

Our Agile Story

acm▶



0
1
0
1

0
2
8
3
4
5
5
1

Thank You

We would like to sincerely thank:

- Our colleagues who have contributed to our transformation over the past seven years,
- Our management team who has always supported and collaborated with us in learning how to approach a brand-new style of working,
- Our Tribe Leads who have led us through the whole journey,
- Our Human Resources department who have facilitated our transformation,
- Our Product Owners, Chapter Leads, Scrum Masters, and Agile Coaches who were the main elements of our new Agile way of working, and
- The ACM Agile family who has always supported us.

Thank you all!

Contributors

We would like to thank all who have contributed to this book, namely:

Aslı Odabaş, Ayda Yörükoğlu, Ayfer Tarım, Başak Dumanol, Barış Yücel, Berkay Murtaz, Çağla Bayrak, Çağlar Sak, Devrim Yıldırım, Didem Çalışkan, Doğan Akça, Doğu Kır, Duygu Balcı, Ekin Köktürk, Emre Doğan, Ender Özgün, Esra Erciyas, Fatih Özcan, Figen Erkılıç, Gamze Yeşilbayrak, Gülnur Bayhan, Hande Park, Jülide Özbülbül, Kıvanç Sağ, Melike Ak Şahin, Murat Büyükkucak, Murat Elmas, Murat Hacısalıhoğlu, Mutlu Çiçek, Neslihan Ayyıldız, Ozan Şahin, Ömür Erdem, Özgür Tellal, Sami Dönmez, Seda Simur, Selin Sert, Serdar Şahin, Sevil Kayaş Yılmaz, Seyhan Yılmaz, Şükriye Dal, Türker Aslan, Tufan Çetiner, Tuğçe Boyacı, Uğur Sennaroğlu, Vahyeddin Tutuş, Vildan Karaca, Yaprak Çalkan,

And the entire Vodafone Turkey family!

Preface

At Vodafone we place a high value on employee experience and explore new ways to enhance our employee experience. We aim to create a future-ready Vodafone and accelerate our digital transformation based on an understanding of our team members' evolving expectations. In this respect, one of the areas we are focusing on is Agile working model. Through Agile, we are not only embracing change, but we are also gaining the ability to pioneer in this area.

Our Agile journey began with the creation of agile teams within Technology Functions nine years ago. Within each team, there are 10-12 individuals with diverse skills that work together in a non-hierarchical manner towards a common goal. They develop outputs at a fast pace and in an agile manner, adopting a mindset that allows "producing small outputs that bring value to the customer in short periods of time, so that if there is a mistake, it can be identified and fixed quickly."

This model, which allows us to be solution-oriented and motivates our team members, also encourages them to take initiative and contributes to their development. It also promotes cooperation, brings together all of the key functions of a business development process, breaks down silos with small teams, and creates flexibility and speed in development processes.

The Agile working model, which is built on simplicity and moving fast as well as quick decision making, and being flexible, helps us develop digital products and services that meet our customers' needs and that consistently bring value to them. It allows us to focus more on the customer experience, quickly adapt to market dynamics, and make the best use of digital technologies.

Our Agile journey has piqued the interest of the corporate world, and many businesses and individuals want to learn more about our transformation story. We wrote the book "Our Agile Story" to shed light on our path for those that are interested. In the book, we explain how Agile altered the way we do business, how we swiftly adapted to the remote working model, and how we developed new competencies within Vodafone.

Of course, the book's content is updated to reflect changing conditions. We are excited to share the new edition with you, that incorporates the "Agile Coach Re-skill" program marking a significant milestone in our Agile journey.

We hope you enjoy reading this book.



Engin Aksoy
CEO

Preface

Can a large institution abandon its old habits in order to become Agile? And if so, what is required to achieve this? What is it to be Agile in the first place?

For us, Agile, in its simplest form, means being able to renew oneself. Alvin Toffler, the famous futurist, once said that “the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn”. With these words, spoken around 50 years ago, he described today’s new Agile world.

Vodafone Turkey continues its Agile journey along which it has been continuously renewing itself over the last seven years. We are delighted to have been part of this journey from the very beginning. The trial and re-learning process associated with Agility is a major point of focus for Vodafone Turkey. We continue our efforts in our goal to make this culture the DNA of the company, and it is promising to see that we have come a long way over the past seven years.

We want this book to outline our achievements, mistakes, and lessons that we have experienced along this journey of renewal, as well as to trigger learning through shared experience. As an Agile book that might later renew itself in accordance with the spirit of the content, this book aims to explain the very process of renewal. It is the first output of our Agile transformation journey, and with this first output, we aim to share the real-life experiences and emotions of the employees of Vodafone Turkey.

Along its adventure, we hope that our book shall continue to grow with the addition of new content based on comments from our readers, and we aim to soon update the book by adding new chapters.

We look forward to hearing your inspiring journeys of transformation.



Mehmet Yitmen
Managing Partner
ACM

Vodafone Turkey's Agile Journey

Contents:

Part 1: Our Changing Structure and Roles

- Why Agile?
- Our New Agile Structure
- Our Current Stance
- What Waits Us in the Future
- What is a Squad?
- Who is the Product Owner?
- Who is the Scrum Master?
- Who is the Chapter Lead?
- Who is the Tribe Lead?
- Who is the Agile Coach?

Part 2: The Remote Working Period

- Working from Home
- Corporate Practices that Have Facilitated the Transition Period
- Additional Responsibilities for Roles
- Advice for the Squads
- Remote Agile Working Manifesto
- The Future is Exciting!
- Conditions of the "New Normal"

Part 3: Agile Coach Reskill Program

- What is Reskill?
- Why Did We Need This Program
- Candidate Selection
- Reskill Program Begins!
- Program Success
- Post-Program
- What Have We Learnt?
- Recommendations For Those Who Want to Build Their Agile Coach Team
- Through the Eyes of the Reskills



Vodafone Turkey's Agile Journey

Vodafone Turkey's Agile Journey

Stage One: Pilot (2013 – 2014)

- In December of 2013, our IT team performed our first pilot.
- In the first pilot, we formed an Agile team consisting of six people.
- Although this study mostly focused on teamwork and transparency, the speed of meeting customer demands within the scope of the pilot increased threefold after only three months of work (for example, a task previously completed in 120 days was then completed in 40).

Stage Two: Scaling (2014 - 2018)

- In February of 2014, we established new Agile IT teams to disseminate the success of the pilot project.
- We also used Agile practices for other technology products and services.
- Within two years, we disseminated the following Agile practices:
 - We established an organizational unit dedicated to Agile delivery in IT. This unit has grown over time with additional scope.
 - Using Agile practices, we delivered all non-large-scale requests received by IT, consisting of approximately 75% of all IT projects in 2016.
 - We also introduced commercial teams to the Agile way of working, thus participating in more projects.
 - We ensured that Agile practices were disseminated to non-IT technology units (such as Network Operations and Network Planning).

- We completed this stage with over 200 people and over 30 Agile teams.
- As a result of our initiatives, Vodafone Turkey was selected as a centre of excellence and began to provide coaching services to Vodafone Group companies in other countries.
- During the scaling stage, we achieved the following:
 - Collaboration between IT and commercial functions was improved.
 - Time to market was shortened, and product quality and productivity increased.
 - Team spirit improved, and teamwork was extended throughout the company.
 - Rapid results were obtained in new digital working areas.
- After completing the scaling stage, we conducted a survey for commercial functions to assess the Agile way of working. Their total satisfaction score of 4.2 out of 5 indicated the success of this scaling phase.

Stage Three: Cultural Transformation and the Adoption of the Agile Way of Working (2016 - present)

- Since November of 2016, we have launched many initiatives to ensure cultural transformation.
- One of the most important steps in this process was to begin using Agile practices in the non-technology functions of the company.
- We have provided Agile training to employees throughout the company.
- We have organized short sessions designed to introduce Agile's benefits to the company.
- During this process, we were introduced to the new concept of Design Thinking.
 - During the process of generating and developing new ideas, we organized workshops with company employees in order to benefit from this practice.
 - Through Agile practice, we aimed to identify the innovative services, processes, and products that are required by the customer.
- As of 2018, we began focusing on digital areas within commercial functions and established our first Tribe structure.
 - We formed Agile teams working in areas of digital customer value management, digital marketing, and digital sales.
 - We prioritized work that would meet the needs of our customers by relying on data rather than predictions.
 - Thanks to the Agile approach launched in our commercial business unit, we achieved a threefold increase in speed of delivery, a twofold increase in productivity, a two-and-a-half-fold increase in capacity development, a

threefold increase in performance of launch dates, and a fivefold increase in quality indicators, all within the first period.

- In 2019, we expanded our scope and transformed almost all Commercial Business Units into Agile-practicing units. We established Agile teams containing people from different functions in digital channel management, new product development, customer base management, and technology fields.
- In order to introduce Agile practices to more employees and departments at the organizational level, the Internal Agile Coach Development Program was launched in early 2019. For the first time in the history of Vodafone Turkey, an Agile Coach team was formed from applicants who underwent an evaluation and selection process designed specifically for the position.

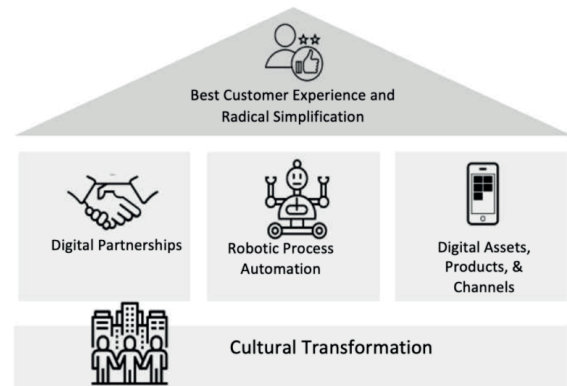
Part 1: Our Changing Structure and Roles

Why Agile?

Today, the issue of sustainability stands out as the greatest motivation for companies to engage in Agile transformation efforts. The lifespan of companies have been shortened. Over the past decade, the list of top companies has changed almost entirely. Global giants worth billions of dollars have been rapidly disappearing. How can one sustain one's company in a democratic market in which one may be competing with two or three people working from a garage? These new, harsh, competitive conditions have caused many companies to undergo dramatic transformations. Such companies must adapt to new market conditions that are rapidly changing in a more agile way. Organizations are changing radically as vertical structures transform into horizontal ones.

Vodafone Turkey has launched a comprehensive transformation program operating under the motto: "We Are Digital, We are the Future." Consisting of digital products, robotic processes, digital partnerships, and cultural transformation, we aim to be a faster, simpler, and more agile company that, in the eyes of both our employees and customers, is ready for the digital future. With the goal of cultural transformation in mind, we have primarily focused on an Agile way of working. Using this approach, with which we aim to gain organizational speed, flexibility, and productivity, we want to prioritize digital fields, strengthening our services and presence in the market.

Within our company's Agile structure, teams consisting of 8-12 people with different specialties work together for the same purpose and in a non-hierarchical order. Working to



achieve their business goals by constantly improving their products and processes within their autonomous structures, these teams contain different profiles, from software development specialists to brand managers. In addition to taking responsibility within their own field of expertise, the individuals who make up the teams also strive to take responsibility for tasks related to different specialties in order to achieve their goals. These teams, called "Squads," take end-to-end responsibility for their own objectives; that is, they have their own authority, equipment, and budget. They can therefore make and implement decisions quickly, as the impediments of bureaucracy are removed as much as possible. And since the teams adopt a self-sufficient and self-managing structure instead of a superior-subordinate one, they are able to make better decisions and offer more productive solutions by working together. With the goals of producing small outputs that add value for the customer within shorter periods and quickly detecting and fixing any errors, they act with the speed and agility required by our age. The Agile way of working,

which ensures being solution-oriented and motivating individuals, allows our teammates to take more initiative and support their own development.

In this sense, we continue to see the many benefits of the Agile way of working. To highlight:

- The Agile way of working drives a high level of collaboration. It combines all the necessary functions of a service development process, providing flexibility and speed to teams while eliminating silos.
- Based on flexibility and quick decision-making, this system allows us to develop digital products and services that focus on the real needs of our customers and create added value.
- The Agile system makes it possible to place more focus on customer experience, quickly respond to changing market dynamics, and make the most of digital technologies.
- The Agile way of working adopts a very transparent structure of setting goals, tracking results, monitoring work performance, and sharing workloads. Interdepartmental conflicts such as “you do this, I do not” or “I do that, you do not” are removed completely. Everyone knows why a task is being performed, or if it cannot be performed, where the deficiency is.
- New roles and rituals bring focused discipline and trigger productivity.

The improvements we have mentioned above are also

reflected in our figures. With this “Agile” approach launched in our commercial business unit, we have achieved a threefold increase in delivery speed, a twofold increase in productivity, a two-and-a-half-fold increase in capacity development, a threefold increase in performance of launch dates, and a fivefold increase in quality indicators, all within the first period.

We have achieved acceleration within the new structure by first slowing down and then increasing our productivity. Within our previous structure, marketing teams worked late hours and produced a large number of projects. However, because the realization of most projects depends on IT, the ideas and projects from many different departments were poured down on them, and since IT had limited capacity and acted unavoidably as a bottleneck, this large number of projects progressed with great difficulty.

So was it really necessary to come up with so many ideas and try to realize them? As the number of ideas we could not implement increased, thereby increasing tension on the system, we realized that system was inefficient. As a result, we have become agile by uniting our teams and beginning to adjust our production speed as per development speed. In other words, we have deliberately slowed the organization. However, this slowdown does not mean that our outcome has decreased. On the contrary, our total productivity has increased. We focus on producing the most accurate value within the same timeframe by aligning the organization

and ensuring synchronization. Thus, we have achieved an organization in which the vast majority of employees do not have to work overtime and are therefore happier and more productive.

"We are all going through an evolution. It was a shame to get off work at 8:00 pm when I began working in business. It was an established habit to stay up late. People even felt bad when they got off early. But we all are changing. Now, everybody leaves work by 5:00 pm. In addition, everyone works wherever she/he wants, at home or in a café. When you think about it, these are all big changes. In such an environment, it is not possible to track people as we used to. And it is not important what people do. All we consider is the outcome of the work. If there is outcome, that is the value for the business, meaning we are on the right track. If there is no outcome, it makes no difference if we work until five in the morning. It's even worse."

Our New Agile Structure

Today, with our Agile structure in Core IT¹ and our five Tribes in the commercial business unit, we have shifted to a fully customer experience-oriented way of working. Our Tribes are as follows:

- **Acquisition Tribe (Acquisition of New Customers):** This Tribe is responsible for new customer acquisitions and offers our customers the most interactive digital products.
- **Base Growth Tribe (Base Customer Growth):** Responsible for increasing base and value, with more customer interaction.
- **Digital Assets Tribe (Digital Assets):** This Tribe provides the best digital channel experience for our customers.
- **Care Tribe (Customer Care Services):**

This Tribe offers customer service with specialized and data-based technologies.

- **Digital Experience Engineering Tribe (Digital Competence):** This Tribe develops new capabilities to improve customer experience.

A Tribe is a community with common values, gathered around a specific purpose and operating in a certain order. Here, "purpose" means the purpose of existence for that Tribe. For example, the Acquisition Tribe exists to create products with a digital experience that our customers love. Every Squad inside this Tribe is built around this purpose. For example, while one Squad in the Acquisition Tribe focuses on perfecting the post-paid customer experience, another Squad focuses on the smart phone experience.

Our previous structure in the commercial business unit was a classic structure based on functions. We have transformed this structure into Tribes by considering the experience and journey of our customers. We have also evaluated alternative structures oriented at products or segments. There are several reasons why we established a structure that follows the steps of the customer's journey. First, we wanted to create Squads that specialize in and perfect every step of the customer's journey in a harmony with each other. Secondly, we acted in line with the fact that every phase in the customer's journey has different dynamics. The Acquisition Tribe's goal is to bring customers to Vodafone. They follow market dynamics closely and design attractive campaigns and product experiences. Another Tribe is responsible for the life cycle of Vodafone's existing customers. They examine the data received from our customers and strive to deliver products and services to them when needed, according to the different requirements of each subscriber. Finally, each Tribe uses different digital technologies. While we use performance marketing technologies

¹**Core IT:** This is the name we call to the IT teams other than the Tribes within the organization of Vodafone Turkey.

to attract customers, we also create analytical models to increase the loyalty of our subscribers.

In sum, when we have evaluated the above factors, we decided to use what we learned from our subscribers' journey and experience.

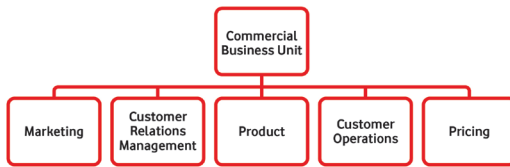
We initially worked on our new structure with a group of Executive Board members, Human Resources, Tribe Leads, and consultants who are Agile experts. The task of this team was to design the first build. Of course, not everything went as planned. In fact, it didn't have to, since the structure changes and evolves over time in line with the changing needs and market conditions.

After designing the Tribes in line with the customer's journey, it was the Squads' turn. Each Tribe Lead determined the interior details of their own Tribe with the support of the team that designed the general structure. Squads were created in line with several key elements. The first element was to include all the expertise

and skills required to achieve each Squad's purpose. The second element was to ensure that all individuals clearly understand their Squads' purpose. It was generally believed that this awareness would automatically bring responsibility. As the Tribes were made up of different Squads, it was necessary to identify the boundaries and grey areas between Squads, to be aware of the general policies to be followed, and to describe where they could get support when needed.

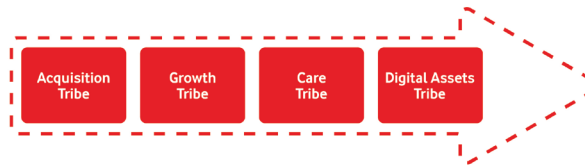
We are currently working with more than 50 Squads in all of our Tribes. Every Squad has very clear goals, and we try to include² all of the competencies that the teams need to achieve these goals. Based on the competence required for the team (such as commercial competence, marketing, product, sales, testing, or software development) colleagues with that particular competence are included. Our Agile Coaches support the teams for proper and effective operation of this structure.

Our Function Based on the Old Structure



Crossing responsibilities.
Individual **superheroes** do everything. İş çıktılarını yavaşlatan
Bureaucracy and **dependency** slow business outcomes.
'Predictive' approach - waterfall methodology
'Business designs - Technology providers' approach.

Our Customer Journey Based on the New Commercial Business Unit



Clear allocation of responsibilities.
Teamwork and **collaboration**.
Quicker and **advanced business** outcomes.
Adaptable approach - 'Test and learn.'
Customer-oriented design.
Müşteri odaklı tasarım.

Business and technology together: **collaboration and transparency**.

1 Quick and advanced business outcomes

2 Higher loyalty and employee satisfaction

²Adaptation to Work

It is not enough to ensure the adaptation of people to the new way of working only through training. We have taken actions to adapt many persons, from management team to Tribe Leads, Chapter Leads to Scrum Masters, to their new roles. We have established special competence development programs for these roles. We have determined the directions of their skill development as a result of the one-to-one interviews we have held with the roles. It is still a subject that is under our focus to bring our team mates to the point they should achieve, both mentally and culturally.

Supporting Specializations

One of the important parts of Agile Transformation is expertise. It is important to provide the competencies required by the Squads, particularly while Squads are being established. Otherwise, it is very difficult to achieve autonomy and subsequent success. At this stage, we began our journey not by starting with people but rather by focusing on the competencies required for the goals of the each Squad. Some of these competencies were already available in our organization (e.g., marketing and software development). Therefore, it was not difficult to match our employees who had these competencies with their particular roles. On the other hand, it was clear that some missing or rare competencies in our organization, such as UX (User Experience) or DevOps, were required, too. Therefore, we faced a serious recruitment process for these necessary competencies. Unfortunately, these competencies are usually not easy to find. Thus, we were confronted with two challenges—how to obtain these rare skills in various ways, and how to know if the recruits we found had the necessary expertise. These two challenges led us to different approaches in our employer branding and recruitment processes. For example, by organizing a Designathon contest in May 2019, we met with people from different regions of Turkey experienced in the design of services and products. We believe that such competitions are effective in terms of both attracting applicants and creating applicant pools. Also, we structured our internship programs according to the competencies and roles we required. Last year, we added a “Future Professions Internship Program” that aligned with our “Women in Sales Function” and “Women in Technology” internship programs,

both of which were designed to increase the number of female employees in the fields of Technology and Sales. We positioned all of this program’s trainees in digital roles and Squads, before including them in our “Discover Young Talent Program” after graduation. In 2019, 65% of students who completed internships in these programs decided to continue their careers in Vodafone by joining our new graduates program. We also changed our approach to recruitment processes. In our Evaluation Center processes, for example, besides the assessment of social skills, we began to use technical cases designed to measure level of expertise in the relevant field.

Our General Operation

Above all, each Squad determines their own Agile practices and work rhythm, based on the product or product experience they are working on. Our entire structure is built on this basis. At the Squad level, we try to practice all rituals that are indispensable for the Agile way of working and support this structure with both Scrum Masters and Agile Coaches.

We began building communities for specific Squad roles. For example, we have communities for Scrum Masters, Product Owners, and Data Specialists. These communities allow friends to share information and spread good practices with colleagues working in similar fields. We attach great importance to these communities, as they trigger learning and development.

Another structure related to learning and development consists of Chapters, which are horizontal constructs based on competence. In Chapters, we discuss and support the way of working in the relevant field and methods of further developing this ability within the company. Within this structure, Chapter Leads ensure the development of the competences of individuals in their field of expertise and support a competent, strong, autonomous structure.

It is the task of the Tribe Lead to align with company strategies at the Tribe level and to set the main business goals. Just as Vodafone Turkey is a part of the Vodafone Group at the global level, with Turkey achieving their own objectives within the Group's larger objectives, so is the Tribe part of the parent company. In other words, Tribes are considered local parts of Vodafone Turkey. Since our company strategy and objectives are clear at the top level, the next step is to determine which Tribe should do what in order to achieve these objectives. The main point is that the Tribe's strategy and vision are compatible with the main strategy and vision. The Tribe's strategy and vision are not imposed from above. While the task of the CEO or her/his deputies is to determine the main strategy, the task of the Tribe Lead is to adapt the

strategy of her/his own Tribe to this main strategy. We performed this during the first establishment of our Tribes, too. We attach great importance to the team's communication of these strategies and the internalization of these objectives. We collectively reviewed them several times to ensure that these strategies and objectives are adopted throughout the Tribe. These objectives are adopted as Squad goals, with the alignment of Tribe Leads and Product Owners and the provision of continuous team communication. As Squads internalize objectives in this way, they begin moving towards objectives at their own pace of production.

In addition, any strategy issues and alignments related to technology within a Tribe are the responsibility of the technology leader, which we call the Co-Lead. The main role of the Co-Lead is to provide a strategically technical point of view for the Tribe. In terms of technological requirements, she/he may need to provide support and direction to the Tribe. Of course, this role is a requirement in our current situation. In the future, Co-Leads may no longer be needed when the Tribe Leads begin to grasp the technological aspect, too. Moreover, some financial and administrative issues not included in the main functions of the Tribe are managed through representatives assigned from outside the Tribe.

A Tribe Governance meeting is held every two weeks within the Tribes to make organizational decisions concerning each Tribe. Chapter Leads, Product Owners, Agile Coaches and Tribe Lead attend these meetings. We also have a Tribe Day event held once every month, where we evaluate our objectives and work within the Tribe. The event is meant to foster team spirit within the Tribe.

In order to consider the bigger picture in terms of strategy, we also hold weekly meetings where Tribe Leads come together to align the Tribes. And every three months, all Product Owners within the company meet for an alignment event called QBR (Quarterly Business Review). In QBRs, Squads communicate their objectives and plans, as well

as business ideas for the next three months, so that everyone can see the bigger picture. Business priorities and dependencies are determined in this manner.

“The most important issue here is to establish the relationship between the general strategy of the company and the strategy of the Tribe, and then between the objectives of Squads. I think the most important challenge is the pressure placed by the objectives set by the general strategy on the autonomy of the team. Here, objectives should be established so that the team may devote time to experimentation, continuous improvement, and development. This may be defined as one of the fundamental principles of the Agile philosophy of work, both as it leads to continuous improvement and as it promotes innovation. It is very important that this is supported by top management so that the teams have room to breathe. Otherwise, the pressure of reaching objectives prevents the kind of work that requires a great amount of discipline and concentration. While this pressure may lead to benefits in the short term, it may also lead to a decrease in the team’s energy and motivation in the long term.”

Although we imagine Squads that works independently within Agile philosophy, we have not yet reached that point. There may be dependencies within structures both inside and outside of the Tribe. Product Owners generally manage such dependencies by collaborating among themselves. As good practice, all stakeholders awaiting support from a Squad are invited to Sprint Review activities to set expectations during the prioritization process.

In sum, a high level of communication and collaboration is necessary in facilitating alignment. However, dependencies still remain as an obstacle that we attempt to overcome through education, experimentation, and improvement.

We have transferred roughly three quarters of the commercial business unit to the Agile structure. Some issues (like pricing, for example) are not part of the Agile teams’ responsibility. Because pricing is an issue intersecting all Tribes, it is managed

by a special team that establishes coordination between the Tribes. We call these kinds of structures CoE (Center of Excellence). CoEs are structures focused on a specific expertise not distributed through Squads and serve all Squads in this field of expertise. CoEs are a solution designed to manage issues such as pricing (where risk is high), User Experience (where there are not enough experts), or Brand Management (which is more effectively managed by one, functional team).

Our Current Stance

- Agile does not just mean IT transformation. It is the transformation of the entire company. Considering Agile as IT’s own business management would be a limited understanding. Agile structure means the transformation of work as a whole, a re-creation of the way of doing business from scratch.
- This is an irreversible process. There is no turning back from Agile! Once you start, you must see it to the end. Because once you provide the teams with the power and freedom that Agile offers, it would be devastating to revert to old practices.
- The heart of Agile is focus and isolation. Clear goals are set for both Tribes and Squads, ensuring their dedication. Just as Tribes are responsible for generating and increasing revenue, every Squad within the structure should be able to take responsibility for preventing customer loss or selling new products to existing customers. This is the main aspect of dedication. Isolation, on the other hand, prevents team dependencies and provides an environment in which teams may independently achieve their own objectives. Progress is achieved step by step, with incremental improvements along the way.
- The Agile structure requires one to value

expertise. Expertise is of great importance in the Agile way of work, and its structure grows with expertise and competencies. The challenge here is that experts and a trained workforce are continually required, so individuals must develop their own expertise. In this manner, career paths should be established in a way that encourages the development of competencies.

- So, could we have begun differently? When looking back from our current point, we might conclude that we would have benefited from broader participation from the very beginning. As previously mentioned, we established the Tribe structures as closed and small group. However, participation, openness, and collaboration are also at the heart of this business model, which may have been easier to internalize if the transformation had begun in a more open manner by considering a broader range of opinions concerning Tribe structure. Through experience, we have learned that everyone clearly understands cause and effect, so there is no need to be afraid of being transparent. It is possible to execute a design process that is open to everyone from the very beginning.
- Another point of retroactive improvement concerns the fact that we performed the business transition very quickly and in a short period of time. Although the teams supported the process in general, uncertainties about the new organization and responsibilities to be established occasionally caused doubts. The fact that the team was relatively young and already accustomed to the Agile structure in IT, as well as the fact that they had a command of the basic principles of the Agile way of working, made the transformation easier. However, if we did not have a long-term and significant history of Agile experience from IT, this rapid transformation could have created serious problems.
- The most controversial issues, some of which

are still relevant, concern fields such as Product Owner responsibility, Chapter Lead roles, future career paths within the new structure, and performance management. The fact that these were not clarified from the start posed a challenge. However, in order to meet requirements, we listened to our colleagues and moved forward by evolving our structure in an Agile way.

- The shift in mindset from that of manager to Agile leader must be prioritized. It is important that managers are right role models in this new way of working. Leaders should be both supportive and encouraging in order to ensure the strength and effectiveness of their teams.
- Another important issue concerns the understanding and adoption of Agile principles across the whole ecosystem. It is easy for the Tribe and other employees working in an Agile structure to adopt this approach because Agile principles conform with human nature. As the name implies, Tribe supports collaboration, so employees must work and produce together. Here, situational leadership is used to achieve the common objective. An individual proficient in weaving, for example, might naturally become the leader for a weaving business, just as an experienced hunter might become the leader of a hunting-related business. They are not leaders simply because they have been assigned as such. Because this is in line with the instincts and nature of many people, those working within an Agile structure can adapt very quickly. The real challenge lies in explaining the entire ecosystem and ensuring that everyone adopts the new structure and adapts to its point of view. This is extremely important, as conflicting messages may cause problems. In sum, it is important that Agile values are understood and adopted by the entire ecosystem³, or company.
- It is also important that the whole company

³Agile Collage

We held fundamental Agile trainings for all Vodafone employees, regardless the fact that they are included in the Agile structure or not. Our purpose here was not only to explain what Agile is; it was to ensure that Agile practices were disseminated to the organization at points that would be beneficial even if the structures were not transformed into Agile. So we planted our seeds for the cultural aspect of a larger transformation. Anyone whose path did not cross through the Agile structure has visited Agile Collage at least once.

understands the Agile way of working and practices it at the highest possible level. However, plan to realize large-scale changes in small steps, and move through your transformation with the awareness that plans are always subject to change. Advance your journey of transformation slowly, through continual effort and improvement.

- Training is important. You must first introduce and become familiar with the Agile philosophy. However, training alone is not enough; coaching is also important. We were late in growing our internal Agile Coaches and realized that it would be greatly beneficial to make this investment from the beginning.

What Awaits Us in the Future

As Vodafone Turkey, we have set sail for a full-scale transformation. We began this process in the IT department six years ago. Since then, our success has grown so that currently, the Vodafone commercial business unit's transformation is complete, customer service's transformation has begun, and the Vodafone business unit's transformation is being developed. Although we have come a long way, we are still only at the beginning of our journey, a journey that has led us to grow our current business, operate more effectively, communicate more with our customers, provide better quality output, and respond more swiftly to problems. Thus, our business results are improving.

Concerning how the Agile way of working at Vodafone might evolve, we have three main goals for the medium term:

- The first goal concerns our Chapter structure. Currently, Chapters are mainly dependent on their leaders' efforts. However, our expert staff is being trained in

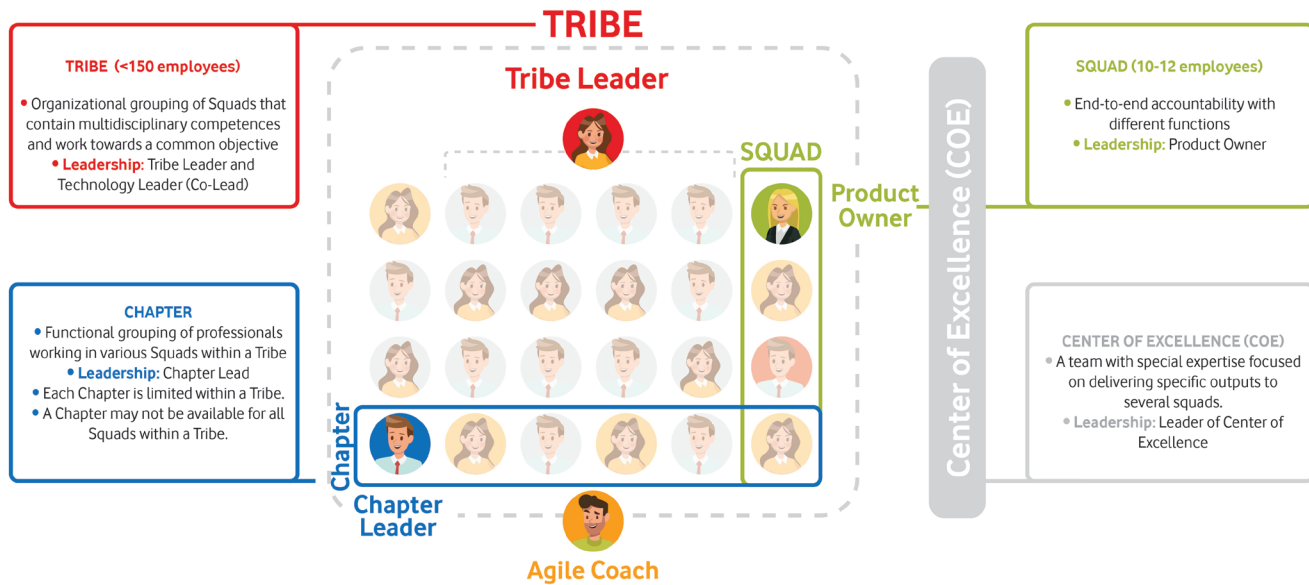
these Chapter structures. In the near future, we hope to relieve some of the burden of our Chapter Leads within the Chapter itself. For example, challenges such as establishing field of expertise, ensuring the development of standards, and strengthening knowledge base can be met through the self-organization of Chapter members. Competencies within the Chapter shall be developed with real community awareness.

- Our second goal is to incrementally resolve inter team dependencies. We aim to establish a more effective team structure in terms of focus and isolation. One of the most critical complementary points concerning this issue is the widespread continuation of transformation in Core IT. It is very important that we continue this transformation and maintain flexible structures by accelerating transformation at all levels of IT and taking all third-party stakeholders into account.
- Our third goal concerns company culture. Culture is a subject in itself; however, we shall continue to develop the muscles we use to build coordinated teamwork⁴. We hope to grow stronger by making trial, improvement, and continuous learning the main elements of our culture.

In addition to the goals stated above, we expect that our new business approach, which is still a work in progress, may be applied to our commercial model, too. For example, a Squad might offer an idea so promising that it could help transform the Squad into an entire company; when that happens, that company would be Agile from birth. At that point, we would not need to address Agile transformation because the Agile structure itself would have already transformed into a company. Thus, we hope to witness the Agile approach transform our business model and thereby reveal brand new business models.

⁴Let's Agile!

It is very critical that the team feels like a real team. We think that this shall be possible by ensuring the team members to know each other very well and to establish a heartfelt bond. We have prepared a special team coaching program for this; and it's called "Let's Agile!" This is a daily team workshop, and all of its contents are designed based on Agile way of working. We provide practical tools through cases on some issues such as giving feedback to the team, effective communication, strengthening the ties within the team.



What is a Squad?

A Squad is a team of employees with different fields of expertise who have gathered for a common purpose and objective. An Agile organization or Tribe consists of several Squads. Each Squad owns a separate and specific objective and works autonomously to achieve it. In order to achieve the objectives and ensure the continuity of business, Squads are expected to contain at least one member from all essential fields and roles. As members assist each other to complete tasks, the team grows stronger and develops competency.

In short, Squads are teams with multidisciplinary competencies that employ Agile practices and work around a common focus.

The First Days in a Squad

We asked Squad members the following question: “What did you feel when the Squad was established for the first time?” Following are some of their responses:

💬 Each organizational change brings uncertainty and excitement for the affected employees. When we first switched to the Agile way of working, this meant not only a team change, but also a brand new way of looking at my working life, which is at least one-third of my daily life. In addition to the curiosity and happiness of learning new things, this also caused greater uncertainty and anxiety for me. In two separate trainings I attended before switching to the Agile structure, examples mostly came from IT and software teams, as the Agile way of working was only recently applied in the field of marketing. This, in turn, raised doubts about how the Agile way of working might function in the field of marketing. My doubts continued until we actually put it into practice. As I was facing our Scrum Board when beginning our first daily meeting, I had a hard time focusing on the work, since I was thinking, “What shall we do now?”, or “What will happen next?” At the end of the meeting, I was sitting at my desk with the work I had undertaken with questions in my head. Frankly, I was at first concerned that we had only changed what we called our current way of working and that we would continue with the old way. Today, it has been about seven months since the first day our Squad was established, but I feel that I have been Agile for many years, even from the beginning of my work life. I realized how wrong my initial thoughts were about how this way of working could not be applied to marketing. After seeing the benefits of this completely new way of working, I think that

if I needed to move to another non-Agile team or company, I would experience the same the concerns that I had seven months ago.

💬 **I was very excited that we were about to switch to the Agile way of working, which I had heard about in almost every training I had attended over the last few years. But I could not fully imagine how I would transform my work to an Agile structure. In my first Squad, it was relatively easier to adapt to this new way of working, since we were mostly dealing with routine jobs. On the other hand, my new team had to create and develop new ideas in each Sprint, something that was new and challenging to me. However, after discussing them with the team, I thought it would not be difficult to incrementally develop these ideas. My current feelings are not much different from the first day. In some aspects, the team faces difficulties in splitting the ideas into small chunks and incrementally delivering them. However, after working in two different Squads at Vodafone, I understand how to handle a business with an Agile structure and take action in this direction, which is a great feeling. I think we shall get better every day.**

💬 The first day the Squad was established, I had to leave colleagues on my ex-team and meet people from different units whom I did not know very well. In the past, I was a part of a team of

people doing the same or similar job functions. Thus, we could better understand and help each other, since we shared the same viewpoint. Within the new structure, each of us came from different function areas, which naturally means that we all had different viewpoints. At first, my new team members could not fully understand me when I talked about technical issues, and I could not fully understand them when they talked about commercial stuff. I spoke about middleware, Web Service, and Database (DB), and they spoke about revenue and DBs (year-end targets). For a while, I even thought that the DBs they were talking about were the same as the databases I was talking about. But over time, we all began to understand each other better. While I was able to comment on the revenue of the work performed as a software developer, my colleagues began to talk about the “retry” processes and web service parameters in the middleware. In this way, we actually had the opportunity to learn about the end to end processes through which work was acquired and then introduced to customers.

💬 **The first day that the Squad was established, I was both excited and a little anxious, since I didn’t know the people in my Squad, I wasn’t too familiar with the work I was going to do, and I had no previous experience with Agile practices. Over time, I started to get used to my work and loved my teammates. Now, I feel safe in my Squad.**

I work as a Digital Product Lead at Vodafone and deal with the prepaid section of My Vodafone App. This is a job that requires people with many different competencies to work together. When you are looking from the outside, it may seem very difficult for so

many people to work together. However, I think that Agile has somehow united us and enabled us to work together.

The Adaptation Process

When Squad members were asked what the adaptation process to this new way of working was like for them, they responded:

💬 **At first, I thought that we would all experience something new and that it would be easy for me to adapt. Then I realized that it was a bit optimistic that I thought everyone would contribute to this change at the same rate. There happen to be team members who affect others negatively because they think that the rituals and new way of working will only slow us down. The greatest challenge is to convince people on the team that this change shall speed us up in the long run. In these moments, the Chapter Lead’s and Product Owner’s reinforcement of trust in the process has a big impact.**

💬 **In a matter of speaking, the process of getting used to the Agile way of working advances in an “Agile” way. The aim of the Agile mindset is to develop by experimenting with small steps instead of long-term plans. As a team, we encounter many problems and try different solutions. Here, you become part of a learning organization rather than operating as an individual. Thus, being a team in the face of challenges makes it easier to arrive at solutions.**

💬 In the new model, the people we work with and the way we work have changed together. Of course, you face some difficulties at first. It almost feels like you have changed jobs. But we have adapted to change and to each other very quickly, both through various activities designed to strengthen team unity and through the training and coaching services provided on Agile and Scrum.

💬 **In addition to Agile, the digital department is also a very different world for me, and there are many terms I need to learn. I was having more difficulty when I first started the Squad, but now I feel that I get better day by day. The issue I had most trouble with was Product Backlog management. Over time, we were able to make it a habit to put things together in a way that everyone could understand.**

The Most Positive Aspects of Agile

We talked to Squad members and listed their opinions concerning the most positive aspects of Agile:

- I feel that making mistakes is a bit more acceptable within the new structure. I think this is a very positive aspect of the Agile way of work. When we realize that we cannot achieve a task we have worked on throughout a Sprint, we try to do it in

a different way. We proceed by trying and learning.

- Taking faster⁵ action within the Agile structure and making small deliveries continuously increases the motivation of the team.
- The Agile way of work is better, both in terms of flexibility and transparency. People with diverse expertise work together in Squads. When you have a question or get stuck on any point, you don't have to worry about searching for contacts or delayed replies. Since your colleagues are sitting right next to you, you can quickly access the information/help you want. Thus, the time it takes to complete a job is also significantly reduced and optimized.
- Working with people with different profiles and perspectives is very informative and enlightening.
- It is motivating to have a say in a task from the beginning to its end and to see the task's impact on the company and subscriber, not only from your own field of expertise but also from other fields.
- The best thing about working in a Squad is that it makes you grow as a T-Shaped⁶ professional. I want to specialize in the digital field, but I also don't want to lose my commercial perspective. I also want to learn about the software side, about which I have no previous knowledge. I believe that the Squad has helped me improve in these fields, since all of this work is being performed in my Squad and I have

⁵This pace is proportional to the size of teams. It becomes slower to take actions as the team grows, especially as the number of people goes above 10.

⁶T-Shaped competency states that while a person has a deep expertise in a subject, s/he also has skills and an understanding in a wider perspective in the relevant peripheral areas.

contributed to all of them in some way.

- The fact that the whole team sits together at the same table renders knowledge transfer faster, more meticulously, and more accurately. Since all team members have the same objective, there is no single party either requesting or responding to requests. This has transformed work into a more holistic system in which everyone strives towards the same objective, but in different areas. Thus, all team members add something of their own in order to achieve better results.
- In addition to contributing to improved business results, working as a team has also boosted morale and motivation. It gives us the strength necessary to understand that both the team members and Chapter Leads will always be there to help when we encounter any problems. In case of such challenges, nobody blames others, and the whole team tries to meet needs together.
- Knowing the purpose of each task ensures positive motivation. I am sure that no team members ever ask themselves, "Why am I doing this?"
- I believe that talking about the day ahead also increases productivity.

The Most Challenging Aspects of Agile

We talked to Squad members and listed their opinions concerning the most challenging aspects of Agile:

- Adoption of rituals by the team. Participation in and contribution to the rituals may be low, particularly in crowded Squads. People might expect these rituals to end after everyone contributes something. In this case, problems with transparency may arise when some members do not fully listen to or share with each other.
- Generally, one person from each function is employed in Squads, and when that person needs to take a leave, you may have to stop work on that function area. But over time, we may overcome such conditions through internal transfer of know-how inside the team.
- It is also challenging if Squads are too big. As a team, we sometimes have trouble scheduling a time at which we can all meet. Since we are crowded in number, we may disagree about minor issues.
- I think there are too many meetings in the new structure. Sometimes they interfere with our ability to complete actual work. When meetings with other teams are also added to our Agile routines, it makes it even more

difficult to find time to work.

- Although the Tribe works in an Agile way, we also work with other non-Agile teams. These different working models can make it difficult for us to understand each other.
- The fact that some Squads contain too many members may make it difficult to work as a team. Perhaps such teams could be divided into smaller teams.
- It is more difficult now to meet minor requests. When we made requests from the teams we worked with before, we would receive answers within half a day at most. Now, we may have to wait for the same types of issues to be resolved at the next upcoming Sprint.
- In our previous way of working, we could evaluate improvement ideas quickly and immediately begin working on them. Now, since there is a prioritized backlog in our Agile way of working, we sometimes have to wait until one or more upcoming Sprints to implement these new ideas.
- Retrospective! Nobody wants to talk about something that went badly during the week. The prevailing mood during most of the rituals is the feeling that everything is going well and that team members can therefore finish and leave. In such moments, I saw that Product Owners, Scrum Masters, and Chapter Leads step forward to lead the teams, after which the rest of the team begins to contribute. However, we still have trouble talking about problems openly.

Practices that Work Well in Squads

When Squad members were asked what are some good practices that they have, these are the sharings:

💬 I think we are one of the teams with the highest level of focus on customers. As the Chatbot team, we have a portal where we can listen to users every day. Moreover, we can identify small but high-value actions via analysing customer interactions on other channels. Before our Product Backlog refinement activities in which we organize our backlog, we look into the data about customer behaviours and accordingly add relevant actions around them to our backlog. Here, I feel we come closer to autonomous work. We are not entirely bound by decisions at the executive level, and we shape our decisions based on the data.

💬 **I think we do well in our Sprint Review events. We invite our stakeholders to our Sprint Review activities and show them what we do by having them experience it whenever possible so they have the exact experience of the subscribers. For example, we added an integration on the “add credit” page within the My Vodafone application that presents offers to eligible subscribers and allows them add credits as per these**

offers. We demonstrated this new capability to our stakeholders, who were invited to the review activity through the application in order to ensure that they have the same experience of a subscriber. Thus, stakeholders were able to provide more accurate and effective feedback.

💬 Although we sometimes have difficulty in Retrospectives, I think we always make decisions that improve the process in these events. We realize some of these decisions right away, in the next Sprint, though we are sometimes unable to resolve certain issues until the next Retro. However, we continue to keep our decisions up-to-date in every Retrospective. For example, one Retro action that we still continue to follow is that if we need to discuss a story for more than 15 minutes in a Sprint Planning meeting, we consider this an alarm indicating that we are not successfully refining our Product Backlog and call for an immediate Backlog Refinement activity.

💬 **We regularly hold strategy roadmap meetings led by our Product Owner. In these meetings, we collectively decide on major tasks and their prioritization over approximately the next two quarters. In this manner, all members are involved in the bigger picture, and the team is always on the same page. Since everybody is included in the decision-making process (and therefore in shaping the future), we gain different perspectives and enrich our projects with diverse ideas.**

💬 Even if as a Chapter rather than a Squad, we regularly hold "Chapter huddle" events with our Chapter Lead, allowing employees who have the same role in different Squads to share the plans, projects, and tasks held in common. Thanks to these meetings, we become aware of tasks that

may be related. We also learn from each other's experiences and are able to develop projects based on feedback from a large group.

When Is a Squad Successful?

Our measure of success has changed over time, alongside the maturity of our teams and growing experience with Agile practices. In the beginning, we equated success with the rate of work completed in the relevant Sprint. The criterion was to deliver the work planned for the Sprint in time, but as in the past, we sometimes cannot deliver everything we plan. Completing the work meant providing the appropriate conditions in terms of both scope and working standards.

Here, it may be useful to mention the "Done" concept. We began to run Sprints by first determining the general quality and performance standards of the work pulled to be completed by the team, so our compliance with these standards is an important factor in evaluating the success of our Squad. We are still trying to improve these standards by occasionally reevaluating them.

Now, despite our old view that a Sprint's success depended on completion of all planned work, we focus on delivering the critical items designed to achieve the Sprint goal. By focusing on delivery, our criteria for success led to the realization of the business objectives of the relevant Squad. For example, if our mid-term objective is to increase the number of sales on the digital channel, we consider that Sprint successful if we first find the main reason behind the drop of sales or the existence of other fields of opportunity. Such realizations would then allow us to take action in a related Sprint.

Autonomy

In Agile organizations, Squads are designed as autonomous, self-organizing structures. In this sense, we talked to Squad members about how they see the level of autonomy inside in this new structure and to what extent is the authority of decision-making left to the Squad. Following are some of their responses:

💬 **While top-level strategic decisions are made at the Tribe level, I think we make autonomous decisions when we feel that we understand the customer and can prove this with data. We examine hot topics on channels such as the call center, where we feel very close to the user. We report the outputs of the analysis and draw up an action plan. And if the Tribe Lead asks, “Why did you spend so much time on this subject?”, the reports of our analysis can answer this question. However, I think that we should not step out of the main objectives of our Tribe too much. It is important that we progress as aligned with the strategy.**

💬 We all express our opinion on a subject in the Squad, and after presenting our cases and reaching a decision, we all take the actions required by that collective decision. We do not act under the influence of any manager while doing this. Although there may sometimes be interventions, the decision-making and implementation stages are largely left to the teams, themselves. Thus, you own the outcome whether it is a success or not. You take responsibility for the success or failure of a task for which you helped make decisions. You embrace it more, and if there is something wrong, you correct it and try again. Thus, the efficiency and quality of the work increases.

💬 **I think there are aspects of this issue that are still open to improvement in Vodafone Turkey. While the authority of decision-making on many subjects is left to Squads, this does not apply to all. Some of the things that are considered critical are received by Squads and are performed after their general constraints are determined at the top level.**

💬 An important issue I learned in this process was that in order to remain autonomous, a Squad should include at least one member from all parties that they conduct business with. You must also consider mutual business plans and priorities when different Squads or non-Agile structures work together, which creates additional burden. In this manner, our Squad became more independent as it gradually increased the number of employees and filled missing roles. We can say that we now work autonomously in most respects, as long as we achieve our objectives. However, we are still bound by the decisions of senior management, particularly in issues related to strategy and portfolio. For example, when we want to update the prices and contents of tariffs, we have to get approval from the relevant team and our managers. This slows us (and our agility) down a bit, for sure.

Shortly on the Future of Agile

How do you see the future of Agile in Vodafone Turkey?

☞ For Vodafone Turkey, I consider a fully agile working environment as one in which teams have truly internalized this philosophy in the medium term. On the other hand, my personal goal is to maintain and reap maximum benefit from the Agile way of working, especially in terms of teamwork.

☞ **Changing employees' area of expertise within the company used to slow down progress in their careers. I think that the Agile way of working will no longer cause this to happen. People who want to specialize in other fields are supported in every aspect, and this won't have a negative impact on their careers. I also think that the company should support these people by providing all kinds of training. In general, I am happy that such a big transformation has begun in the company I work for, but I think Agile practices are not suitable for all departments in a corporate company. Of course, this is my personal opinion.**

☞ I think that all units will switch to this structure, and Agile will become more widespread. Particular attention will be paid to situations in which different teams work together during the roll-out process, and there will be a specific process for this multi-team alignment purpose. This part is now slowly maturing for us. There may still be problems/delays from time to time when you want to organize and do business with two different Tribes, but it is getting better day by day.

☞ **Vodafone Turkey took an important step for its future by switching to the Agile way of working. Agile has proven its usefulness during this period in which Always-On Marketing (analytical and multi-channel marketing) and digital transformation are becoming more and more prominent. My confidence in this way of working has become even stronger after witnessing business results and efficiency improving over time, something I have observed both within my own team and in other Squads. In this regard, steps will be taken to further improve the autonomy of teams by including teams that are not yet in the Agile structure, filling missing roles within teams, and, with increased confidence, reducing approval mechanisms.**



Who is the Product Owner?

- **It is the person who determines the direction of the team, sets the vision of the Squad, and locks the team onto a single target.**
- It is the customer's representative within the company.
- **The Product Owner is the person who assumes the task of delivering all products, services, and experiences that shall add value to the customer. In addition, s/he accurately understands the customer's priorities and ensures that value is added for the customer.**
- After correctly identifying the minimum viable product (MVP) and presenting it to the customer, the Product Owner increases the generated value by working with the customer in order to develop the MVP accordingly.
- **It is the Squad member that represents the user community and business value of the product. S/he determines which road map/priorities shall be established by the development team working with Agile practices in order to create maximum value for both the product and its users.**
- It is the role that prioritizes the valuable business outputs created with the team by considering customer impact and revenue. In this sense, s/he leads the objectives and scope within the Squad.

New Life Changes

When asked about the differences between their previous roles and their new roles, Product Owners replied:

💬 **When considering my previous roles, one of the biggest changes I have experienced after my role as a Product Owner is working closely as a team with colleagues from different fields while leading their business plan. Another change in my life is breaking work down into small parts, experimenting, and learning and adapting accordingly, rather than planning work in all its details. As someone who has managed products for a long time, I was used to thinking about every possible detail, from the biggest to the smallest. After becoming a Product Owner, I realized that growing a product step by step is an easier and more effective method.**

💬 **The biggest change in my life after becoming a Product Owner was adopting the philosophy of "stop starting, start finishing." My new aim is to channel the focus and energy of the team through working with smaller pieces of tasks that create value for the customer. I can tell that instead of trying to do everything at the same time, saying "stop, do this first and then the other" has changed the way I work.**

💬 **Product Owner is a role that I have been introduced to thanks to Vodafone. Since I was responsible for product management and product development in my previous roles, I always had a firm grasp of issues such as analysing the market, determining the strategy and targets of the product, and determining and following the actions**

to be taken in line with the company's objectives. In our old structure, although I was the main owner of the business, I had no chance to be actively involved in each step of the product development process. Activities such as determining product strategy, clarifying product flows, and preparing product design with the design team took place in advance. Then, after the project group was established, I received information concerning the feasibility and timing of my requests. When it came to the software development stage, we sometimes did not maintain active communication for months at a time, unless the software team asked a question. Particularly in long-term projects, until our requests had been filled, the market changes.

Agile organization made me realize the value of the smaller parts that constitute the whole. Dividing the work into smaller valuable parts when possible, both enables us to catch up with the current market's dynamism and makes it easier for us to recognize mistakes and quickly determine new actions in response to those mistakes. If you are a person who is satisfied by achieving results in your business life, your commitment to the project may wane when the development period of the project is extended, regardless of your role. In Agile, achieving the whole by combining the parts brings more motivation to the process.

☞ In my new role, I can plan more effectively; I can see the competencies of the team members more clearly and am motivated by them. All of this makes me work with more drive and enthusiasm.

☞ **Until I began to work as a Product Owner, I was working as a Product Manager in digital channels. I can say that for myself, the most important effect of the Agile transformation is the development of a culture that invites a variety of different talents to a project, allowing team members to better understand each other while working towards one goal. This culture allows you to manage the project, product, or channel much more effectively and provides you with serious speed. If you are a manager in a traditional organization, on the other hand, you are responsible for managing not only the work itself, but also the projects and dynamics tied to your team's competencies. Now, instead of managing different skills in the product development team, I focus more closely on whether the team is on the right track in achieving its objectives and creating real value for the customers. Focusing on managing the value not managing the people, this is one of the most important changes that come with the role of Product Owner.**

☞ When I compare it to my previous role, the most important change in my life is owning end-to-end responsibility of the product. We experience both success and failure completely and transparently. I have worked on many projects before and have assumed roles at every step of these projects. In those days, delivering the project meant that the work was no longer our responsibility. Now we have live products

for which we continuously follow up on. Like a gardener, we always keep an eye on it to grow the seed into a seedling, and then to grow it further. Breaking our objectives into small pieces that create value while still not losing view of the bigger picture is the most important benefit I have gained from the Agile way of working.

The Story of a Sprint

We asked Product Owners about their experiences in a Sprint. Here are their reflections:

☞ My biggest focus in a typical working week is planning around product value. In order to take the next best steps as a Squad, I focus on continuously refining the Product Backlog. After understanding in advance the value that a potential idea can create for the customer, I begin to divide the idea into smaller deliverables. Afterwards, together with the team, we mature these deliverables and update our Product Backlog accordingly. In addition, I start negotiations with the parties our Squad is dependent on and prioritize tasks in accordance with the plan made with them. At the same time, I work on a longer-term product roadmap aligned with our vision, constantly managing the plan while still allowing for flexibility. I think that managing Product Backlog flexibly is one of the most meaningful



innovations brought into our lives by the Agile way of working. I follow customer feedback about our products through regular and one-on-one contact and change the content of Product Backlog items or review their priorities based on this feedback.

💬 **During the first week of a Sprint, I mostly work by spending time on our mid-term objectives and plans. I review the plans for the following three months and perform the necessary arrangements for these plans. I meet with the relevant stakeholders in this regard and try to ensure that they also understand and adopt our objectives. In some cases, stakeholders may come to me and ask for support. In such cases, I explain my views and our plan so that we can come to an agreement on a common point. If my work affects any other field of work within the Tribe, I meet with my Tribe Lead (and the other teams in the Tribe if required) in order to clarify how we can all proceed together.**

During the second week of the Sprint, I focus more on upcoming events. I work on my Product Backlog for the next Sprint. The team gathers together at the Product Backlog Refinement event at the beginning of the week. During this event, I share the details of my ideas with the team, and we evaluate different ideas together. As a result, we leave this meeting with a slightly clearer picture in mind. Considering the team's opinions and suggestions allows me to both enrich my Product Backlog and ensure that the team has a command of the issues. After the event, I might conduct further research or interviews to make high priority items clearer and to detail the final version of my Product Backlog

before the upcoming Sprint Planning Event. Parallel to this flow, we work closely as a team throughout the Sprint and monitor the progress of the items in the related Sprint almost every morning when participating in the Daily Scrums. Together, we observe whether our planned actions have resulted in the expected contributions, and we immediately conduct alternative experiments with minor changes when required.

💬 There is a concept I have heard from teams who have been working with Agile practices for a long period of time: "Running a Sprint." When I heard this concept, I wondered why a Sprint was "run," but when I started "running," I understood why. Our Sprint length is two weeks, i.e., ten working days. One-1 ½ days of this period are actually spent on the events we hold in line with Scrum rituals. With the remaining time, we simply "run" to complete the work we have planned. You might say, "You cannot run all the time, you get tired." But this run is not really motivated by the push to get somewhere; rather, it is fuelled by the motivation of being close to success, like an athlete approaching the finish line. While everyone runs in the Sprint together, I, as a Product Owner, am both within and ahead of the Sprint. I consider whether the items we are currently working on meet expectations, and I try to prioritize and clarify the items we need to run in front of us, while resolving dependence points, if any. In fact, being both inside and outside the Sprint makes it easier for me to plan my work.

💬 **The Sprint cycle begins with its planning. To plan effectively, you should already have determined your objectives, your strategy for these objectives, the roadmap**

necessary to support this strategy, and the prioritization of the steps of this roadmap. Furthermore, I can say that it is very important that the whole story is embraced by your team and that the entire team understands where the product is going in the long term. In this sense, we regularly meet as a team to consider the following questions: “Where are we?”, “Where are we going?”, and “What does this contribute to?” These regular reflections encourage the whole team to embrace the objective in line with priorities and to create the elements needed to support this objective. In this way, we also ensure that the goal of a Sprint is embraced by everyone. As the Sprint continues after its planning, I always keep an eye on its progress. In addition, we meet with all stakeholders to prepare the items for the next Sprint and perform our Product Backlog Refinement ritual. Each Product Backlog Refinement activity performed within a Sprint significantly contributes to the planning of future Sprints. The Retrospective is one of the most important parts of the Sprint rituals. This can sometimes be an overlooked subject. However, the Sprint Retrospective allows me to listen to the team’s point of view so that we can explore together what we can improve. This greatly contributes to the Product Owner’s expectations and way of conducting business.

Product Owner Competency Building

How do you go about improving your skills?

💬 As mentioned, Agile structure is an organization you learn by living it, one in which you reach the desired results through trial and error. This learning culture allows you to make mistakes, as long as you learn from your mistakes. It may take some time for people coming from different organizational cultures to become accustomed to this new culture. Speaking on my own behalf, I had a difficult time. However, the company provides fundamental Agile training to each member of the Squads to facilitate this adaptation. This training was a very useful first step for me in understanding all the roles and responsibilities when I was first recruited by Vodafone. In addition, we have Agile Coaches who support us, both in learning Agile practices and in overcoming challenges we experience within or outside of the team. In this way, we feel supported in how we can actualize theoretical information or create alternatives.

💬 Agile’s strength comes from self-organized and competent teams. T-Shaped skill development (where each individual gains different perspectives) is important to be a competent team. Thus, we organize in-team training that supports the T-Shaped structure, and this way, I get the chance to learn directly from my teammates’ experiences. For example, when our

Decision Architect informs us about the way s/he works, I learn other fields of competencies within our Squad, and thus I can improve myself.

💬 **If you are in an Agile organization, it is very important to internalize the dynamics and fundamental logic of the Agile way of working in order to develop and improve your own skills. When I first began working in this role, I listened, read a great deal, and spent a lot of time with Agile Coaches in order to understand the logic of this new way of working. The fact that there was always a coach to support me when I had a question greatly contributed to my understanding of Agile. On the other hand, the Agile structure is not a process with strict rules. Otherwise, it would contradict its essence. When you embrace the main idea of Agile, it shapes your team and product development process, and after a while, you start to find your own truths in the Agile perspective. You might say that within the framework of its basic dynamics, every Agile team wears the suit that suits itself. I never hesitated to try to improve the process, both for my own role and for the operation of my team. For my own role and responsibilities, I try to realize the Agile motto and its trial and error perspective. I think this contributes both to the growth of my own skills as well as those of the team.**

💬 The Product Owner role is a new role. The first thing I did in order to adapt to this role and to prepare myself in the best way possible was to understand Agile's general philosophy and to explore how my role can represent this philosophy. For this purpose, I began by participating in fundamental Agile training and reading books about Agile. The Product

Owner Empowerment Program training series, organized under the sponsorship of the company, helped me to practice and internalize my role better. In addition, receiving continuous feedback from Agile Coaches and realizing my own areas of development also contributed to me becoming more competent in my role. At the same time, I have followed and continue to follow best practices and new trends in the industry, as well as in other industries, in order to enhance my vision.

💬 **In order to assume this role properly, it is necessary to understand how everyone in the Development Team works and to have a command of the leadership skills required to do the job. Thus, I try to spend enough time with each team member to understand their work. This position is definitely not a management role, as no one in the Squad reports to you. Therefore, you have to rely on your natural leadership skills rather than on your label as manager. I embrace being open to questioning and welcome feedback from the team, my Tribe Lead, and other Product Owner colleagues. I read and conduct research in the field of leadership and believe in the importance of being the center point of the team. I try to ensure that we, as a team, own successes and failures, and in this respect, act as a role model for my teammates. I spend time to get to know people and to understand their expectations and challenges they face. This kind of empathy helps me when planning work and seeking support from the team.**

Interactions and Difficulties

Agile organization has introduced many new roles to our lives, and Product Owner role is just one of them. We asked Product Owners the difficulties they experience in this new structure and how they interact with the other roles. These are their thoughts:

💬 The Product Owner is the role that determines the product's vision, priorities, and Product Backlog. This is a role that is in constant interaction with other Product Owners, Chapter Leads, and Tribe Leads within and between various Tribes. Interactions and collaboration with other Product Owners mostly occur around the work of connected Squads. The priority of one Product Owner may not be the priority of another, or there may be different ideas and perspectives when deciding on the scope of the work to be performed. The most challenging part is bringing these perspectives to a common understanding in order to arrive at a collaborative decision. When this occurs, I usually meet the relevant Product Owners and share my suggestions (as well as listen to their suggestions) on how we can solve the issue. As a result of this meeting, we then present a mutual proposal and follow up on its progress. We constantly reflect on what we have learned in the Sprints and act together on improvement

actions. Such difficulties, as I have explained, can be resolved to some extent through communication; however, significant time and energy may be spent on arriving at common ground which may slow things down. In order to avoid this, in terms of the setup, I think that each Squad should be as autonomous as possible.

Another role that the Product Owner interacts with is the Chapter Leads. Support from Chapter Leads helps ensure the continuity of the roles and competencies required in my Squad. We constantly communicate with each other when recruiting new team members, developing competencies inside the Squad in order to increase quality and performance, and familiarizing those in the Squad with the T-Shaped structure.

💬 **While the Product Owner introduces the team to the tasks, strategy, and vision related to the product, the Chapter Lead helps develop the required competencies for the same purpose. I thought that these two roles may overlap to some extent, because in order to improve the competencies of the product (especially in the non-technical scope) I may need to be included in the details. I found this questionable and potentially disturbing. Luckily, we have not really experienced such a disturbance. Our Tribe's focus and work has been organically divided. Chapter Leads have generally focused on developing competence and resolving issues that concern the entire Tribe but cannot be resolved in the Squads. Together with the Chapter Leads we have adopted a working method where we support each other and do not step on each other's feet. In my opinion, avoiding problems in Agile teams**

depends on the goodwill of the persons involved and the attitude of the Tribe Lead. I think if we were on another team, we might experience problems.

As colleagues who have assumed the role of Product Owner, we are usually from business units. On the other hand, we do have colleagues from IT on our team. At first I had a hard time understanding and working with those from IT; we had differences in every field, from terminology and ways of working to our expectations from working life. I had no knowledge of many critical competencies at first, and until I learned these, we were not on the same page. As for expectations from business life, while presentation skills (such as sharing a report with top management for a colleague with a business unit origin, for example) are important, it may be a burden for someone from a technical background. To ensure ownership of the work, you should both understand the demands made of you and ensure that the team is flexible. As I understood technical competencies, and the team understood my expectations, we were able to come together as a well-functioning team.

💬 Product Owners are positioned in the Tribe as persons who determine strategy and follow up on actions and targets accordingly. Being a Product Owner means being both inside the team and being the face of the team that is shown to the external world. Product Owners have a serious responsibility to assess requests received from all stakeholders, to analyse the benefits of the work, to unite each team through common ground when collaborating with

other Squads, and to establish an environment that nurtures the team's productivity and participation. If you depend on another Squad in order to complete a task, it is essential to plan accordingly, both to ensure that you are prioritized by the other Squad and that your output is received by approximately the same date. Particularly in the early stages of my position as Product Owner, I experienced anxiety over whether the items in my Product Backlog would be ready enough to be pulled into the Sprint by my team. In such cases, working together as a team and inviting everyone's participation in line with your objective leads both you and the team to more successful results.

💬 **The Product Owner is a role that reports to the Tribe Lead. Therefore, it is very important for the Product Owner to get the support of the Tribe Lead in the roadmap prioritized by her/him. For this purpose, I think it is critical that the Product Owner is transparent, is able to adequately explain what s/he has prioritized, and will defend her/his ideas when necessary.**

Another role we interact with is the Chapter Lead, so it is important to progress in a mutually supportive structure in relation to her/him. It is more productive when the Chapter Leads do not work in close proximity to Squads so that they do not interfere with their work; however, they should still be within a stone's throw to offer support when required. At first, we experienced minor problems with Chapter Leads concerning the separation of our responsibilities. However, we have grown to understand each other through open communication and have now achieved very

good synergy.

The support of Scrum Masters is very valuable in creating necessary engagement of the team. Asking for their advice, sharing clear expectations and objectives, and garnering their support to trigger product vision ownership within the team leads to better results and enhances team motivation.

Along our Agile transformation journey, I had the chance to participate in the establishment of the Tribe structure. During this process, my most important observation was on the necessity of Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters, whose contributions to every issue are invaluable. Such contributions include preparation for the establishment of the Squad, team training, implementation of the new process, support of new practices during Sprints, and alignment of Product Owners and other roles. These two roles are critical in achieving team spirit within the Squad, adapting to the work, improving transparency, and removing any obstacles. The first colleague that I would call on, if I were asked to establish a Tribe one day, would be an Agile Coach.

Priority Wars

Whose priority comes first? As a Product Owner, it's your job to set priorities at the Squad level. Do you think this really works as it should?

💬 As a Product Owner, I manage the road map and priorities of the product I am responsible for. However, this does not mean that stakeholders should be disregarded. Rather, it means coming together with the stakeholders to achieve complete transparency. There is no ideal reality where you will always share the same opinions with every stakeholder. There will inevitably be times when opinions clash, as it should be. In fact, differing perspectives and diversity are valuable for growth. What is important for me is that the team clearly understands what we are doing and why we are doing it. If we cannot meet the needs of our stakeholders, I would be transparent about the reason for this and would calmly discuss our differences. It is important to be open to feedback and change priorities according to the right value. I feel lucky to see that this perspective finds its worth in Vodafone.

💬 There are two aspects of this issue: alignment within the team and alignment between teams. For the first case, if colleagues working in the Squad are confident in your knowledge and expertise about the work, and if you are open to their opinions and are flexible about the priorities and business plan when required—that is, if you truly listen to their suggestions, there should be no problem. I bring my own ideas to team at Product Backlog Refinement events while still trying to be open to the ideas of others. There were times when we directly applied suggestions from the team or considered their suggestions for priorities. Thus, because they understand what we are trying to do, we have never had any problems in terms of alignment.

In cases where there is a risk of being externally dependent, we try to assess the work in advance and make dependences clear by communicating them as early as possible. In other words, we inform other relevant Squads in advance, when possible, to appear in their priority lists in time. However, your priority may not always be the priority of another Squad. On this point, we follow methods that vary depending on the condition and the work. In fact, these kinds of situations are mostly resolved among Product Owners, and we rarely need the support of Tribe Leads.

💬 **If priorities for my Squad only concern our Squad, intervention or interference from outside rarely occurs. However, much of the work may also concern other Squads. In such cases, we experience interventions more frequently. I think management of such multi-Squad-dependent work is our greatest area of development. Currently, we try to manage these issues by organizing multiple alignment meetings between parties. In these meetings, we establish the reason behind the work's priority by discussing customer needs and the data on hand. While this system allows us to arrive at common ground, the loss of time and energy needed to reach alignment slows us down. I think that as we continue to gain experience, we will establish systems to minimize dependencies between Squads and thus will come to a better understanding on this manner.**

💬 The fact that priorities within the organization are set by Product Owners is well understood both by the Squad and the stakeholders. However, everyone wants to have more say in

ensuring that their request takes priority. We experience the same when seeking support from other Squads. Where this point is concerned, achieving common goals both prevents intervention wars and helps create synergistic collaboration between teams. As a Product Owner, I explain to my stakeholders as clearly as possible why I prioritize a request or why I am not able to address a particular request; I also explain that requests should meet criteria for readiness before we pull them into a Sprint. In addition, I try to ensure that teams not working with Agile practices may empathize with our way of work.

Teams work as independently as possible within the Agile structure. When you have any dependency on systems that affect multiple Squads (particularly in technical terms), it may be extremely difficult for those Squads to align and prioritize. Unfortunately, we do not have a structure in which we are completely independent in terms of organization and technique/know-how. In order to better manage such dependencies, I think that it is extremely critical to increase the competencies of the Squads and to provide them with the necessary know-how. In this regard, we invite support from colleagues who can offer us insight based on their unique experiences and perspectives. This usually takes place during our Product Backlog Refinement meetings in which we shape upcoming plans. We also hold prioritization meetings in which members from all related teams come together to reach alignment.

💬 **Prioritizing is absolutely the Product Owner's task, although contributions from the team are also very important. Stakeholders often insist that their work**

should be prioritized. At the same time, different teams may be communicating with myself, the Chapter Leads, the Scrum Master, and other Squad members in attempts to prioritize their own work. In this case, it is important that the team speaks with one voice in order to ensure that all requests are directed to the Product Owner. As a team, we are generally successful at achieving this. Also, the fact that the Tribe Lead embraces this process, values my opinions, and prevents interventions when necessary makes it easier for me to do my work.

However, it is also a fact that there are Squads that we are dependent on and that are dependent on us; this is something we continue to manage by ensuring that Product Owners are aligned with each other. We therefore try to organize meetings and plan dependencies together, thus greatly minimizing potential problems. Product Owners assume an important role in this respect. The more the Product Owner has command of her/his product and roadmap, the more open s/he is to collaboration and transparency, all of which facilitates management of such dependencies. Of course, the larger the number of dependent Squads, the more difficult your job will be. For example, when once working on a project involving six Squads, we experienced serious alignment problems from the very beginning. Though we had worked on projects involving multiple Squads before, this was our first large-scale experience working with teams that were simultaneously working on other projects. We put the project on hold when we felt seriously blocked, calling on the

Agile Coach and reconsidering the entire structure. We restructured the Squads, their dependencies, and their expectations of other parties, thus clarifying the Squads that would be dependent on one another and deciding on who would assume certain responsibilities, such as the responsibility for going live. In complex structures, you sometimes need to stop and reassess changing conditions in order to build the structure accordingly. In this sense, I think this was a good experience for us.

Lean and Simple

One of the important mindset shifts necessary in gaining an Agile perspective involves accepting imperfection and producing evolving solutions. How does this work?

💬 As a Product Owner, one thing I care about most is avoiding the impulse to wait for the next feature before delivering previous ones, as long as it does not cause any inconvenience to the customer, of course. Teams may be in the habit of insisting on perfection before delivering the product to the customer, particularly during periods of change, which ultimately delays delivery of the product. In such cases, I suggest that we deliver the product as is, before resuming work on additions in the upcoming Sprint, thereby keeping the team in line with MVP culture. For example, at one point we wanted to create an innovative tariff and unique digital purchasing experience that would provide added value for the customer. While releasing them both at the same time was a more idealistic scenario, it was not a must. Moreover, as the scope of the project grew, we risked prolonging its release. At this point, the priority was to separate the project into two smaller parts, generating added value and ensuring that the product was brought to market more quickly. In this manner, I prevented the Squad from losing focus during what proved to be a stressful situation. And by taking the MVP live, I was able to target potential areas of improvement in the product by observing customer reactions. In the next step, we were able to release new and better versions to the market by correcting flaws found in the original product.

💬 **I like to focus on the minimum viable product (MVP). It is actually beneficial for everyone if you can progress by testing rather than having to anticipate all the**

details from the beginning. This allows you to release the product to the market more quickly. Our job is one-on-one marketing, where thinking simple does not come easily. As a general rule, we tend to create a bigger picture and try to simplify it later. In fact, the MVP does not mean that you have to compromise quality or bring the product to market with deficiencies in basic issues. For example, when we once realized that there was a mistake concerning an image included in our My Vodafone App during a launch, we quickly corrected the error and did not receive any customer complaints. If we had not noticed it, however, it could have led to bigger problems. Through learning from experience, we then began to test even the smallest images and text changes.

💬 Implementation of these practices was not easy at first. Some might believe that the idea of moving forward through thinking simple (as per the concept of MVP) means narrowing the scope of the work. However, developing products and services by advancing step by step both increases speed in achieving an output and allows you to notice any potential problems in advance so that you can take early action. In our team's new marketplace project, for example, we determined our MVP to be the sale of a device that would be directly reflected on the subscriber's invoice. However, as our team did not have any digital platform experience, we could not make realistic market predictions, so we minimized our MVP even further by deciding to work toward a platform that would spark

demand for the devices. This allowed us to test new environments and collect earlier returns from customers, with minimal risk. In this regard, the team divided the work into smaller pieces that would create as much value as possible.

💬 **During a session in one of our Agile trainings, the following question was asked to the team: “Let’s say you are flying to the U.S. this morning. After waking up, what should you do before leaving the house?” Answers included things like getting dressed, brushing your teeth, packing a passport, and doing a final check of the house. We were then asked: “You are flying to the U.S. this morning. You wake up late and risk missing your plane. What do you need before leaving home?” Now, people responded by saying they would just take their wallets and passports, leaving the house in pyjamas. MVP is something like this in that you should determine the minimum of what is required in order to present a testable value to the user. As a team, we had difficulties achieving this during the earlier stages. Naturally, we wanted to present our imagined best version of the product to the customer, and so we did. We then realized that our imagined version do not necessarily match users’ expectations. Thus, we presented smaller pieces first, allowing the customers to try them before further developing the project based on what we learned. Now, all of our planning is based on this practice. We first offer the smallest piece that would add value for the user. Then, we develop that piece by tracking user behaviour and following up on user feedback. This allows our team to progress more quickly, while at the same time enabling us to present the final product that users expect.**

💬 It is extremely important to understand user

expectations, to address requirements without losing sight of the bigger picture, and to then meet requirements by breaking them down into smaller pieces. Our Squad generally receives requests in large bunches. Therefore, I try to move forward by explaining what is really required and how we want to progress as a team. In this way, the team participates in determining the scope of the MVP. For example, one of our projects recently released was initially received as a project with huge scope. If we had tried to complete all the requests at once, it would have taken at least two years of work, after which the project may no longer have been necessary. We formed three Squads to complete this project, coming together to determine essential requirements in terms of financials and user experience. We progressed through these requirements repeatedly, agreeing on a few features we thought were most important. Thus, we were able to present the output to our customers in as little as three months. We are currently continuing to develop this new product by adding additional features according to the requirements as per customer usage and experience.

What is “Success”?

What does it mean to be a successful Squad? How do you see yourself in that picture?

- 💬 **When I think of a successful Squad, I think of a team that moves towards a common objective, confronts obstacles with a solution-oriented approach, and completes tasks within the Sprint through high level of teamwork, while at the same time maintaining value by constantly examining what has been contributed to the customer and the company. Relatedly, the essential duties of the Product Owner are to convey a clear vision to the team, to set realistic priorities, and to separate the work into smaller parts that add value. At the same time, it is critical to consider the feedback from the relevant Squad regarding the content and prioritization of the work to be completed on the product.**
- 💬 Being a successful Squad means working together to achieve one objective. It also requires motivation to consider new ideas, progress as a whole and continuously learn from one's teammates, all while working towards that common objective. In my opinion, the Product Owner's duty is to empathize with and be a balance point for the team, to bring vision and strategy, to ensure a shared perception of quality and success, to share progress and any potential problems with transparency, to be open to suggestions, and to be cooperative rather than imperative.
- 💬 **In order for a Squad to be successful, it is important to achieve the objectives. Ensuring success cannot be alone the responsibility of the Product Owner. Thus, it is critical that the entire team understands the objectives and takes ownership of them,**

independent of their areas of expertise. On this point, it is essential that the Product Owner clearly communicates the Squad's objectives with the team while still being a true member of the team. As a Product Owner, I am transparent with the team, working towards the same goal and contributing to the establishment of an environment open to exchange of ideas. The product is more functional and successful when team members are able to express their ideas openly in order to fully realize them.

- 💬 For me, the key to being a successful Squad is to be a team that sets and adopts clear objectives, looks for the best solution in line with these objectives, and focuses on continuous improvement and development. My advice to Product Owners is that they should try to ensure that their objectives are adopted by colleagues in all roles within the Squad. To achieve success, everyone should be able to answer the question, “Why are we doing this?” If everyone on the team is a part of the same objective, they should be able to share their opinion on just about everything. The fact that everyone's voice is valued and that everyone assumes responsibilities outside of their main areas of expertise is the most important factor that connects team members to each other and to the main objective.
- 💬 **For me, being successful means seeing that the entire team feels motivated and responsible for every job we bring to life. I think the fact that everyone can share in our success and that all team members may**

comfortably express their own ideas are the factors that allow for success in the first place.

💬 I think the basis of a Squad's success is that the whole team understands their strategy, objective, and roadmap. Everyone should know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Thus, it is important that the Product Owner clearly communicates her/his vision and that the team adopts this vision. Moreover, the Product Owner should listen to the team's suggestions when establishing strategy and creating a roadmap. When you set up the system in this way, you ensure that everyone contributes and acts as a team, thereby helping them to take the next steps. Acting as a team constitutes the core of an Agile team's success.

The second important issue for achieving success is to become an organization that can act without fear of making mistakes and can truly embrace the "test, learn" principle. In this respect, Product Owners have great responsibility. The more you are open to trying, taking risks, and, when necessary, learning from mistakes, the more courageous your team is. Product Owners should not forget to motivate the team in this respect. A Squad's success can certainly not be measured simply by the performance of tasks planned in the Sprint.

Advice to Product Owners

- I think that we are experiencing a big process of change with the Agile way of working, and I believe that this change starts with ourselves. Thus, I can advise Product Owners to always be flexible in their thinking and open to innovation, to constantly question methods of conducting business

by reassessing themselves and the truths they believe in.

- My suggestion to Product Owners is that they first create a clear roadmap around their vision by involving the entire team. When implementing this roadmap, they should respect others' fields of expertise and volunteer to listen to everyone in the team equally; they should not wait for planning events to communicate their vision and strategy, and they should work closely with and be accessible to the team. They shouldn't hesitate to assume tasks when required, should share failure without blaming others, and should believe in their teammates in all circumstances. When you act in this way, the team volunteers to contribute more. When our Squad was established, for example, our first goal was to increase the current upsell by 50%, starting in the following month. In the beginning, this objective put great strain on the team, so we gathered together so that I could communicate what this objective meant and how it served the company. Together, we decided on all possible actions, and the team knew the amount of additional sales that would result from each action. So everyone volunteered to do more in their field, and we followed up on daily sales, wrote results on our Scrum board, and celebrated together as we saw sales increase. After three months, we had achieved our objective by working together.
- My advice is to not try to manage the Product Backlog on your own. The Product Backlog is everyone's responsibility, and everyone can add ideas to it. The best solutions emerge when everyone contributes. Therefore, everyone in the Squad should offer their own ideas and suggestions to be prioritized by the Product Owner, if required. At one of our planning

events, for example, a colleague on the team insisted on a request related with DevOps. Although I turned to other priority items, saying that we would consider the request at a later time, he repeatedly asked about his request throughout the meeting, which made me uncomfortable. We had other top-priority issues to discuss for that Sprint. Nevertheless, I allowed him to speak up and asked him to go into more detail about his request and why it was so important. He explained that there were serious problems occurring while going live, citing three incidents that had occurred that week. At that moment, his request became top priority. Thanks to his insistence, we developed a mechanism that detects errors before making our work live. This mechanism has evolved into a structure that is used not only by our Squad, but also by many other Squads.

- Due to old habits, it is sometimes hard not to dive into the details of the product/channel you are responsible for, especially if you come from a past position in which you had to master such details. For me, the process of determining what to do and leaving the “how to” part to the team has been very difficult. Of course, I’m sure it has been as hard for the team as it has been for me. In the early days, when I became a Product Owner, I would even write down details about how the items included in the Sprint should be performed, or would explain them in detail to the team. I would try to assign work instead of waiting for team members to own the work themselves. Fortunately, I was able to quickly discard such habits. My biggest piece of advice to those who are just starting out is to allow your team to own the items themselves and try to let them find their own way of working. Let them experience the happiness and motivation resulting from this ownership. When you let

them fall down, they can learn how to stand back up again, and they will be the wiser for it. When issues cannot be resolved, you should offer them support.

- A Product Owner should create an environment in which team members can assume their own responsibilities; when clarifying the details of the work, she/he should not proceed without considering the team’s opinion. When positive business results are achieved, do not forget to share success as a team.
- My advice to future Product Owners is that their perspective should not be limited to whether or not the work included in the Sprint is finished. Likewise, assessment of the team should not be based on the pace of the Burndown Charts. Success comes from being a good team, so focus on creating this. The rest will take care of itself.
- Always have a good command of your product, in all its detail. Make a habit of internalizing MVP culture and finding meaningful pieces in the product vision you want to achieve by dividing the work into subcomponents and constantly growing the product by listening to the customer. Be sure to make decisions based on data rather than personal opinion.
- What I have learned throughout this whole process is that there is no personal failure in the Agile way of work; when you fail, you fail as a team. This is actually both a big responsibility and a great comfort. Everyone on the team contributes either directly or indirectly to every success or failure, and analysing the reasons for any failure, as well as the gains resulting from them, prevents you from repeating the same mistakes. So focus on being a team and on continually improving as a team.



Who is the Scrum Master?

- **The Scrum Master is the team's Agile ambassador who aims to make the team's life easier in order to: ensure that the team is focused and productive, create an easy working environment free of difficulties as much as possible, and take actions to achieve the successful adoption and implementation of Agile principles.**
- The Scrum Master's role is all about responsibility. Any volunteer who wants to help the team work more successfully can become a Scrum Master.
- **The Scrum Master is the person who ensures that new Agile rituals are performed in the Squad and that all members of the Squad adopt these rituals.**
- The Scrum Master not only solves problems but can also predict problems, tackle challenges from a broader perspective, understand the team and its dynamics, and provide them with the support necessary to produce better outcomes. Contrary to some misunderstandings, the Scrum Master definitely does not act as an older sister/brother who supports the team with mere technical issues. Rather, she/he acts as a guide or catalyst.
- **In fact, the Scrum Master is somewhat like a secret superhero. She/he is expected to ensure that things are on track and resolve problematic issues, while at the same time maintaining the team's motivation and taking action to increase team energy when it is down. For this purpose, the top five characteristics s/he should possess are: energy, empathy, good observation skills, responsibility, and knowledge about the team's domain.**
- The Scrum Master plays a guiding role in the team's process of adapting to Agile working systematics and practices. At the same time, s/he observes the entire process, helps to overcome team challenges during the execution stage of the work, tries to keep motivation high, and ensures that members work as a team.

Selecting a Scrum Master

We asked our Scrum Masters, “How did you decide to become a Scrum Master, and how were you chosen?”

💬 My story about becoming a Scrum Master involves a situation of coincidence. When our team's Scrum Master left the job, there was a need for someone who knew about the work and team dynamics. I hesitated at first, because before I became a Scrum Master, I always believed that she/he should be a software developer. After all, my team produces software products, and I thought that a Scrum Master should possess a good understanding of this work. I am also from a technical background; however, I have never worked as a software developer. Looking at it from this perspective, I applied for the role after my teammates and manager encouraged me by telling me that they would support me in difficult matters. At that point, I realized that the Scrum Master accountability had nothing to do with being a software developer.

💬 **In fact, I wanted to become a Scrum Master, as I wanted to provide maximum benefit for my team. In the election we held within the team, my teammates chose me for this role.**

💬 Actually, my process of becoming a Scrum Master occurred independently of me. Since our team's Scrum Master had joined the army for his military duty, my teammates asked me to become Scrum Master, as they believed that I could manage this accountability.

💬 **I think neither an Agile background nor the job description matter. Actually, I didn't want to become a Scrum Master. As if we were on the reality show Survivor, everyone**

on the team wrote who they wanted as Scrum Master on a piece of paper, and we collected them. Since I earned the most votes, I was selected as Scrum Master 😊

💬 I believed that I possessed the characteristics of a good Scrum Master, so I applied for this role to better myself. We are somewhat of a new team. When we first started, I knew some team members but not others. After introductions during our first Sprint, our second task was to choose a Scrum Master. My friend and I were candidates, and we presented our promises to the team. My colleague promised that she would bring dishes like cakes and pies, and I said I would tell jokes and make the team laugh. Finally, the team voted, and there was a tie. There was only one thing to do—flip a coin. We tossed the coin into the air, and when it hit the ground, the result was clear; I was the Scrum Master! Even though we both really wanted to be the Scrum Master, we made light of it with a bit of a joke. After all, I think it doesn't matter who is chosen, as long as there is someone who wants it.

💬 **I did not want to become a Scrum Master myself. While we were discussing it, everyone on the team suggested my name, so I accepted. Without knowing much about Agile, I tried to understand the accountability of a Scrum Master. After our Agile training, I guess everyone thought that the Scrum Master was a kind of servant. I think this is the most liked characteristic of the role. At first, we thought that**

my accountability was to get the team to participate in the Daily Scrums, to book meeting rooms, and things like these. But as time went on, we understood that it had more significance. Now, the team members trust my experience in the company and come to me when they are stuck. We all work together to overcome obstacles and improve ourselves.

New Life Changes

When asked about the differences between their previous roles and their new accountability, Scrum Masters replied:

💬 **I have been a Scrum Master for about six months, and what I have been feeling since the moment I began is the desire to constantly develop and improve myself and my team. I feel a serious responsibility towards my team and the stakeholders. I try to take immediate action in any situation that may affect my team's mood or way of work. From time to time, we may experience setbacks or miscommunication between the team and the stakeholders we work with. When these things happen, I try to step in and ensure that we arrive at a solution together. From this point of view, I think I have a new focus in my life, which is to act as a mediator. It's also very motivating to see things changing and improving, and to see the team working more happily. For example, when I follow a method in the Retrospective, in which team members thank each other and give gifts, their motivation improves because**

everyone once again sees that they and their work are appreciated. Or when I notice a small disagreement between team members, I encourage both parties to meet one-on-one, before the issue gets bigger, and when they are able to easily resolve a simple misunderstanding through mutual communication, they thank me for taking action. It brings great joy to make a difference!

💬 The Agile way of working is not something new or discovered from scratch. Since it is a perspective that can be applied to daily life, you do not feel like a fish out of water when you are introduced to it for the first time. But there is a different aspect to being a Scrum Master. Learning Scrum has given me more motivation. I enjoy trying to fill in the frame drawn by Scrum. Moreover, it is very enjoyable to learn a system that we can implement in both work and our daily lives.

💬 **After becoming a Scrum Master, I gained new responsibilities. I began to feel more responsible for how the team's work is progressing, and more importantly, for potential obstacles and solutions for them. I think my muscles for time management have improved, since there are extra tasks to be performed and followed up on. In addition, the role of Scrum Master also contributes to the development of leadership skills, as it requires the fundamental responsibility of being a facilitator.**

💬 When I became Scrum Master, I suddenly found myself examining things in more detail. I learned a lot from my team, and I began to give advice about issues I originally thought I knew nothing about. I moved away from acting as an individual after realizing what team spirit really means.

💬 As soon as I became a Scrum Master, I realized that I had additional responsibilities. I felt that I was always monitoring the team's motivation and took several actions to ensure that team members quickly warmed up to each other. The most important thing I did towards this purpose



was to try to create a common past in order to create concrete memories that went beyond the routine.

In addition to the team event we held externally, I wrote a team song; then we

recorded the song in the FreeZone Studio, made a video, and distributed it to the whole company. This increased our team's brand value within the company. Being a part of this work also increased team members' sense of belonging to the team and to each other.

💬 If you ask what has changed in my life, the answer is that I began to look at all aspects of the team's work and to see the bigger picture; I can say that I learned how difficult it is to be both a member of the Developers and a Scrum Master, as well as how I can maintain impartiality and include all team members in the game. I think my leadership skills improved with this new accountability. Also, with the new responsibility brought about by the role, I feel that I have learned and can better implement Agile practices.

The Story of a Sprint

Our Scrum rituals are the most important subject throughout a Sprint. As Scrum Masters, we try to facilitate these rituals so that they are performed in the most effective way. The teams begin their Sprints⁷ by discussing the upcoming work—in other words, by Sprint Planning. We establish our objective for the Sprint, our high priority work, and how to complete it. Then, throughout the Sprint, every day we start the day by trying to achieve maximum efficiency in the allotted 15 minutes, inviting the participation of the whole team during the Daily Scrums. If we see that we need to talk in more detail about the topics covered by the team during the Daily Scrum, we always try to gather the relevant team members together after the Daily Scrum. As Scrum Masters, we particularly try to focus on potential obstacles or difficulties during the Daily Scrums. Such obstacles⁸ constitute the possible tasks that we as Scrum Masters may need to address with the team. The remaining Sprint time is focused on resolving these obstacles, maintaining the team's energy, and improving the team's communication through lunch meetings or after-work team events when possible. Towards the end of the Sprint, we focus on the results of our work in the Sprint Review. Here, the team's input is especially important; we do not just focus on whether or not the work is complete. We may have completed the work, but how impactful were we? We consider whether or not we achieved a real business outcome, or, in the case that we were not able to complete some items, we examine them further in order to make it a learning experience. The Retrospective occurs just after this ritual.

The Retrospective is, in fact, an activity that we direct according to the mood of the team. The most important thing is to encourage

⁷Usually, our teams run 2 weeks Sprints.

⁸To improve the transparency and the focus on the Scrum Board, you may identify risks with emojis and limit the number of tasks a person can work on at the same time.

everyone to participate actively. When we first began an Agile way of work, we used to say in the Retrospectives that “blood shall be spilt” in order for the synergy of the team to work. Of course, we did not mean real blood. But putting everything on the table respectfully and transparently is necessary to carry out discussions, to understand others’ perspectives and soft spots, and to become familiar with the likes and dislikes of others. When we enhance this transparency, both the way of doing business and the Retrospectives run more efficiently. It may take some teams longer to adapt, but it is particularly important that the Retrospectives⁹ are healthy rituals that provide outputs that can be realized as real improvements. Thus, we set our action plans in each Retrospective and then follow up on these actions throughout the Sprint to see potential learnings and improvements.

To summarize, our aim is to spread the Scrum Master’s accountabilities to the entire team in order to ensure that everyone embraces the culture of continuous improvement. On the other side, of course, we are trying to facilitate the way we do business for a smoother progress. We also coach everyone to be proactively part of the solutions for the questions or problems faced.

Scrum Master is not the secretary of the team!

It all started with the task for finding a meeting room for rituals. These were supposed to be the tasks of a Scrum Master at first or nobody wanted to deal with these issues. We have shared this issue in the Retrospective, and it was decided that one person shall be selected in each Sprint for this task and thus the load shall be distributed within the team.

Interactions and Difficulties

As Scrum Masters, we sit around the same table as the rest of the team, as we are also team members. Thus, we are in constant contact throughout the day. It is important to spare some time for all members of the team; that’s why we try to interact with each of them individually and really get to know them. For example, we try to learn about what they do in their daily lives, what they like, and what their hobbies are. We also try to spend a lot of time together outside of work. And while we are working, we also try to have fun. Also Product Owners generally sit at the same table with us, they are always part of the team and all of our activities. Similarly, our Tribe Leads work closely with the Squads. Since we share the same working environment every day, we can always gather to discuss any issues. We always have the Product Owners’ support, particularly on issues we cannot provide solutions for on our own.

We also meet with other Squads’ Scrum Masters once a month to share our experiences, what has gone well, or what still needs to be resolved; thus, we are always learning new things from one another. We also help each other with newly-introduced Agile tools or processes.

“In the past, we tried to prepare our Scrum Board with the team after Sprint Planning, but it was not easy to bring the dispersed team back together in order to prepare it. In one of the Scrum Master events, I learned that another team prepared their Scrum Board together during their Sprint Planning. We have begun to implement this and thus are now able to perform all the preparations together before the team is dispersed.”

From time to time, the Scrum Masters and Chapter Leads specific to the operation of the Tribe gather together in order to discuss the

⁹We use different Retrospective techniques such as “The Speedboard”, “Facebook Reactions Retrospective”, “Force Field Analysis”, “Token of appreciation”, “Mad, Sad, Glad”.

general course of all the Squads, difficulties they experience, various processes and expectations, and the implementation of improvement actions.

On the other hand, the role of Scrum Master is still new for most of us. As a company, we are still in the stage of exploring the tasks of this accountability. Through experimentation, we try to find the practices that work best for our team. Management has also adopted a flexible and supportive approach towards this issue; they observe both the Agile practices and the Scrum Master's accountabilities in the implementation of these practices. While becoming accustomed to this accountability and to the Agile way of working, we also encounter various obstacles, including the following:

- Normally, Scrum Master is a full-time job, but in our company, one of the Squad members also assumes this accountability, which poses a challenge. As Scrum Master, you may find yourself in turmoil and therefore may not be able to identify potential problems. In fact, you may not be able to act impartially when required.
- This is a new accountability for many people within the company. Thus, we all have to learn by experience and discover what the role means to each of us as individuals, which is both freeing and challenging.
- Consisting of people with different competencies and experiences, Agile teams operate within a new and different structure. Naturally, problems and difficulties in communication may arise when teams are first being formed.
- In a large company, all aspects of change may not come easily or quickly. The fact that some problematic issues related to the company's operation may not be resolved

quickly, therefore requiring repeated discussions during Sprints, may cause loss of motivation.

- Of course, there is the permanent problem of finding an appropriate meeting room.
- We run two-week Sprints. In some teams, the distribution of work during these two weeks may not proceed as desired. The first week of the Sprint, for example, may progress slowly, while the second week may be more intensive. This escalating and descending pattern may cause the team stress.

The Scrum Master's Agenda in the Near Future

As Scrum Masters, what awaits you and your teams in the coming days?

💬 **As a Scrum Master, the main issues I particularly focus on in the short and medium term are related to improving team play and removing team obstacles. In this regard, I plan to focus on the Retrospectives and to try different practices here.**

💬 Our team consisted of eight people, and some of these colleagues have left us. Because it will take time to replace these colleagues, I remain as serious as possible in order to prevent the team's motivation from being affected. These circumstances have required me to assume the roles of colleagues who have left the team. After all, this is what it means to be a team—to

assume more responsibility and support the team when necessary. My biggest task in the medium term shall be to rebuild team spirit when new colleagues arrive.

💬 **My first goal is to read and learn more about Scrum. To be realistic, I think I have not done this to the best of my ability. Now, if necessary, I will be more inclined to develop my own skill set by suspending some of my work within the team.**

💬 As a team, we use both digital and physical boards, but we have not yet been able to use the physical board very effectively. Therefore, one of my focal points in the short term is to make the physical board more fun and understandable. In the long term, I plan to work on moving towards a more autonomous structure. Switching to Agile is not that easy for people who have been working for many years and have therefore adopted a certain working principle. For example, instead of understanding morning meetings as a practice designed to ensure the synchronization of the team, the team may simply see them as a ritual requiring you to report to the Product Owner. I aim to improve autonomy by improving both the Agile perspective and the team's business competencies.

💬 **The most important thing is the team's motivation, so I aim to increase transparency in order to make the team's work more visible and to ensure that everyone understands the importance of their work. Moreover, I plan to invest more in reading and learning about my role. With this in mind, one of my objectives is to obtain a global Scrum Master Certificate.**

💬 In the short term, I will continue to identify areas of potential improvement so that Sprint rituals can run more effectively, since team motivation

may be disrupted if they become bored during long meetings. To prevent this from happening, I try to perform rituals so that all members of the team are actively involved. And in the medium term, I plan to take action to ensure that the teams work in a T-Shaped structure so that everyone participates in different fields of expertise. For example, I want everyone on the team to partner with a specialist in a different subject and have them perform tasks together so that they can learn from each other's work as much as possible. In this way, we may move forward with less impact when a member of the team may have to remove herself due to an emergency or other event.

Advice to Scrum Masters

- Every person has a different capacity, and each team has different dynamics. Therefore, I recommend that Scrum Masters tailor their practice by approaching issues according to the specific need rather than rote procedure.
- Do your best to establish team spirit. Your only objective is to create a well-functioning team!
- Apart from business objectives and measurements, you can also use some basic Scrum measurement tools such as a Burndown Charts. However, it is important to remember that these are just tools and that you should not attach too much importance to them. The most meaningful metric is motivation. Look at the faces of your teammates every day; if they are smiling and having fun, the rest will follow.
- Feedback culture is very important, and

the lack of this culture can seriously affect Retrospectives. Start by participating in training on feedback and effective communication as a whole team.

- Just as it is not the king who says "I am the king," the person who says "I am the Scrum Master" has not really become a Scrum Master. As the saying puts that clearly, "Everyone knows good hackers, but no one knows the best", this challenging accountability has to inevitably play out with an invisible hand. However, this should not demotivate you. If everyone is happy and the team is successful, you have done your job well.
- The Retrospective is the most important ritual for the recovery of a team, so try different techniques.

"We were afraid to comment on the Retrospective rituals of our first Sprints. Thus, our Retrospectives were short and inefficient. In order to use this ritual more effectively, we started using a tool called Sli.do, which allows us to write anonymous comments. As a team, we write about the issues we think should be discussed in the Retrospective. Then, we focus on the topics that receive the high votes in the Retrospectives and determine the actions for the Sprint."

- Scrum Masters are actually the ambassadors of Agile transformation. In this sense, I think it is important to consider their ideas and become involved in the process of improvement throughout the company. Accordingly, you should not be limited to your team but should actively take part in the transformation of the organization.
- For the sake of personal and team development, you should always aim to benefit from other teams' experiences. Try

to find practices that have previously been proven successful.

- Try to experience each expertise area in the team to some extent and as much as possible. In this way, you will better understand the needs and challenges of each role and thus establish empathy.
- A good Scrum team depends completely on chemistry. When team members understand each other and share responsibilities, Scrum can be extremely fun. The accountability of Scrum Masters here is no different from the roles of other team members: to adopt team play and encourage everyone to do the same.
- First of all, get to know the members of your team. "What do they love?" "What are they offended by?" "What do they laugh at?" And "why do they get angry?" Then, approach each member's question/ problem with specific solutions. Proceed by making decisions concerning issues such as when and where rituals shall take place or whether to create a physical or digital board by consulting a majority of votes. It is important that the whole team participates here. Always aim to achieve together.



vodafone

Maslak

Gelecek heyecan verici.
Hazır mısın?

görmekten Teknoloji
Yarınınızdayız

5G
Dünya

Who is the Chapter Lead?

- **A Chapter is a common virtual team structure formed by people with similar fields of expertise and skills within the Tribe structure of an Agile organization. Here, the aim is to ensure that the work performed in different teams by people with similar expertise are parallel with each other, as well as to establish a structure that will allow them to communicate with each other in order to further develop their skills. It also serves to ensure alignment above the Squads within the scope of the relevant field of expertise.**

The Chapter Lead is the person who leads their members in line with the objectives of the Chapter and coaches them in their career development .

- In its briefest definition, the Chapter Lead is a person who: has knowledge of expertise in the area of the Chapter that s/he leads; is responsible for the management of potentials, performances, and the development of competencies of the employees in their Chapters; provides the environment required to encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills in the Chapter; listens to their team; and offers guidance and coaching to their team in order to resolve difficulties or problems, when applicable.
- **The Chapter Lead is the person who models appropriate working practices and synchronization between colleagues who perform similar tasks within different Squads.**
- The Chapter Lead is the person responsible for the general quality of the work, the support of the knowledge/skills required to complete the work, and the coordination of employees with similar responsibilities working on different teams. S/he is also responsible for keeping employees motivated. The Chapter Lead is responsible for her/his people, and for a specific expertise area, s/he ensures that different teams cooperate and work in coordination with one another.

Changes Brought About By Agile Way of Working

We asked our Chapter Leads: What are the differences between their previous roles and their new roles?

💬 **I have to say that after becoming a Chapter Lead, there have been serious changes in my management style. I am evolving from a management style that is basically more traditional and based on delegation/support to one that centers around coaching, listening, empathizing, and developing individual skills and competencies. Of course, as Chapter Leads, we also actively assume the role of Squad team member. In this regard, we focus on both our Chapter and our Squad. As a Squad member, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to stay active in the field.**

💬 After becoming a Chapter Lead, I learned to live with uncertainties and to motivate myself to produce solutions. Perhaps this is a process that many roles experience after switching to the Agile structure, which is nourished by these uncertainties, triggering creativity. There are no sharp distinctions such as "This is my job, and this is yours," as in the old structure. Instead, the new structure encourages everyone to cooperate, embrace generated business value, and be part of the solution. Of course, this involves some grey areas, and while these grey areas are tiring at first, you learn to be motivated by them as you learn to collaborate.

💬 **Being a Chapter Lead has seriously changed the way I work with my team. In the past, we planned team tasks and brought them to action on our own, but now we try to ensure that these tasks are planned and executed**

within the Squads. We then try to follow up on these tasks, which poses a different challenge. On the other hand, some parts of the organization still operate within a non-Agile structure and these parts still consider me a "manager". They want to follow up their tasks directly with me as in the old way of working. In such moments, I must say to them, "No, I'm a Chapter Lead, you have to send questions or tasks to the team." This, of course, can be a little tiring.

💬 When I became a Chapter Lead, I assumed the role while still working in product development and the artificial intelligence training processes of Tobi, our artificial intelligence-based digital assistant. I continue to work on balancing these roles while working towards the objectives of the Chapter. For me, Agile's focus on people is quite new. Apart from my field of expertise, I also have to focus on supporting the development of other people's skills.

The Story of an Average Week

A Chapter Lead's time is generally divided between work on their Squad and their responsibilities as Chapter Lead. While we are part of the Squad and participate in all Agile rituals and Squad-based meetings and events, we also try to spare time for members of the Chapter. We meet either collectively (a Chapter Huddle) or individually that are either planned in advance or occur spontaneously. Our goal is to share knowledge and experience in the fields of expertise we are leading, and we support the development of competencies inside the Chapter. At the most basic level, we try to ensure that the people in our Chapter have a happy working week during which they are able to create value.

Each Chapter works on a roadmap with their members, discussing topics related to what we have learned from products delivered to customers through different channels inside the Chapter, technologies and concepts that may affect our playground on a global scale, and the matching of outputs with our business objectives in order to provide better service to our customers within the Chapter. We do all this with an approach that is above the Squad.

We try to answer work-related questions through face-to-face interviews with our colleagues in the Chapter. If we receive a request for help, we may also go into the details of the work with our teammates, working together to find a solution. On the other hand, we also continue to work on processes related to ensuring that the Chapter works more effectively and conduct job interviews with applicants who will potentially be included in our team. Our main focus is to establish a sustainable structure and to be the driving force of cultural transformation.

Moreover, we try to actively participate in other Squads' Sprint Reviews as much as possible. In this way, we can explore developments in different Squads and thereby steer future plans for our own Chapter.

Parallel to this, we always meet with other Chapter Leads, Product Owners, and the Tribe Lead in order to nurture each other in aspects such as employee feedback and business priorities. Moreover, if there is work that needs improvement in terms of all Squads within the Tribe related to the specific field of expertise that we lead, or if there is work that needs to be developed with other Tribes or non-Agile teams, we focus on these issues and take initiative, prioritizing the execution of the required actions necessary to achieve better performance. To share a recent example from a Chapter, we were asked to define foreign identity numbers of foreign customers in the system by a certain date, as required by the Information Technologies and Communication Authority. The time and effort spent on calling these customers caused sales losses in all activities of the post-paid Squads. We took initiative not to close the month with losses due to these activities and quickly met with the partner management teams, created an action plan, and therefore managed to reach (in the same month) the number of sales that were lost in all Squads by ensuring the implementation of telemarketing in the field.

How Does a Chapter Work?

Meeting as a Chapter is called a “Chapter Huddle.” We try to meet at least once a month, but we sometimes meet twice a month. Instead of just talking about work, we try to bind the team together by allowing them to spend time and share with one another. Of course, there is no need to wait for these meetings to achieve communication in the Chapter. We try to keep our communications constant and close, keeping our sharing as per active needs.

What Characterizes the Content of a “Chapter Huddle”?

The content is based on the Chapter, and it can vary depending on specific needs. In general, all members have already determined the agenda of the relevant meeting before gathering together, and the meeting advances by following that agenda. However, the specific items of a Chapter Huddle are:

- Reviewing and following up on the Chapter’s own high-level road map;
- Sharing how the Chapter closed the previous month in terms of their Squad on the basis of performance, good practice, things learned, and priorities and plans for the next month;

- Sharing good practices and exchanging ideas about new technologies;
- Choosing and researching a new subject as a team, thus creating an opportunity to improve our collective competence; and
- Completing the Retrospective, learning from our mistakes, and determining actions of improvement.

These gatherings create a healthy and transparent platform where all members may exchange feedback. As Chapter Leads, our goal during this meeting is to lay the groundwork for sharing knowledge and experience inside the Chapter, to comment on the discussed points when we can offer valuable contributions, and to improve the performance of both the team and the business. The “Chapter Huddle” platform also contributes to the communication and interaction between people in the Chapter after they return to their routine lives.

Developing the Competences of the Team and Chapter Lead

How do you plan to improve as Chapter Lead?

💬 The Chapter Lead role is one that is relatively new in Turkey, particularly in Vodafone. As with any role, much of the development occurs by getting actively involved, taking initiative, and experiencing things firsthand. The company organizes specific training programs that I benefit from on many levels; these programs include those on the Agile way of working, the development of coaching competence, and feedback skills. However, I think that I have developed most in this role through experience gained from spending more time on my team and field of expertise.

I think the development of the people in my Chapter is very critical in terms of both preparing themselves for the future and contributing to the performances of the Squads they work with. While I achieve efficiency by providing mentorship and establishing a “buddy system” for the development of a new employee, I can achieve more efficiency through a coaching approach for the development of a more advanced-level colleague.


💬 **Learning about my role through experience is the most important practice I can achieve. After all, the Agile way of working is a new idea for the whole company. As stakeholders in this method, we are all included in a general routine of experiencing and learning. On this point, I think the behaviour I use most is auto control. I try to avoid old-fashioned “manager” behaviours and practices as much as possible. There are also numerous**

opportunities and mechanisms within the company designed to foster self-improvement in every field. However, I think one of the general problems of our company is that we have not fully been able to adjust our current business tempo in order to spare some time for such opportunities. When I do find time, I participate in company training and try to follow communities and events outside the company that are related to my field.

We have established the agenda of our Chapter meetings according to a structure in which everyone can learn something new and share different practices. We try to make the work of learning continuous, as we aim to be a learning organization. We also have a competence development plan that we follow with the individual members of our Chapter. According to this plan, we monitor and support development with a structure that evaluates individual and team competencies for the mutual benefit of team members and the company.

💬 As we are in a transition phase, there is clear ambiguity in all processes. Since I do not have any other examples of this role, I decide what to do and how to do it, drawing my area of responsibility. There are trainings that are provided; however, it is very difficult to fully implement the information received in these trainings. In fact, we develop our own methods through trial, error, and constant improvement.


In order to develop team members' skills, we organize periodic in-team trainings related to the subjects in my field of expertise. We participate in trainings offered by technical teams for applications such as Adobe Analytics, Target, Inapp, and Google Firebase. We also meet with external companies for development in the fields of digital marketing, big data, e-commerce, and conduct business development activities.

 **I try to improve myself through online training and sharing sessions within the company. Specifically, I continue to improve in subjects such as leadership, coaching, motivation, and feedback. As this is a process, I try to do my best to take the appropriate steps necessary to improve. I attach great importance to establishing a new structure that values my role .**

For the development of the members in my Chapter, we are currently discussing pain points in one-on-one meetings. Our next step will be to begin taking action about these issues. Where this is concerned, I think coaching practices (such as GROW) may help in managing this process.

Interactions and Difficulties

Agile has introduced many new roles to our lives, and your role is just one of them. How do you interact with other roles within this new structure? What kinds of difficulties have you experienced in the new structure? Here are Chapter Leads reflections:

 **The role of Chapter Lead is a very sensitive one, requiring a high level of emotional intelligence, observation, empathy, and skill for receiving and providing feedback. Unlike in the traditional “manager” role, you lead with coaching skills and are responsible for the management, development, and assessment of all potentials, performances, and competences of the employees in your Chapter. However, every Chapter member does not work primarily only for the goals you own and manage but also for the core business priorities of their Squads and Product Owners. Parallel to this, you are also an active member in a Squad and assume duties and responsibilities for that Squad—this is a balance that is not easy to manage. Therefore, Chapter Leads share as much with Product Owners and Tribe Leads as with Chapter members, exchanging information on the Chapter’s priorities, innovations, barriers, and areas of improvement. So I can say that we work**

closely with all other roles. Therefore, communication and cooperation are essential.

I can't say that I have difficulty in determining future strategies in my field of expertise. On this issue, I benefit greatly from the exchange of information with our Tribe Lead and the senior management of the Vodafone Group and Vodafone Turkey. The difficulty is in communicating and implementing these strategies in all Squads at the same rate, as well as in allocating time for this purpose. To ensure execution, I always stay in touch with team colleagues, whether it be for a coffee break, a one-on-one meeting, or a Chapter gathering. The rest requires follow up. We continue to share information on the relevant subject until we feel that we are on the same page as all Chapter members. After I was assigned this role, I expected performance from Chapter colleagues about tasks required at the Chapter roadmap, tasks that were not considered a direct priority by the Squads actually. I think this caused me the most difficulty. In the beginning, the Product Owners and Scrum Masters pointed out that I was requesting work without informing them in advance. I later learned through experience to communicate with Chapter members on Chapter related issues before their Sprint Planning events, as well as to ensure that they add these issues to their Squad's Backlog for discussion.

💬 The Chapter Lead is the leader of a certain field of responsibility and competence within the Tribe. I lead the DevOps Chapter. In fact, the world we live in dictates that we need constant innovation and change for the future. This technological transformation is essential for us in the digital world we live in. Within this

scope, the leadership we exhibit occurs within the framework of leading and managing such change. Since the synergy of our team always requires what is new and better in terms of technology, it is not so difficult to manage this mechanism in my own Chapter. For me, the biggest challenge is to monitor and maintain the continuity of the quality of the work within the Squads, particularly as our Chapter is derived from a traditional IT operations team. At this intense work pace in a game where rules are constantly changing, finding opportunities for improvement is difficult. At some point, the responsibility lies with the Chapter and Chapter Lead, but because the Squad is responsible for planning and doing the actual work, there may be breaks. Naturally, the Squads have many work responsibilities focused on generating business value. Within these priorities, we and other Chapters try to find a capacity to execute our own issues. This is one of the biggest challenges we are trying to manage but have not yet had the time to address.

💬 **Chapter Leads manage people within the Tribe and support the Tribe Lead in terms of strategy. The greatest challenge is that work not owned or identified by Squads is recovered by the Chapter Leads. Here, I am referring to work outside of the Squads' commercial goals. For example, say there is a need for better follow up of digital analytics (follow up of instant notifications returned to sales) for all relevant Squads. In addition, actions for disruptions in experience, accessibility, and performance corrections also need to be planned. For this purpose, one must understand the needs and coordinate the work of six different Squads and Digital Analytics teams. In this context, I contribute to my Squad but also put extra effort into ensuring that other Squads take the same**

ownership. I think as time goes on and the competencies in our Chapter grow, allowing us to see the bigger picture in our field of expertise more clearly, we will overcome such difficulties.

Another issue is that potential strategies in the field of the product and marketing Chapter are issues that are already prioritized by the Squads. Therefore, this does not leave much space for Chapter Leads in this field. I think that the balance between the Product Owners and the Chapter Leads in some fields is an area that still requires improvement, but we try to progress through trial and error.

💬 The new Agile structure divides the responsibility for product and people formerly included in the role of a traditional manager. Here, the Chapter Lead's role is to undertake the human side—in other words, the development of skills. Accordingly, we work closely with the Tribe Lead on organizational issues. Unlike in the old structure, the difficulties associated with one-on-one observation of employees have increased, as my Chapter members work in different Squads now. However, since one of Agile's primary goals is to achieve team autonomy, I try to prioritize my efforts on the "human" side. Rather than abiding by a structure in which I control employees, I have a task that I can run for help whenever required. In this regard, I think that development planning, employee training for all Chapter members, and the sharing of information in Chapter meetings are all highly important. We have not yet sufficiently prioritized these items, but it continues to be my main objective. I believe that we can move forward through cooperation, and I am truly confident that focusing in our own improvement areas together with Squads' objectives will lead to better results. We

therefore use coaching activities in order to identify our developmental needs.

The Future of the Chapter Concept

Chapters are a new structure; what do you think awaits this structure in the future?

☞ After not having had a Chapter Lead in about a year, our company then incorporated the role into our organization as a result of its learnings. I think that the Chapter structure plays an important role and will continue to gain importance due to the focus it brings in terms of competence development, motivation, potential, and performance management. It also establishes an invisible connection in terms of competences representing specific levels of expertise between Squads and encourages the sharing of information and experience.

☞ **In the future, the Chapter structure may continue exactly as it is, but I believe that the number of Chapters will eventually be reduced due to the development of expertise and the growth of T-Shaped competence. In line with this development, technical Chapters such as software development, DevOps, and testing may merge into a single Chapter at some point.**

☞ Chapter Leads are the ones primarily responsible for holding teams together; however, their responsibilities in the fields of product and marketing coincide with Squads, leaving little room left for action. Therefore, I think change in the structure is inevitable, since the organization is constantly changing and learning from its mistakes. This kind of flexibility and change is already inherent in Agile.

☞ **As a Vodafone Turkey family employee, I believe that further expertise and career development is essential, requiring**

someone to always lead and grow in this role. The task of such development falls on us as Chapter Leads. I believe that the more effective we can make this role, the more value it will add to the company and to the entire Vodafone Turkey family.

When considering the Agile structure, autonomous Squads constitute the main functioning wheel of the new organization. Agile Coaches within the organization support autonomy, of course. However, because this alone is not enough, we also need competent teams in order to achieve true autonomy. A competent team can only consist of competent individuals, and as Chapters, we are involved in their development. Therefore, in order to realize a structure that is autonomous and can generate the desired value, the concept of the Chapter is essential.

What Is a Successful Chapter?

In your opinion, what does it mean to be a successful Chapter?

💬 **A successful Chapter is a structure in which: Chapter members are supplied with an effective communication network, employees have the appropriate level of knowledge and competence with which to comfortably perform their roles, and Chapter Leads invest time in its members in order to contribute to their development at every level. Since the sum of the Chapters constitutes a complete Tribe structure, the development of competences within the Chapters is reflected in the overall performance of the Tribe.**

💬 A successful Chapter is a team that works in its own field of responsibility, guides and mobilizes the related Squads in terms of this responsibility, and establishes and operates information sharing mechanisms within itself. For my Chapter, success in this respect means establishing a fully-automated wheel of application development and being a team in which cross-responsibilities and perspectives are developed and transformed.

💬 **It is difficult for the perfect to remain silent. Successful Chapters produce quality work that poses no problems, motivating its members and thereby positively affecting the Tribe's business results. Accordingly, this means that Chapters are doing their**

work properly.

💬 I think that a successful Chapter is an organization that may run independently of Squads, where information can be shared transparently and therefore move the organization forward by the Chapter's ability to always being open to change. I believe that any Chapter willing to adapt and improve in order to achieve its objectives can be a successful Chapter. A successful Chapter, therefore, is a Chapter whose members are interconnected, always willing to share, consistently following developing trends, and never losing the motivation to specialize in the products/ processes/technologies under their radar.

Advice for Chapter Leads

- My recommendation for companies that have adopted the Agile way of working and decided to establish a Chapter is that they should always invite feedback from companies currently applying this structure. They should also seek consultancy from companies that provide professional Agile consultancy services. Getting the support of internal or external Agile Coaches already working on this subject during the transition process may be a fast and effective choice. During this process, which also requires the continuous support of senior management, companies should include all team members (in particular the Chapter Leads) to prepare them for the new structure through additional training supported by the human resources department.
- Do not set up this structure without

describing to employees what the Chapter is and how it works. Because such descriptions and expectations were not clear enough at the beginning, causing a certain level of uncertainty, our company experienced many difficulties that divided our team and prevented us from meeting expectations, particularly within my own Chapter. When organizations are only partially transformed into the Chapter structure, it slows down the transformation considerably, so if you switch to the structure, do it completely, identifying and triggering the establishment of all Chapters at the same time.

- Don't be afraid of uncertainties, and welcome the grey areas. Being a Chapter Lead requires self-motivation and the prioritization of leadership qualities needed to unify the team.
- Choose a Chapter Lead that will be good at her/his job. This requires a person who observes well and is confident that her/his team is happily producing value-added work. S/he is also a person who can: solve problems in varied and complex scenarios, listen to and empathize well with others, analyse specific scenarios, remain open to new and different ideas, offer experience acquired by different roles, and provide expertise in the work performed by her/his team members.
- Because Chapters show the value attached to employees and their development, I believe that they are critical to the Agile way of working, which emphasizes a human focus. I recommend that companies planning an Agile transformation establish these structures with care in terms of autonomy and provision of support in skill development.

#cometoagile



Tribe Leads and the Concept of Agile Leadership

The Tribe Lead is a role that focuses on achieving its goals by taking full responsibility of functioning as the general manager of a small company. However, this role is somewhat different from the definition of manager in the traditional sense, which prioritizes leadership, decision-making, strategic planning, and managerial skills. In the current structure, the Tribe Lead is responsible for ensuring that Squads work in the most favourable conditions, as well as for creating an environment in which Squads can make their own decisions.

“From time to time, I describe my role for my friends as follows: ‘I’m like the eldest person in a large family, like a grandfather. You know what’s it like in a family—many things happen, but the father knows about them last. Or if someone is really in trouble, like if someone has spent all of his pocket money, he comes to the father. Or when he has a fight with the neighbour’s child, he asks the father for help, too. Actually, that’s exactly my role in this transformation. Instead of telling people what to do, I give advice to those who seek it and try to help those who want help. In short, I am more on the serving and coaching side.’”

A Tribe is a community that acts around a certain purpose and united ideal, and it is the task of the Tribe Lead to achieve this ideal. In this manner, the art of establishing Tribe's main purpose and directing all means at hand in order to obtain valuable work outcomes comes to the fore.

The Tribe Lead does not need to have all the right answers, but s/he can help the Squad to move forward with the right questions. A normal manager would focus on questions like, "What will happen if we do this?", "What is the financial contribution of this?", or "What shall we gain or lose from this?" In other words, s/he projects decisions on a somewhat mathematical and virtual plane. This is a style that we are used to, one in which the manager is personally involved in every detail, following up on and interfering with everything. We are now consciously giving up¹⁰ on this style in our transition from charismatic to collaborative leadership. Our aim is to encourage Squads to collect data, interact with customers more frequently, and increase market awareness. Squads also feel responsible for every action they take, presenting their results transparently and learning from mistakes when required. This approach supports both ownership and learning. Managers transform into leaders who provide inspiration and function as role models; Squads expect them to offer confidence and encouragement rather than giving orders. In this sense, the Tribe Lead is more of a serving role, not one that continuously receives or demands service. Understanding this role requires a change of mindset for Squads as well as for leaders. Our journey progresses day by day, transforming our way of doing business and our concept of leadership, both of which go hand in hand.

The new leadership model emphasizes the importance of coaching skills. To develop these skills, we receive support from both internal and external coaches and work closely with Agile Coaches. The role of Tribe Lead naturally evolves as we live and experience different scenarios. As we analyse and solve problems, the organization becomes more efficient, and we continue to improve.

As Tribe Leads, we frequently gather together

to share our experiences, exchanging opinions about the problems we face. We contribute to the culture by being curious and open to change and continuous learning. After all, we are not talking about a drastic change that occurs all at once. Although there is a starting point, the change continues to develop over time. Just as relevant individuals in the Squad experience their journey of transformation together, we, as Tribe Leads, also operate as a group that supports its individual members.

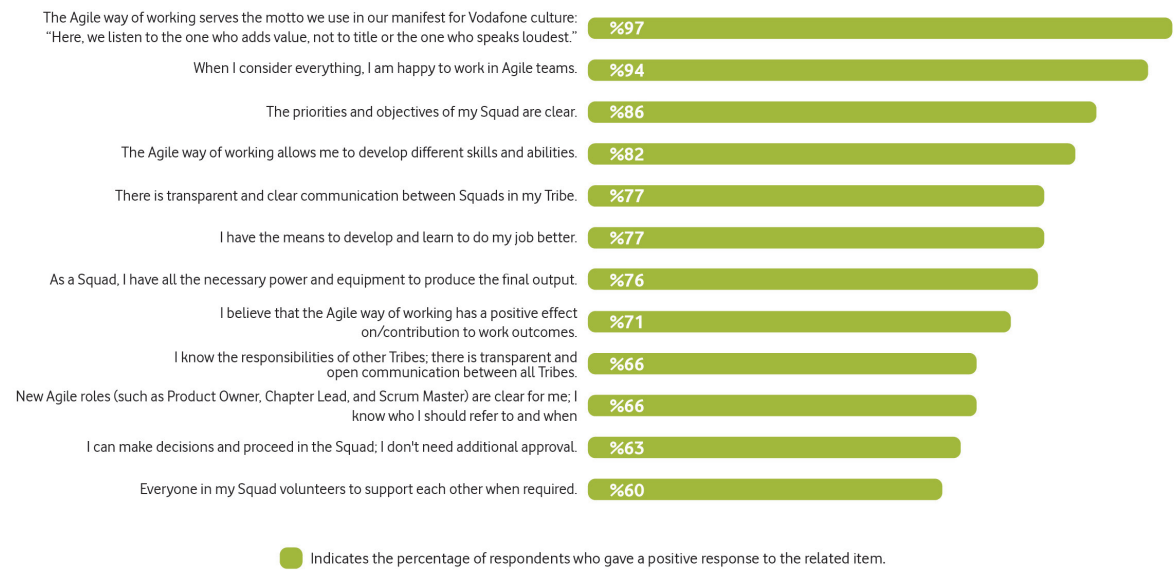
"Let me tell you about an experience we had at the beginning. Our classic way of doing business is as follows: the team creates an idea, works on the plans for a few weeks, comes up with alternatives, submits them to the manager, and then waits for the manager to make a decision. Based on that decision, the team prepares for another three to four months before preparing a new launch. Postpaid Squad came to me after having prepared a very good strategy; they evaluated more than ten alternatives, selected three of them, and had a suggestion. After six months, they informed me about their suggestion and asked me to approve their proposal. As Tribe Lead, the first things that occurred to me were as follows: 'In fact, I liked the second alternative. Its advantages are this and that because the others have been tried before. As a matter of fact, in my experience...' Then I took a step back, took a deep breath, and worked my Agile muscles again. I asked them about their vision for their product and where they wanted to go. I asked about their first step in achieving this vision and about their first meaningful output that would lead to it. I continued my questioning by putting on the appropriate hat: Where will you be after one or more Sprints? How will you weigh the outcome through the consumer and then evolve? What is your learning plan? The team was surprised. Perhaps they thought, 'You are the director, but we have worked on so many proposals and then chosen one; why would you not confirm it?' Those old muscles of mine are also still active, and the difficulty in this transformation lies in putting a stop to the mindset that tells you to make your own decisions and instead creating the best environment for the team to make decisions for themselves."

¹⁰It is of course a necessity that a Tribe Lead have the appropriate tricks of the trade to determine the strategy, feel any problem and understand the issues. However, this knowledge and experience shall not be brought forward so that they interfere with the teams' work or tell them what to do.

The Squad Has the Power Now!

After considering responses to change and the new Squad structure, it is clear that the Squads are happy. Surveys and one-on-one feedback have shown that they have gained purpose, as well as the ability to manage this purpose end-to-end. In fact, everyone has a specific purpose when they arrive at the office, whether it be increasing revenue, improving user experience, or achieving market share. These clearly-defined goals make the Squad experience more pleasurable.

properly. Squads work with this same simple principle. In most traditional organizations, however, someone might say, "I will plan the strategy, and you wipe the table," or another might say, "Let me show you how to wipe the table, and I will point out if you miss anything." The Agile structure, on the other hand, adopts end-to-end ownership of responsibility, resulting in a more productive and gratifying work environment. This new structure requires the employee to pursue the work because no decision is exactly right or wrong. In this way,



Moreover, the Squads' areas of responsibility are also very clear, another factor that results in happier employees. The principle is very simple: let us assume, for example, that my task is to wipe a table. In the context of this example, I would find a cloth, have a strategy to complete the task, and wipe the table. Nobody must tell me what to do in this case, since I would clearly be able to see the areas that I did not wipe

teaching occurs through practice. The first Sprint leads to a second and then third, through a natural progression, reinforcing a sense of ownership.

This way of working also encourages continuous learning. If, after making and implementing a decision, you do not get the desired result, you evolve in another direction. There is actually

no better way to learn than this, as this method teaches you to recognize the pros and cons of each decision instead of learning from a decision made by someone else. Because the teams are constantly trying and learning new things, expanding their expertise and moving towards the T-Shaped direction, they become more motivated.

In addition to the above, the reduction of hierarchy, focus on prioritized work, observation and sharing of success, and common goals designed to achieve a clear purpose are other important factors that increase satisfaction.

Of course, the fact that different roles work in synchronization can result in varied expectations and difficulties. Colleagues from different disciplines may have difficulty adapting and share differences of opinion, particularly at the beginning, which may be reflected in the physical work environment. While roles in the commercial sector may not be bothered by a noisy working environment, for example, software developers may find it distracting. This seemingly-simple problem may grow into a bigger issue if not addressed, requiring the team to agree on a solution such as quieter working hours in specified areas.

Another important issue concerns areas of responsibility. We have many new roles in the new structure, and these roles and responsibilities are settled over time. In fact, our expectations have only been met just recently. At first, these new roles created grey areas, but as you learn about collaboration and teamwork, these areas can be opportunities for enrichment. Of course, it is also important to identify and explain the reasons behind the existence of roles from the beginning and to support them with activities such as additional training.

Isolation problems and dependencies may also prove challenging. We provide direction to the teams and empower them with a clear goal and objective before asking them to run. However, if the team is excessively dependent on external conditions and thus experience difficulty in achieving progress, they may become discouraged or demotivated. If this happens, it is our duty as Tribe Leads to open the way for the Squads we transfer power to.

What If the Squad Fails?

Along with its rewards, the Agile way of working also contains potential for failure¹¹ and risk. Our aim here is not to take legal risks or to attempt something that contradicts the core values and structures of the company. But it would be limiting to only dwell on potential risk as if every action might cause legal/financial trouble, or even the company's fall. The distinction is an important one. Our Tribe's legal and financial officers examine our outputs from the Sprints, closely monitor the outcomes, and proactively step in if there is a risky issue that the Squad has not anticipated. But this is a close monitoring and proactive warning mechanism rather than an approval mechanism.

In addition to its new organizational structure, one of the benefits of the Agile way of working is its adoption of experimentalism as an official methodology, which encourages employees to closely examine cause and effect. This is how real learning occurs. As the saying goes, there are no failures, only lessons. However, no matter how much we say this before, it was not working. For example, if we make an offer and the customer accepts but then gives up and

¹¹Nobody is Perfect!

This is an activity where we share our mistakes and failures openly, and come together to learn from them. We have created a sharing platform within the company to encourage experimentation.

wants to return to her/his old tariff, we might ask why the customer has given up. If we were not in the Agile structure, the business unit might just consider the return and cost here and abandon the issue. In the same example, the technical teams might consider whether they performed the development correctly or allowed the customer to enter or exit the process in the right way before abandoning the issue. However, combining these two scenarios might actually point to why the customer gave up the offer, revealing the real mistake. In fact, pinpointing such mistakes is not easy. Instead of relying on old patterns, we now try to break routine. There is a cost to investing in alternative ideas, of course, in that we may be abandoning practices we know to work, but mistakes that add value are often only found in this way. In this respect, the best aspect of the Agile perspective is actually the incentive to spend the time and labour necessary to gain different understandings.

"Let me tell you an example of trial, error and learning. We created tariffs for young people on our digital channel. Our young customers could choose the application they desired with their tariffs. We thought that this freedom of choice would increase sales. It did not come out as we desired. Putting an extra stage of selection at the time of purchase lowered the purchase rates. Instead of this, presenting the most preferred one and closing the sale, and enabling our subscribers to make their choice freely after the sale led us to the desired result. We shaped our new product range in this direction. We started to implement this teaching in our other tariffs, too."

Is There Really Autonomy?

Let's begin with the saying that life is not always a bed of roses. Autonomy begins with a basic determination of roles and responsibilities, agreed upon with a handshake. Yes, we want every Squad to be autonomous, but their freedom is limited by the freedom of other teams, so there will always be a certain level of dependence. Squads learn to live with these dependences, even at a basic level, and to resolve them through collaboration. However, there are also tasks everyone accomplishes within their own field. The task of a Tribe Lead is to find resources that eliminate these dependencies, creating a budget if required. For example, we have a clear dependence on Core IT in many aspects, but we have created the necessary budgets to reduce this dependency in one of our Tribes and have established a small new team, bringing new competencies to the Tribe. This was sourcing work, and we made certain sacrifices to find the resource and reduce dependencies.

We have already discussed the perspective of Squads and Tribe Leads concerning dependency management, but what truly matters is the design of the organization, which should increasingly minimize dependencies. Developing such a design may have no end, requiring it to constantly evolve. For example, our first dependency concerns the competence of business intelligence. When this organization was first established, everyone complained that there was no business intelligence staff available in the Tribe. In the old structure, this competence was functionally linked to finance. We therefore sat down, solved the issue with finance, and introduced this competency into

our relevant Tribes by allocating funds usually spent on the recruitment of marketing staff. In just approximately two months, we were able to complete the recruitment of new business intelligence staff who were then introduced to our system. Of course, as soon as this problem was solved, a new one arose, and we are now addressing it with Core IT. This cycle of problem-solving is a never-ending process, so it must continuously and routinely be attended to.

Characteristics of a Successful Squad

There is no¹² single definition of success, since it can be achieved in many ways. In order to be successful, a Squad should first produce an output, which is why it's so important to establish a successful structure. This kind of structure should include elements such as an appropriately-sized Squad, varied competencies within the Squad, and successful management of the Squad's dependencies on the rest of the company. It is important that these elements are carefully constructed and that their formation may later be reshaped in line with the company's changing needs when necessary. The Squad should produce outputs within the framework of its own rhythm and should also be able to reach the customer. A team that can deliver continuously is the first step towards success.

What about achieving the Squad's goals? If we fail to meet the objectives, for example, does that mean that the Squad has failed? Where this is concerned, it is important to remember that

success does not mean the mere achievement of goals. Of course objectives are important, but the definition of success is more tied to moving in the right direction. On this point, two issues are important. The first concerns the path taken. Let's say, for example, that one Squad increases business results from two units to four units and another Squad increases results from eight to nine units. In this scenario, it is more important to have progressed from two to four units, not the fact that the result here is four or nine. On the second important issue here is whether or not the Squad has moved in the right direction. A Squad may not reach their objectives for several months, but if they have the right road map, they may continue improving with small outputs, taking it step by step. This is also related to the team's commitment level. As a Squad, have they adopted their purpose of existence, embraced the objectives, and moved forward through successful teamwork? Or are they trying cut corners and blame others, as is typical in the old structure? Is the Squad trying to hide behind excuses or blame placed on the person who submitted the work, the sales department, the price, or the market? The new working culture should trigger an experimental approach and creative thinking. When this happens, it is possible to achieve outstanding results with this new cultural perspective that encourages Squads¹³ to act as a team and resolve each other's deficiencies amongst themselves.

Another important issue related to success is the development of competencies and fields of expertise. We support this development through communities and Chapters. Every Squad can produce outputs, but what's important is the Squad's delivery speed, the quality of its output, and the human capability it has for its adaptation after the first launch. Now, marketing and IT

¹²Rather than comparing teams with each other, you shall focus on healing actions to ensure that the teams work more productively within themselves. To put it briefly, a successful Squad is a strong team that understands the reasons for its existence, focuses on its objectives and develops by overcoming the obstacles in front of its objectives.

¹³An important factor in acting as a team is the size of Squad. When the number of members exceed ten people, we experience that the communication inside the Squad begins to be affected negatively.

teams work together. The Squad should possess the technical skills required for the relevant work in order to produce quality work. The human and technical skills in different fields of expertise such as user experience, software, performance, and marketing are very critical in this respect.

Finally, Squads should work harmoniously. At Vodafone Turkey, there are more than 50 Squads, and each is responsible for different aspects of the customer experience. When these Squads work in harmony, total customer experience improves, leading to a more successful company.

“Observing performance is the easiest part, as there is a structure in which Squads set their own objectives on the basis of the Sprint and a transparent construct where you can easily follow to what extent those goals are realized. Intervening with a team that needs improvement in terms of performance is where you need to be more careful. The first thing I consider is whether the team truly understands the Agile structure of work and whether they implement it correctly. Particularly, the teams that have been transformed from an operational structure may not be able to understand this ritual structure and its added value without fully implementing those rituals. Instead of intervening, I try to strengthen the team by encouraging them to think of ways to reach their objective and by ensuring that they should not be scared of making mistakes. If there is still need for development, then one should consider whether the team requires support in terms of competence.”

Advice to Agile Leaders

- Agile leaders should be patient, consistent, excited, enthusiastic, and encouraging. They should ensure a good balance between the establishment of a creative playground for the teams and the achievement of objectives. They should also practice experimentation and transform errors into a learning experience. Lastly, they should spend generous amounts of time with their teams and should always be accessible.
- If you want to rely on your strategy and roadmap, create your objectives with your teams.
- It is very important that leaders create a culture of resilience. In fact, when you examine an organization at any given moment, you might observe 80 things that go well and 20 things that need improvement. You should neither be delighted at the 80 things that go well not upset at the 20 things needing improvement. This work is based on evolution, so change is always crucial. Therefore, one must remain resilient in such changing conditions. It is important to stand up when you are down, to cover for another when an objective is not met, and to show the determination and resilience of continuing down one's path.
- An Agile Leader is a leader who walks around. Leave your seat and start walking around! This is something that does not happen much in the old management style. You should be open and reach out to as many people as possible. When your

ecosystem is large in number, it may not be possible to participate in each Squad's Sprint Reviews or all of the Chapter meetings. Therefore, you should turn every second into an opportunity to communicate and interact with people—in other words, to create bonds. What's important is the ability to constantly establish such connections in the best possible way and to receive or give valuable information at all times. This, of course, requires constant communication. This may require you to stroll the room or sit in different locations.

- Tribe Lead should be the leader with an answer to the "why" rather than to the "what" and the "how." S/he should be a serving leader who works to eliminate problems, remaining aware of the fact that Tribe members can only be as successful as they are competent, and as productive as they are effective.
- An Agile Leader should be close enough to understand issues that require support but distant enough to maintain team autonomy. The best practice for working closely with teams is to participate in Sprint Reviews and provide continuous feedback.
- One should not forget that the goal in the transformation to Agile is entrepreneurial in perspective rather than ritualistic. Organizations should transform themselves through their willingness to make mistakes, to be open-minded, and to empower their employees. We think that one of the biggest changes for leaders is the ability to leave the realization of business results to the teams and to create an environment in which teams can freely express their opinions and make decisions. The development of the leader's coaching skills can ensure that

the Squads and everyone working under the same roof can gain an entrepreneurial perspective, understand their new roles, and own the common objective of the Squad they are a part of.



Who Is an Agile Coach?

An Agile Coach works to ensure that organizations, teams, and individuals can keep up with and manage the change. Thus, s/he coaches the entire institution to ensure that the Agile culture is internalized at all levels of the organization.

As Vodafone Agile Coaches, we generally:

- Participate in the activities of the teams we coach,
- Conduct one-on-one interviews when required,
- Offer trainings within the scope of Agile,
- Deliver workshops (such as “What Is the Concept of Done?”, “What Is the MVP?”, and “Product Backlog Management”),
- Establish and operate communities for improvement within the company (such as the Scrum Master community), and
- Coach at the organizational level (such as creating metrics or designing and implementing supportive steps for cultural transformation).

The name of our Agile Coaches team in Vodafone is "Agilizers." In early 2019, the Internal Agile Coach Development Program was launched in order to introduce Agile practices to more employees and departments at the organizational level. For the first time in the history of Vodafone Turkey, an Agile Coach team was created from applicants who completed an evaluation and selection process designed specifically for the position.

This selection process consisted of five steps:

- Letter of Intent
- First Interview
- Knowledge Proficiency Exam
- Evaluation Center Application
- Final Interview

In this process, candidates who voluntarily applied to this new role were assessed in areas such as level of knowledge about Agile, desire for the position, communication skills, coaching competence, curiosity, and focus on self-development.

The program, designed to last about six months, began immediately after the selection process and included the following training and certificates:

- Coaching and Feedback Training,
- Facilitation Training,
- Conflict Management Training,
- Scrum.org Professional Scrum Master Training and PSM I Certificate,
- Scrum.org Professional Scrum Product Owner Training and PSPO I Certificate, and
- Storytelling Training.

This program continued with on-the-job training, which included shadow coaching and co-coaching activities. The process was designed to increase the experience of new coaches by asking them to participate in team rituals with

colleagues who were already actively coaching. Later, this process continued with the coach candidates assuming team coaching responsibility with a smooth transition and actively supporting their related teams on their own.

A Squad's Coaching Adventure

Vodafone implements a Spotify model in which Squads are positioned inside the Tribes. Each Tribe has its own objectives that serve the company's general strategic objective. Squads in the Tribe regularly follow the targets (OKR: Objective Key Results) that serve the Tribe's objective.

To establish a new Squad, it is necessary to first determine why the team is required, what is expected from them, and how it will contribute to the organization by producing certain values.

The establishment of a Squad is a dynamic process. While many Squads are established from the very beginning along with the Tribe, it is also possible that new Squads may be established later, or that changes can be made to the structure of existing Squads as required, while the Tribe continues its work. In any case, the first step in the establishment of a Squad is to provide a two-day basic Agile training session for all team members. After this training, we gather the team in an all-day kickoff event to ensure that the team can start running its first Sprint right away. In the first half of this event, we focus on team building and organize introduction and icebreaking activities so that team members can get to know one another. We also build foundations designed to ensure that the team works harmoniously; such foundations include the team name, logo, Sprint length,

times of rituals, Scrum Master election, and team rules and values . During the rest of the day, we plan and begin the first Sprint. When the Squad begins to run a Sprint, we ensure that teamwork and feedback training is also organized.

It takes about six months for an average Squad to reach maturity in actively using basic Agile practices. During this time, Agile Coaches work closely with the team and continue to support them in terms of practicing Agile principles and overcoming difficulties. We also encourage the Squad to work independently through Agility Snapshots (an assessment that explores the adoption of Scrum framework/values and identifies improvement areas) and Team Health Check-Ups (an assessment designed to explore the Squad's success as a team). We complete these assessments every quarter. In doing so, we aim to trigger the team's ability to independently take actions toward improvement by increasing transparency. We reduce support when the team is able to work together to overcome difficulties experienced in the first Sprints and become capable to apply the inspect and adapt empirical process that embodies the core of Scrum. During the coaching adventure of a new Squad, we mainly focus on the establishment of the team, ensuring that the team and its roles become accustomed to the new way of working, act together as a team, and actively work towards improvement. Being a team is not easy. Usually, it takes more than six months to establish a good team, but as the establishment of new teams within the company continues to grow, we need to eventually reduce support for the team and move on to coach new teams. Before reducing support for a Squad, however, we want to see positive sparks, at least in terms of the formation of team spirit and maturity, both of which are required for a Squad to independently address and solve problems. Agile is an approach based on the empirical process; therefore, we believe that the team should learn to cope with the problems it faces instead of avoiding them

altogether. In other words, we aim to reduce support for the team based on the extent to which KAIZEN culture is established and internalized within the team. To clarify, we try to observe the following:

- The status of the relationships within the team,
- Ownership levels of standards such as the Definition of Done,
- The role and competency strengthening programs/trainings needs,
- Level of understanding of Squad/Tribe objectives, and
- Measures taken to follow up and resolve obstacles.

We support these observations through periodic check-ups and try to ensure that necessary actions are taken according to the priorities determined by the team.

If a team can take action and follow up on the above issues by internalizing them, we consider it a "mature" team.

Can Every Squad Be a “Team”?

In order for a Squad to be considered an Agile Team, it must have the following main features:

- Its objectives and vision should be understood by all team members,
- Its members should work passionately to achieve its objectives, sharing responsibility and helping each other,
- Its members should give and receive open feedback about areas of development,
- It should maintain a trusting and respectful environment,
- It should strive for perfection through constant development,
- Its members should work boldly together to remove obstacles and make their own decisions, and
- It should develop an understanding that focuses on the customer.

Becoming a successful team is a challenging process in that it requires a high level of communication, transparency, and collaboration among team members. While some people may be naturally inclined to work as a team, others may not prefer it. Due to differing work habits, characteristics, and expectations, disagreements may arise between team members coming from different disciplines, but this is actually a natural slip of the wheel. It is not an easy step to switch from a way of working that prioritizes individualism. However, even if the hiccups occurring during the team-building process do not always affect the value produced, they can disrupt team harmony and cause larger problems in the long term. To prevent this, it is important that the team be encouraged to communicate openly during its establishment through the reinforcement of Agile values. Also, the team can be encouraged to proceed in line with its objectives through the acceptance of

their natural differences. As team members work side by side to begin producing results, such problems may begin to resolve themselves. Even minor achievements can be important milestones for the bonding of a team. As coaches, we also offer support through activities that enable the team to meet outside of work in order to accelerate the team-bonding process.

Of course, this may not always work exactly as planned. For example, we once made the mistake of not allocating enough time to discuss Agile values during the establishment of one of our teams. Because we did not discuss the grounds for being a team at the start, disagreements occurred, and we had to apply different approaches. When we noticed the problem, our first action was the simplest that came to mind—we encouraged those experiencing disagreements to have one-on-one meetings so that they could resolve their issues. However, coaching these interviews did not resolve the problem, so as mutual discussions continued, we organized a “Teaming Up and Providing Feedback” training session to trigger team dynamics. During the session, we attempted to demonstrate the value of teamwork and feedback through games and examples, but this also didn’t produce the desired results. As problem continued, we sought support from the relevant Chapter Leads, since any problem can potentially affect the whole team. After these training sessions, one-on-one interviews, and meetings, we realized that the problem was that two successful team members could not agree as a result of their opposing personalities. Our example is similar to the predicament of famous footballer Zlatan Ibrahimovic, one of the most unique centre-forwards of recent years. When news was released that he would join Barcelona, one of

the best teams of recent years, fans believed that Barcelona would be unstoppable. But during his first season, everyone realized that despite Ibrahimovic's superior skills, he was not suitable for Barcelona, and Ibrahimovic ended up joining Italy at the end of the season. In both examples, the solution was to end a forced relationship in order to avoid causing additional harm to both parties.

This example illustrates the difficulty of being a team and maintaining team spirit. Whatever you do, and no matter how hard you try, it is sometimes inevitable that things will not work out.

Have We Become Agile?

It is not possible to claim that one has become Agile. As Agile's basic philosophy is based on experimentation, we constantly strive to experience new practices within the company. And though we sometimes fail in these practices, what matters most is the development of an environment where people internalize the acceptance of making mistakes. So to say that one has become Agile is actually against the nature of this culture. When you think you have achieved it, you have to progress by trying something new. Accordingly, we can say that there is a long way ahead of us in terms of maintaining an Agile culture.

Considering our Agile journey, we are focusing on the following areas of improvement:

- Leading a new culture and mindset,
- Avoiding the mechanical applications of Agile, which are implemented without focusing on values, and
- Reducing dependencies between Squads.

Considering that the basic building blocks of teams are individuals, the agility of those individuals (in terms of mindset) is one of our main focal points. Thus, we try to practice one-on-one coaching as much as possible, and whenever we see the need. The important question here concerns the extent to which people are open to change. Teams begin to change only when individuals do, and when teams begin to change, the organization also changes. What makes the transformation to Agile valuable is that this change becomes continuous because it becomes the main dynamic of the organization. In general, we support the establishment of a working environment in line with Agile values, transparency, and focus on customers. As long as these are provided, the specifics of what we do and how we do it are actually less important. The basis of this kind of work is to constantly reinforce these values and principles when required and to establish an environment that facilitates the discovery of new practices. On this point, Chapter Leads and Tribe Leads are our important stakeholders. By working together with these roles, we first try to ensure that they have developed the characteristics of servant leadership that embraces Agile values so that they set an example for the individuals they work with.

In order to be successful, it is extremely important that managers who have long been accustomed to the old system and culture are able to adapt to this new way of working. If this transformation cannot be achieved, the potentially demanding behaviour of such managers may negatively impact many other roles in the system, thereby causing further difficulties. As Agile Coaches, we have experienced such difficulties, too. Of course, it is not easy to change years of old habits at once. We therefore support the transformation process through training sessions, workshops, and one-on-one coaching exercises. Scrum Masters are also an important role that empowers us to

overcome obstacles experienced throughout the company. Our organization still experiences difficulties in establishing this new way of working, so we rely heavily on the help of Scrum Masters. In order to overcome such difficulties and increase the number of ambassadors of change who act together with us, we try to keep organizational-level awareness alive through organizations such as the Scrum Master Community.

In addition to the cultural aspect of Agile, one must also consider the more mechanical aspect. Do Agile practices work as desired in all Squads? Of course they don't. After working with traditional methods for many years, we are now on a journey that requires us to develop new muscles through extreme transformation. Along this journey, we will naturally encounter problems that we will have to address. Perhaps the first of these problems or resistance points is the resistance that occurs against the Daily Scrum activity. There may be different reasons for such resistance, depending on the dynamics of the team. For example:

- We are always together, so there is no need to meet every morning.
- There has been no change in the state of affairs today, so we do not need to talk.
- We have just made plans yesterday and discussed the work in detail. Therefore, we don't have to discuss it again today.

In such cases, we first describe the benefit of this ritual to the team. If their resistance continues, we observe for a while, and when we observe a failure resulting from the fact that the ritual was not performed, we create a platform to discuss it and reassess the requirement for the Daily Scrum and the benefits of this practice with the team.

As Agile Coaches, we first of all stand by the team and focus on the root cause of resistance.

We try to ensure that the team understands and embraces the benefit of the activity as a result of experience. We reinforce this by asking the right questions and organizing appropriate team games.

One of the biggest obstacles to the Agile transformation is dependencies between teams. In large organizations such as Vodafone Turkey, it is not possible to completely resolve these dependencies while transitioning from the traditional to the Agile way of working. Although we try to include all the necessary roles to the team during its establishment, some dependencies may remain for different reasons, but the organization takes actions to eliminate or minimize such dependencies as much as possible. For example, we may disperse team members on which many teams in the Tribe have developed a dependency to other teams in the Tribe. If dependencies outside the Tribe concentrate on a particular area or team, that team may be moved inside the Tribe. In the field of technology, we are planning and realizing the transition to micro service architecture step by step.

Another obstacle is that we have teams with profit partners that we have made agreements with before setting out on the journey of transformation, so we are working with traditional methods in different locations. Therefore, these teams could not run in the same location and towards the same objective with their profit partners due to the contracts they had agreed upon before the transformation. In such cases, the priorities of the Product Owners and profit partners may differ, and the desired objective for the Sprint may be compromised because the priority of the Product Owner is not respected. Although our entire Squad could not begin working in the same location due to the contract, we were able to ensure that the entire team participated in the activities, albeit remotely. To ensure that

our profit partner and management understood us, we explained by illustrating the problems we were dealing with. As a result, we can now achieve a common understanding concerning both the details of the items to be planned and their priorities by performing Product Backlog Refinement rituals before planning meetings. Even though the team includes employees from two different companies, it has become more unified, and clear improvements have been made, proving that it is, indeed, possible to achieve a common goal. We have agreed that service providers shall work at the same location in the upcoming period and have formalized this requirement during the renewal and signing of contracts. In addition, we have initiated development activities for competencies that may be developed internally.

Interactions Between Roles

Our Agile transformation has led to major changes within our organization. In order to lessen bureaucracy and hierarchy, we are trying to evolve to a more horizontal organization. The challenges of our transformation within Squads is perhaps not as severe as it is at the organizational level, but we have seen how difficult it is to achieve a self-organized team without sacrificing transparency. In this context, we try to work as closely as possible with all team members, helping them to internalize Agile principles, regardless of their role in the team. Since the primary value of Agile highlights the value of individuals and interaction, we identify areas of development within the team by focusing on individual relationships.

As Agile Coaches, we have responsibilities in the Tribes as well. One of the priorities of the "Agilizers" Squad, which was established more

than a year ago by Agile Coaches, is to ensure that transformation support at the team level is provided and maintained in a wider range. In addition to the roles within the Scrum framework, the Tribe also contains roles such as Chapter Leads and Tribe Leads, which were established according to the requirements of the organization. In order to increase interaction between these roles, we contribute to the organization of "Scrum Master-Tribe Lead" and "Tribe Lead-Product Owner-Chapter Lead" meetings and events such as Tribe Days, an event in which Tribes invite their stakeholders to the organization. Here, the teams within the Tribe present their work outcomes and their expectations from stakeholders. At the end of Tribe Day, a social "happy hour" activity is held.

The Chapter Lead is the role we had the hardest time understanding as an organization because the way it is defined in the organization does not exactly correspond to its practical application. The Chapter Lead's primary role and responsibility is to increase the competence levels of Chapter members. Accordingly, Chapter Leads are expected to understand the competence levels of Chapter members by holding regular one-on-one and team meetings with Chapter members. They are also expected to take necessary actions to raise these competency levels. Currently, the organization perceives Chapter Leads as people managers more than as coaches, but we are working to change this perception by evaluating what we can do to ensure that they work in accordance with the definition of their role. We are thereby trying to create a platform suitable for this purpose. We also provide awareness and training sessions to support the communication of Tribes and other non-Agile units.

Agile Recommendations

For a New Squad:

Rather than teaching you what to do, Agile approaches help you discover how to do your work (at which you are an expert) more effectively, comfortably, and efficiently as a team. However, it is still useful to draw up a team contract and review it periodically.

The contract consists of the basic rules accepted by team members. When these rules are clearly understood by everyone in the team, they contribute greatly in their simplicity and effectiveness. For example, the contract might include rules regarding the use of laptops or phones during rituals, the start time of the team's Daily Scrum, or the implementation of at least one Retrospective action in each Sprint.

For a New Scrum Master:

For proper implementation of the Scrum framework, Scrum Masters should prepare themselves for change, new ideas, the courage to experiment, and the ability to communicate clearly with management or the team. In order to support their role, they should also seek new knowledge on the topic by reading and studying about Scrum.

For a New Product Owner:

Product Owners should act as if they are part of the team rather than the manager of the team. With the awareness that they manage the product (not the team) they should take extra care to get to know their product, market, competitors, customers, and stakeholders. While doing so, they should focus on value and instil this focus in the team.

For a New Tribe Lead:

In order to become an Agile leader, Tribe Leads

should learn to change their own behaviour. With this transformation, they should support the teams in establishing an environment where they can manage themselves and be creative. This environment should allow all team members to feel that they can easily knock on the Tribe Lead's door. Therefore, it is essential that Tribe Leads are in frequent and close contact with all Squad members, as well as the Product Owner, Chapter Lead, and Scrum Masters, from the very beginning. By participating as a stakeholder in the teams' Sprint Reviews, they should actively provide feedback on the final product and contribute to the development of the team.

For a New Chapter Lead:

In addition to being an expert in their field, Chapter Leads should also communicate their competence and knowledge to others, opening the door for them to improve themselves. In doing so, they directly contribute to the development of Chapter members by staying in close contact with them. To ensure regular contact, Chapter Leads should organize recurrent one-on-one and Chapter meetings. To improve individual competencies in the Chapter, they should keep and follow up on a list of objectives prioritized as actions.

For a New Organization Undergoing the Agile Transformation:

Begin the transformation with awareness and ownership at the CEO level from the beginning.

Clearly explain why you want to change, what your objectives are, and how people may be affected by the transformation.

Agility is not a phenomenon that you can achieve simply by ensuring that teams implement certain practices. When you begin the transformation, do not work at a single level (the team level). Instead, proceed by ensuring that managers in particular are involved in the

transformation and that they lead by initiating this change in their own behaviour.

Begin to train your internal Agile Coaches at the very start of the process.

When setting up your organizational structure and selecting roles, try to include as many in the company as possible. In other words, you should avoid difficult top-down designs.

Make early support plans for the training and development of the competencies of new roles (Product Owner, Scrum Master, etc.) introduced with Agile.

In terms of organizational structure, it may not be possible for everyone to work in an Agile team, but this should not be an obstacle to maintaining Agile principles. Take steps to progress the corporate culture and to change the language.

For Those Wanting to Become Agile Coaches:

Those wanting to become an Agile Coach may start by understanding and embracing the philosophy of Agile and trying to reflect it in their daily lives. They should also be aware that some part of them should always remain a student with an appetite for knowledge, no matter how many years they have been doing their job.

WE WISH YOU GOOD LUCK!



As Vodafone Turkey, we began working from home from mid-March 2020, excluding certain operations teams and personnel acting in critical functions. Since we had already long been working from home one day a week, our infrastructures supporting remote working had already been established. Before March, we tested our infrastructure by trying to work from home for 1 day with the participation of the whole organization.

Our current priority is to overcome this pandemic period healthily and as soon as possible.

Part 2: The Remote Working Period

Working from Home

Remote working, a subject of long debate in the world of Agile, has quickly become the reality of our lives due to the Coronavirus epidemic. Therefore, we asked the Squads: How does this way of working currently affect you? And how was the transition period? Here are their reflections:

💬 **All teams have been affected by the pandemic, whether they work in the Agile structure or not, but I think Agile Squads have been slightly less affected. The transparency and rituals that the Agile way of working incorporated into our lives really helped us face this period quite comfortably. At first, the entire Squad felt nervous, of course, but following our Product Backlog Refinement event (our first long meeting as a Squad during this period) we realized that there was not much to be afraid of. Sharing screens via online tools, we conducted this meeting (which we normally do in a meeting room) quickly and effectively. We even noticed that we were able to address topics faster and focus more on solutions in online meetings.**

💬 Squads that have already spent a significant amount of time getting to know each other were able to adapt to working at home incredibly quickly. Moreover, I think that if we had not already established Agile Squads with the business and technology units, coordination would have been incredibly difficult during this period of crisis. We also currently have Squads that have recorded increased productivity during this time. The key fact here is that everyone works simultaneously while at home. I am not sure if the situation would have been the same if some of our Squadmates were at the office while others worked remotely.

💬 **We were able to quickly get everything on track at the very beginning of the period via video calls and managed to smoothly transition to remote working while focusing on Daily Scrums, Sprint Planning, and the Retrospective. The Agile platform helped us to easily adapt to remote working as a Squad, so we did not encounter any great difficulties. As of now, we meet and perform Daily Scrums twice a day, more than we did when at the office. We may be physically together at the office, but now we communicate more effectively, which is a big plus for Squad spirit.**

Since I am hearing impaired, I sometimes had to rely on written communication during meetings at the office, but now we can use messaging while video conferencing. The whole Squad uses every means available to write everything down that is being discussed during meetings. Thus, I fully understand all rituals and am able to participate. In this respect, it's a great achievement for me.

💬 During this period, we had almost no problems with communication and online meetings, and we are well aware that with this paradigm change, we will return to the office with several achievements under our belts. For instance, we have experienced that many things we thought were impossible (such as trainings, workshops,

and information sharing) can be done without being together in a physical environment and that some of them can even be done more actively and effectively. Surely there are some challenges, which include:

- Prolonged working hours, including meetings after 17:00 because we are at home and available, causing an imbalance in personal/professional life;
- The inability to take breaks or have lunches during working hours;
- Difficulty coordinating the Squads we are dependent on, and
- Difficulty in keeping Squad spirit/motivation alive.

In order to address such challenges, we try to take corrective actions by defining certain principles within the Squad and as an organization.

💬 **These difficult times have led to many different challenges, but I think that the Coronavirus epidemic has also reinforced our "Be Agile, Embrace Change" principle throughout the company and has perhaps led to the further strengthening of our agility. This period of shifting demands and priorities, in fact, supports Agile's purpose, and I think that Agile Squads have adapted most quickly to this period. Under current conditions, we have been able to minimize the loss of time by evaluating the shifting priorities of stakeholders after our initial Sprint Planning and taking action according to current demands. At the very beginning of this period, we were unsure of how we could continue our usual Squad rituals (normally held face to face at the office) with the same efficiency while everyone was working from home. However, we were able to adapt to this situation without any problems thanks to several online tools and communication channels that we have effectively learned how to use.**

💬 Agile working incorporates many rituals in itself, and frankly, we have seen many benefits of these rituals during this period of remote working. Our adaptation to working from home has been very easy, as it has enabled Squads to meet regularly and stay informed. Therefore, we did not suffer any productivity loss. However, the current situation has required us to reconsider our priorities and put some work on hold while putting other work into practice more quickly, especially in parallel with the increasing need for digitalization. Here, too, our Agile way of working has helped significantly in terms of prioritization and adaptation to change.

💬 **Prior to the Coronavirus period, we assumed that Agile Squads needed to work together around the same table and that Tribes required special workspaces, the "flexy location" layout being therefore inapplicable. However, this period has yielded new insights for all companies. Although this ideal environment proved impossible, all work and events regularly held by Agile Squads continued without interruption. At this stage, our principle is to address the following questions: "What do we need to ensure the continuity of our business, how can we apply different methods, and how can we become more digitalized?" Now, we conduct all rituals and meetings in digital environments and even organize activities on digital platforms, which increases motivation and dedication. Apart from routines, communities of employees such as Chapter Leads and Scrum Masters continue to meet online and produce value.**

💬 I thought that working remotely would make Agile working difficult, since Agile working fundamentally emphasizes the principle of coexistence as a team, thus making it harder to adapt to remote working. I guess we approach the idea of togetherness with prejudice, since it suggests that people should be physically side by side. But with the Coronavirus epidemic, we

quickly realized that gathering as a group can also be achieved in the digital world, especially in technology companies like ours. Actually, we were able to adapt quickly and continued conducting almost all rituals online. Our only fear concerned difficulties such as the ability of online tools to work successfully when we are all connected at the same time and the efficiency of meetings requiring us to talk in turn. But nobody questioned whether our working style would be suitable for a digital environment; we only questioned our infrastructure. However, through our first Agile rituals, we came to the realization that there is nothing to be afraid of and that our company has provided all the necessary facilities in terms of technology and infrastructure. As an IT employee, I can't help mentioning that I have, on a number of occasions, re-experienced the feeling of pride in working at Vodafone Turkey.

We also realized that the Agile working method is also the most suitable way of remote working. Some of the benefits we have gained from the Agile way of working during this period include the following:

- Our work wasn't interrupted, as the rituals continued online in the same way as in the office;
- We did not stop communicating with each other and stayed highly connected;
- We had the opportunity to update and improve our Squad chemistry; and
- We were able to communicate more transparently.

Did we face any difficulties? Of course there are also challenges, challenges are always part of the job.

💬 **When sitting around the same table at the office, we could instantly share our**

progress in each other's work, despite the different jobs we were performing, and we could also freely chat about matters outside of work. After working from home, it became obvious that meeting with the Squad only at Daily Scrums was not enough. We felt our sense of integrity and bond begin to weaken, which is why we decided to organize daily online meetings (lasting at least one hour) to spend more time together. During these meetings, we were able to talk about our work, chat informally, and just take a breath, thus nourishing our bond. In fact, we now spend more time together than before.

💬 I think we are lucky to have been caught in this home office period after having already become accustomed to the Agile way of working, since our old way of working would have caused more difficulties. Currently, the clarity and simplicity of our small group rituals allows them to be successfully conducted via video conferencing. Thanks to our short daily meetings, we are always informed of what we are doing within the Squad, and our communication is never interrupted. In fact, more people are participating in Squad rituals during this period, since rituals such as Sprint Planning were more tiring when gathered in the same room for a long time. It seems that the online format has made them more comfortable. On the other hand, since difficulties such as finding suitable meeting rooms and inviting people from different locations no longer exist, the number of meetings has increased enormously. While this will increase productivity in the short term, it may also cause mental fatigue and damage the balance between professional/personal life in the long term.

💬 **Both individually and as a Squad, we adapted to remote working faster and easier than I expected. Our biggest achievement is that we have begun to apply Agile rituals without any extra effort. Since it is now possible to begin Daily Scrums with a**

simple click of the keyboard, we are able to meet every morning, punctually, and ready to start the day together. The number of meetings has increased during this period, but the amount of time spent for meetings has decreased, and the content is now clearer. Even the simple fact that everyone now attends meetings on time significantly increases productivity, and it's much easier to schedule individual working hours without interruptions. For example, I can now spend much more time on the Sprint Reviews for different Squads (something I could previously not find time for while at the office) while still working comfortably from home. In fact, working synchronously with other Squads has become much easier since working from home.

On the other hand, I also think that the synergy of working together in the same physical environment seriously contributes to work performance. Unfortunately, creating this synergy is a bit more difficult when working remotely with stakeholders and senior management. Sometimes it feels as if we are meeting just for the sake of meeting and that we have not yet adapted to the digital version of networking, whether it be business or social-oriented. Likewise, you don't enjoy non-business-related conversations and the one-on-one meetings that occur spontaneously while in the office when working in the digital environment. In short, we do, indeed, miss the office and our colleagues.

😊 I think we are fortunate during this period, because as Vodafone Turkey, we have already been able to work from home once a week for quite some time. I'm sure this mandatory transition has been much more difficult in companies that have never had this experience and are not used to the possibility of their employees working from home. Thanks to this

experience and our adoption of the Agile culture, we experienced a seamless transition period.

I think the initial challenge we faced was to remotely arrange our one-day rituals, where we scheduled the Sprint Review, Retrospective, and Planning as a Squad. We were used to gathering for a full day to share ideas, go out to lunch, and spend time together. Now, when we gather in the online environment, we occasionally make plans about where we will go when the pandemic is over. Everyone in the Squad misses having coffee and conversations during the day, both with the Squad and with other colleagues.

Corporate Practices that Have Facilitated the Transition Period

- Perhaps the most necessary thing during this period of being constantly at home is maintaining motivation. One way to do this is to make people feel safe and happy. Accordingly, from the very beginning, our senior executives have been trying to communicate more closely and transparently, both through meetings and notifications. Thanks to the transparent discussion of company processes and management's sincere approach in this direction, we clearly felt that the company has prioritized the happiness, safety, and the families of its employees during this period.
- As soon as this epidemic began, we took quick action to implement a home office environment, which significantly impacted the morale and commitment of our employees. During this process, both HR and our managers were genuinely concerned about everyone. In fact, colleagues from HR phoned every Vodafone Turkey employee individually to ask them how they felt and whether they needed anything. This touching approach was well received. In addition, our managers speak with their Squads almost every week to see if everything is okay.
- We also continue close contact and communication through surveys designed to detect and address any potential problems. As expected, the most challenging issues are related to the psychological impact of the virus and the decrease in our communication. Accordingly, we participate in sharing and interaction sessions.

"In the first survey we conducted for our employees working in Agile Squads, 70% of them stated that they work comfortably and without significant problems, 90% stated that the systems and devices operate smoothly from home, and nearly 70% stated that working from home is much more efficient. Subsequent surveys showed that the productivity index increased by ten points."



- Our most important human needs during this period are to continue communicating, sustain positive habits, and maintain motivation. In line with this, we have observed that the change in work flow and the continuation of regular rituals have greatly contributed to the motivation and commitment of our employees in Agile Squads. Apart from gathering for business purposes, we also organize "Tribe Days," personal development panels, conferences, trainings, sports lessons, "happy hour" meetings, and even "coffee interludes" with our families and children. These online events help to strengthen our ties and fulfil our need to communicate during this period.
- In particular, the transition process was supported through information to address and alleviate health-related concerns, invitations of various experts to speak on the subject, and information about nutrition and health.
- Working from home is not easy, and many of us may not have the conditions suitable to prolonged working hours at home. Considering the ergonomic requirements of employees working at home, office desks, monitors, and chairs have been sent to employees requesting them.
- Of course, technology and infrastructure support is also very important. Infrastructures related to remote access were quickly reinforced, and sustainability was ensured via various tools (such as Skype, Teams, Zoom, Mural, and Miro).
- Scrum Masters and Agile Coaches also play important roles during this period.

Through various practices such as "coffee time," they took actions in Squads to create environments in which people could have fun, take a break from work, and de-stress while at home. Agile Coaches' continuous close monitoring and support of the Squads had a positive impact on them in terms of Squad motivation.

"I realized the fact that, even more so than before, we, as Vodafone, are a big family. I was proud to be a part of this."

Additional Responsibilities for Roles

We talked to each role and asked them about the additional responsibilities fall on their role in supporting this current method of working. Here are the responses:

Squad Members

💬 Since the Squad usually sits around the same table, we had been able to frequently and instantly share ideas and act quickly when we had questions. But due to remote working, this does not always work in the same way, and we sometimes fail to support each other. Therefore, our current situation may require me to take more initiative regarding my work. Jobs requiring us to cooperate with other Squads, in particular, oblige us to follow up more closely than usual. The current agenda keeps all Squads busy, so this situation is actually normal. When considered among other things, I also think that it's positive because it bolsters self-confidence, practicality, and a sense of ownership, both in myself and in our Squad.

💬 **Working remotely has made me feel that I'm not just working in an office anymore. It**

now feels as if I have two jobs, one involving caring for and planning activities with my children. In this respect, everything is more rushed and intense. But this is the first time we have spent this much time with our children, and in this sense, this period we find ourselves in has its different and beautiful sides. Most importantly, we are healthy, at home, and with our families, and we will get through this period together.

Since we can anticipate how much work we can get as a Squad, I think we set right balance between professional/personal life at home. Although I initially couldn't manage to maintain this balance, I think that I have now achieved it.

Scrum Masters

💬 During this new period, Scrum Masters have important responsibilities. Normally, solving problems or eliminating obstacles within the Squad was easier when everyone worked side by side, but things can be overlooked while working remotely. That's why Scrum Masters should monitor their Squad more closely during this period. For example, if I notice that one of the Squad members is working too hard, it is my duty to warn them that they will not be able to continue at the same pace in the long term and that they should slow down. On the other hand, if there is someone in the Squad who lacks motivation or is experiencing difficulties due to work or some other reason, it is more difficult to support them from afar.

💬 **As Scrum Masters, our responsibility is to flag the Squad's problems so that they can be solved when necessary. This period we are currently experiencing has brought with it new conditions and methods of work that may weaken muscles that normally function well within the Squad. In order to minimize the impact of this, I try to quickly identify and solve problems by asking more**

questions. One of the most important ways I can support the Squad during this period is to boost their happiness and motivation by highlighting their strengths. In this light, I try to bring the Squad's positive developments to the forefront.

Product Owner

💬 This period has brought many additional responsibilities to all of us, and I do not know whether I can successfully fulfil all of them. First of all, I try to adapt our Squad priorities to the current situation by closely following the agenda of the company and country. In addition to short-term planning, I also try to plan for the medium and long term. In Sprint Planning actions, we try to plan by considering the home and family (or psychological) conditions of our colleagues. In order to be more productive, I try to create and support new ideas, thereby keeping the Squad's motivation high.

💬 **Remote working has actually brought many changes to our lives and those of our customers. We therefore had to focus on our customers' changing lifestyles and the values we would create for them. Of course, I quickly revised our Product Backlog according to these priorities and adapted my own priorities as Product Owner. Being flexible in this way has become even more important during this period, and in this sense, serious responsibility falls on my role on behalf of my Squad.**

Chapter Lead

💬 Firstly, there is no more small talk or sharing cups of tea. I was already aware that such conversations helped me to understand and support my Squadmates, but this period has further reinforced that fact. I try to make up for this loss by attending as many Daily Scrums as possible and scheduling more one-on-one meetings.

As our inability to meet face to face drags

on, I see that we encounter more and more communication-related mishaps. Some problems that were previously solved fairly easily are now exaggerated because of distance or the inability to reach the right person. To prevent this, I try to contact my Squadmates more frequently in order to quickly detect and solve such problems.

💬 **I try not to miss any Sprint Reviews for most Squads in my Tribe and participate in other rituals as much as possible. My most important role is to support the motivation, performance, and development of my Chapter members. For this purpose, we continue to organize 3 different pre-planned gathering events called "Chapter Technical Sync," "Chapter Huddle," and "Chapter Meeting." We also schedule online coffee hours to chat and share our experiences and feelings.**

The continuation of training sessions is also an issue during this period, but we try to keep up with such sessions with Vodafone Academy. Also, there are many new online training opportunities now, and I try to research and share them with my colleagues.

One of the biggest challenges seems to be conducting orientation for new members of our Chapter, but we are currently thinking about how we can do this in a more effective and healthy way.

Tribe Lead

💬 As the Tribe Lead, I try to make my Squads feel free to come to me for help. During this period, it is necessary to keep motivation high, so I reduced the time I was spending on stakeholder management and shifted my focus to spending more time with my Squad, particularly the Product Owner, Chapter Lead, and Scrum Masters in my Tribe. Of course, it is also important to ensure that each Squad is progressing towards

our goal. In this direction, I make a concerted effort to participate more in Sprint Reviews.

💬 **I think the biggest additional responsibility is being shouldered by the communication side. Currently, it's not possible to run into somebody in the elevator or while getting a coffee, or to simply ask them "what's up, how is it going?" as we pass by. This has created the need for more planned and systematic communication and therefore interaction. As the Tribe Lead, the most critical responsibility surely falls on us. Every two weeks, we organize a "Tribe All Hands" event and "happy hours" where we play digital games at the "Care Tribe." In addition to our regular routine meetings, we also schedule weekly one-on-one meetings with the Product Owners and Chapter Leads. The purpose of these meetings is to reach out to Squads via different channels than those used in Sprint Reviews and, beyond that, to remain as accessible as possible.**

Agile Coach

💬 As Agile Coaches, we first try to offer support about methods and tools that Squads can use to quickly adapt to the digital environment and work more effectively. We also practice using such tools with the Squads. At the beginning of this period, we began designing online training sessions and workshops and are now improving them via feedback. We also conduct online in-class training sessions via Zoom and Mural, making it possible to create a digital collaboration environment previously realized in classrooms. We can even conduct group studies using Zoom's "Rooms" feature. We renewed training, Scrum Master Community meetings, and our Scrum Master Empowerment program accordingly, leading to very positive feedback. All participants expressed how their new experiences are more productive, allowing them to better focus. Thanks to new tools and increased efficiency, we reduced our two-day Agile 2.0 training to

one day. In order to successfully manage focus and energy during this training, we decided to divide it into two parts, each held on consecutive afternoons, which resulted in clear benefits. We also use applications (such as Mural and Miro) that offer a collaborative environment and conduct workshops digitally, resulting in useful outputs. For example, we completed our Scrum Master Empowerment program during this period with studies conducted on Zoom and Mural and even began the second program directly online.

Our main responsibility is to ensure that Squad agreements regarding the needs of the changing work environment are reviewed and that work can be conducted more effectively and happily. Since we have the opportunity to observe from both within and outside of the Squads, we try to detect disruptions in the working order and take immediate action. For this reason, we regularly provide information to the Human Resources teams and management team of our organization/Tribe so that problems can be solved quickly and collaboratively.

Advice for the Squads

- Hold tightly to your Agile rituals, and do not ignore the advantages of communicating face to face while doing business; even while working from home, you can send fewer emails and make more video calls (let's open the cameras, please 😊).
- It is imperative to find new digital solutions in order to increase communication and avoid misleading assumptions. It may be productive to create new formats/methods or deepen the use of tools such as Jira, if needed, to record or follow up on work.
- Even when working remotely, it's important to create opportunities to stay close. Normally, Squads don't just gather to work and follow rituals; they share, laugh, and have fun. We need this even more when working from home, both at the Squad and Chapter levels. For this reason, gather for regular meetings in which no business is discussed and play games instead.
- This period is an opportunity to get to know each other better and to establish a strong Squad bond for the future. Perhaps no one in the Squad had ever been a guest at a Squad mate's house before, but we do this often now, albeit digitally 😊. To turn this into an opportunity, be sure to introduce families, and let children socialize with each other online.
- Be sure to seek support from your Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters, and use digital tools and applications that facilitate your work and trigger cooperation. Retrospective digital tools, in particular, trigger more effective results for Squads who are initially

afraid of trying different techniques.

- Review Squad contracts and update them according to the conditions of remote working, which we now call the "new normal."
- Communicating with other Squads is as important as communicating with your own Squad, so be sure to socialize with them—not only to understand their problems, priorities, and expectations, but also to keep up with the overall scheme of things.
- Meet with colleagues from different Squads within the company, and participate in various online sharing events. These will allow you to learn about good practices and try them out yourself.
- During this period of working remotely and sometimes never leaving home, morale and motivation are very important. Monitor the mood of your Squad frequently, and evaluate your psychological health during Sprint Retrospectives.

Remote Agile Working Manifesto

We now have the opportunity to experience a new working environment in which our focus areas and ways of doing business are also changing. As Agile Coaches working with our Squads, we observed that some things have gained even more value and importance. In this direction, we created a manifesto for remote working with Agile. While all of the items listed below are important (just as in the Agile Manifesto) we believe that those on the left have gained particular importance.

Exploring rather than Experiencing

Adaptation rather than Plans

Appreciation rather than Feedback

Team Chemistry rather than Spontaneity

Simplicity rather than Tools

Self-Care rather than Accessibility

Socializing rather than items on the Product Backlog

Video Calls rather than Voice Calls

Confidence rather than Working in the Same Location

Exploring rather than Experiencing

We understand that the professional experiences we have gained so far are valuable, and we are aware that we need to adapt our habits to remote working conditions. Therefore, we recommend focusing on constant curiosity and exploration.

Adaptation rather than Plans

Planning priorities is important. Because this period has brought about serious change, we recommend that you adapt your plans and yourselves according to this change.

Appreciation rather than Feedback

Feedback is irrevocable for our continuous improvement. However, we highly recommend placing more focus on appreciation, which we believe will better boost motivation during this period.

Team Chemistry rather than Spontaneity

We resort to individual or spontaneous solutions to meet needs arising from remote working. While this behaviour helps us

solve problems quickly, it may also cause chaos when Squadmates resort to different solutions at the same time. We recommend expanding Squad agreements in order to work more harmoniously with our remote working conditions. Items such as digital tools used in meetings, the use of video mode and microphones, frequency of breaks, and planning of social meetings can be included in Squad agreement clauses. When establishing such agreements, we must also take care not to ignore employees' needs and to apply clauses in the agreement, updating them when necessary.

Simplicity rather than Tools

We know that if the tools are used correctly and adequately, they will make our lives easier; in order not to complicate things, we therefore recommend that you determine which specific communication and online tools you will use with your Squad. Squads can adapt to this period with different methods and tools. While one Squad might choose to raise their hands on camera for size estimation or display an application downloaded to their phones, other Squads might choose a web-based poker planning application more suitable to them. Remember, there is no single right method, so you should choose the most suitable tools by continuously exploring with your Squads. Keep in mind that the tools are designed to make our lives easier, and avoid complex methods of conducting business.

Self-Care rather than Accessibility

We value accessibility in working remotely, but the level of accessibility also depends on the continuity of our physical and mental health, as well as on the distinction between professional and personal life. Therefore, we recommend that you identify and apply the necessary actions to maintain these. Some of our suggestions include taking regular breaks to both mentally and physically relax, ventilating your work environment, adjusting your chair to the proper sitting position, and dressing as if going to work.

Socializing rather than Items on the Product Backlog

We recommend that you communicate with your Squadmates not only for work but also for socializing.

Video Calls rather than Voice Calls

We believe that seeing each other increases our energy. We therefore recommend that everyone uses their microphones and cameras during meetings.

Confidence rather than Working in the Same Location

We know that working together as a Squad in the same working area is effective. During this period, however, we believe that confidence is more valuable than being in the same place at the same time. We recommend that you place trust in your Squadmates and make them feel that they can trust you, too.

The Future is Exciting!

As Vodafone Turkey, we have taken many important steps towards the digitalization of our customers and our employees and have experienced serious transformations. However, COVID-19 has caused even greater change and more serious transformation in terms of digitalization. Now, the "old days" will indeed be considered old, the period we call "normal" is a thing of the past, and a completely different period that we call the "new normal" awaits us. Digitalization is the biggest added value of this period.

During this period, sales and service models are rapidly flowing into digital channels. With the help of Agile transformation on the Commercial Business Unit side, particularly over the last three years, we have strengthened digital channels so much so that we are now surviving this period very comfortably. We are able to provide continuous online sales and technical support to our customers without any interruption. This will be an integral part of the agenda for any company. However, we estimate that many companies will make significant investments in their technical infrastructure based on what they have learned from this period. In addition, Big Data will continue to gain importance in our lives, not only in the area of work in general but also in the field of Human Resources. Data will be our most urgent need, especially during a period when all working models are changing and working from home has become common practice. The monitoring and development of commitment, motivation, and skill sets will be important

orders of business. We were already using this kind of data, but now we use it even more. Data Analytics will be one of the indispensable items of the "new normal" in understanding the needs of employees and customers, as well as developing products and services according to needs.

In the field of training and development, the in-class training sessions held thus far will be replaced by digital platforms, and solutions will continue to be shared with employees through digital media. This change of environment in the field of education and development will play an important role in issues such as the sharing and measurement of knowledge using conventional methods. The technologically advanced but simple tools, online competition and survey applications, and digital tests that have already existed will continue to be used widely and will improve over time.

During this period, the biggest change will undoubtedly be seen in job descriptions and the way of working. As Vodafone Turkey, we have created a system in which employees have already been working from home once a week for the past three years. We continue to work with our leadership Squad on how this period will change in the "new normal." With the widespread use of the work-from-home method, we strive to increase commitment and efficiency and to ensure that it will be sustainable. At the same time, we work conscientiously to prepare our organization for the future by investing in the right fields

and with the resources that this change may create.

Another important issue is "Workforce Shaping." This period has shown us very clearly that things we normally thought impossible can actually happen. In this regard, we are now taking serious initiatives to use alternative working models. Such models involve the introduction of more periodic, hourly, project-based, and flexible working systems other than those suggested by the full-time permanent employee or outsourcing.

As change and transformation take place, these new models will surely require us to reconsider the issue of "employee commitment". The experience of digital working methods and workforce changes will lead to issues concerning ways of ensuring employee commitment, becoming one of the important outputs of the "new normal".

About a year ago, our company formed an important multi-disciplinary Squad called "Fit for the Future." Our aim was to identify and implement actions relating to preparing ourselves, our Squads, our leaders, and of course our entire organization for the future. We also wanted to develop the skills/competencies needed in the future and had already begun work on four main issues: making "Curiosity" a part of the culture, "Innovation," "Workforce Shaping," and "Reskilling/Upskilling" (preparing employees for future roles). "Fit for the Future" had already been addressing these topics, but this new period has further reinforced our decision to develop them.

Conditions of the “New Normal”

Together, we hope to survive this period in good health. What do you think will change in business life when these days are over? Assuming we are able to return to the office when recovery begins, what's the first thing you will do?

💬 When these days are over, I think companies will establish entirely home-office-style Squads. However, people's expectations of the company they work for will also change, and perhaps people will not prefer companies that do not develop a "home-office" culture.

I think the demand for meeting rooms will decrease, since online meetings can be an alternative solution.

When we return to the office, everyone will have been missing each other, and I think we will still wait in long queues for coffee. I don't set plans, but our Squad dreams of going to dinner together. During the first few weeks, we can also do things like going out for a drink after work.

💬 **During this period, everything we thought was unsolvable has been resolved through remote working, and we have experienced many of its positive aspects. For example, I would never have believed that our call center could work completely remotely, but we managed this in a very short period of time. Another example is that previously, meetings and work were often delayed simply because we could not find a meeting room, but we have seen that this has been resolved digitally in a much better fashion. For this reason, I think that when we return**

to our offices, the practices we have used while working remotely can continue to expand.

Frankly, when the recovery process is over, the first thing I will do when I return to work is hug my colleagues. I guess I really miss physical interaction because we are Mediterranean people 😊

💬 We clearly experienced that working remotely is much more efficient when everyone works synchronously. In fact, meetings from home are much more efficient than before. I have attended many online meetings, with numbers of attendees varying from 2 – 75, and as far as I have observed, these meetings have been very successful. We even spoke with our Squad about holding meetings with online tools, even at the office. We will see how that goes.

I guess I'll still be very cautious when we return, since this period has instilled a certain awareness in all of us. Other than that, I am looking forward to returning. I look forward to sitting around the table and listening to the bustling voice of activity on my floor; seeing my colleagues in person, I will not forget to be thankful.

💬 **First of all, I will need to convince myself**

of the necessity of going to the office every day. No good can come from an epidemic, yet I have been thankful for an environment in which I could both continue my professional life and spend time at home with my family. Until today, I was a person who intended to conduct "home office" work every week but could not realize it. From now on, I will be able to adapt to this rhythm more easily.

In terms of business, we will definitely understand the value of being together, although we also enjoyed the practicality of digitalization. We will once again be able to visit colleagues in their offices, meet for coffee, share "good mornings," and delineate. But we have also learned that connecting to meetings remotely is practical, and we will now no longer have to spend too much time finding a meeting room.

It may be cliché, but it cannot go without mentioning that this crisis forced us all to think of "digital first." It will now be even more critical than before to perfect the experience in digital channels, consider digital priority products, and reach subscribers through digital channels. I think the way we evaluate our priorities and investments will change in this sense.

As soon as I return to the office, I will first walk the floors. I will have conversations with everyone I enjoy working with and have not been able to see during this period. I hope those days are close, and soon we will meet at the cafeteria!

💬 We will not be able to hug each other as a

Squad like before. However, we are very used to working side by side. Now we are conditioned to be distant from one another, and I do not know how to overcome this. Because our perspective on life has changed completely, I think that when we leave this period behind, nothing will be the same as before. Including ourselves. While we make plans with life, life also makes plans for us. While we may have had other plans, life's plans are now for us to stay at home.

I don't think we will have crowded meetings or conferences like before, since we will be worried about social distancing. Squad parties and dinners may also frighten us for a while. Our current situation may not be ideal, but it is mandatory for our health.

I realize that most of my social life occurred at the office. I even seemed more married to the office than my spouse. Because of the time usually spent with my Squadmates, my wife and I had never spent so much time together before. I miss drinking coffee at the office, and I love the kitchen on our floor. When I return, my first job will be to drink a foamy coffee with the Squad and talk about what we did and how we fared. And I promised to make them *çiğ köfte* (Turkish appetizer).

💬 **First of all, I am sure that we will continue to conduct some work remotely. Maybe we will even always work like that, since it is more efficient and we have all the technical facilities for it. Remote working will also save us the stress of Istanbul traffic and time lost on the road. We will be less tired, have more time, and be more productive.**

Physical gatherings will also be more valuable and carefully planned. We will not

be running around like before.

When I return to the office, I want to look into everyone's eyes, talking to and touching as many people as possible. I dream of hugging the ones I missed, but of course, I do not know if that will be possible after the coronavirus. I can also throw joking glances to those who say “I have to go, got work to do at home” ☺

☺ It is very clear that handshakes and hugs will be less frequent in the new period. It is predictable that many aspects of our daily and business life will change from now on. I believe that we are convinced that things can run smoothly without being physically present in the company, and after this period, methods of increasing the efficiency of this will be used more widely. In addition, I believe that working with Agile is indispensable for adapting to changing conditions, and from now on, Agile transformations will become more widespread.

I think the first thing we will do is to quench the longing with the Squad. However, I do not think that it will be very difficult to return to how we used to work in the office, thanks to the adaptability that Agile has provided.

☺ **Many things will definitely change in the new period. First of all, we found that working from home does not decrease productivity, so I think opportunities to continue remote work will increase. This may affect issues such as the number of offices required, their location, and the number of employees.**

The decrease in some bureaucratic processes may now allow for an overhaul

of all long processes. Digitalization and automation will increase in every field.

As a Squad, we do not have a clear plan for our return. But we have discussed holding some of the first Squad meetings outdoors, bringing along the cakes we learned to make while at home to joint meetings, going out to dinner more often, and organizing regular after-hours activities.

☺ I believe that the definition of confidence will change after this period. The micromanagement or control-style perspective was often based on observing what employees were doing. Telecommuting has complicated this issue even further, raising questions concerning employees' methods of managing or conducting business. But this period has made me realize that it is not necessary to work in the same location in order for us to trust one another.

During this period, Vodafone Turkey demonstrated exceptional management skills, showing how much they value occupational health and safety. We have observed that placing people at the forefront of the company increases loyalty, regardless of generation. After this period, I believe that many companies will review their values and come to understand and internalize the benefits of being people-oriented in this manner. Also, remote working created an environment in which everyone was a kind of guest in their colleagues' homes. Such “visits” allowed people to become closer and understand each other better. When returning to the office, I believe that more people will place more focus on not only the company but also its employees.

We look forward to returning to the office! I think

we all want to spend time side by side, having fun with both Agilizers and our Tribe. After our reunion, it seems that adapting to the new way of working will be our top priority. Although people seem to want to work from home when they are at the office and want to be at the office when working from home, we all agree that once we return, we will experience Monday syndrome once again. Maybe a red carpet will await us at the door on the first day of our return, who knows? 😊

Part 3: Agile Coach Reskill Program

With the Agile way of working spreading throughout the organization, the need for the Agile Coach role within the company continues to increase day by day. Based on this need, we designed the Reskill program, which was previously implemented for different roles, from scratch for the Agile Coach role and wanted to share our experiences here in a transparent manner.

What is Reskill?

Reskilling is learning a new skill and training people new competencies to prepare them for a different role within the organization. At Vodafone Turkey, we strive to manage change and shape the future workforce strategy by allowing our team members to apply their new abilities in critical roles through Reskill programs.

At Vodafone, our priority is to prepare our organization and employees for the future. It is vital to unlearn some of the knowledge and competencies we have acquired when necessary and to replace them with brand-new skills that address future business practices. In this respect, we have completely changed our approach to learning and development processes in the last three years. In particular, the concepts of "Upskill" and "Reskill" have become a part of our lives, and we have redesigned all our learning and development processes around these concepts.

With Upskill, we empower employees in their respective fields, while with Reskill, we offer career opportunities in different areas by providing our teammates with new skills. In the last two years, we have implemented Reskill programs in 7 different subjects with 77 participants so that our employees can specialize in areas different from their career paths. These programs are long-term programs that include different learning methods such as virtual classroom and online training, prioritize experience-based learning, and encourage learning by working on real cases. We can say that Vodafone Turkey Agile coaches are the first Reskill program graduates trained within the company.

Why Did We Need This Program?

Agile transformation is an essential catalyst for Vodafone's digital roadmap and transition into a technology company. The Agile transformation journey is expanding throughout the company. At the same time, our Agile Coach team takes many actions to improve the agility of existing Agile teams.

The fact that agility facilitated rapid adaptation to change during and after the pandemic created awareness throughout the organization. While the number of teams we supported was 72, we came across approximately 25 new teams waiting for support. In addition, we got to see the benefits of internal Agile coaches as they know the company and the telecom sector. Based on this, we decided to develop a Reskill program to disseminate the expertise of our Agile coach team throughout the company.

We wanted to use the program to respond promptly to Agile coach needs that arose in the organization, to propagate Agile culture throughout the company, and to train potential Agile coach candidates.

When designing the Reskill program, we wanted to make sure that the applicants who participated in the program had all the skills they would need as Agile coaches. As crucial as knowledge is for the Agile coach journey, internalizing it and using these competencies is just as important. Therefore, we took all of these into consideration at the design stage. Agile is wide-ranging, so an intensive learning period was required to gain these competencies. The most challenging aspect for us was preparing for the intensive training period, as those included in the program would continue to work their current jobs. To make it easier for participants

to manage their time plans, we opted to spread the training program over time and receive their feedback at specific points.

Candidate Selection

First, the Reskill program was announced to the whole company; those who volunteered for the program applied for the internal role.



The process consisted of 4 steps:

- Application for an internal role
- Candidates' eligibility check
- Candidate video shoots
- Face-to-face interview

We asked the applicants to shoot videos for five questions about their motivation to apply upon evaluation according to their Agile experience.

The questions we asked them to shoot videos were as follows:

1. How would you define **Agile**? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Agile working method?
2. Have you ever been a **Scrum Master** or **Product Owner** before? If yes, for how long?
3. Do you have any training, certification, or experience in **Agile, Scrum, Kanban**, or similar

fields? If so, how did you contribute to the team with this knowledge?

4. What characteristics do you think a good

"Agile Coach" should have?

5. Why are you interested in the role of an **Agile Coach**, and what qualities make you a good fit for this field?

Are You Ready to Write Your Reskilling Story?



Sixty-six applications were received. The Agile coach team watched and evaluated the videos shot by the candidates. Candidates who volunteered for this new role were assessed in areas such as Agile knowledge, interest in the position, communication skills, coaching competency, curiosity, and focus on self-development.

Candidate name					
Is Agile Mindset Understood? (Y/N)					
Any Product Owner experience? (Y/N)					
Scrum Master deneyimi var mı? (Y/N)					
Any Scrum Master experience? (Y/N)					
Is she/he involved in Agile organization? (Y/N)					
Experience Duration					
What are their certificates? (PSM, PSPO, PAL)					
Is the Agile Coach Role understood? (Y/N)					
Which features make her/him suitable for coaching?					
Agile Coach Motivation 5: Very willing 1: reluctant					
Comments					

Interviews with the HR recruitment manager and members of the Agile coach team followed. The Agile Coach Reskill Program, designed for approximately seven months, began immediately after the selection process.

Reskill Program Begins!



The program consists of 4 phases:

1. Agile Fundamentals

- In-Class Basic Agile Training
- Scrum.org Professional Scrum Master Training and PSM Certificate
- Scrum.org Professional Scrum Product Owner Training and PSPO Certificate

First and foremost, an Agile coach must understand the fundamentals of Agile and Scrum. Thus, we wanted program participants to gain this knowledge and be able to demonstrate it with a certificate.

2.Vodafone's Business Model

- Product Owner, Chapter Lead, and Scrum Master Digital Learning Journey
- OKR (Objective Key Result) Workshop
- Digital Classroom Design Thinking Training

Vodafone's model is similar to Spotify's Agile Model. In this model, Squads are positioned within Tribes. Each Tribe has its objectives that serve the company goal. The Squads within Tribes regularly monitor the objectives (OKR: Objective Key Results) that will serve the Tribe's goal. With "Design Thinking", which supports Agile working, we aim to identify the right innovative services, processes, and products the customer needs. Therefore, we aimed for our colleagues participating in the Reskill program to master both

the Agile roles at Vodafone, the fundamentals of OKR, and the Design Thinking approach.

3. Competency Development

It is just as necessary for an Agile coach to build and expand their knowledge as it is to develop particular competencies and enhance their awareness to apply them. At this point, we concentrated on the competencies required for a role that will lead organizational change and serve as a trainer, coach, mentor, and team facilitator.

- Coaching and Feedback Training
- Facilitation Training
- Storytelling Training
- Training of Trainer
- Impact Training

4. On-the-job Learning

At this stage, we aimed for the candidates to share their training experiences with the teams.

Each Reskill candidate was paired with an Agile coach as a mentor-mentee. Each mentor-mentee then agreed on how they would work together.

A roadmap was created for Reskill candidates and their mentors in Agile coaches. Within this roadmap, goals were added to improve the candidates' coaching, training, and facilitation skills and increase their Agile knowledge. We can list these goals as follows:

- To participate in Scrum rituals as an observer,
- To facilitate the retrospective together with the Agile coach,
- To prepare the flow of a facilitation event,
- To conduct a facilitation event together with the Agile coach,
- To attend any workshop as an observer,
- To organize a workshop with the Scrum Master community together with the Agile coach,

- To attend Agile & Scrum training as an observer,
- To give Agile & Scrum training together with Agile coach,
- To be an observer and facilitator in the OKR workshop,
- To complete reading and watching recommendations to increase coaching skills and Agile knowledge,
- To write an article about Agile.

Each mentor and mentee came together regularly to observe the progress and teachings on the roadmap they had initially determined and shared their comments and feedback on each item.

Our main goal here was to ensure that the person understands the Tribe and Squads they will be in and, most importantly, to create platforms where the mentor and mentee can observe each other and provide space for development.

Let's hear more about the on-the-job learning process from the mentors and Agile coaches!

What approach did you use during the program?

Throughout the program, we wore different hats according to the needs. In the team rituals, we participated with our mentees as part of the program. While we were coaching, our mentees observed how to approach to the events, our

comments and our facilitation. From time to time, when our mentees took an active role with the coach hat, we observed them. After both situations, we shared our observations and feedback; the feedback about which areas we were strong in and which areas we had room for improvement helped us to gain critical awareness.

💬 **Apart from making observations in team rituals, our mentees were involved as observers in the training we provided. In the following training, they participated as narrators in some of the same content and gained experience with the trainer hat. It was precious for mentees to be a part of the practice.**

💬 Throughout the program, we tried to consider the current situation and needs of the reskill candidates and organized weekly or bi-weekly meetings to monitor their progress regularly. Each mentee's development area differed from the other. For example, one mentee had a great deal of knowledge about Agile but needed to progress in putting what he or she knew into practice. For such situations, we prepared different role plays according to the mentee's needs. Sometimes, they played a dominant Product Owner in the team, and we worked on how to take a stance or what kind of action to take as an Agile coach. Other times, we role-played how to coach a team against Agile working. Since the program was quite intense, we also interspersed different activities to keep them excited and to show how a coach should incorporate the Agile perspective into his/her daily life. For example, we asked them to watch TV series or movies and interpret them from an Agile perspective. There were even some who voluntarily wrote blog posts.

💬 During the program, our primary goal was to consider the mentees' needs and to support each coaching candidate in the area they needed the most. When we look back at the process

we went through, this process, in which we wore different hats and took on various roles, improved both our mentees and us.

How did you plan the support you will provide during the mentoring process?

- 💬 The first meeting with our mentees during the mentoring process was significant for us. Even though we work together in the same organization and know each other, it was a critical point to determine how we would proceed together, how the process would take shape, and to express our mutual expectations clearly.
- 💬 **We created our agreement about our communication style, expectations, and needs, just like the team agreements we make in team formations.**
- 💬 We were all aware that in addition to our existing roles and responsibilities in the organization, we would need to put in much effort here. Therefore, we met with our mentees at regular intervals. We created our schedule according to our availability on our calendars.
- 💬 **When necessary, we had some meetings outside the program we had set. There were also cases where we changed to our program to respond to such immediate needs.**
- 💬 We met with our mentees in a regular and disciplined manner for the period we had set. We decided that it would be a good idea to brush up on some topics, and we did some re-readings to constantly provide them with new information and support them with different approaches.

Program Success

The feedback from Reskill candidates, all candidates' completing assessments during the program, all candidates completing the program, and comments from their managers about the improvement in their competencies can all be cited as concrete reasons for the program's success. The fact that two alumni are working as Agile coaches is possibly the best indicator of the program's success.

It was critical to measure the success of Reskill candidates throughout the program correctly. Fulfillment of the responsibilities outlined in the roadmap to support on-the-job learning was a measure of their success. Although a different coach mentored each candidate, our primary criterion was to evaluate everyone transparently through a standard structure. Based on this, it would be fair to assess the candidates in the categories of technical competencies and soft skills.

Within soft skills, we aimed to measure communication, openness to feedback, and motivation with different weights.

Mentee Soft Score (25%)	Weight	Score (1-10)	Details-Comments
My mentee was easy to communicate with.	%10		
I made suggestions considering my mentee's development process, we set development goals together for the 3-month reskill period and my mentee contributed to this process.	%10		
My mentee is open to criticism and feedback, sees feedback as an opportunity for improvement.	%15		
My mentee implements the feedback.	%10		
My mentee continuously participated in and prepared for discussions and meetings about the reskill mentoring process that he/she was involved in.	%15		
Throughout the reskill period, my mentee worked to achieve the goal with enthusiasm, perseverance and determination.	%10		
My mentee reached the target we set for the reskill period.	%20		
My mentee does not avoid responsibility and demonstrated this throughout the reskill period.	%10		

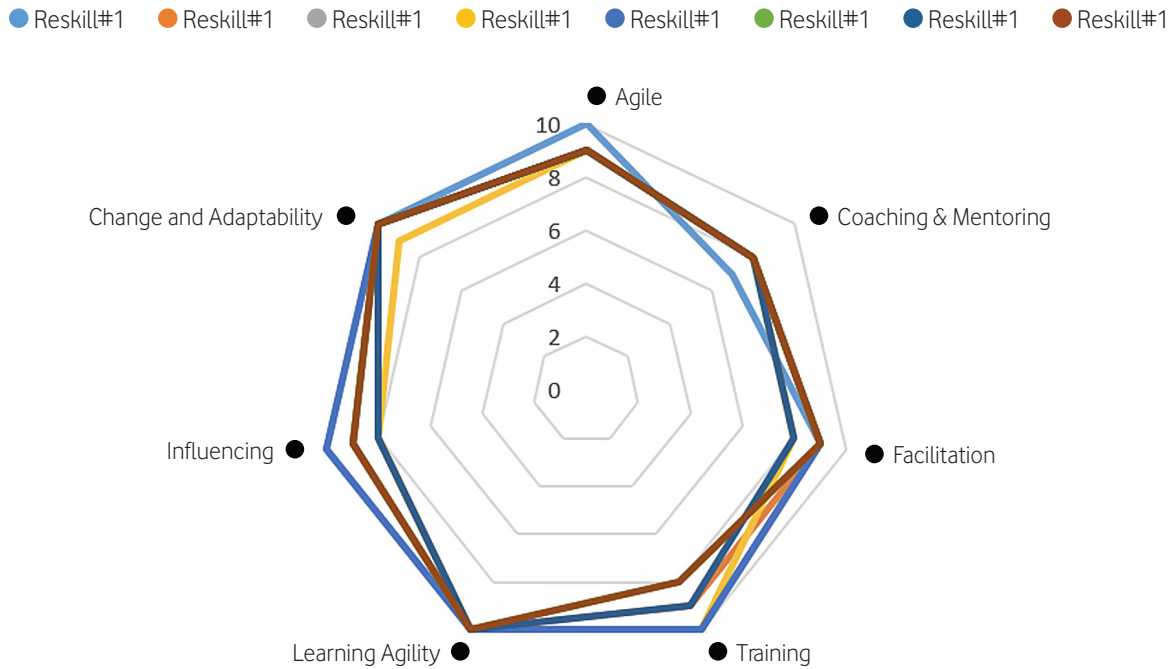
In technical competencies, we measured Agile knowledge, coaching and mentoring, facilitation, training, inspiration, change and adaptation skills.

Mentee Technical Score (75%)	Weight	Score (1-10)	Details - Comments
Agile	%30		
Coaching and Mentoring	%20		
Facilitation	%20		
Training	%10		
Learning Agility	%10		
Influencing	%5		
Change and Adaptability	%5		

Each assessment topic has a different weight. We tried to define their behavioral indicators so that they can mean the same thing to everyone.

Technical Skills	Description	Behavioral Indicators
Agile	Understands agile methodologies (e.g., Kanban, Lean, Scrum, Scaled Agile) and applies agile working methods. A role model of agile mindset and principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the way with his/her knowledge on Agile. • A good team player. • Does not progress by working with big pieces. Tries often, gets feedback, and shares his/her teachings. • Is aware of his/her own areas for development and takes proactive actions to improve himself/herself.
Coaching and Mentoring	Coaching supports Vodafone's learning culture, builds a professional relationship to develop others using feedback skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By asking powerful questions, enables people to find their own answers and create awareness. • Supports the team to solve their problems on their own by approaching conflict management objectively. • Creates trust and sincerity with the other person and can easily receive/give feedback. • Provides result-oriented guidance to the other person based on his/her own experiences when necessary.
Facilitation	Applies a range of techniques to ensure that objectives are achieved effectively and to support facilitation teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated activities are more efficient and traceable actions emerge. • Suggests facilitation techniques for the needs.
Training	Applies a range of techniques to support education and training to guide and manage a group activity to ensure that objectives are effectively achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows the level of knowledge, the ability to communicate and pass on the knowledge in the trainings given by the Agile coach.
Learning Agility	A role model with his/her knowledge and experience in the field of agility. Adopts the philosophy of continuous learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a researcher and continuously increases his/her knowledge. • Closely follows the developments in the field of agility in his/her company and in the world. • Adapts quickly to changes and helps teams to adapt as well.
Influencing	Considers different points of view, uses arguments to persuade others to take action while maintaining and building relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embraces different perspectives. • Understands what is going on around him/her and communicates accordingly. • Persuades the parties to act with strong arguments in his/her relationships.
Change and Adaptability	Evaluates, directs, and adapts to changing situations and demands in different situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapts quickly to change and takes actions to facilitate the adaptation of others. • Follows innovations and tries without fear of making mistakes, takes an active role in bringing new practices to the company. • Learns from his/her experiences and adapts them to his/her next steps. • Provides a platform for the teams he/she works with to experiment and share innovations / inspires them.

Each candidate was scored on these topics by their mentor. The scores given by mentors were transparently shared with all candidates, and they were given feedback for their development.



Post-program

After Reskill program was completed, it was understood that an Agile coach position would not be opened in the organization for a while, so we designed a new program called Reskill Agile Coaches on Site to achieve the following;

- To respond effectively to the increasing need for coaching to achieve the organization's agility goals,
- To continue with the training of Reskill candidates by coaching in the organization to improve their skills,
- To prepare potential Agile coach candidates.

To be in this program, candidates must;

- Successfully graduate from the Reskill program
- Commit to provide coaching support to at least two teams,
- Allocate 30% time in their existing schedules,
- Remain in this scope for one year.

Three alums of the Reskill program committed to fulfilling these criteria. The other candidates did not participate in the new process, stating that they could not fulfill the requirements mentioned above within their current business plans. With this scope, Agile coach candidates started to support the teams within Tribes directly. Coaching support expected from candidates can be roughly listed as follows:

- Participation in the rituals of the teams,
- 1-1 coaching support to the Product Owner and Scrum Master,
- Facilitating the workshops that the team needs
- Participating in Tribe level rituals,
- Providing Agile training needed throughout the organization.

In addition, a reward system was created where they could earn Vodafone Redpoint (gift vouchers) for their efforts. This system was based on the candidate's being rewarded to the extent of their ability to provide Agile coaching support to the teams. With the Reskill Agile Coaches on Site program, we continue our efforts to provide platforms where coach candidates can share their experiences among themselves while applying the knowledge they have learned in training.

What Have We Learnt?

💬 **During the development and implementation of the Agile Coach Reskill program, our focus was first to conduct a fair selection process and then to offer a high-quality learning journey. Through the Reskill training and the mentoring process we carried out together, an exemplary quality program was realized. At the end of the program, it was a very pleasing experience to see that we could achieve the goals we set for ourselves.**

💬 The program was more of a process that we developed and improved through continuous learning based on the needs. In line with the feedback given and received during the program, we designed the most appropriate learning process for the needs, both with changes in the level of mentoring and with some changes we agreed on in the program's content.

💬 **We could have had a more effective time planning by keeping the program duration a little longer. For reskill candidates and Agile coaches, the frequency of training, mentor-mentee processes, shadow coaching, and overlapping training in the program created a severe intensity. There were several events almost every week during the program. This intensity could have been brought to a more reasonable level by extending the duration.**

💬 With an MVP perspective, the program initially aimed to increase the candidates' competencies successfully. The fact that the candidates took

part in the workshops, first as observers and then as facilitators, made an outstanding positive contribution to their competency development. Increasing the number of such practical activities in the program will be an issue we will consider when designing the next program.

💬 **Candidates who graduated from the program were very enthusiastic about joining the Agile coach team. We later identified a need for a space where the graduates could use the competencies they had developed. Our learning here was to communicate more transparently to the candidates in advance that it may not be possible to place them in suitable positions immediately after the reskill program.**

Recommendations For Those Who Want to Build Their Agile Coach Team

- We can say that it is the right approach to select suitable profiles from within the organization and train them for the roles needed. On the one hand, this approach increases engagement by responding to employees seeking development in new roles from within the organization. On the other hand, it provides the opportunity to enrich the role with previous experience in different areas of expertise.

- First and foremost, it is vital that the candidate selection and placement process is shared transparently with the entire organization. The scope of the program should be created by considering the needs related to expertise and industry standards. Creating a program budget for external trainings and certifications is one of the things that should be done while developing the program. Regarding the quality and success of the program, we may also underline the importance of the selected candidates receiving support, such as mentoring and shadow coaching, from experts with a specific level of expertise to develop in the role.
- Furthermore, an environment should be created where Agile coaches, who improve themselves through program content, constantly challenge each other in terms of development as a team and give feedback to each other comfortably.

Through the Eyes of the Reskills

What motivated you to apply to the program?

When I applied to the program, I had been working as a Product Owner in an IT team for two years. This was my first experience with Agile, and I was very impressed by the dynamism in this new role. I was excited that Agile is a process of change and development and that Agile coaches are the ambassadors of this change within the company. The Agile coach team at Vodafone consisted of people who had previously made a sharp change in their careers. I saw it as an opportunity to transfer this courage to people and teams and accompany them on their journey with a team that had the courage to change.

In April 2017, I was part of the pilot team at the beginning of the Agile transformation. I took part in the Agile Servants and Change Leaders teams and supported the transformation and adaptation. During this process, I discovered my own coaching skills. I applied to the program to take this experience one step further and become a professional.

While I was leading works that highlighted my technical capacity related to my position and role, I was also working as a Scrum Master. I realized it made me happy to share my experiences with others and support them in their career path. It was at those moments that I came across this program that piqued my interest.

Before my organization transformed into a Tribe structure, I gained experience as a Product Owner in an Agile team. With the transition to the Tribe structure, I realized how effective and useful Agile coaches were. I applied to the program to have a deeper understanding of Agile and to take actions that would impact and benefit the whole organization.

I got the opportunity to see how soft skills can make difference especially in teams with different competencies. I realized how important flexibility is to get to the same point on common ground and to maintain relationships. I was working on some changes in myself: working on smaller and more meaningful outputs rather than big plans, learning from mistakes, and effective feedback. At this point, I discovered that the competencies I was working on and Agile coaching complemented each other, and the program came along. Making Agile thinking a part of my life became my biggest motivation point.

How was your application process?

💬 I learnt about the program from the announcement e-mail and applied for it. The first step of the interview process was to shoot videos for five different questions and upload these videos to the system. I had difficulty in recording myself on video. As I am a person who likes interaction, it was difficult for me to speak without someone in front of me. The following interviews were with the Agile coach and HR, and they were great. Also, before applying, I first had to talk to my manager and see if I could fit the training into my current work.

💬 **As a first step after applying to the program, I explained my motivation with a video. It was a different experience for someone who couldn't even leave a message on the answering machine. The second interview was held virtually. I explained "Why I should be an Agile coach" with enthusiasm. Afterwards, seven friends and I started the program with a pre-assessment test.**

💬 I came across the program while I was working and doing research on Agile approaches. Although my team is not an Agile team, I agreed with my team and my manager that it would be effective to incorporate Agile practices and thinking into the way we work. I always felt their support during the application process. After applying, the process was very transparent and clear from start to end. We conducted the interviews in a very comfortable and friendly environment where you can be yourself. We were informed at every step until we were accepted.

How did you manage your work while participating in this program?

💬 It was a really challenging period. As many key members of my current team changed during the

program, I had to carry out the program in an intense onboarding period. My biggest supporters during this period were my teammates and managers. Even though they needed me a lot, they always gave me the support I needed to attend training during my training hours.

💬 **This was a challenging process. I had to do a lot of planning and ask for help, both to stay on track and to complete the existing work. In this process, I learned how to simplify, prioritize, ask for help, and stay balanced. The fact that the program coincided with the pandemic, and we switched to working from home made it easier for me to strike this balance. Determining the training schedule in advance and informing stakeholders in advance was another factor that made it easier for me.**

💬 I balanced my current work and this program with our HR partner, the Academy department, and my manager. Of course, my current workload was as busy as ever. However, I remember that I had to be dedicated and time-efficient to ensure that I did exactly what needed to be done for this valuable program.

💬 **On the calendar and program, I made progress with the support of my manager and current team.**

💬 We provided each other with time flexibility in my existing role and work within the program. The environment of trust, I believe, is the most crucial factor here. Once this environment of trust was created, commitments were kept, and outputs were owned as we transparently completed the tasks.

What have you learnt/gained?

💬 First and foremost, I made great friends thanks to the program. Apart from that, we have gained a lot of knowledge and practical experience in the following:

- In-depth Agile and Scrum knowledge
- Coaching and mentoring
- Prioritization
- Writing User Stories from the customer perspective
- Active listening and listening levels
- Making observations and asking effective questions
- Design Thinking
- OKR (Objective Key Results)
- Team Coaching
- Conflict resolution
- Facilitation
- Providing training
- Effective feedback

Can you share a memorable moment from the process with us?

💬 The day I gave my first Agile training after graduating from Reskill Academy is an unforgettable memory. During the preparation process, I went over the details and prepared myself for any questions that might come. I was also worried about if I could really meet the expectations. At the beginning of the training, I asked everyone to communicate their expectations in advance. Throughout the training, I couldn't stop thinking about how well I met these expectations. Whether the feedback I received was positive or open to improvement, it was invaluable

to me. When I reflect on the day, I recall how excited I was. It was a huge step and reference for me.

💬 **I once co-facilitated an event in the VBU Tribe where a team's OKRs were assessed. In that event, I discovered that it is more complicated than developing software on a computer to encourage people to collaborate and provide output in an environment where the camera is turned off. They do not speak while working remotely. Aside from dealing with the nature of humans, which is more complex than a computer, it requires a lot of effort to remain neutral and not to add comments while making them produce the output. "If you can change the situation, change it; if you can't, change your perspective" has always been my solution architect motto:) However, the facilitator's hat conveyed to me the message, "No matter how much you know, keep it to yourself." So, in fact, this experience marked the beginning of my "forget what you know and learn again" journey.**

When did you feel that you have improved on this journey?

💬 As I went through each step of the program, each training, and each practice, I could feel my progress and growth in the journey. Particularly in my newly established team, I observed it clearly. Throughout the program, our team changed, and I started as the Product Owner for a new team. Nobody in the new team had prior experience of working with Agile. While I should be a little involved in raising the Agile maturity of the team as a Product Owner, I found it a good area to apply my knowledge while I was learning. Today, we witness the effect of the steps we took with the Scrum Master towards agility on the business outcomes at the end of the year.

💬 **When the theoretical training finished and we were involved in teams, I told myself, "Now you have arrived at the point where you will put what you have learned into practice." I was at the point where I would practice, acquire new skills, find new solutions with each involvement, and go beyond my limits.**

💬 Once people come to me for support, and I provide more mature answers, and the team or the person is content, or I receive feedback after the training session, I feel that I have made progress in this journey. At every step, I ask myself, "What could I do better?" and work on it. As difficult as it was at first, it is now so gratifying to demonstrate my competencies, to share them with others, to spread this, to see that my ideas are appreciated, and to learn to act as a team.

💬 **My Agile coach journey that I started with this program is still ongoing. And I am not thinking of ending this journey. As Heraclitus said, "The only thing that does not change is change itself", I continue to change, learn over and over again, and develop/improve. To answer, when I first felt I enhanced through this program, it was after the first team-building activity that I got positive feedback.**

Has this program affected your professional/private life/perspective?

💬 In practically every aspect of my professional and personal life, I have used MVP. Scrum is, in my opinion, a framework that can be applied to any subject. Furthermore, the program's training included not only Agile but also coaching, which was beneficial to me.

💬 **One of the most important outcomes is that I can now stay in the moment and understand how to listen to people effectively. I am reflecting on how I can contribute and simplify things in both my personal and professional life. Instead of concentrating on big plans/projects, it was more effective to break them down into smaller components and complete them while taking a look back from time to time.**

💬 Before this program, I had already begun to embrace change. With this program, I realized that more than change orientation is needed and that continuous improvement does not only apply to teams or organizations. Try-Observe-Adapt and Try again!

Can you assess the process, highlighting both the positives and negatives?

💬 We have been living in a very segregated social environment over the past few years. This course gave me with the joy of being around people who see the world from similar perspectives. There were eight of us that graduated. It would have been preferable to acquire a position afterwards.

💬 **The biggest challenge was managing the time to fulfill the responsibilities of my current role and those required by this program. We have been running around and putting in additional effort to manage the time, but I believe we have achieved success by maintaining mutual tolerance.**

💬 First and foremost, I want to thank all our colleagues who prepared this program and paved the way for us to become Agile coaches. It was a comprehensive

program. It is precious to both learn the theory and to have the chance to put this knowledge into practice. In short, it was a program that shed light on such programs that came out afterwards, but it was a unique program. I just want to add that a mixed program, rather than taking the theory for the first three months and providing the option to test it for the next three, could have been a more effective program.

💬 **The academy's most difficult challenge was managing time. I would have loved to have more time to read the books thoroughly; the time allocated for this part could have been longer. I think the time allocated for the remaining steps was perfect. I am reading another round for a deeper understanding. Of course, the end-to-end view in coaching and the developing all competencies will be possible over time, process, involvement, and experience.**

Do you have any suggestions for potential candidates considering becoming Agile coaches or entering such a program?

💬 They should be ready to read a lot, to research, to experiment, to make mistakes, and to receive feedback after mistakes. Most importantly, they should strive to help people, to illuminate their path, and to provide exemplary work at the organizational level.

💬 **First and foremost, they should see if they can do these. For this, they should question themselves at every step to examine themselves in the situations they experience in daily life, in their bilateral relationships. If you can do inner coaching such as "What did**

this event evoke in me?", "Why did I react this way?" "Was there another way?" if you try to understand and make sense of the other person instead of criticizing and making assumptions while listening to them, it is worth working on it.

💬 Being eager is the most crucial factor, and this eagerness will unlock many opportunities for you. It is also critical that they continue to ask questions and set goals step by step in this cycle.

💬 **I realized that it is not easy to put everything learned in theory into practice. As I listened and observed the teams, I realized that it is vital to understand the need there. At this point, the minor step you take by approaching every area you are involved in with an Agile perspective can add a lot to transformation. When the time comes, I recommend you take the initiative when you understand the need and revise your agenda accordingly on the way.**



vodafone