

## The Agile Readiness Assessment Creating sustainable responsiveness

Once again, IT is being asked to do more with less. But after years of cuts and reductions, it's not clear how "less" will get "more" done without putting solutions at risk.

We need to look for ways to be highly business focused, consistent in execution, highly collaborative with everybody in the solution chain, and successful at completing what we start. We need to rethink how we work.

How work gets done will by and large determine what gets done. Are priorities clear or confusing? Are requirements actionable or abstract? Is quality built-in or are we trying to inspect it in? Are we responding consistently, or are we on the verge of chaos?

The questions are easy to ask, but not easily answered. Because there are lots of ways to get things done, there is no universal approach to IT. To be sustainably responsive we need to balance how we work, the team we have, the business we're partnered with, and the technology we use.



To connect the dots between practice and performance, ThoughtWorks offers an Agile Readiness Assessment. At the core is the Agile Maturity Model. Developed by dozens of IT professionals who have worked with hundreds of IT organizations, the AMM allows us to chart how increasing discipline and proficiency in best practices can increase the degree of responsiveness without flirting with chaos. It also allows us to frame sustainable practice within an organization, so that change is achievable and responsiveness lasts.

“82% of IT departments believe that they need to improve their processes so that IT can deliver to the business requirements”

– Survey of IT Decision Makers  
Forrester Consulting, 2008

# ThoughtWorks®

We start by understanding how solutions are delivered across roles, functions and suppliers, looking at everything from how people interact with each other, to the coding practices developers follow, to how quality is assured. We also look at organizational demands, ranging from corporate and IT governance to regulatory and business controls, to understand the business environment. With all of these inputs, we can frame an Agile roadmap using the AMM, down to practices within teams.

State Achieved	Level	State Description	Reference Implementations
	3+	Spontaneous	Requirements are not derived / extracted from formal documentation or process but are captured at time of expression by the business in a business-focused manner.
Target	3	Incrementally valuable and granularly testable	Agile Stories: requirements are expressions of business value, not technical tasks that need to be performed
	2	Independent	Requirements independent, actionable statements of things to be done by a delivery team. The nature of estimation and negotiation will change.
Stage 1 Goal	1	Short, estimable, negotiable	Requirements are further decomposed to have greater estimation accuracy. This will consist of a number of "tasks" promoted as "technical requirements," among which there will be interdependencies.
	0	High-level, vague, business-oriented expressions of need	Requirements are decomposed into high-level expressions ("epics") of what the business needs done. Estimation accuracy is unreliable; the statement of need is too high level to negotiate.
Current	-1	Detailed, highly coupled specifications	Verbose use cases; large expressions / statements without complete context.

#### Objectives:

- Define task collections
- Collect all material specific to satisfying those collections into a single document
- Define high-level acceptance criteria
- Construct inventory of requirements or tasks
- Estimate the tasks

#### Events:

- Estimation workshop
- "Collaborative tasking" and estimation

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This allows us to chart a course of action:

- What is the optimal mix of best practices that will enable us to meet organizational demands?
- What is the gap between what we're doing today and what we need to be doing?
- What do we have to do to bridge this gap?

ThoughtWorks is among the leaders in Agile practices and agile thinking. We rapidly deliver high performance solutions using a wide array of technologies, and consult to the world's leading organizations on becoming sustainably responsive. Contact ThoughtWorks today to learn more and schedule your own Agile Readiness Assessment.