

# Are Team Autonomy and Flexibility Enough for Agile Transformation?

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# MY BACKGROUND (MORTEZA MOALAGH)



## Education and Research

Bachelor Degree  
**Industrial Engineering- System Analysis**

Master Degree  
**Information Technology Management**



## Professional

2005-2008



**Business Analyst**

2008 - 2012



**Enterprise Architect**

2012-2017



**Business Analyst**

2017-2022



**Product Manager**



Now, Ph.D. Candidate at NTNU



## RESEARCH ABOUT AGILE TRANSFORMATION IN NAV

Today, We want to look at the Findings from reviewed published papers in recent years about agile transformation in NAV and findings from a Master thesis by Vegard Svesengen 2022.

16  
SELECTED  
PAPERS

Included only qualitative papers that discussed agile transformation in NAV



Co-creating with employees in the public sector

# AGILE PRINCIPLES





Agile methods often lead to increased autonomy and flexibility at the team level while increasing organizational demands for agility and efficiency. (Tendedez et al., 2018)

# SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Old



COMPETENCY

IT department as a middleman between the business departments and the vendors



MEANING

Traditional software development involved large coordinated releases, staged workflows, and limited team autonomy.



MATERIAL

Fifty applications with different user interfaces and technologies. The IT department managed the contracts, tested applications, and supported business units.

New



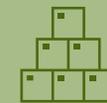
COMPETENCY

NAV implemented a new organizational model called "Product Area" for software development. Placing both business and development people in cross-functional teams led to fewer handovers, and requirement dependencies, particularly, were managed at a low level.



MEANING

NAV transitioned from project development to ongoing product development in cross-functional teams, decoupling silo systems and fostering continuous software development.



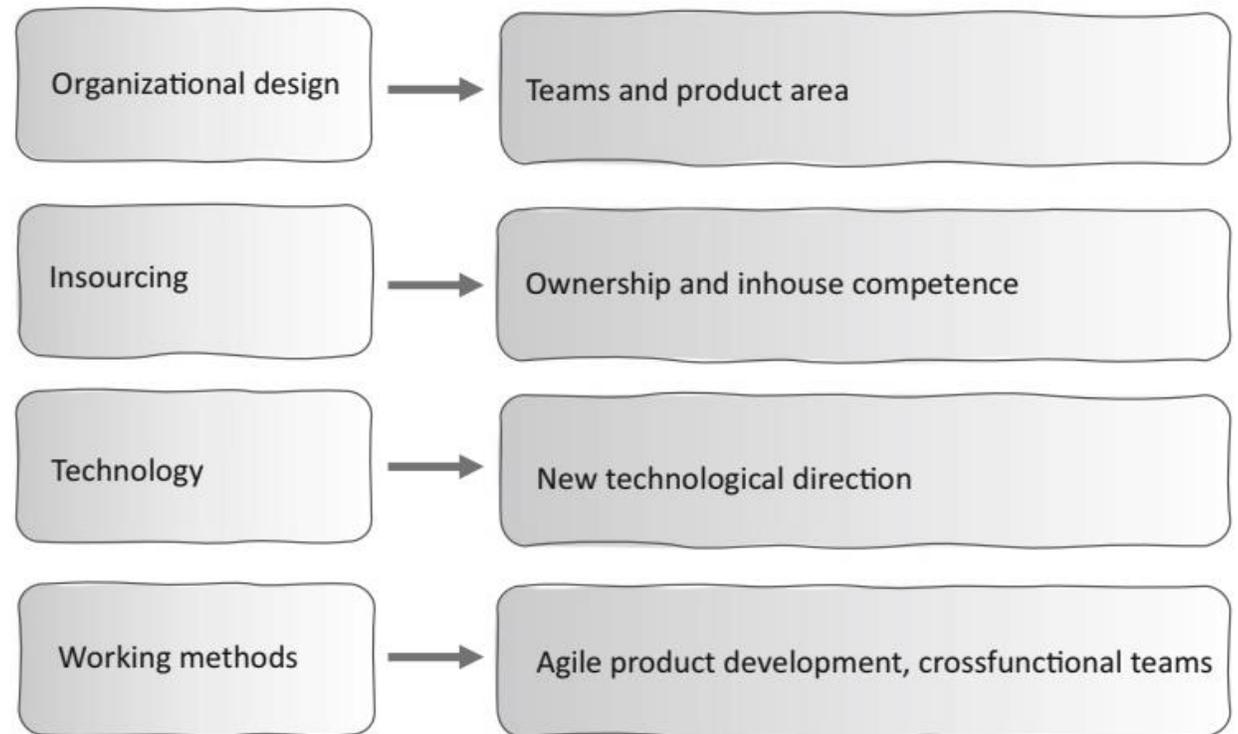
MATERIAL

NAV IT achieved autonomy and efficiency by creating its own application platform (NAIS) for seamless deployment and production.

# AGILE TRANSFORMATION IN NAV

*“The teams had the advantage of being able to reuse modern solutions or quickly deliver newly developed solutions without downtime or a fierce testing regimen. The teams had the expertise and capacity to work continuously. And they could do the job from home. From that perspective, the identified changes have had a major effect on the organization’s ability to change.”*

**Source: Hulda Brastad Bernhardt, 2022**



# USER'S PERSPECTIVE (NAV EMPLOYEES) ON AGILE TRANSFORMATION



- Local offices function in a hierarchical manner, which means a low level of autonomy to start with.
- We get the autonomy of the product teams to release their solution based on a timeline defined centrally and prioritization done centrally. This creates additional stress for the local offices.



## QUOTATION FROM CHANGE AGENT

*"For large releases, we change agents might get notified a few days before, but not only long before everyone else. However, these releases usually contain much information, so getting this information and learning quickly is important."*

## QUOTATION FROM COUNSELOR

*"Now, you might get notified that a new feature is ready by the notifications in the system and not by a leader. Sometimes, a counselor might know what functionality has been released before the leaders. So, the dynamics of the implementation process has changed completely, and a lot more rests on everyone to use the new functionality."*

# USER'S PERSPECTIVE (NAV EMPLOYEES) ON AGILE TRANSFORMATION



- Currently, the systems are being developed at a high speed, but the question is whether the users are using the created facilities at the same speed.
- To what extent has the development of new systems created added value? Do users receive enough training to use these new facilities?



## QUOTATION FROM COUNSELOR

*"I have been to some offices where they are almost a year behind in terms of new functionality or knowledge of how to use the systems. Because the person still needs to fulfill his role. Consequently, the responsibility to learn about new things has been [wrongly] put on each individual."*

## QUOTATION FROM COUNSELOR

*"It is very time-consuming. We have many systems in NAV. I got a new task today to fix a little checklist, which is long. The process in question can be tedious, so it is easy to forget some elements. Even I, a change agent who knows the systems, forget stuff from time to time because of the complexity."*

# USER'S PERSPECTIVE (NAV EMPLOYEES) ON AGILE TRANSFORMATION



- While Digital Transformation is often about rapid change in reaction to market change, the public sector is about stability and robustness. When counselors prefer to use old practices and IT systems, it does not necessarily mean that they are resisting Digital Transformation. It can as well mean that they want to protect such stability.



## QUOTATION FROM COUNSELOR

*"I think many employees would prefer to get a complete system, get training, and now we start using it."*

## QUOTATION FROM COUNSELOR

*"Sometimes [the product team] will release some new feature, as they often do with the agile methods. And then, we see this mass hysteria in the office, and many people are unhappy with the change. And then they change something quickly without considering who is behind the hysteria."*

# MAIN FINDINGS

## Democratic Participation



## Boundary Work



A modern office interior with a large window, a meeting table with people, and a man standing by a chalkboard. The scene is brightly lit with natural light from the window and two large, white, cylindrical pendant lights. A group of about seven people are seated around a long, dark wooden table, engaged in a meeting. To the right, a man in a light-colored shirt and dark trousers stands next to a large black chalkboard, holding a folder and looking towards the group. The chalkboard has some faint white markings on it. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

# DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

*Achieving an inclusive and innovative environment requires a commitment to democratic participation and collaboration.*



# WEAK BOUNDARY WORK AND INFRASTRUCTURE

*A key issue here is to broaden from a focus on only the dev side and a sole focus on autonomy and flexibility and embrace more complexity to address the boundary work involving the users/business side of the organization.*

# FUTURE WORK

RQ

How can business units, end users, and citizens who have utilized the services be actively involved in the agile transformation design process in the public sector?

RQ

What is the role of boundary work and infrastructures that integrate the users/business side of the organization beyond the development side to address complex socio-technical interdependencies?

RQ

What changes and solutions could be implemented in software development practices to enhance user collaboration and satisfaction?

IF YOU WANT TO COLLABORATE IN THIS RESEARCH, PLEASE EMAIL THE ADDRESS BELOW.

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A background image showing a group of business professionals in a meeting. A woman in a grey blazer is in the center, looking at a tablet. To her left, a man in a dark suit and tie is partially visible. In the foreground, another person's hands are seen holding a tablet and a smartphone. There are also coffee cups on a table. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment with large windows.

# DISCUSSION TIME

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