Chapter 6
Agile Business Analysis for Digital Transformation

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ABSTRACT

The use of cutting-edge digital technologies and the realization of right project, program, and portfolio (3P) initiatives can trigger the intended company-wide change and the digital transformation. Today, organizations need to increase their agility for managing their information technology (IT) projects and transforming their business models. The integration of agile perspective and business analysis (BA) approach has a great potential to increase the success of digital transformation. This study aims to provide an overview of state-of-the-art in agile business analysis in scope of digital transformation. In accordance with the well-known frameworks, general principles and promising techniques of Agile BA are highlighted and discussed. The regarding agile practices provide valuable guidelines for researchers and practitioners that how they can assist continuous feedback, continuous learning, continuous improvement, and continuous integration capabilities of organizations; and also how to maximize value to the stakeholders in agile project lifecycles and agile business transformations.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital transformation paradigm has gained great importance by organizations in order to manage changing dynamics of globalization and remain competitive in digital world. In order to realize strategic Projects, Programs and Portfolios (3P) and operate efficient business models along with globalization, the integration of Information Systems (IS) with businesses; namely digital transformation of organizations became inevitable.

Understanding digital transformation phenomenon is essential; it is a journey of an organization starting from digitization, digitalization and finally the most pervasive phase digital transformation. Gartner Glossary (2020a) highlights the term digitization as "*the process of changing from analog to digital form*". The integration of Information Technologies (IT) with existing tasks allows to convert analog

information into digital information. As one further step, digitalization, aims to alter and optimize existing business processes by applying digital technologies; in other words, targets process improvements through new technologies or communication platforms and user experience (UX) enhancement (Verhoef et al., 2019). Accordingly, Gartner Glossary (2020b) defines digitalization as "*the process of moving to a digital business*" and "*the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities*".

Beyond digitalization, digital transformation is the company-wide change that aims to lead the development of new business models or new business logic; namely to lead business model innovation with new value creation 3P in organizations. As stated by Verhoef et al. (2019), digital transformation is a company-wide phenomenon with broad organization implications; the core business model of the firm is subject to change using digital technology. Verhoef et al. (2019) highlights digital transformation as "*a change in how a firm employs digital technologies, to develop a new digital business model that helps to create and appropriate more value for the firm*". In other words, companies focus on business model innovation affecting the whole company and the way of doing business as well as the way of creating business value.

It is obvious that digital transformation process is about *not only* utilizing digital technologies to facilitate changes in organizations or industry, *but also* creating new value networks, redesigning business models and developing right digital strategies in order to drive better operational performances. The use of cutting-edge digital technologies with a right strategy for digital business transformation can trigger the intended company-wide change and can facilitate right 3P initiatives and management practices. Organizations need to realize an effective 3P management using well-defined and adaptive methods in order to align their strategies with the global needs of competitive digital era.

Today, the competence and mindset of implementing adaptive approaches and agile practices for management of IT projects, programs or portfolios are becoming notable enablers of strategic digital transformation. Recently, various agile approaches are taking a considerable place in the agenda of companies. In order to realize agile 3P management lifecycles, pure agile approaches started to evolve into various forms such as hybrid agile approaches over time for utilizing benefits of different approaches concurrently. However, we need more to deliver successful IT projects. Identifying and articulating the need for change, seamless requirements elicitation and analysis, requirements traceability and monitoring processes with viable solution evaluation mechanisms are inevitable competence requirements for organizations. In other words, IT projects can succeed with the help of effective requirement engineering practices, in other words right mix of Business Analysis (BA) methodologies, tools and techniques.

The concept of BA is not novel; has a critical role in 3P management lifecycles. BA is "*the practice of enabling change in an organizational context, by defining needs and recommending solutions that deliver value to stakeholders*" (IIBA and Agile Alliance, 2015). There is a great effort of standardization bodies, researchers and practitioners over the world to introduce more effective and systematic implementation of BA for supporting project management capabilities of organizations. The notable issue is that today agile and adaptive methodologies are requiring efficient Agile Business Analysis (Agile BA) practices, instead of cumbersome, traditional BA work.

Researchers and practitioners are seeking for promising adaptive Agile BA practices in order to achieve successful project outcomes with high quality, speedy and flexible digital transformation; to maximize the value delivered by an organization to its stakeholders; and to support continuous improvement, namely continuous change. In this regard, the purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the importance of Agile BA in scope of digital transformation. As a building block in digital transformation, Agile BA principles

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