The feedback report has helped us on our journey, not only by pinpointing areas for further improvement, but also because it was welcomed by senior management, creating more understanding and even better support.”

“The support the consortium has given us in preparing the application and preparing for the conference was very insightful and has provided us with so much learning.”

“After all we had already learned in the process, we were amazed with the learning opportunities with the other participating organisations.”

Some general insights are: We see that operational agility is rather commoditised and stable. There is not much innovation there and all applicants scored “Good”, which indicates two things: Organisations know how to “do Agile” quite well, and ... this is not the game changer or the area in which you can do better than others. Support agility has a lower score and a higher spread, indicating this area is still a little less mature. On the other hand, we see business agility journeys where (for example) HR is the main driver. Leadership and culture have some innovations and are at a relatively high level in all organisations, so these are also accepted as being important. Agile governance has a lower score and a higher spread. It seems organisations are still struggling to learn what good governance is. Or are they struggling in their understanding of why this is needed? Many participants were provided with improvement ideas from the reviewers in this area.

When it comes to value, we see that ecosystem (which is a relatively new category) also has less mature scores. On the other hand, we have seen great innovations in this area. Focusing on customers and staff / people has been part of agility since its inception. The understanding that most unexpected situations arise from the organisation’s environment, and that an agile supply chain is needed to provide sustainable value, is relatively new (and supported for example by the State of Agile Procurement report). Agile strategy is also a little lower scoring, so would also seem to be still developing. On your journey, you might wish to see how you are doing in these areas.

The best organisations and the best scores this year, as was the case last year, turned out to be those organisations that balance their scores in all areas. The best organisations scored a “good” in all areas, with innovations in some areas where they scored “Very Good” or even “Excellent”. We also saw some organisations that were still a bit less mature, with less balance in their scores. As can be expected, at the start of their journey they choose some areas to focus on, and after a while, start their balancing journey. We applaud this and we recognise organisations cannot, and even should not, be doing everything at once. They should be running a good organisation and delivering value, never mistaking haste for speed and keeping the focus on value delivery.



## Lessons Learned

Business agility is defined as the competency of an organisation to pivot and to be able to change in order to deliver more value. It is a means to becoming the best organisation you can be. Hence, it is about striking the right balance (grey circle) between “doing Agile” (teal circle), “being agile” (blue circle), and “delivering value” (purple circle). Overall, we could see some organisations were still relying more heavily on the “doing agile”, and less on the other areas. We trust our feedback will help them to progress in the other areas as well.

Most of the applications we received followed the proposed structure supplied, and applicants have been given valuable, detailed feedback. Some of the applications however only talked about *what* they’ve done, not *how* they’ve done it, and some only talked about what has been achieved, without mentioning *why* it was achieved. We seek to continuously improve the support and model for delivering the stories to us, so the applicants will also get better, more specific, feedback to help them further on their journeys.

Some transformation journeys were driven by value creation as the main driver. Some were driven by providing more efficiency, some by becoming a better place to work, and some, simply by striving to become the best in the industry, or to enhance the baseline. It is great to see that business agility, when applied flexibly, can serve as the basis for such different objectives and combinations of objectives.

All of the journeys described encompassed a learning journey, in varying stages of maturity, from around one year old to more than 5 years into the process. Not one of the applications described an “implementation” as in: defining the structure, implementing and starting to execute it. Successful agility journeys are learning-and-improvement journeys, with a North Star focus of delivering value. All applications showed learning, regular re-planning and experimentation. While some, less mature, applications were focusing on improving output, the more mature were focusing on improving outcomes and value generation.

All of the journeys also addressed the change journey carried out at all levels of the organisation. This is similar to last year’s results, where we also witnessed that a successful business agility journey touches all levels. This is one of the indicators we have found in all these stories: If it is only top-down, it doesn’t succeed. If it is only bottom-up, even if it is endorsed by leaders, if it is not modelled by them, it doesn’t work. The leadership journey and culture journey permeate all levels.

An interesting observation: more and more applications talk about leadership levels, as if leadership *were* levelled. In our language, we strive to be consistent and have leadership as a competence of people and of organisations (hence our 9 principles of agile leadership). Management has to do with power and hierarchy, hence *that* has levels. Some managers are leaders, and some leaders are managers.

In all the applications, we saw that culture and leadership were explicitly addressed on the change journey. These topics were not developed coincidentally, but purposefully, not only with appropriate training, but also with coaching, feedback, engagement etc. Last year, we could also see the importance of these two areas. From the applications we saw this year, we could see the maturity of the approach growing.

One effect we saw for the first time this year, in some applications, is agile journey fatigue. Organisations that have been on their journey for a number of years are finding that the change journey itself has become the new normal. Hence, the risk these organisations face is: how do we keep on top of our game, how do we maintain enough focus? Completely stopping the journey will lead to a loss, a loss of built-up competencies, a loss of focus on value for customer, people and ecosystem, a loss of cohesion. In the future, we will learn more about what happens when organisations get into “maintenance mode” and how to create resilience. We will learn how to support and maintain the competencies developed, but to focus on the change journey, on the business improvement journey, and on other topics (such as new technology or a changed business landscape). Interesting times lie ahead.

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Reviewer Quotes

*"In general, the organisation is excelling at the first steps of its transformation and should be applauded for these efforts."*

*"The organisation needs to be commended for adopting the true spirit of business agility - right across the organisation. The fact that they wrote a book and used this as the core of their evidence is unique."*

*"Impressive story. Enjoyed reading about the transformation journey of the organisation. 'Never waste a good crisis' seems applicable."*

*"The organisation's emphasis on championing value creation, flexibility, speed, innovation and continual improvement are trademarks of agile transformations."*

*"The organisation has broad experience of deploying agility into the organizations that not only goes beyond the company, but stretches to other companies, other countries."*

*"Your continuing success appears to be due to the commitment by the management team to fully embrace what they needed to do to ensure this project was a success. Too often we hear that SAFe has been abandoned within 2 years, because the stakeholders just wanted an agile sounding version of what they were used to."*

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# Blue Zone

## Leadership

Leadership is an organisational competence. It is not restricted to management levels (see our leadership principle 6). All applicants have shown investment in developing this competence. Not every applicant had a planned approach towards developing leadership, including outcome/impact based metrics, but all of them invested heavily in this area. In all industries, in all geographical areas, we saw supportive/servant leadership as the chosen approach, with visible and approachable managers and with supporting leadership on all levels.

Like last year, many of the applicants mix leadership and management. While one of our principles is “leadership lives everywhere in the organisation”, many applicants have referred to management as their leadership. Most applicants still expect leadership to come from the top, so it seems, despite the culture of empowerment. On the other hand, we can clearly see that a key success factor (also reflected in other reports) is that top management needs to be really engaged with the business agility journey for it to become successful.

Some organisations used the 9 principles of agile leadership, some used other approaches or had no explicit model to start from. Some organisations used external coaching, others, pair-coaching, some of them have used internal coaching. In just a few, we saw no direct evidence of coaching. Coaching here (and in the applications) is defined as “leadership coaching”, focused on behaviour. Next to this, some of the organisations used “Agile Coaching”, focussing on understanding agility. Sometimes, agile coaches can be leadership coaches as well.

Most organisations ensured that management was visible in the organisation and that managers were approachable by all, even when a multi-level hierarchy was still in place. In some, managers were the ones showing leadership by talking about their failures at meetings. More than half of the applicants mentioned explicit multi-level feedback or feedforward mechanisms throughout the organisation as an important mechanism to ensure improvements. All the applications shared transparency and experimentation as important traits of leadership. Some organisations used a leadership team manifesto. All applicants, in some shape or form, mentioned agile leadership principle 1: “Actions speak louder than words”.

One organisation, when faced with setbacks, invited feedback from stakeholders and customers on their leadership approach and behaviours. This is an innovation we have not seen before. Some other organisations have created their own version of what they call agile leadership and have published their approach.

Leadership is at the core of business agility, not only in the Framework for Business Agility, but in the applications, we have received this year and last. Not many applications showed a deliberate approach to growing the leadership competency, though we saw a higher number than last year. In our view, having a deliberate approach improves the success of the journey.

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### *Reviewer Comments*

*"Well done! It is important to continue to value the psychological health of teams."*

*"The organisation has done an excellent job from a leadership perspective by championing the agile culture and all-level, division-wide responsibility towards the common goal of value creation."*

*"It is exciting to see leadership shifting from "managing people to managing the system".  
Encouraging words for many organisations out there looking to step up."*

*"The organisation fostered a culture where leadership was not a title, but a shared responsibility".*

*“Moving from leaders to leadership.”*

*“Great job modelling agility. Look to empower more team members instead of having them rely on you for answers.”*

*“I would like to see mention of leadership living everywhere in the organization, decentralized decision making and specific examples of that involve marketing.”*

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## **Culture**

The [agile culture](#) is the container of what many others call the agile mindset. Agile culture marks the biggest difference between “doing Agile” and “being agile”. As Peter Drucker says: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” so all applications explicitly target this as one of the drivers of their improvement journey. We saw the same last year, so it might be that this is a success factor. We’d like to think this is correct, given our extensive work on agile culture and how to measure it (see our culture matrix and pulse survey, and our support of the State of Agile Culture report — all of which can be downloaded for free on our site). It is noteworthy that some applicants have used the culture pulse matrix several times on their journey.

Culture elements that were mentioned in most applications were no-blame, trust, care for customers, value delivery, experimentation and collaboration. A growth mindset was also mentioned by most. To support cultural change, training, workshops, coaching, individual development plans and most importantly “showing, not telling” behaviour, were mentioned as important interventions. Embedding culture explicitly in agile rituals/ceremonies/events was another intervention we saw in some of the applications. Some organisations codified their culture and gave it a name. This of course is a great way to show how you make this your own, how you embrace it, how you recognise its importance. In some cases, it helped to overcome the “agile lingo chasm”, where people have to learn new terminology for concepts they already know. One organisation mentioned that using videos and podcasts and senior management telling them why this was important to them personally, succeeded in making agility “cool”.

The focus on agile culture in the change journey in half of the applications has led to the surfacing of potential improvements, of opportunities to increase wellbeing or to increase value delivery. Hence, culture is not an add-on; it is part of the core of the journey, even when the journey is framework rather than behaviour led. If culture improvement is a bolt-on, it might not be successful. One application actually describes how a framework implementation was almost unsuccessful, until the pivot to include and enhance agile culture was made.

In some of the applications, culture was relatively restricted to individual development. While important and one of the drivers, it is not sufficient. Culture development depends on both individual and social learning. Most applicants have received backing from their HR functions to help them on their journey. This shows how important supporting functions such as HR, Finance or Marketing are on the agility journey.

One of the applications addressed culture for the department it described, for the organisation within which it resides and for the customer and organisational ecosystem it lives in. It also described how to navigate all three. This is an innovation we have not seen before. Asking for feedback from stakeholders also opens the door for giving them feedback, which ensures joint learning and improvement. Another application showcased that where the hierarchy could not be broken because of business logic, agile culture was the way to overcome this agile anti-pattern.

One application gives a word of warning. During a longer journey, the investment in agile culture was suspended for a while, which led to a visible drop in value delivery. As this was noted by the customers, it led to a drop in business performance as well. It was, fortunately, quickly recognised and improved. We saw similar examples last year of the difficulties of maintaining the mindset and culture over a period of time. It seems an easy thing to let slip.

Last year, we saw more examples of gamification and role-playing. This year, we saw it in only one application. More fun and more diverse social learning styles might work for more organisations but are not (yet) commonalities. Also in last year's applications, we saw more evidence of diversity and ethics. These were not explicitly mentioned in this year's applications.

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*Reviewer Comments*

*"The 7 passions at your organisation are mentioned, and the way these were identified by the culture squad (learning from other organizations) is remarkable."*

*"There is evidence of a no blame culture and fail fast culture which encourages learnings to help succeed next time."*

*"Brave management encouraged and permitted failure by stating 'for every 3 successes a team had to share one failure'. This creates a more positive culture within the team."*

*"Great reading on all the initiatives, such as the value-based culture, focus on wellbeing, knowledge sharing, collaboration and HR alignment."*

*"It's impressive you have converted agile terms into things that any member of your organisation can understand (e.g. the Galactic theme) – love that!"*

*"Building and fostering culture starts with values and purpose, once leadership team sets themselves as role-models cultural shift can bring benefits in increasing well-being and fulfilment through trust and transparency, bringing in the end customer satisfaction and finally revenue increase."*

*"Using games to understand agility is a good practice, also helping people connect and learn about each other, both practices support the path to an open organization, and for now, this is what I see about the organization: heading to achieve the agility."*

*"Fantastic to see psychological safety being provided."*

*"There is a balance between process improvement and people development (mindset and culture over subject matter)."*

*"To build on your success, we recommend focusing on integrating Agile principles more deeply into areas that are traditionally resistant to change. Developing targeted strategies for legacy systems and expanding stakeholder engagement will enhance your Agile culture."*

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## **Governance**

Governance last year was a little less mature than leadership and culture. We saw a similar score this year. Governance is universal, pervasive and scaled, based on principles such as empowerment, alignment and transparency. Without appropriate guard rails, empowerment cannot work, yet we have found few applications

specifically talking about those guard rails. In quite a few of the applications, as we did last year, we still saw more hierarchy than was ideal for business agility, hence there is room for further investigation.

Governance was also interpreted in different ways. Some of the applications related governance to “project governance” only, others to “corporate governance” or “departmental governance” only, etc. Of course, it depends on the scope of the application. However, when we have found this, the feedback has always been to ensure that governance is aligned with other governance when it is not integral. We know integral governance is not always possible, in which case organisations need to explicitly address how to overcome this. Some applicants saw this as one of their major impediments to further business agility and organisational success.

All applications show the need for clarity of roles and mandates, and transparency and openness in communication. As for the communication, in larger organisations, most of them mentioned tooling as being of utmost importance, so all necessary information was available to everyone at the same time.

Some of the applications used the governance structure proposed by the framework they were using and then enhanced this during their journey to grow towards the governance needed. Most applications mention senior management’s active involvement and sponsorship as a key component in getting governance to work. One application explicitly mentioned the tension between autonomy of teams and the power of senior management and the effort it needed to align towards appropriate governance. Governance is not just some rules on paper; it is active participation throughout the organisation to get the appropriate decision-making.

Aligning governance to cultural, organisational or departmental values was mentioned in some applications, and evidence was provided that it helps to overcome difficulties. Also, some applications referred to agile principles as the basis for their quest towards more agile governance. Or they have set up operating principles to which they keep referring. By using principles, it is possible to overcome the need some organisations feel for “more control”. It allows you to ask: “Which control is appropriate?” because it asserts that more control, more structure, is not, by default, the right way to go.

In some of the applications, we saw the use of Wardley Maps for analysing governance. One scale-up organisation took agile governance as a starting point for their next step in maturity. One of the larger organisations used several (sometimes parallel) experiments to test what governance was working best, testing hypotheses and in the end gaining a clear vision of the guard rails needed. In that organisation, learning how to implement agile governance and proving it could be done, was the key success factor in convincing the entire organisation that agile governance was increasing the *right* control instead of letting go of all control.

With agile governance, the quest is always to balance lightweight, empowered decision-making with transparency of information, so people can make informed decisions. Guard rails should be clear, otherwise psychological safety is not guaranteed and empowered decision making is thus hampered.

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*Reviewer Comments*

*“Love that you start with “why”!”*

*“One possible approach for managing distributed governance are tools and artifacts for understanding the whole. Wardley maps are great, and so are more detailed descriptions of the value streams and/or paths to value and giving explicit decision-making authority for parts of it.”*

*“Great to see that not just one agile methodology is being used “*

*“The governance framework you have put in place is exceptional, an excellent example of how to have the right level of structure to allow your teams to deliver the right outcomes with little oversight.”*

*“You might want to experiment with creating a true cross-functional team where all people involved are communicating on a daily basis.”*

*“We really applaud your value: ‘Trust the people, not only the process’”.*

*“There is hardly any evidence that robust, yet agile, governance frameworks were implemented to manage risk and compliance.”*

*“The strong, traditional governance structure that’s in place is typical in your strictly regulated environment. It’s difficult to see any evidence of agility influencing lighter-weight governance in certain areas where applicable.”*

*“In any organisation, there are parts with highly regulated environments and with low-regulated environments. To improve the approach for these different environments in an agile transformation, we recommend that you first establish the level of regulation and take that into account.”*

*“We advise bolstering coaching to prioritize outcomes in behaviours, which can be supported by visible metrics and progress tracking in an Obeya-style setup.”*

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## Teal Zone

### Operational Agility

This is the category that most frameworks and methods live in (the applications show several of them, some organisations even using more than one). It is adding the “doing agile” to the “being agile”. General scores in this category were “good”, but we didn’t see much innovation. Only a few applicants scored slightly higher than “good”, and a few slightly lower. Perhaps, because this area is so mature in general, it is more or less commoditised. On the other hand, ensuring your operations are adaptive and aligned with the value the outside world is expecting or wanting to collaborate on is crucial. A conclusion might be, that this category is no longer the main differentiator. It would appear that it is not how well you use the tools, the methods, or the framework that brings value to the business. Rather it is other areas of the FBA where organisations may be less mature and where there is opportunity to generate more value.

Improvements shown by applicants focused on delivering more value to the customer, increasing delivery speed, embracing innovations and especially new technology. They focused on adapting existing ways of working and enhancing delivery processes, supported by building technical competences. Defining hypotheses and testing can be seen in most applications, so they don’t just “implement a framework”, but improve it and adapt it to what they need. One of the organisations used a combination of three frameworks. Similarly to last year, we have also seen some evidence where a framework has been too strict, obstructing business agility, and has therefore been scaled down or completely abandoned. This evidences that implementing a framework or method does not automatically help an organisation to become more agile.

Some organisations are more product/flow based and some more project based. Of course, this heavily depends on the sort of organisation you are, and what type of value you deliver to customer, people and ecosystem.

Most organisations used road mapping and large planning events (PI, big room etc) to regularly test assumptions and progress, to discuss priorities and next steps and to ensure tapping into the experience of many when deciding how to progress.

A considerable number of applicants still operate using cross-functional teams only partially. Some functions are in the teams, some functions are still outside. On the one hand, this shows possibilities for further improvements. On the other hand, it shows that organisations seem to embrace a hybrid style. Still, they show success. And, since business agility is a means to an end, the end being business success, it shows that they are pragmatic about this topic. We applaud this, as long as it is value-driven and frequently inspected. If it is driven by structure and hierarchy, we have invited organisations to consider what their next steps are to experiment with more cross-functional teams, to learn and to see what the best models for the organisation are.

Most of the applicants seem to use KPIs for ongoing and slowly improving businesses, and OKRs for change and strategy related improvements (and outcome-oriented measurements). To do this, we have seen all kinds of data and information being gathered. Organisations have found out it is not so easy to move from output-related data to outcome and impact/value related data. Yet most of them are trying to do this, showing their need for improved steering. We have not seen much evidence on how the applicants have pivoted based on data, but trust that small improvements have been made. Although for example cycle time is still mentioned here and there, organisations are realising that those kinds of metrics are not the best. Some have started to use AI and algorithms for the interpretation of data, and we expect to see more of this next year.

One of the applicants moved from a process-driven to an employee-driven approach. “Happier employees = happier customers” was their tagline, and this has helped them to transform from process-driven to value-driven. This is one of the innovations and improvements we have seen. With a focus on value delivery, prioritisation improved.

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#### *Reviewer Comments*

*“The team can be applauded for (a) driving design thinking in line with agile and (b) driving collaboration across the organisation.”*

*“Glad that the learnings were to get real customer feedback earlier instead of just perfecting the designs.”*

*“Although there is evidence of excellence in the blue zone and its support to operations it would be worthy to have a particular view of the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) environment and its relationship to the operational internal and external processes.”*

*“You indicate no distinction between change and operations. The work for both flows seamlessly together due to the emphasis on flow of value and the flow of work.”*

*“We commend your strides in operational agility, particularly in your back-office transformation”.*

*“It's great to see a balance between achieving operational goals and maintaining team morale and focus on wellbeing. This approach contributes to the team's effectiveness and fosters a positive and sustainable working environment.”*



*“An impressive list of achievements in response to the growing demands. It shows a capacity to innovate and commitment to staying ahead.”*

*" A lot has been done for operational agility and the numbers are great. I miss tailoring the framework and questioning the existing hierarchy."*

*"I applaud the list of outcomes you achieved. "*

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## **Business Support Agility OR Business Change Agility**

In this category, for the awards, we have chosen to combine two separate categories out of the framework for business agility. This is because in some organisations, competences for change agility are not needed for doing good business (process driven / flow type organisations). In other organisations (particularly smaller ones), there is less need for agile support. Hence, we have combined these two for the awards, and let the applicant decide which category to address. This category was amongst those in which applicants scored lowest. We have to ask whether this was due to lack of understanding of the category, commoditisation, or other reasons. Next year we will improve the support needed to aid understanding.

Learnings on change:

When it comes to change agility, the Framework for Business Agility looks for evidence that is related to: How do you build the organisation's competences when it comes to pivoting and adapting to change that is more than incremental, more than an upgrade of an existing product or service? Competences that allow you to negotiate questions such as: "How do you enter a new market"; "How do you create a really new product for a market"; "How do you pivot away from a situation that has become toxic"; "How do you overcome a supply chain that is challenged"; etc. In a rapidly and unexpectedly changing environment, these competences are crucial.

Most applicants reporting on change have used emerging and standard approaches to change, sometimes using Kaizen and sometimes agile project approaches. They have tailored the approach, many times also relying on HR to support building the organisational capability of handling change pro-actively.

Two applicants specifically mentioned Toyota Kata style coaching and continuous change. Another application described how an additional team was deployed over a certain period to increase change competencies for a department, while maintaining the delivery promised to the customer. These are not very innovative approaches but worth mentioning. In some transformations, adding resources temporarily is, by some, considered to be an anti-pattern to agility. That might be the case, but what we are looking for is good business done using business agility, not business agility in isolation.

Some applications have described their experiments with improving change, especially involving customers or other stakeholders on their journey. This is increasing the focus on value, and at the same time maturing not only the organisation itself, but also its organisational context, ecosystem and customers. Some applications showed a completely planned approach to increasing change agility, one of them using 10 initiatives, which were all based on an adaptive learning approach. We didn't always see a planned approach towards increasing change agility.

Learnings on support:

The applications in the marketing, finance and HR categories each demonstrated that they applied the full Framework for Business Agility in their transformations in a specific, supporting category. It shows that business agility is not only useful in full enterprises or businesses, but since it is an organisational competency framework, it can be applied to individual parts of the organisation as well. This is useful evidence for those who want to start experimenting. Many business agility journeys we have witnessed over the years have not started in IT or technology, but for example in marketing, purchasing, or often, in HR.

One application showed how a complete business model pivot had been executed in just a couple of months, showing a clear capability to change. What we could not see was how this competency had been developed, whether it would be needed in the future and if so, how it would be supported and maintained (or put to use elsewhere in the business).

In the applications, we have seen improvements in HR (to support the business agility culture journey) and finance (to support the regular re-planning cycle and work with revolving rather than yearly budgets). Improvements in these functions usually arise after the first tranche of change on the business agility journey, because that is when they start blocking. In other cases, we have seen these functions actually leading the business agility journey.

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#### *Reviewer Comments*

*“How do you shape and “retro the retros” to ensure that there is a consistent pace and “sense of danger” (to quote Toyota’s Kaizen approach) to ensure that there is a constant motivation to improve?”*

*“Probably my favourite sentence of this sitting of the review is “Our culture has evolved to the one of continuous learning, making the term “transformation” nearly obsolete.”*

*“Love that all teams have a 6-month improvement roadmap.”*

*“The transformation journey shows a transition together with your stakeholders, customers, people and leadership.”*

*“For further improvement, consider detailing the processes of anticipating and evaluating the effectiveness of these changes over time.”*

*“An interesting topic is the specific talent acquisition practice that leads to successful filling of roles, especially given the volatility of the talent marketplace.”*

*“Your submission has highlighted noteworthy strides in incorporating Agile into support functions, particularly within your Finance and Marketing divisions.”*

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## Purple Zone

### **Customers**

Of course, in agility, delivering value to customers is one of the main drivers, so many applicants scored “good” or “very good”. Nevertheless, of course, our reviewers still saw potential improvements in quite a few cases. A few applicants had a bad customer experience or score as the primary reason for starting the business agility journey, and these applicants have shown impressive turnarounds. Embedding the voice of the customer deeply into the business is still a challenge for some organisations.

Last year, some of the applications did not really address the external customer. Since we changed the model and the explanations, we found this not only improved our framework, but also the applications in this area. We are learning and improving constantly based on feedback. This is one of the important areas. Some organisations showed they are really striving for “becoming obsessed with the customer and providing value”. For some, the

somewhat lower ambition of “listening to the customer and improving” is their target. Since we are not the applicant organisation, we cannot comment on what fits best in their situation.

We saw more evidence this year on measuring customer value and acting upon it. Also, we saw more real engagement and first attempts to measure value delivery, rather than just measurements of customer satisfaction. Based on these measurements, some organisations have made real changes, not only to product but also to the way they engage with customers — improving channels, improving technology, and in some cases, where appropriate, online or real face-to-face workshops with customers or a representative group of customers. Most have become more mature in using technology, not “just” for a customer (sales) journey, but to get real engagement. That of course helps in getting more reliable data, not only on the current situation, but where to go moving forward. One applicant changed a customer happiness centre (looking back) to a customer future self-service centre, looking forward.

Many more market-driven organisations have used A/B testing and real testing of hypotheses before going fully out to market. They have done this with an open mind, and with agreement from the customers in a transparent manner. We applaud this and hope to see more of this way of working next year!

In some of the applications, this area is the first where AI technology and virtual assistants were used to improve the customer experience and also to get more engagement. We expect to see more of these examples next year!

An interesting innovation this year is how one of the applicants set up a rewards programme that allowed data to be shared not only within the organisation itself but throughout its ecosystem, allowing all organisations to improve and pivot.

Some identified improvement areas:

Some organisations develop first, then improve/retrofit, instead of using for example MVPs and prototypes to test assumptions. We applaud getting things out before they’re fully developed, however in some cases, the reviewers felt more assumptions could have been tested.

Some organisations, after a first great step forwards, slowed down and dropped some of the initiatives for real customer engagement. In their feedback, reviewers cautioned to really ensure whether this was the right decision, given the risk of dropping back again.

In some cases, we saw evidence of reacting to customer feedback and engagement without (from what we could see) appropriate root cause analysis. While a quick response is crucial, so is the *correct* one. We should always distinguish between speed and haste.

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#### *Reviewer Comments*

*“The evidence submitted focused on output. I’d like to see more emphasis on outcomes and true value delivered.”*

*“To further strengthen your application, consider exploring the long-term impact of these initiatives on customer loyalty and engagement.”*

*“You have managed to resolve issues that marketing faces in many parts of the world and continue to deliver an excellent customer experience.”*

*“Involving senior leaders in branch visits could offer valuable leadership perspectives and further demonstrate your company-wide commitment to customer service. These suggestions are intended to fine-tune your already impressive customer engagement strategies, distinguishing your organisation as a leader in customer-centric practices.”*

*“Bravo on bringing the voice of customer into backlog creation.”*

*“Exciting that feedback is looked for throughout the project process, including from customers. An optimal approach, dare I say, best in class.”*

*“It is impressive to see the failures you have cited in your journey and the steps taken to improve them.”*

*“This is what stood out for me in the application – it seems that the organization is built around solving a problem for prospective customers – this is evident by the value- driven product development, the customer feedback loops and the responsive customer support.”*

*“Focus first on what your customer wants instead of retroactively fitting already existing things to appeal to the customer.”*

*“It's a positive thing to note that you invite cross-functional teams to meet for focused discussions on projects, you also hold briefings for executives and run training/ education sessions for your stakeholders to enable them make the most of your primary processes.”*

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## **People**

Your organisation can only deliver value to customers, to the ecosystem, if it also delivers value to your people, your staff. Some of the applicants had this as their major driver for business agility, with attrition rates so high that the organisation was on the brink of collapse in their “old way of working”, and a high percentage of staff experienced burnout. Some organisations have started with the HR department as the primary driver for business agility, rather than the usual suspects of the tech or IT departments. Over the years, we have learned that people, driven by purpose, supported by the organisation’s leadership and culture and with the psychological safety of the right governance, are the most important assets any organisation needs to achieve its purpose.

Not all applicants have made clear to us how they deal with talent development, hiring, experimentation, remuneration & rewards, purpose sharing, (cultural) diversity, work-life balance, performance management etc. These areas are, of course, crucial for enhancing the potential of your people and, hence, your organisation. What organisations did share was the need for cross-functionality, coaching and psychological safety. The visions of some organisations were not only expressed in value for customer, but also in value for people and for ecosystem.

Some applicants explained that the move away from strict roles and tasks towards more agility for some people felt unsafe. Trust and explicit room for safety was found to be crucial. Training, coaching and mentoring were needed to help some people overcome their fears and start working towards their potential. For inspiration in this area, we also encouraged some to look at [agilepeoplemanifesto.org](https://agilepeoplemanifesto.org). One organisation had a job fair, so people could be kept in the company but could move away from the agile teams if this was not their best way of supporting the organisation to create value. Another organisation created apps and tools for internal usage to help people organise their work better and share their individual goals so others can support them etc.

More applicants than last year reported collecting data on moods and employee satisfaction, rather than just on the usual criteria such as attrition rates and sickness rates. We have not yet seen measurements on value delivery.

Most examples of learning we saw were based on individual learning, despite people being social animals, looking for a joint purpose. Social, team-based learning appears to be a somewhat neglected area, or organisations seem

to think this can be done implicitly by using retrospectives for example. We would advocate a more explicit approach. If you have something to share, come and join us with your application next year!

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*Reviewer Comments*

*"Good example of the loyalty program and "swarming" as a principle where cross-functional teams are spun up around customer value & content, and not the other way around where work is retrofitted to an existing structure."*

*"Fantastic data on the attrition rate reduction from 75% to 10%. Amazing achievement to be proud of."*

*"I love the multiple examples of putting people first."*

*"By focusing on the development and well-being of your workforce, you can build a more resilient and adaptable organization."*

*"There seems to be a heavy focus on more tools and tech but less attention on individuals and interactions over processes and tools."*

*"The applicant is a testimony of people's importance in strategy execution. All the programs are oriented to give feedback and motivation to employees."*

*"Purpose Driven People, in direct contact with customers, are a key enabler to an organisation's success. "*

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## **Ecosystem**

As you can see in the description of the FBA, ecosystem is a relatively new category, yet we have found it to be crucial. Most disturbances come from the ecosystem, and without collaboration within it (for example the supply chain), not much value or agility can be created. We introduced this category for the first time this year and were very curious whether this would be reflected by the applicants. We must say, bar a few, most applicants scored "sufficient" to "good", and the reviewers found that this category allowed them to give appropriate feedback. Learnings were that if your organisation is on its agility journey and you haven't yet considered this category, you should start. Two organisations have indicated their ecosystem thinking is still in an "embryonic state", but also report that this report and process has motivated them to start investigating.

Given the broadness of this category, and the restricted number of words, most applicants decided to just provide us with evidence stories on ecosystem. Most of them at least chose the supply chain (where applicable). But quite a few also addressed, for example, sustainability/ecology /environmental impact. One of the applicants set up a supply chain council, focused on achieving a net zero supply chain. We have seen great examples of actively enforcing the ecosystem, for example, setting up university curricula, sustainability and ecology activities, and proactively engaging with suppliers and stakeholders to look for win-win solutions.

Some applications explicitly mention how they have changed contracts and have created more agile-minded ones based on establishing a collaborative relationship and a good delivery agreement. Another application shows how an organisation proactively shared its agility practices, not only with its supply chain but also with competitors, their business environment, and the region, so everyone could provide a better service for

customers and ecosystem (and they would still be recognised as the first, as thought leaders, as the organisation bringing the innovation, thus actually growing their commercial advantage as well).

We also saw some organisations sharing their dataset and their learnings throughout their supply chain, helping the suppliers so the customer experience and customer value was further increased. For one organisation, the poorly functioning supply chain was the starting point of the agile journey, so included the ecosystem from the outset. Focus on delivering value and increasing business agility throughout the chain has led to much higher value for the customer and improved relationships in the supply chain.

In one application with the most innovative approach, we saw how the organisation really engaged with partners in the supply chain, regulators, their business environments, and with the social and ecological ecosystem. This turned out to be so successful that they wrote a book on the subject to share with the world, and university courses are being built upon their approach. We were fortunate we could witness this.

Only two applicants also described how they see their social responsibility. Beyond satisfying the customer, their own staff, and reducing the ecological impact, they proactively engaged in their social role by investing in local communities, upskilling, creating a better functioning social environment and ensuring better health conditions.

One organisation used their QHSE policy as a starting point for their ecosystem engagement. This included not only scope 1 but also scopes 2 and 3. For a business in their line of work, this could be expected, but what we saw was pushing the boundaries. They also showed this resulted in them being a better and better-respected business and, with less disruptions because of QHSE, one with a much better bottom line.

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*Reviewer comments*

*"It clearly shows me an awareness and strategy to position the value proposition of the organization in the ecosystem."*

*" Ideally, the client and the Brand team are of "one mind" in the ecosystem, with as little back and forth between them as possible."*

*" It's evident the organisation is forming partnerships as opposed to transactional relationships."*

*"From the provided example we can observe that the organisation's ecosystem is open to change, for the better. "*

*"The organisation shows a commitment to the environment, to safety, to the neighbourhood, and to the world through its environmental policies. The marketing organization is clearly part of "every staff member" following the environmental policies and demonstrated this commitment through the creation of environmentally friendly products."*

*"You outline the creation of an academy that parallels a business MBA - this is an innovative approach that aligns adequately with the ecosystem section of the FBA. "*

*"These are admirable achievements! Curious how they compare to your targets."*

*“Your engagement with the broader business ecosystem, as demonstrated in your application, is impressive. Your specific examples of partnerships and community initiatives show a clear understanding of the importance of an agile ecosystem. For future improvements, consider detailing the challenges faced in building these relationships and how they were overcome. This would provide a more in-depth view of your strategies for fostering a collaborative and agile ecosystem.”*

*“The slide of evidence provided shows a complex and diverse ecosystem. The application describes a few examples of products but does not give great insight into the clearly complex landscape within which the organisation operates and how this is engaged. ”*

*“For me, it seems like the entire business model is based around being a part of a larger ecosystem – from the local, ethical suppliers to the customers – as well as being part of the broader community.”*

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## Grey Zone

### Strategy

How can you be truly agile when your strategy isn't, when your focus is still a 5-year plan? You cannot. The scores are better this year than last, indicating the need for agile strategy might be a growing and better-recognised field of interest on a business agility journey. Some applicants have presented their business change strategy, others their business strategy. Some have presented two examples of strategic choices, and some of them have a less developed agile strategy. When it comes to the organisational competence of business agility, we are talking about agility in *business* strategy, so we will improve the support for applicants next year, so they are more aware of what we are looking for.

When it comes to strategy implementation, many applications refer to the use of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to steer, to measure progress, to pivot or adapt. Only some applicants show evidence of a North Star and of defining strategic hypotheses and experimentation. One application defined their strategy in questions to be answered, rather than instructions. We see this as a great innovation! Some applicants showed how they have developed a full data gathering system to measure KRs, hence, to pivot further. We see this as applicable in some situations, less so in others (when you change your OKRs, you need to change your algorithm, hence it might hamper agility in the future).

One (large) organisation now has a full strategy definition and implementation process, including transparent information sharing and feedback loops. It is now a quarterly process with some dynamics if faster steering correction is needed. They used to have a three-year cycle, so have increased their speed tremendously, and strategy is, where needed, a constant flow. Another organisation did exactly the opposite and have defined a two-year strategy (more a North Star) to overcome the burden of the yearly financial budgeting cycle and be more agile (again more or less quarterly) within that time frame.

Another organisation has devised what they call the golden thread, which leads from overall strategy to user stories and back, as the basis for their PI planning events. This golden thread was used to ensure the PI events maintained the strategic intent instead of going down rabbit holes. It also helped to focus on outcomes and values instead of outputs. Since outputs are easier to talk about, finding ways of bridging is very important.

We saw several applicants using adaptive roadmaps rather than strategic plans, again supported by OKRs. This is a good way of communicating and sharing the vision and ensuring everyone is on the same page. Some others

use narratives, which are also great ways of understanding what the organisation stands for and what it wants to achieve on a high level.

This year, only one applicant explicitly discussed the difficulty between business-as-usual needing attention, against creating more and new value. For some organisations this might be tactical, but for quite a few IT driven organisations, this is a constant. The way they overcame this was by scenario planning, prioritisation in a large group and voting sessions at the end. The number of in-flight initiatives was reduced, the value to the customer was increased, and this was understood and accepted by all, not only by management, so all micro-decisions were also focused.

The need for transparency and information sharing throughout the organisation, using tools available to all involved, is recognised as crucial to strategy implementation and speed of decision-making. Applicants also recognise that it is a constant, adaptive, learning journey.

On their journeys, organisations recognised that business agility is a HOW that serves the bigger WHY. Sustainability (part of value for ecosystem), talent development (value for people) and of course customer value are the main drivers listed as the focus of strategic intent.

One applicant is working to have an emergent strategy, balancing inside-out and outside-in, bottom-up and top-down, because they are in a rapidly changing environment. It was a pity this applicant did not share more on this as it would be good to create a case study on the subject.

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#### *Reviewer Comments*

*"Given the constraints outlined in the application, it feels like the organisation has found a way to rapidly respond and prioritise incoming work."*

*"OKRs might help to connect the organizational goals and strategies with those of digital marketing."*

*"This example provides a good Agile response to the challenges of strategic realignment and leadership change. It underscores the importance of maintaining focus on business outcomes and provides a starting framework for teams to remain aligned with organizational objectives despite uncertainty. Of course, this should be constantly reviewed and adapted to the team's needs."*

*"It is insightful to note that you ran the experiment on 3 pilot teams and then applied their learnings for wider transformation."*

*"The slide of evidence provided shows a clearly defined set of tiered goals. The application describes some very interesting mega-projects and an agile approach to strategy."*

*"With this alignment and agile execution, strategy becomes a day-to-day challenge to be renewed and executed."*

*"The clear purpose and North Star and relating all decisions to this North Star is very helpful".*



*"A dual focus on satisfaction and commercial outcomes can ensure a comprehensive strategy that caters to both customer needs and business growth."*

*"The organisation's 5-year agile transformation strategy is impressive: a steady evolution from a siloed corporate entity with manual processes and transactional relationships towards a one-organisation grass roots culture of continuous improvement and innovation."*

*"So often a plan is mandated, and everyone has to figure out what it means for themselves. Here, the organisation created a team to help explain, train and refine."*

*"What stands out for me more is the customer feedback and the eco-system model."*

*"To me this is an example of the usage of an innovative approach with excellent results. Well done! "*

*"I did not see any reference to the organisation's strategy and how the agile transformation was linked to achieving this through value streams, etc. I also did not see any evidence of the OKRs and how the transformation was moving the dial."*

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# Thank You!

The Agile Business Consortium would like to thank all organisations and individuals helping us to organise the 2024 awards. As with business agility, it takes a collaborative ecosystem of organisations focusing on win-win, on wanting to collaborate, to bring value, to bring the success this awards process has been.

First of all, a big thank you to all participants. Without you sharing your stories, we would be unable to share the great things you've learned with the world. It is not an easy process in which to participate, and you have to devote a good deal of attention to providing us with the information we are looking for in order to assess your application. We know, and you know, that if you gave a presentation at the conference, this is only a small part of your journey. We trust that the detailed feedback report all of you have received (presenters and non-presenters) helps you on your further journey and are looking forward to further collaboration both with you and between yourselves.

A big thank you too to all the supporting organisations. You have opened your networks and investigated possibilities with us. You have introduced the event to potential applicants and have devoted time and energy as reviewers, as well as being real friends to us during the whole process. This is such a great example of collaboration, of win-win, of supporting each other's causes to collaborate in our joint cause of making the world of work better by enhancing business agility worldwide.

We would also, of course, like to thank the reviewers, who have spent considerable time and effort to assess the case studies and provide the applicants with valuable feedback. We trust you enjoyed the collaboration, the insights and the learning journey. We enjoyed your feedback so much and will use it for the 2025 process. We are grateful to have you as part of our extended family and we hope you have enjoyed our gift to you: a tree in the world trust fund, to make the world a better place, in small steps.

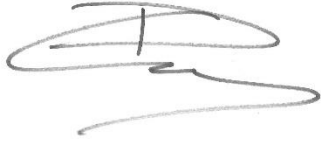
For our organisation, this awards process is a year-long journey, starting just after conference with lessons learned, and defining the process and work needed for the upcoming year. The process involves finding supporters, applicants and reviewers and ensuring they are supported as well as they can be throughout the process. The conference itself needs to be organised too, ensuring that it is a good experience for all involved, helping the presenters, the hosts, the panellists, and the participants. Then there is of course the after-conference engagement, harnessing the energy created throughout the process into sustainable value for everyone in the months and years to come. This brings together all the talents within our own organisation. It is an experience that brings us all together and strengthens our vision.

Finally, we would like to thank the audience — the people coming to the conference, those downloading videos and those reading this report. If we want to make an impact on the world of work by helping organisations to embrace the value business agility can bring, the audience is the most important factor. We hope we have inspired you and we hope to inspire you even more.

We have learned from the process and the feedback from our customers, our staff and our ecosystem. We have delivered value and strive to increase the value we are delivering using the feedback we have received this year. We trust that the 2025 awards will be even better and will provide more insights into the world of business agility.

Many organisations are on the journey to business agility, and it is a rewarding but not always easy path. By sharing experiences, we help each other. We understand that every organisation's journey is different and that there is no direct, foolproof route to success.

Advancing business agility worldwide is our purpose. We strive to gather and share valuable knowledge and insights and to create and maintain vibrant, sharing communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a vertical stroke, positioned above the name Peter Coesmans.

Peter Coesmans

Chief Agility Officer, Agile Business Consortium

# Appendix 1: Application Process 2024



The application process opened on August 1st 2024. To create a level playing field, the review criteria were fully transparent, and the process clearly explained.

Applications were open to organisations and parts of organisations, recognising that many large enterprises develop their agility in different departments, in different countries, for different functions and at a different pace.

The process for assessment uses the agnostic Framework for Business Agility (FBA) as a basis. This framework is explained in more detail in the next section. Using this model for all categories ensures that what is being assessed is true business agility. Webinars were also organised to help applicants fully understand the model and criteria, allowing you to write a good application while ensuring the review process is rewarding.

Reviewers were selected based on their experience of business agility and agility journeys. Many of them are internationally recognised as experts in their field. They are specialists, reviewing applications in one distinct category. Each application is reviewed by a team of 3 independent reviewers, none of whom has any ties with the organisation being reviewed. We also strive to have different sets of reviewers per application. Reviewers are not allowed to share information on which applicants they have reviewed and what their comments were. To ensure this, the Agile Business Consortium does not reveal who reviewed which application. All reviewers are trained specifically in the process by the lead reviewers and review process owner, our Chief Agility Officer, Peter Coesmans.

Each reviewer reviews, at most, 2 applications, first assessing the application, without knowing its other reviewers. After the individual assessments, all information is gathered, and the scores, feedback and assessments shared. The reviewers review the application form only. Balancing meetings take place for each category, where the reviewers choose the organisations, they will invite to present at the conference. These organisations will be informed and then supported in preparing their conference talk.

The feedback from the reviewers is used to create this report, which provides you with a balanced review and insights from these independent experts.

## Appendix 2: The Framework for Business Agility

Business Agility is a people-centred, organisation-wide capability that enables a business to deliver value to a world characterised by ever-increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. It is achieved by inspiring and harnessing the collaborative, creative ways of working of the people of the organisation in meeting its core purpose.

An agile organisation can respond quickly and effectively to opportunities and threats found in its internal and external environments (be they commercial, legal, technological, social, moral or political).

An agile organisation has the ability to:

- **Adapt quickly to market changes** - internally and externally
- **Respond rapidly and flexibly** to customer needs
- **Lead change** in a productive and cost-effective way without compromising quality
- **Sustain a competitive advantage**

The Agile Business Consortium has developed the Framework for Business Agility (FBA) to help organisations to get a holistic, agnostic view of the agility of their organisation, or any part of it. NOTE: The Framework can be applied to an organisation, or any part of an organisation, to assess its business agility.



### Blue Zone

#### Agile Culture

An organisation's culture reflects its personality – one that's influenced by a range of factors, including its size, geographic spread, beliefs, and values. People and events also affect an organisation's culture.

An agile culture provides an organisation with a set of core values, behaviours and practices that allow it to prosper in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

Its success also comes from promoting, encouraging, rewarding and harnessing the flexible and innovative behaviour of people within the organisation, by nurturing the three components of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, mastery and purpose.

There are seven elements that combine to form the DNA of an organisation's agile culture, for which there is a development Matrix for Agile Culture describing five levels of agility for each of the seven elements.

## **Agile Leadership**

Individuals within an organisation are typically identified as leaders as a result of one or more of: their knowledge and experience related to what they are leading; their competence as a leader; and/or their position within a hierarchy.

To create and sustain flexible, resilient and adaptable organisations, agile leaders seek to develop others as leaders at all levels, believing that everyone has the potential inherent in a growth mindset to deliver on a shared purpose.

To be credible and effective, agile leadership requires a willingness from those who lead to ensure that they extend their own competencies, capabilities and thinking to 'being' agile rather than just 'doing' agile.

There are nine principles for agile leadership that are aligned with the agile themes of communication, collaboration and commitment. These principles should be embraced by any leader wishing to harness the power of collective effort – regardless of the scale of the change or the authority they inherit from organisational structure.

## **Agile Governance**

Agility in governance reflects a light-touch, flexible approach to decision-making and oversight needed to ensure that the activities of an organisation remain aligned with the values and purpose of its sponsors and regulators.

The term sponsor depends entirely on the organisation context: For an entire business, the sponsors are its shareholders; for a charity, its trustees; for a government body, its citizens etc. On a smaller scale, in subdivisions of the organisation, the sponsor may be an individual, a team or a committee with devolved authority.

In principle, governance is universal, pervasive and scaled. It is based on:

- Empowerment – reliant on informed decision making, at the lowest responsible level that is responsive and at pace
- Alignment - with the purpose and values of the organisation and any appropriate legislation
- Transparency - easy for people internal and external to the organisation to see what is going on and when intervention is needed. Providing an auditable record of activity where needed to demonstrate compliance and appropriate management of risk

Agility in Governance values: radical transparency, trusted autonomy, collaborative responsiveness and informed judgement. To be effective overall, this should be applied through all levels of devolved accountability.

## **Teal Zone**

### **Operational Agility**

Agility in business operation, business change and the internal support of these are at the heart of every business that is able to survive and thrive in a VUCA world (one characterised by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity).

Operational agility allows the organisation to respond, day-to-day, to the ever-changing needs and demands of its customers, people and ecosystem.

In a VUCA world, what is considered to be valuable is constantly changing, so the processes delivering value need to be adaptive in order to ensure sustainable, cost-effective value delivery.

Much effort over the last few decades has been put into reducing the cost of delivery and increasing efficiency – optimising for a 'steady state' that often does not exist in reality. Organisations need to balance operational efficiency with the ability to respond rapidly to changes in what is perceived as valuable.

An organisation's operational agility is largely dependent on the agility of its culture, leadership and governance.

Note that where pressure for change exceeds the capacity and capability of operational agility, a special response may be needed. This is achieved through agility in business change that exists on a continuum with operational agility.

## **Business Support Agility**

Agile support processes enable the organisation to deliver value to people, customers and ecosystem. They don't directly deliver value themselves

Agility in the way business support functions (such as Finance, HR and Procurement) work will allow the organisation to:

- Recognise and respond rapidly to business opportunities and challenges
- Keep and grow people and customer relations by supporting a growth mindset
- Rebalance and refocus if and when needed while stabilizing and maintaining focus where appropriate
- Achieve its purpose by adding value to customers, people and ecosystem

It will also allow the organisation to overcome issues that often hinder its business agility such as:

- Inflexible financial and planning processes that prohibit pivoting and the reassigning of people and resources
- Restrictive HR policies and processes that may prevent people from focusing on collaborative and innovative stakeholder-centric delivery of value and building new competences to do this
- Heavy process-driven approaches to procurement that do not allow for relationships to change if the situation requires it
- Overly structured marketing & sales processes that might cause blindness to new opportunities or new markets
- Inflexible facilities management policies and practices that may inhibit collaborative working and the essential focus on delivery of value

## **Business Change Agility**

Where pressure for change exceeds the capacity and capability of operational agility, a special response may be needed. This is achieved through agility in business change that exists on a continuum with operational agility.

Examples of such changes may include: Changing the way the organisation operates to comply with new regulations; bringing new products or services to market; moving existing products and services to new markets; and transforming the business – either to meet a new purpose or to achieve an existing purpose in a significantly different way.

In order to be successful, these larger changes often need to be organised alongside the day-to-day operation of the business in a way that allows the value of the change to be delivered incrementally and as early as possible but without creating turbulence that risks overwhelming the operation.

Transformational initiatives to develop significant new products, services or capabilities and to ensure that the value of these are fully realised, e.g. by changing operational value delivery processes, support processes, and/or bringing about change in culture, governance and leadership, often need to be managed as agile projects or programmes.

## **Purple Zone**

### **Value Customers of the organisation**

The primary focus for the delivery of value for most organisations should be their customers.

The most successful organisations will be those that sustain delivery of value in a VUCA world (characterised by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity).

To survive and thrive in this regard it is important to organise in a way that enables the business to constantly deliver value to customers, in a changing world, with changing customer needs

Everyone in the organisation needs to:

- Know the customer and the value they deserve so that all decisions are focused on adding to that value
- Understand the customer's "why", to help anticipate their needs. In public sector organisations, the citizen is the valued customer

Sustainable shareholder/stakeholder value can only be achieved as a result of knowing, understanding, championing and serving the customer. That is critical to the success of the organisation and must be the primary driver.

## **Value the People within the organisation**

People are the powerhouse of every successful agile organisation – one that is able to survive and thrive in a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

Trusting people, allowing them to develop and show their talents in the organisation, and engaging them through purpose, is critical to ensuring the sustainable success of an organisation.

Collaborating talents, people happy with their work, focused on delivering value, and supported, but not constrained, by processes and technology, are the core of a resilient, responsive, agile and thus successful organisation

People learn and adapt faster than systems: They

- Learn and adapt most easily when they feel safe
- Are more creative when powered by diversity
- Grow naturally when learning from each other

## **Value the Ecosystem in which the organisation exists**

No organisation exists in isolation. It lives in:

- An organisational ecosystem of regulators, suppliers, competitors, partners, innovators and innovations
- A social ecosystem of individuals, communities, rules and customs
- An ecological ecosystem of resources, energy, and nature.

To survive and thrive requires an organisation to understand its role in its ecosystem, with success defined by how it delivers customer value while contributing positively to the ecosystem in which it lives.

## **Grey Zone**

### **Agile Strategy**

Agile Strategy connects the operation of the organisation, and the way that is changed and supported, with the delivery of value to its customers, its people and its ecosystem.

It consists of a set of guiding principles that is communicated and adopted in the organisation, to generate a desired pattern of formal and informal decision-making needed to maintain a focus on delivery of value, allowing for learning in a VUCA world



In an agile organisation, strategy is not defined, fixed and implemented, but is in a constant flow of defining, realising, measuring, and adapting. This requires open eyes and ears, and an open and rapid flow of information.

Agile strategy is therefore about how people throughout the organisation are expected to make decisions and allocate resources in order to accomplish key objectives.

To make this a reality, agile strategy requires effective agility in culture, leadership and governance.

## Appendix 3: Applicants That Have Presented

Out of a much larger number of participants, the following organisations have presented their stories at the agile business awards conference. The videos of these presentations can be viewed for free at [agilebusiness.org](https://agilebusiness.org). What you will see is that sometimes, these stories talk about an entire organisation, sometimes, they only reflect a certain part of the organisation. Sometimes, they are technology heavy, sometimes they are not. And you can always see that the stories cover all areas of the Framework for Business Agility, the world standard used for assessing these organisations.

Some of the stories presented at conference, will be reworked to white papers or case studies. We invite you to also access those on our website. And lastly, we have set up a virtual community with the participants of last year, the participants of this year and some other organisations, to learn with and from each other about the ongoing process of business agility. If your organisation is on such a journey and feel they want to join the participative sharing and learning, please contact us!



**Roche  
Serbia**

# Appendix 4: The Agile Business Consortium

## Agile Business Consortium

We are the independent, not-for-profit, professional body dedicated to advancing business agility worldwide in accordance with a defined set of professional standards, competencies, and a code of practice. We do this by:

- Supporting the development of professionals through formal and informal learning recognising knowledge, practice, and experience that is evidenced through assessment and ongoing CPD
- Providing access to relevant, trustworthy content; a range of events and special interest communities; a network of like-minded professionals
- Commissioning and engaging in research, thought leadership and market-wide collaborations to extend knowledge and develop good practice

We encourage an inclusive, agnostic and people-centred approach to organisational agility, including the use of a wide variety of agile methods and frameworks.

We are the brains behind **DSDM**, **AgilePM**<sup>®</sup>, **AgileBA**<sup>®</sup>, **AgilePgM**<sup>™</sup>, **AgilePfm**, **AgileDS**<sup>™</sup> and **AgilePM for Scrum** as well as the originators of **the Framework for Business Agility - including the Nine Principles of Agile Leadership and the Agile Culture Matrix**.

# What's coming up from the professional body?

## Framework for Business Agility (FBA)

As part of our work supporting business agility professionals, organisations, and communities, we're constantly gathering data to ensure the Framework for Business Agility (FBA) continues to reflect the latest thinking across the field.

The FBA proved to be an invaluable model for our Awards Reviewer Panels. You can familiarise yourself with the FBA to understand more about its value for you and your organisation on this link:

<https://www.agilebusiness.org/business-agility.html#fba>

## Support for Business Agility

We see the FBA as the holder for almost everything we do! Effective business agility needs an agile approach to governance, culture, people, strategy and leadership – and our work supports great thinking across all of these domains.

On our website you'll find business agility tools to do self-assessments in several areas of the framework; for example, leadership and culture. You can use these as individuals entirely free of charge. Please [contact us](#) or email [info@agilebusiness.org](mailto:info@agilebusiness.org) for access information to use the tools for groups and teams.

In addition, if you would like advice or consultancy, you may like to check out our list of accredited delivery partners. These are organisations that meet the standards of the professional body and will be able to supply you with business agility guidance you can trust. You'll find more information here:

<https://www.agilebusiness.org/community/accredited-delivery-partners.html>

## Professionalising Agility

It's time to professionalise agility!

We heard from organisations that looking at people's qualifications isn't always a guide to their competence – and we responded with the introduction of Professional Level membership.

The world of work is changing fast. And business agility is rapidly becoming an essential discipline in helping your teams and organisation deliver more impact and better results. We're here to champion the mindset, ideas, and tools of business agility in the world. We do that by providing you with the latest thinking, training and events that will help you get on in your career.

Gain **Professional** recognition – <https://www.agilebusiness.org/professional-agility.html>

Join us as an **Allied Organisation** and support your people and your teams to build organisational agility – <https://www.agilebusiness.org/organisations/allied-organisations.html>

## Appendix 5: Acknowledgements

The awards 2024 is a year-long process. We have received tremendous support from the organisations listed here. They were NOT financial sponsors. They did the really important thing: collaborating for success. They have helped us find applicants, helped us as reviewers. They have helped us in marketing, and they have helped us to continuously improve our process. Without this network of supporters, the awards process would not be taking place. We would like to extend a big thank you to these supporters and we hope to see them again next year. If you want to become a supporter for the awards process 2025, please contact us.

