

# Taking advantage of agility on the digital transformation journey

By [Danny Drew](#)

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Agility isn't traditionally a word readily associated with Africa's technology market: the continent has been seen as lagging far behind others in adopting new solutions.



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Today, however, the drive for mobile solutions and digital transformation, especially in the South African market, is forcing changes in mindsets. Companies are increasingly realising that they need to offer consumers the services they want, at the time they want them – or risk losing their custom.

Agile processes are imperative to the success of any business looking to successfully compete in a rapidly changing environment. The aim for all of us should be to become organisations that can respond to new opportunities or competitive threats as quickly and effectively as possible.

## Lower risk and investment

The agile process in technology is an emerging approach that enterprises are adopting to introduce new applications for the digital age. This includes the quick consulting and assessment of whether a solution works for the organisation or not, designing the solution, testing it to fail or hopefully succeed as quickly and cost effectively as possible.

By following this process to applications design and adoption enterprise-wide, agility delivers a significantly lower risk and investment of time and resources while the gain of experience or learning is key to improvement.

With this process, the months that it would generally take a team to build a solution are minimised to weeks if not days. At Avaya, we talk about the transition from presentation to production: the time to get a solution delivered, from presenting it to the customer to having it up and running. And we look to achieve this in two to four weeks.

## **Major challenge, opportunity**

The major challenge and I would say also an opportunity when following an agile process to application development and consumption is consensus. Not only do the needs of customised applications for organisations vary based on their business, but their needs become even more specific when you go down to the business unit level and a country or culture level to name a few.

Achieving consensus early in the process from the involved business units or countries not only enables you to design the right solution for the right team, but also minimise the times you go wrong, and achieve financial buy-in from your internal stakeholders from the get-go.

## **Right mix of bureaucracy**

This makes total sense: an agile organisation ultimately empowers its local units and geographies to be more responsive and adapt to local customer trends, creating the right mix of bureaucracy with nimbleness and innovation.

Moving businesses to the digital age by adopting an agile process is only made possible if your technology platform has three characteristics: open, modular and easily extensible.

Your platform should support the design, creation and deployment of advanced applications, without developers having to acquire specialised communications expertise. By being open, the platform will be much easier for your organisation to leverage and integrate with virtually any third-party data and applications.

Being modular means the platform allows you to select a range of capabilities over time to meet your company's goals and initiatives and drive business results that will change over time.

Extensible means having a platform on which your organisation can expand and adapt as your business changes, shaping new, innovative and differentiated customer and employee experiences, as well as accommodating new and future requirements.

## **Need to keep up**

Here in South Africa, we are still very much on our digital transformation journey: the infrastructure is not as developed as in other markets, and we still have some way to go in digitally-enabling everybody. But as companies increase their digital offerings – and as consumers become increasingly aware of their benefits – competitors need to keep up.

The agile process is a great new approach to deliver on your digital transformation objectives. It has evolved to be a proven successful approach to change by taking small cost-effective steps for trial and error as the world around us continuously moves the goal posts.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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