(expleo)

CLIENT CASE STUDY

How Expleo helped a world-leading bank embrace agile delivery

Since the introduction of the iPhone, a significant technological shift in society has been influencing the way the world's leading enterprises operate, both internally and externally. That shift has been driven by growing consumer demands for information and services instantly and from anywhere, through their mobile devices.

Recently, amid those growing demands, a world-leading bank recognised a need to evolve its IT capabilities to keep up with the digital trends impacting the financial services industry, and to provide its customers with mobile banking experiences.

With its legacy business processes and dated IT structure, the time from new feature or product request to release was around 18 months. Crucially, the leadership team acknowledged that this was unacceptable in the eyes of today's digitally-literate customers.

In 2017, the decision was made to embark on a transformation from a traditional top-down waterfall business model into a fully agile organisation. This would allow IT to deliver new features and products – and, in turn, additional value to the customer – at pace, with flexibility, for lower costs.

Why they chose Expleo

Expleo has been a preferred partner for testing and quality assurance of the client since 2009. Thanks to that existing relationship, we already had around 80 of our specialists within the organisation, working as testing engineers and helping the organisation maintain the level of quality that Expleo prides itself on.

Quality is often the first thing that is deprioritised when a business attempts to make itself faster. But that is a grave mistake, and they understood that quality should always be a priority, not just within business processes but also within company culture.

Challenge

A key cultural challenge facing them was a fragmented relationship between business and IT. It was recognised quickly that, in order to succeed with an agile transformation, they would need to stop thinking about business and IT as separate. The two must work in harmony to achieve the same goals.

Other challenges they were facing at the time, included:
- An architecture which was not quite ready for the transformation
- IT's coding rules, principles, and discipline were insufficient
- Digital security rules were inadequate
- IT processes were too complex or long-winded
- Automation, continuous delivery, and deployment were not yet possible

So, they sought out our experience to assist with the agile transformation, and expanded the partnership to include comprehensive coaching and training while changes occurred in key areas of the business.

With our quality-focused philosophy, we contributed to the early strategic planning stages of the transformation initiative, and went on to provide a combination of management consulting and coaching.

Solution

The result of those early strategic planning stages was the creation of a multi-year initiative, involving 20 'tribes', containing over 200 hundred 'squads', made up of around 2,700 employees in total. This would incorporate a number of IT disciplines, including Agile, LEAN, SAFe, LeSS, DevOps and Management 3.0.
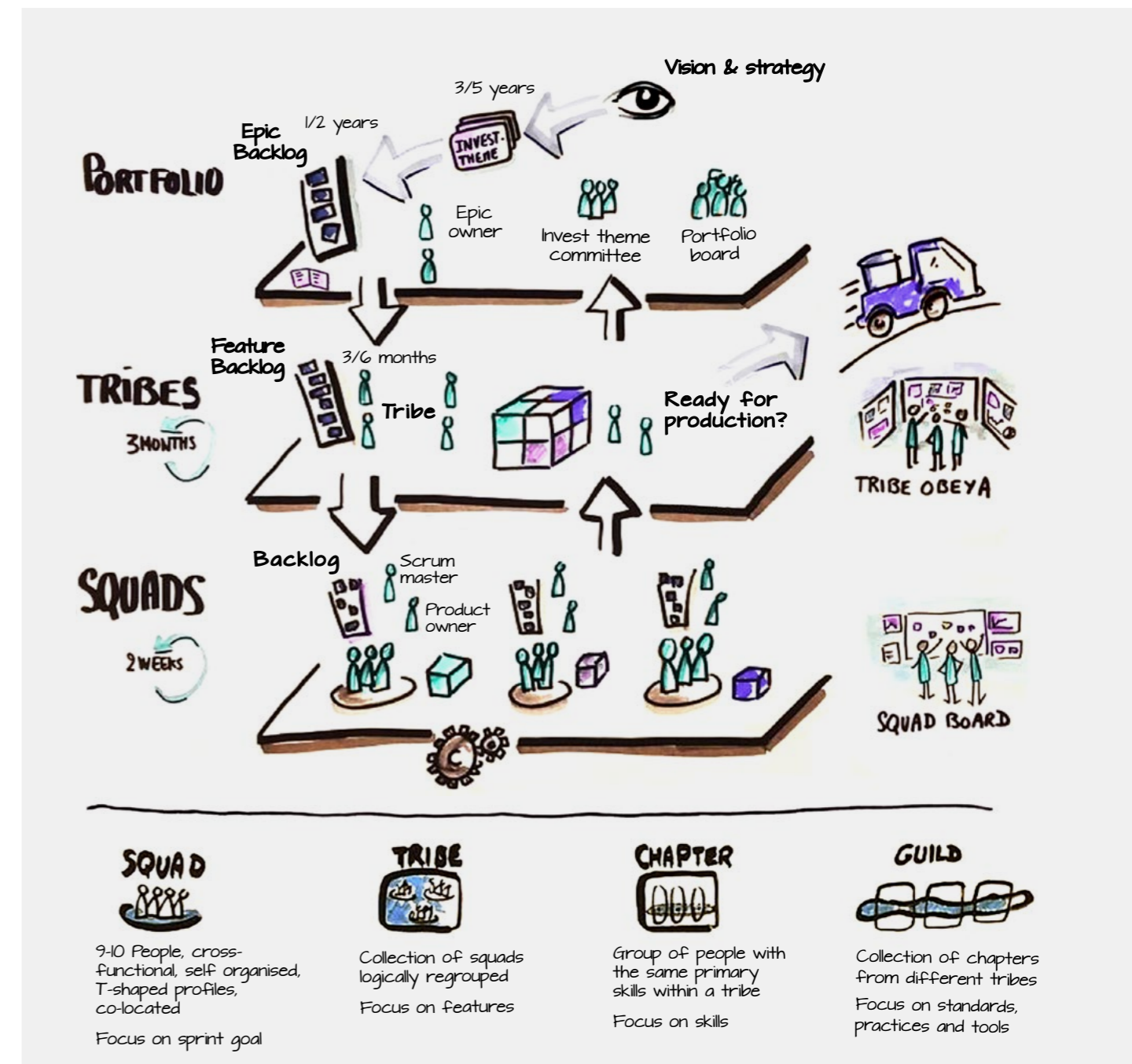
This meant first establishing an internal Transformation Office to bring cohesion and transparency to the initiative, support decision making, steer the bank-wide investment portfolio, and help company culture and behaviours change to embrace the shift to agile.

The client then leveraged our extensive skills and expertise to ensure this initiative was guided by thorough coaching and training. Once the Transformation Office was in place, the main functioning principles which were introduced to facilitate the transformation were:
- Introducing small 'squads' with high cadence of development (two to four weeks)
- Synchronising frequently through 'Demo', allowing to adjust rapidly when needed

- Releasing value (new features) on demand, managed at 'epic' level
- Only committing as far ahead as the next quarter, reviewing priorities based on the market and customer feedback
- Priorities coming from the portfolio are pushed to 'tribes' and 'squads' while remaining open to change based on bottom-up feedback
- All of this also was overseen by functional bodies called 'guilds' to manage standards and maintain best practices

Target Operating Model

The outcome

The organisation is currently on track to meet its target for squads to be able to deliver new features and products independently, and at full velocity, by the end of 2019.

This progression has been enabled by our training and coaching in the following key areas:

- **DevOps:** Release automation, application configuration management, and cloud
- **Test Automation:** Regression testing, automation, and behaviour-driven development
- **Agile Maturity:** Tribe independence, squad independence, and guild standards
- **Architecture:** Micro-services, target architecture, and transversal digital capabilities

The client's employees are now being encouraged to learn new skills, and make decisions to benefit their own work within the agile culture, which will in turn improve productivity and employee satisfaction.

One of the main advantages Expleo brings to a large-scale initiative like this is our background in testing and quality assurance, which enables our consultants to provide training and coaching enriched by their own hands on experience in IT.

Creating close relationships with the workforce has allowed the transformation towards agile to succeed, not just from a technical point of view, but from a cultural point of view as well, and that is a huge point of differentiation when introducing a new way of working on an enterprise-wide scale.

When employees are working smarter, and faster, while maintaining the appropriate levels of quality, the business will invariably see direct benefits through the extensive value which is being delivered to its customers.

For further information, or if you have any other questions, please contact: info@expleogroup.com