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Agility – small changes, big impact

Agility does not need to be complex or scaled to be impactful. Often simple changes can generate the greatest impact. The concept is easy to understand – customer-centricity, collaborative teams, continuous learning, and incremental value delivery. But the application of simple concepts is not always as easy as it sounds. How might embracing Agile principles through small consistent changes make an impact?

Agility in action

Our client, a top global pharmaceutical company, had recently launched a new disease-modifying therapy within their neuroscience portfolio. But the external ecosystem was challenging with a relatively stable patient pool and existing brands already well established. A data-driven and differentiated value proposition was essential to achieve market growth. Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) require certainty and reassurance across safety, efficacy, and the treatment burden to consult their patients appropriately. A data-driven approach that would instil confidence in HCPs and encourage them to change their prescriptive behaviours was the key to maximising the brand's potential and expanding patient reach.

Partnering with Deloitte to incorporate Agility

Time was of the essence. Siloed exchanges across functions were no longer an option. Deloitte drove the set up and facilitation of cross-functional, cross regional teams. Bringing together experts from medical, commercial and regulatory to ensure the right capabilities were in place to rapidly develop and utilise data on the efficacy of the product. This enabled the client to unleash the collective potential of its teams by adhering to Agile ways of working. As a result, quick wins paved the way for longer-term solutions to maximize product reach.

Inspect, iterate, adapt

A scrum approach involving two-week sprint cycles with ongoing inspection, iteration and adaptation was adopted. Such an approach facilitated continuous delivery of value, rapid learning cycles, and ongoing re-prioritisation of work packages based on new insights. Sprint reviews created opportunities to frequently bring together a broad range of experts to which teams could demonstrate progress. Diverse perspectives shared during these sessions rapidly improved the proposed solutions. While feedback loops allowed for experimentation with new ideas and testing of assumptions. As a result, teams made rapid progress, applying novel approaches to evidence generation.

Transparency on priorities, progress and accountabilities

Frequent stakeholder engagement through Agile events ensured alignment and sponsorship for key initiatives. For example, Sprint Plannings ensured ruthless prioritisation of work so that the most relevant and impactful work packages were focused on. In addition, transparency made it clear who was focusing on what, avoiding duplication of efforts or miscommunication regarding priorities.

Customer-centricity brought focus on patient and HCP needs

Teams remained focused on HCPs' and patient needs, leveraging new studies and trial data to ensure relevant insights were generated. As a result, engaging narratives were crafted, complying with compliance regulations. Creative brainstorming sessions, followed by feedback rounds and external engagements, led to fast iteration of innovative approaches, all tailored toward the needs of HCPs and patients. In addition, Deloitte "Challenge Board" sessions with subject matter experts brought an external perspective to challenge the status quo, enhancing the proposed solutions.

Cross-functional and cross-regional teams

Bringing together experts from commercial, medical and regulatory functions across regions to adhere to Agile ways of working facilitated faster delivery and creation of innovative approaches. Cross-pollination of expertise led to new questions and perspectives while communication across traditional silos increased. Ultimately the project team was able to evolve beyond traditional approaches and progress at speed.

Unleashing the power of people

Establishing and driving these cross-functional, cross-regional teams and adhering to Agile ways of working enabled the client to maximise its collective knowledge and capabilities. Teams empowered by leadership to consistently live Agile values and principles shifted their behaviours rapidly toward enhanced collaboration and clear prioritisation, with a learn-fast mindset and curiosity to develop new methods. Embracing this new way of working, teams applied novel approaches to support the generation of innovative and patient-centric evidence. Effective and timely use of emerging data informed cutting-edge go-to-market tactics in a highly regulated field, differentiating the treatment from its main competitor. Creating a data-driven narrative targeted toward HCPs, paved the way to establish the product as a preferred treatment of choice for patients.

In summary, generating impact from agility does not always require large-scale transformations. On the contrary, success starts with simplicity: small changes consistently applied within teams and enabled by leadership. The impact of agility stems not from a singular focus on methods, but rather on the behaviour, mindsets and cultures these methods foster.

Agility leaves a legacy beyond product value delivery. As a way of working, it fosters new ways of engaging within teams to deliver value at speed. Such behaviours improve employee engagement, enhance collaboration and break down silos to foster innovation, ultimately unleashing the collective power of an organisation's most valuable resource – its people.