

Maersk Line's agile transformation underpinned by BCS agile practitioner certification



'Culture eats strategy for breakfast' is a phrase you will hear at Maersk Line. From previous experience, they know that change driven by process alone falls away when problems occur and people revert to old habits.

Faced with very long lead times for their IT solutions, and rising requests for software development, their IT had to work smarter, not just harder.

The BCS Agile programme supported a sustainable change by developing the values and behaviours needed to drive Maersk's agile transformation.

'Rather than blindly aligning to a particular framework, brand, or interpretation of agile; we are aligned with the outcomes that matter for Maersk Line.'

Özlem Yüce Agile Transformation Lead Maersk Line

THE CHALLENGE

In 2009-10, it was taking on average 150 days for Maersk Line to get value out of its development pipeline. A quarter of requirements took over a year, and over 450 requirements took more than 500 days to deliver. This was painful because like most organisations, Maersk Line is highly dependent on IT to enable strategic change so, with increasing demand for software development, the situation was getting worse.

Part of the problem was that IT was acting like a factory, simply 'taking orders' from the rest of the organisation. They were focused on delivering, on-time, on-budget and simply meeting specifications and this clearly wasn't working. What they really needed to focus on were the more important business outcomes for Maersk Line: more value, faster flow and better quality IT solutions. This required partnership and collaboration with the organisation.

They tried implementing Scrum on a couple of strategic projects but improvements were limited because it didn't address the dependencies on key legacy systems, the real bottleneck for delivering meaningful change. Nor did it solve any of the systematic issues upstream of IT like the approval and funding mechanisms. Scrum was also a poor fit with their outsourced and offshore development and the complexity of their technology landscape.

More fundamentally, the team's mostly tacit knowledge of agile meant the changes didn't stick. Not only could they not explain to others why change was necessary, when the pressure increased, they reverted to old ways of working.

THE BENEFITS

To create a lasting transformation Maersk Line selected the BCS endorsed VFQ (Value Flow Quality®) work-based education programme from Emergn. VFQ is methodology-neutral and delivers the tools and the understanding for individuals at all levels to understand and apply agile practices to the way they work.

'We have definitely become more focused on outcomes as a result of the education,' says Özlem Yüce, Maersk Line's Agile Transformation Lead.

'Across the organisation there is now a common language with new guiding principles that are better suited for the complexity of a 21st century organisation. People talk about how they can break ideas down in order to deliver value early and often. Teams talk about how we need to optimise the whole end-to-end value stream, not just their team or department.

'The work-based learning has been a key part of this by changing the way people think, helping them to recognise that software development is a discovery process, which requires a different mindset. Instead of aligning through process and rules, they are becoming aligned on the principles and way of thinking.

'The advantage of this is that different teams can use different processes – Scrum, Kanban, or whatever suits

MEASURABLE RESULTS

Centralised booking system project:

- turnaround time reduced from 208 to 108 days
- ROI increased to \$26.3 per dollar*
- 88% reduction in number of defects
- required patches down 85%
- delays reduced by 80%

SAP project:

- turnaround time reduced from 168 to 60 days
- ROI increased to \$44.8 per dollar*

(*average ROI in 2009 across \$100m portfolio was \$4.1)

their product, technology setup or just how they want to work as a team – but still be aligned.

The BCS agile practitioner certification has been an important catalyst, encouraging people to really engage at a deeper level with the learning material, leading to changes in hearts and minds. The conversation, behaviours and level of understanding have changed massively. With the whole of Maersk Line – not just IT – focused on delivering more value, faster flow and better quality IT solutions .

Find out more about BCS Agile Certification at bcs.org/agilecertified +44 (0) 1793 417 755

