



# Transitioning from a project to a product delivery model

Lessons from a project manager's perspective

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Momentum Savings

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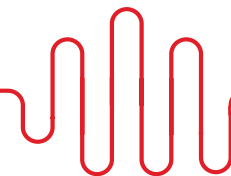
**33rd IPMA World Congress**  
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# Summary

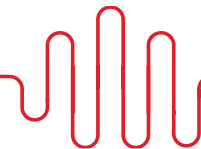
Transitioning from a project to a product delivery model: lessons from a project manager's perspective

Sharing insights with portfolio and project managers for when they are considering large-scale change for the way in which their business delivers on its strategic portfolio.



## Discussion flow

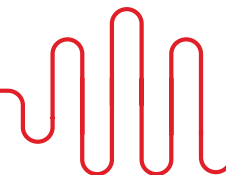
- The need for change
- The proposed change
- The approach to the change
- The solution
- The lessons and recommendations
- Questions and discussions



# The need for change

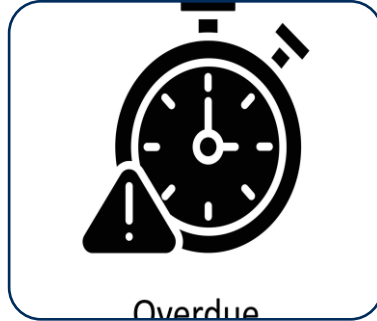
## Understanding the landscape

- Momentum Group is a South African-based financial services business.
- It's one of South Africa's largest life insurers.
- It has a federated operating model: Empowerment, accountability and collaboration.
- Group consists of 8 business units, 32 planning units and various business capabilities.
- This case study is based on a planning unit within Momentum Group, Momentum Savings, which specialises in long-term savings products and solutions.
- In 2021, Momentum Savings was unbundled from a larger planning unit in Momentum Life.
- The leadership created an operating model to support growth. As part of the business transformation office, a project management office was created in 2022.
- Momentum Savings deals with many complexities such as “old” or legacy systems and platforms and complex products.



# The need for change

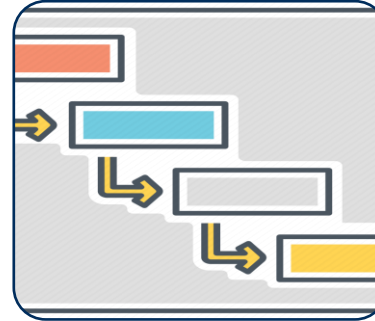
## The delivery reality



The delivery rate is not optimal (missing target dates and delaying expected benefits).



The delivery focus was directed mainly towards one of three strategic objectives.



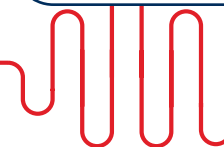
Projects were largely delivered in a waterfall manner and teams worked in silos.



People were thinly spread trying to focus on many projects concurrently.



We were delivering projects; not necessarily client value. We lacked the mindset to design for and with clients.



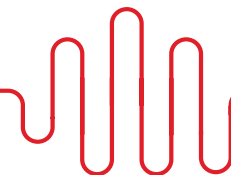


# The need for change

The delivery reality

*“We do not yet work end-to-end or with a client experience focus:  
We are both internally and functionally focussed,  
and this trips us up on maximising our efforts.”*

Momentum Savings CEO, Stanley Gabriel.



# The proposed change

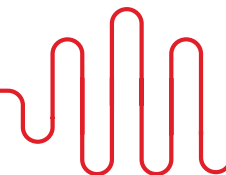
## The opportunity

- Gartner research found that businesses increasingly adopt **agile** practices (44% of businesses) and **product** models (39% of businesses) as the preferred way to deliver work.

<https://hbr.org/2023/11/what-the-next-generation-of-project-management-will-look-like#:~:text=The%20future%20of%20the%20project,and%2039%25%20through%20product%20models.>

- Businesses that find the most success on their digital journey, drive **value frequently** and directly to their customers by leveraging continuous **data-driven insights**. These companies are building product organisations around a **product-centric approach**.

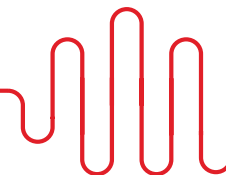
<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/consulting/us-five-steps-to-become-a-product-centric-organization.pdf>



# The proposed change

## The opportunity

- A product-centric delivery model is a way of organising people and continuously delivering valuable solutions to clients with more emphasis on value than the outputs.
- A product-centric delivery model aligns the business strategy to development and execution.
- Products are defined by their value or purpose (it does not imply a physical product).
- A product is evolutionary in nature (long-term success), integrating technical and non-technical elements.
- The product team is a multidisciplinary team, responsible for the build, support, maintenance, and service of the specific product.

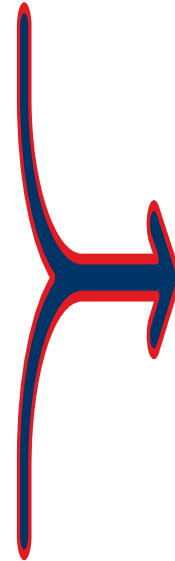




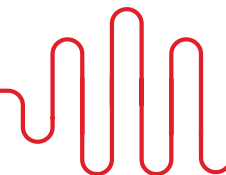
# The proposed change

## A product-centric delivery model

<b>Project-centric delivery model</b>
Scope is agreed in advance.
Start and end date.
Delivering features (output).
Agile mindset (optional).
Deliver on the plan.
Temporary team.
Budget for the project.

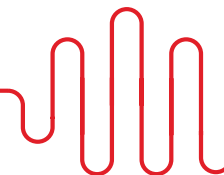
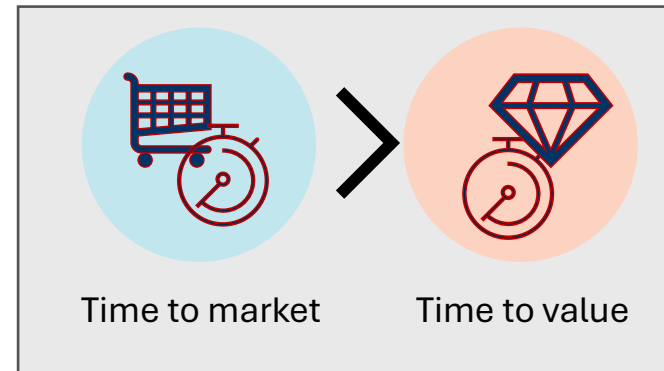
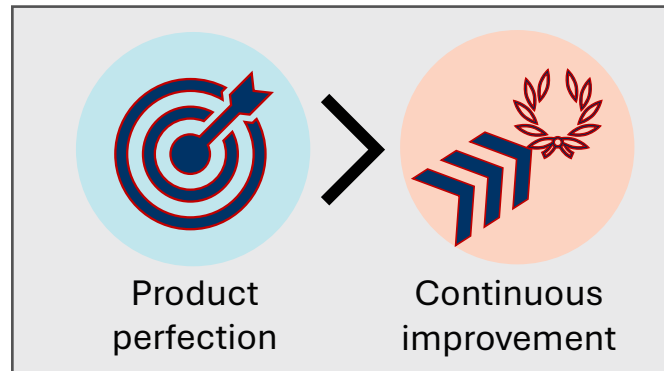
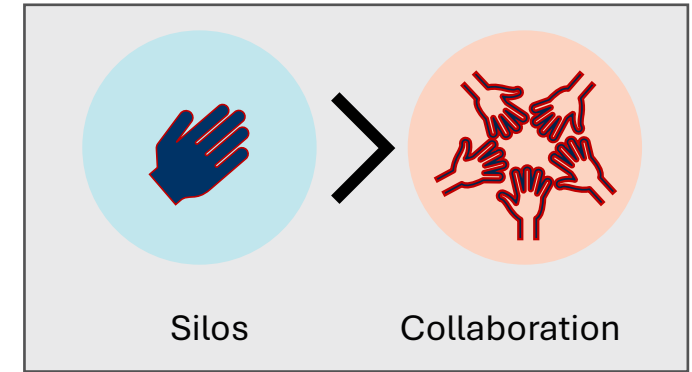
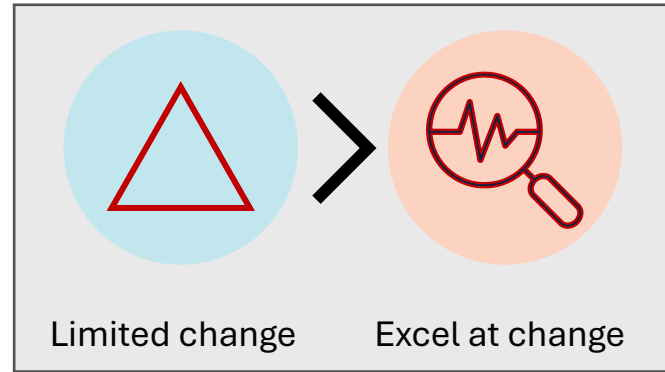
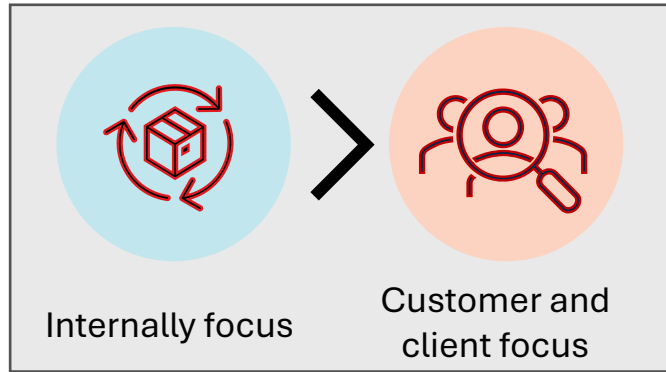


<b>Product-centric delivery model</b>
Value delivery, based on feedback.
Value system and flow of value.
Delivering business outcomes.
Product and agile mindset.
Delight the customer/end user.
Permanent team.
Budget for the product.



# The proposed change

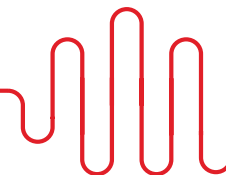
## A product mindset



# The proposed change

## The hypothesis

- There was a great opportunity to **transition the delivery** to a product-centric model embracing agile work practices and principles.
  - If the **correct products** were designed, delivery could be aimed towards more than one strategic objective, while allowing individuals in product teams to focus on what they are delivering on and to work together as an end-to-end team in delivering value faster to the business.
  - Embracing agility can help manage work more efficiently and to **deliver more effectively**.
  - Transitioning from a project-oriented approach to a product delivery model can enhance **collaboration**.



# The approach to the change

## The project details



### The problem statement:

- Enabling our strategy and maintaining the business relies on how successful we can deliver.
- A new way of organising ourselves and a better approach to delivery is required.



### Objectives:

- To transition to an **agile** way of work.
- To transition into a **product-centric model**.
- To partner with an agile **coach**.
- To support individuals with **training**.
- To support the transition through a well-structured **change** process.



### Success:

- Delivery across the **value chain**.
- Higher **client** satisfaction.
- Achieves business **value** faster.



### Proposed deliverables :

#### Embrace agility:

- Visibility of work.
- Interactions.
- Measurements and continued improvements.
- Smaller, incremental deliverables.

#### Product-centric delivery model:

- Design a product-centric delivery model.
- Allocate skills (and people).
- Create a capability of product owners and sponsors.
- Experiment (at least for 6-12 months) with the initial delivery model.



### Core project team

- Sponsor – CEO
- Owner – Head of business transformation
- Project manager – Portfolio manager
- Change manager – Head of human capital

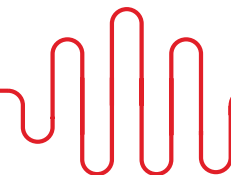
# The approach to the change

Clearly defined vision



## North Star

Delivering value to the **client** better  
while enabling **you** to deliver easier,  
resulting in improved **business** results through delivery that is  
sustainable, regular and across the value chain.

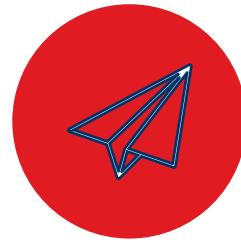


# The approach to the change

## Establishing a roadmap

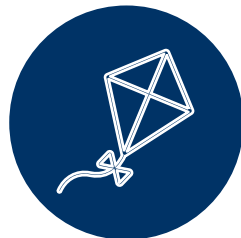
### Feb 2023 – Dec 2023

- Start the agile transitioning.
- Review current delivery and what we would like to see differently.
- Product delivery research.
- Exco commitment.
- Project approved and prioritised.
- Confirm product-centric delivery model structure.
- Create change team.



### April – June 2024

- Roles and responsibility agreements.
- Way of work alignment.
- Initial interaction design.
- Communication and socializing.
- Make work visible.
- How to work in a matrix structure.



- Stream leaders: Product sponsor, product manager and delivery manager.
- Vision, objectives, measures and criteria to allocate work to stream.
- Map current work.
- Skills and resourcing.
- Transition planning of work and people.
- Change management.

### Jan 2024 – March 2024



- Team liftoff sessions.
- Start operating in model.
- Mindset shift embedding.
- Improving interaction design.
- Community of practice.
- Continue change management.
- Transition work to new strategy.
- Way of work adjustments.

### July 2024 – onwards

# The solution

## The proposed product model: Our value delivery model



VDM COP

- Guide the maturity of product-centric delivery and agile way of work.
- To ensure alignment between the three streams.
- To ensure overall strategic delivery/progress rolled up to exco.



Client experience: DGXperts

*To enhance the way we connect and collaborate*

Focus on:

- All the activities to manage a contract and the experience that the client, intermediary and employee has from quoting and onboarding a client until the client exits the contract.
- Digitalisation.



Long-term savings provider: InVollo

*To be the go-to savings provider for South Africans*

Focus on:

- Improving and maintaining our product offering.
- Enabling our intermediaries to sell our products.
- Creating awareness of our offering in the market.

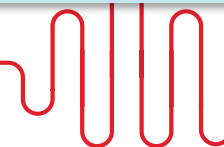


Systems and platform:  
S&P Trailblazers

*To enable business delivery through scalable, sustainable and efficient technology capabilities*

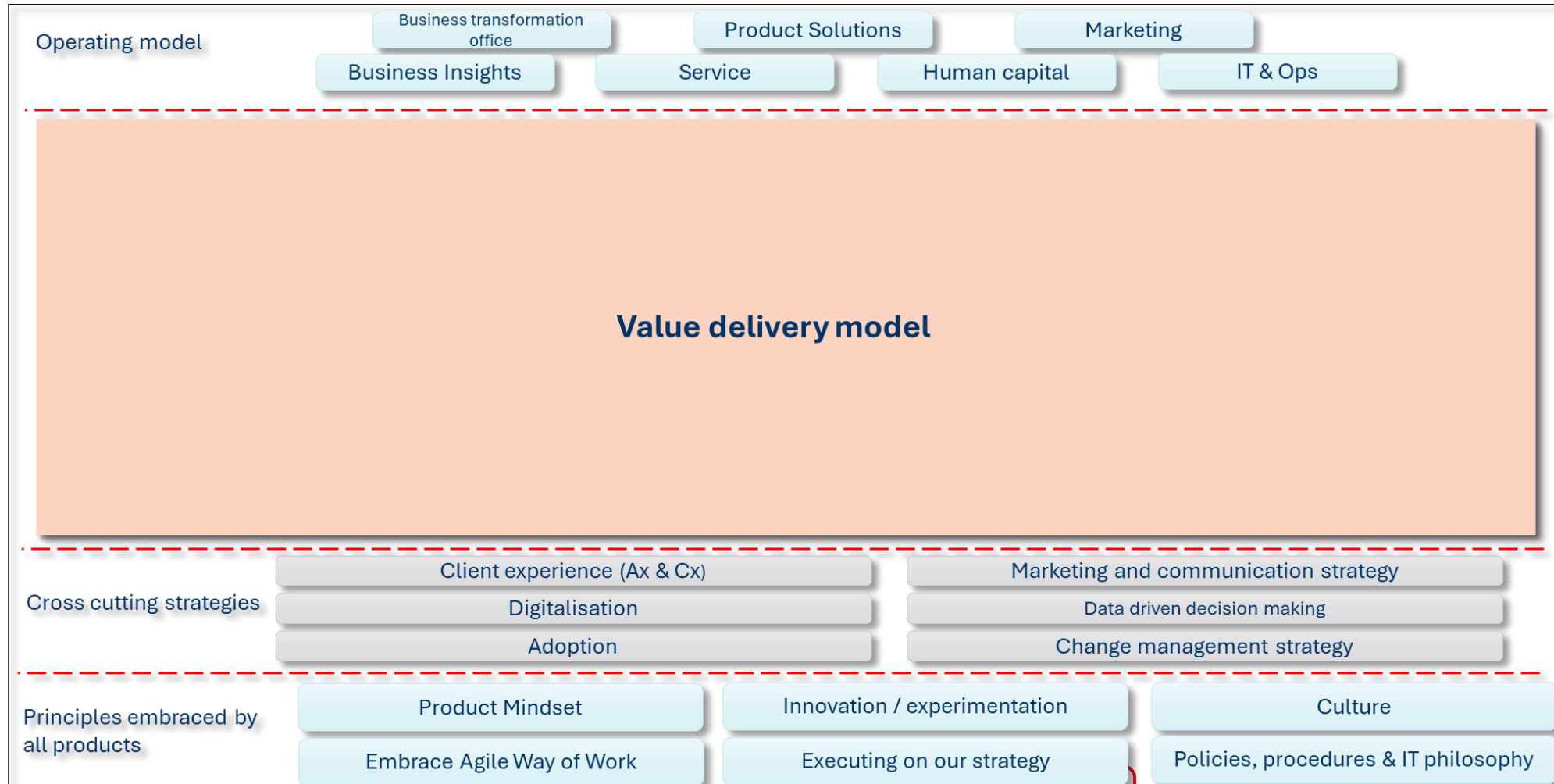
Focus on:

- Providing reusable capabilities to enable the other streams to deliver.
- Modernisation of the IT platform.



# The solution

## The solution in context of our business





# The solution

## The team






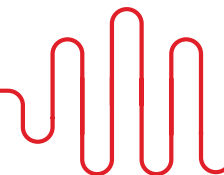
# The lessons and recommendations

*It's fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure – Bill Gates*



- How we did on the journey:

-  Many lessons
-  Some wins and some lessons
-  Many wins



# The lessons and recommendations



## Leadership

### Lesson

- Executive support was key to the change,



### Recommendation

- CEO as the project sponsor.
- Create priority and space for the leadership team to debate the model and co-create the solution.
- Reiterate the importance to deliver within this model.
- Communication relating to the delivery model should come from the CEO.
- Support leadership on an individual level to adapt to the model.
- Give people permission to not know everything and to be happy in the messy middle.
- Don't stop support on "go live" date: Ensure continued executive support to reflect and improve.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Leadership

### Lesson

- It was difficult to establish mutual understanding of the model.
- Business leaders had to challenge their own thinking.



### Recommendation

- Take the time it requires to create clarity within the leadership team on what the model means.
- Once business leaders buy into the model and understand the implications in terms of delivery, ask these leaders to supported early on with communication and change management within their teams.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Find the correct leadership for the delivery model.
- Leaders in the delivery model struggled initially but were willing to own their new responsibilities. There was willingness and courage to step into these roles that were so different from their work.

## Leadership



## Recommendation

- Finding the right leaders for the value streams need careful planning and consideration.
- Co-create the requirements for these roles at leadership level.
- The transition into the model yields better results where the leaders are from business rather than technical experts.
- Allow each leader to transition at their own pace into their role.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Some roles and responsibilities of people in the stream will change.
- People who were previously part of project teams and now in delivery streams experienced uncertainty around the value their contribution can add.
- Conflicting direction from functional and delivery leaders was unexpected.
- We decided to not appoint people but use who was available. Where there was only one person fulfilling a role in the business, this person was allocated to all teams (as a shared resource).

## People



## Recommendation

- Ensure that all skills are in a stream to enable delivery across the business value chain.
- Enable people that are shared across streams.
- Spend time on clarifying roles and responsibilities for people stepping into roles. Involve them in creation.
- Ensure mutual understanding of roles in teams.
- Allow for moments when people can practically see that all doesn't start and end with a "job title".
- When communicating and solving for the model, be widely inclusive.
- Provide clarity on the matrix model to leaders and employees.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Culture will support the transition (or not).
- It takes time to move to self-organisation and autonomous teams. We saw lovely moments of self-organisation where teams took ownership of and made decisions about process.
- Not everybody will support the model. The more subscribed people are to the model, the more they take ownership to make decisions and self-organise.

## People



## Recommendation

- Allow people from various areas of the business to be part of the change. Understand that subcultures in teams may affect progression and success.
- Don't assume that if leaders buy into the model the implementation roadmap will be supported.
- Give people clear guidance on what the right mindset for the model is.
- Create opportunities for people to apply the principles embedded into the new model practically.
- There might be individuals that don't see the need for change. Don't let them derail efforts.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Create a roadmap and milestone dates but listen to the voices of those who are affected.
- The implementation was more difficult than strategising about the model.
- We didn't spend enough time onboarding the people that became part of the streams.
- It was important to set out what we wanted to achieve in the first year and how success would look like.

## Approach



## Recommendations

- Agile project management is critical to ensure forward movement.
- There will be many unknowns as you progress. The approach should allow you to assess and recalibrate.
- Let yourself be led by the progress seen in the business.
- Joint sense making is critical for success, and it may take more time than you had foreseen. Allow for mutual understanding at group and individual level.



# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Change management is key to success.
- Empower the team with applicable training.

## Approach



## Recommendations

- Provide product training for a core group of senior leaders before transitioning into the delivery model.
- Extend the product training to key influencers during the early transitioning stages.
- Find a knowledgeable coach to support the process.
- Grow the internal coaching footprint.
- Identify individuals that can play a role in nudging the streams towards the intended way of work.
- Create a change team that can support the implementation efforts – be agile in this approach.
- Create a community of value delivery model leaders to reflect and improve on the way of work.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Finding the correct product structure for the business is not easy but needs to be done right.
- Clear understanding of ownership of strategic objectives resulted from the delivery streams that supported strategic implementation.

## Solution



## Recommendation

- The best product construct starts with identifying what the business needs to be good at as an organisation for their clients.
- Take care to not have too many products and sub-products, or suboptimal definitions of products.
- When there are too many complexities and dependencies, review the proposed solution.
- Create clarity of what each product is responsible for by specifying the focus and purpose. Test the clarity of the thinking to transition work into the products.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- Getting into a rhythm as early as possible is key to progress. It allows for feedback loops that enables the team to determine improvements to processes.
- Some changes, such as how to deliver smaller value items sooner, became practical for the team as they planned around work.
- Our biggest team in the business, information technology, was ahead of others because they had adopted an agile way of work earlier.
- We are still struggling to solution from a client perspective.

## Solution



## Recommendation

- Liftoff sessions are beneficial for teams to connect and to co-create working agreements.
- Creating routine for streams is important (even if the full picture is not yet known).
- Acknowledge that the journey won't always be smooth. But be intentional in driving the change.

# The lessons and recommendations



## Lesson

- We aligned more widely in the business as people from different functional areas started engaging.
- There was a shared understanding of and ownership for the business strategy and key results.
- Although we strived to get rid of silos, the streams created mini silos early on.

## Solution



## Recommendation

- Take time to filter the business strategy down and be specific of how each stream will deliver.
- Take time for team members to understand each other's domain language. Be intentional to be inclusive.
- Plan for the value delivery streams to connect on what work they are doing.



Questions and discussions



Thank you

