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ORGWRIGHT

# AI Won't Kill Your Business - Your Org Design Will

An OrgWright whitepaper that shows how to Thrive in the Emergent Technology Era



# Executive Summary

In today's volatile business environment, where executives grapple with economic uncertainty and the rapid evolution of technology led by AI, adapting and thriving are no longer optional – they are imperative. Organizations must adapt and thrive amidst constant change in an era where technology evolves unprecedentedly. As a seasoned consultant with over three decades of experience in technology innovation and organizational leadership, I've witnessed the relentless march of digital disruption, from the advent of microprocessor-based time clocks to the transformative power of AI. This paper explores how organizations can achieve continuous adaptability and secure a competitive edge in the face of rapid technological advancements.

## AI's Impact on Industries and Competitiveness

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries, enhancing efficiencies, reducing costs, and driving significant competitive advantages. From real-time fraud detection in financial services to improved diagnostic accuracy in healthcare, AI's integration into business processes offers unparalleled benefits. However, the rapid pace of AI advancement also introduces substantial challenges. Organizations must develop robust internal capabilities in change leadership, organizational design, and work design to navigate these challenges effectively.

## The Promise and the Challenge

While generative AI promises to revolutionize business processes, enhancing efficiency and innovation, it also necessitates fundamental changes in organizational structures and leadership models. Companies must rethink their approaches to integrate AI seamlessly and develop new skills within their workforce. The challenge lies in aligning technological advancements with organizational change, ensuring that AI adoption leads to sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

## The Need for New Organizational Structures and Leadership Models

To capitalize on technological advancements, leaders must transcend traditional management roles and become designers and navigators of their organizations. This involves crafting structures that support effective delegation, establishing mechanisms for sensing and adapting to changes, and promoting a culture of continuous organizational redesign. By fostering a culture of adaptability, organizations can remain agile and responsive to the evolving business landscape.

## Core Conditions for Continuous Adaptability

- 1. Informed Awareness:** Decisions are based on robust insights and shared data, ensuring responsiveness to internal and external changes.
- 2. Coherence:** Ensures that all parts of the organization are aligned with value and work cohesively towards unified goals, reducing friction and increasing efficiency.
- 3. Purposeful Direction:** Establishes a clear vision and strategic plan that guides the organization's actions and decisions.
- 4. Strategic Empowerment:** Moves decision-making closer to the operational front lines, enabling faster responses and greater innovation.

### **Becoming an Adaptable Organization**

Thriving in today's rapidly evolving world requires a systematic approach to building adaptability. Leaders must design organizations for effective delegation, enhance mechanisms for sensing and adapting, and operationalize structured collaboration. This approach ensures that the organization adapts to changes and leads in innovation and strategic execution.

### **Leadership and Continuous Evolution**

Sustaining adaptability necessitates dynamic engagement with new operational cadences and methodologies. Leaders transition from traditional command roles to facilitators and coaches, embodying a servant leadership mindset that empowers teams to experiment, fail fast, and learn rapidly. This strategic shift ensures that the organization remains resilient and competitive.

*In this transformative era, leadership involves more than understanding the need for change; it requires a clear, actionable plan that leaders can confidently execute. By following the structured approach outlined in this paper, organizations can build an adaptive framework that not only prepares them for present challenges but also equips them to lead and succeed in the evolving global landscape.*

Summarized by ChatGPT 4o



# Introduction

In today’s volatile business environment, where executives grapple with economic uncertainty and the rapid evolution of technology led by AI, adapting and thriving are no longer optional – they are imperative. As a seasoned consultant with over three decades of experience, I’ve witnessed the relentless pace of technological evolution. From the introduction of PCs and the internet to the transformative power of AI, one thing remains constant: the need for

lete. SAP came into existence in 1972 when five former IBM leaders set out to create standard enterprise software that integrates all business processes and makes real-time data processing a reality. Over time, SAP and several others, such as Oracle and PeopleSoft, enabled organizations to re-think their organizations to operate more efficiently by redistributing workloads and providing greater transparency to real-time operational performance. In the early 2000s, process automation companies were born, and by 2017, the threat of replacing humans with robotics permeated “white-collar” workforces everywhere. Those early RPA (Robotic Process Automation) technologies led to ML (Machine Learning) and NLP (Natural Language Processing). Today, we are experiencing a new wave of digital disruption driven by the maturing of these technologies and the comprehensive and integrated adoption of AI (Artificial Intelligence), fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate and compete.



***“EVERY COMPANY IN THE WORLD, AND EVERY WORKFLOW FOR EVERY COMPANY IN EVERY INDUSTRY, WILL BE RE-ENGINEERED IN 24 MONTHS.”***

***- BILL MCDERMOTT, CEO OF SERVICENOW***

continuous adaptability. This paper explores how organizations can not only survive but thrive in this next era of digital disruption by embracing the principles I’ve honed throughout my career.

Digital disruption is not a new challenge to business leaders. Kronos, founded in 1977, introduced the world’s first microprocessor-based time clock in 1985, eventually making all punch timecard-based ‘systems’ obso-

The energy and excitement brought about by AI feel different from prior digital disrupters simply because every technology company, be it a platform provider such as SAP, ServiceNow, and Oracle, a hyper-scaler such as Google, Microsoft, and AWS, or a systems engineering company such as EPAM, Globant, and Endava, is incorporating AI into its base products and/or development practices.

The pace at which technology has evolved has increased every year; today, through AI, technology is evolving technology. Technology is evolving faster than our ability to regulate and legislate it, as we witnessed early on when UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), more commonly known as “drones,” were observed flying in commercial airspace. Though many organizations are creating policies about the “ethical use of AI,” few regulations control and limit AI usage. As such, AI is reshaping industries and individual capability at a rate never seen before. For visionary leaders, grasping and harnessing these changes is paramount to securing a competitive advantage. Today’s



critical question is, “How do we prepare for and adapt to these ongoing transformations?”

All industries are experiencing seismic shifts because of AI’s impact. In financial services, healthcare, technology, and beyond, AI is enhancing efficiencies, reducing costs, and driving significant competitive advantages. For instance, financial institutions

AI is used for real-time fraud detection and risk assessment, while healthcare providers use AI to improve diagnostic accuracy and patient care.

McKinsey recently reported in “The State of AI in 2023: Generative AI’s Breakout Year” that high-performing organizations benefit significantly from AI adoption, especially in product development and customer service. These transformations enhance an organization’s capabilities and redefine entire market dynamics, making AI a critical part of its competitive strategy. This assessment was made before the latest round of LLM (Large Language Model) enhancements and Microsoft Copilots’ product development acceleration. Some companies are heeding the call to embrace AI technology - but are struggling to deliver, at pace, the required changes to their products and services.

### The Promise:



Generative AI will revolutionize business processes, significantly enhancing efficiency, productivity, and innovation. Companies effectively using these technologies can expect notable improvements in performance metrics, cost savings, and revenue growth.

### The Challenge:



The rapid pace of technological advancement introduces substantial challenges beyond mere technology integration. We can safely predict that AI capabilities will evolve much faster than society’s ability to regulate and legislate. We saw this with process automation, recognition tools, and many other technological advancements, most intended for good and then used, oftentimes intentionally, in destructive ways. These challenges are elevated by GenAI’s early adoption by individuals ahead of organizations. Many organizations consider this a call to action to establish GenAI usage policies. Where regulations exist, organizations must know how to navigate them and where they do not, organizations must establish their own standards defining the ethical use and addressing the potential societal impacts of widespread AI adoption.

## The Promise... and the Challenge

“While changes in technology occur very rapidly, changes in organizations do not.”

- Scott Brinker, Martec’s Law

“All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they get.”

- Arthur W. Jones

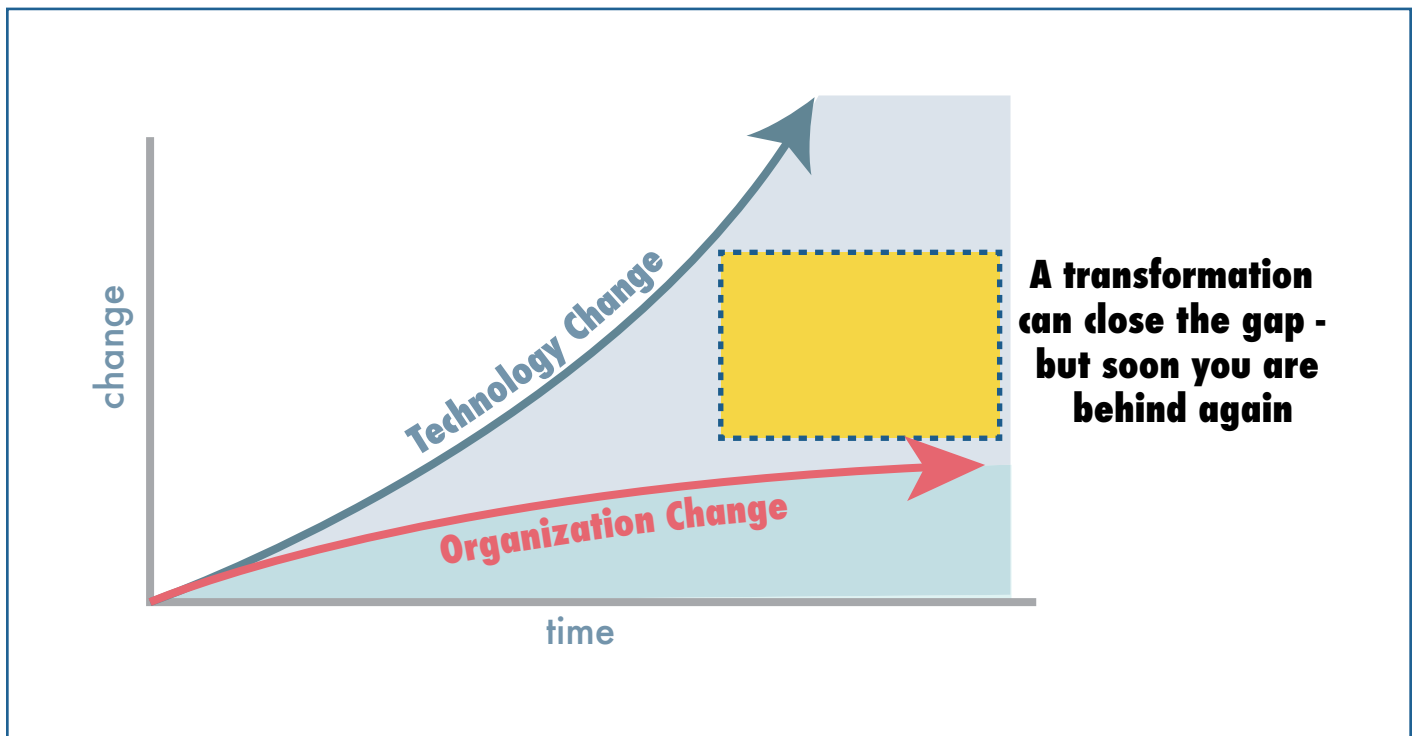


## The Need for New Organizational Structures and Leadership Models

Leaders today must transcend traditional management roles and become designers and navigators of their organizations. This involves crafting structures that support effective delegation, establishing robust mechanisms for sensing and adapting to changes, and promoting a culture of continuous organizational redesign. Scott Brinker, VP of platform ecosystem of HubSpot, even suggested that large organizational ‘resets’ (e.g.,

reorganizations and spin-offs) are necessary to keep up with the evolving pace of technology.

As organizations have experienced various waves of technological advancements, more than merely having the technology and figuring out how to incorporate it into their current ways of working is required. This is particularly true with AI since its benefits will be extracted by individuals or realized through organizational use cases and trials and errors. Companies must fundamentally rethink their organizational structures and leadership approaches to capitalize on these technological advances fully.



» Martec's Law – Steve Brinker

## An Example of Technology-Driven Change: The America's Cup



The America's Cup, often seen as the pinnacle of yacht racing, has experienced revolutionary changes from 1974 to 2024, mirroring the shifts required in modern organizational designs.

The impact of technology on organizations is evidenced by its effects on sailing boats over the last 50 years. The fundamentals of sailing haven't changed. They remain the wind, the tides, and the course. However, advances in materials, information, and design have made the 2024 America's Cup boats unrecognizable from the 1974 boats. How the boats are designed, operated, and crewed has dramatically changed. The same is true for organizations.

In 1974, America's Cup boat designs and sails were based more on traditional naval architecture principles, with incremental improvements focused on optimizing balance and maximizing the wind captured by large, conventional sails. By 2024, the boats had transformed into marvels of modern engineering. The most striking change is the replacement of the traditional keel with advanced hydrofoils. These hydrofoils lift the hull above the water at high speeds, drastically reducing drag and allowing the boat to reach once unimaginable speeds. Though this is not digitally driven change, these physical design changes did mandate changes to a boat's workforce, the "crew".

The 1974 teams were more significant, primarily focusing on physically managing the boat's sails

and maintaining balance. Fast forward to 2024, the crew size has reduced, with each member now also a technology and data analysis specialist. Modern crews are as much about brainpower as brawn, using real-time data and analytics to make strategic decisions about navigation and speed. This data-driven approach requires acute knowledge of software and analytics tools, shifting the necessary skills from purely physical sailing prowess to technological expertise and strategic insight.

The shift from large crews focused on manual tasks to smaller, more technologically adept teams reflects how companies must evolve. Today's organizations need employees who understand their traditional roles, are proficient with digital tools and data analytics, and can make rapid, informed decisions. Just as sailors have transitioned to roles that require managing technological interfaces and interpreting complex data streams, modern workers must be able to navigate and leverage digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and real-time data analytics to drive business success.

Just as the America's Cup boats have adapted to modern technologies to remain competitive, so must organizations redesign themselves. Nimbler, more technologically integrated competitors will outmaneuver businesses operating with outdated models.



# Conditions for Continuous Adaptability

In my career, I've worked with over 150 transformations and dozens of product development efforts – finding common paths to successfully delivering results in the face of uncertainty. I have also studied management literature to find the best way to scale and consistently deliver results. Some of this goes back to models that the Marine Corps used to get a not entirely responsible 19-year-old NCO to successfully lead missions in complex and rapidly evolving situations. Through this experience and research, I have identified **four core adaptability conditions** vital for fostering a culture of adaptability. I have labeled these as Coherence, Informed Awareness, Purposeful Direction, and Strategic Empowerment. However, these principles are not abstract concepts or wishful states of affairs. These are practical applications proven by personal experience and management literature on leading organizations. Using this lens, I have consistently been able to rapidly turn around unsuccessful projects and transformations. **The basis of organizational adaptability is a well-designed system that enables leaders to delegate outcomes and changes, ensuring reliable results confidently.** It requires creating a structure where control and steering mechanisms are redefined rather than removed. It involves decentralizing some structure where control is not about direct supervision but about directing the energy and creativity of empowered teams toward shared goals.

Leaders retain significant steering capabilities through routines that include feedback supported by strategic dashboards, frequent interactions, and operational reviews. These provide them with insights and influence without the need for micro-management. These steering mechanisms ensure that leaders can maintain oversight across the organization, dynamically adjusting strategies and aligning with the strategic vision.

These core adaptability conditions transform the role of leaders from direct managers to strategic enablers who guide and support an adaptable organization. If these adaptability conditions are absent, organizations must rely on localized optimization, intuitive decision-making, reactive responses, and centralized micromanagement. Such an approach often proves

too slow and inefficient, hindering the organization's ability to compete effectively in dynamic environments.

When looking at troubled or failing transformations that have all the right “practices” in place, see if the intent of those practices is reflected in the organization's design and implementation. They are likely missing. By strategically designing organizational structures that embed these core adaptability conditions, companies can transcend traditional constraints and enable more agile and strategic operations.

Looking into military strategy and modern management principles, we find **four core adaptability conditions**—Coherence, Informed Awareness, Purposeful Direction, and Strategic Empowerment—essential for cultivating a culture of adaptability. These conditions are not theoretical ideals but are grounded in practical applications validated by some of today's world leading companies:

- 1. Informed Awareness:** Decisions are made based on robust, shared insights bolstered by shared models and data, ensuring decisions are responsive to both internal and external changes.
- 2. Coherence:** Ensures that all parts of the organization are designed to work cohesively towards unified goals. This alignment reduces friction and increases the efficiency of collective efforts.
- 3. Purposeful Direction:** Direction is set on an operating rhythm that is responsive and quicker than the external rate of change. This strategic rhythm provides opportunities for clarity and steering.
- 4. Strategic Empowerment:** Moves decision-making authority closer to the operational front lines, enabling faster responses and greater innovation while ensuring that these decisions are made within a framework that supports the organization's goals

## Informed Awareness : Insights and Decision Making



From Intuitive Insight to Informed Awareness: Relying on intuitive insight can result in decisions based on gut feelings, anecdotal evidence, or incomplete information. While intuition has its place, it often needs more robustness for consistent, strategic decision-making. When decision-makers do not share the insights that feed intuition, decisions that are not



supportive or even contrary to the desired direction can be made. Informed awareness is the organization's ability to maintain a keen understanding of its environment and make informed, agile decisions. This condition is crucial for navigating complex and rapidly changing situations. Transitioning from intuitive insight to informed awareness involves developing Shared Models fed by Sensing Capabilities that provide Customer, Environmental, and Capability Insights and cultivating a Data-Fueled culture where decisions are backed by data analysis, research, and shared models. Designing and implementing cadences and routines that leverage shared models, data, and storytelling to create a shared understanding ensures that leaders and teams fully know the internal and external factors influencing their organization, leading to more accurate and strategic decisions. Informed awareness allows organizations to stay ahead of the curve, adapting to changes with a solid foundation of knowledge and insight. Without Informed Awareness, the delegation of decisions and actions cannot be trusted. Informed Awareness is necessary at speed so that all the decisions continue to point in a common direction.

## Coherence (Teams and Interactions)



**From Local and Resource Optimization to Coherence:** In many organizations, local optimization is the norm, with different departments or teams focusing on their goals, metrics, and success. The belief

is that if every part works optimally, the whole organization will also. However, unless every part is pointed in the same direction and coordinated, this siloed approach leads to inefficiencies, misaligned objectives, and a lack of synergy across the organization.

Moving from local optimization to Coherence goes beyond calling for mutual trust; it encompasses a unified direction where everyone understands and works towards common goals. Coherence is more straightforward to attain in a flatter hierarchy. Establishing the conditions supporting responsible delegation before reducing hierarchical structures and empowering teams with decision-making authority is essential.

Coherence is built on team design, intentional interaction design, and shared models. This shift involves leadership support for a design that breaks down silos – either through cross-functional teams

or clear orchestration paths. Then, management accountability should be used to actively encourage cross-functional communication and align incentives to ensure that all parts of the organization are working towards the same strategic objectives.

Coherence is achieved when every part of the organization is tuned to a shared vision, synchronizing their efforts and ensuring seamless and effective collaboration. Creating Coherence involves gauging the clarity of the organization's vision, the roles and responsibilities of team members, and the level of intentionality in partnership across the organization. A harmonious organization operates seamlessly, ensuring effective decision-making and execution. Coherence is a necessary condition to allow for delegation deeper into the organization. The organization is more likely to make decisions effectively when Coherence is coupled with Informed Awareness.

## Purposeful Rhythm (The Future as the Center of Gravity)



**From Reactive Response to Purposeful Direction:** In many organizations, solution design is often driven by immediate issues and crises, resulting in constant firefighting. Organizations operating

in a reactive mode tend to make decisions based on the most pressing problems without fully considering long-term implications. This crisis-driven fragmented decision-making process prioritizes short-term fixes over strategic planning, perpetuating a problem-solving cycle without substantial progress.

In organizations where Coherence doesn't exist, creating improvement beyond the next local crisis is challenging. Moreover, the lack of coordination across departments often results in misalignment and inefficiencies, further exacerbating the organization's reactive nature. This reactive approach creates a chaotic environment where strategic goals are frequently sidelined by short-term problems, leading to stagnation in long-term progress. The resulting lack of focus and rhythm makes implementing changes while maintaining the organization's performance challenging.

To shift from a reactive response to a Purposeful Direction, organizations must embrace a rhythm of adapting capabilities that align digital and AI

enablement with organizational excellence while driving clear strategic intent. Purposeful Direction requires establishing a clear vision and strategic plan that guides the organization’s actions and decisions—managing the obstacles and risks and developing a clear path to achieve them. Emphasizing Organizational Excellence is crucial in this transition, ensuring that all operations are optimized and aligned with strategic objectives. Digital and AI Enablement needs to follow Organizational Excellence; organizations must leverage technology to enhance or redesign their processes, not implement technology for technology’s sake. The rhythm of designing and implementing Digitally Enabled Organizational Excellence must be aligned and synchronized to the rhythm of customers and the market. Strategic intent, including budgets, communications, and expectations, must also be aligned with this rhythm. This ensures that all decisions and actions are aligned with each other and with the organization’s overarching goals.

Purposeful Direction then empowers teams to contribute meaningfully to executing the organization’s goals, driving sustained growth and success. This alignment of rhythms and focus comes from a vision of the future as a center of gravity from the core, while execution is delegated to teams in the organization. Purposeful Direction is difficult to achieve without Coherence and Informed Awareness.

## Strategic Empowerment: Cadence, Routines, and Feedback



As leaders, the transition from centralized control to strategic empowerment necessitates a shift in organizational structure and a transformation in how control and decision-making are perceived and implemented. Historically, decision-making concentrated at the top has led to inefficiencies, slow responses, and a disengaged workforce. It doesn’t work for the leaders, either. This traditional model often results in decision-making bottlenecks and stress for the executive.

To address these challenges, leaders must establish clear, actionable conditions within the organization—

Cadence, Routines, and Feedback—that collectively foster an environment of trust and align the interests of the organization, its leaders, and its employees:

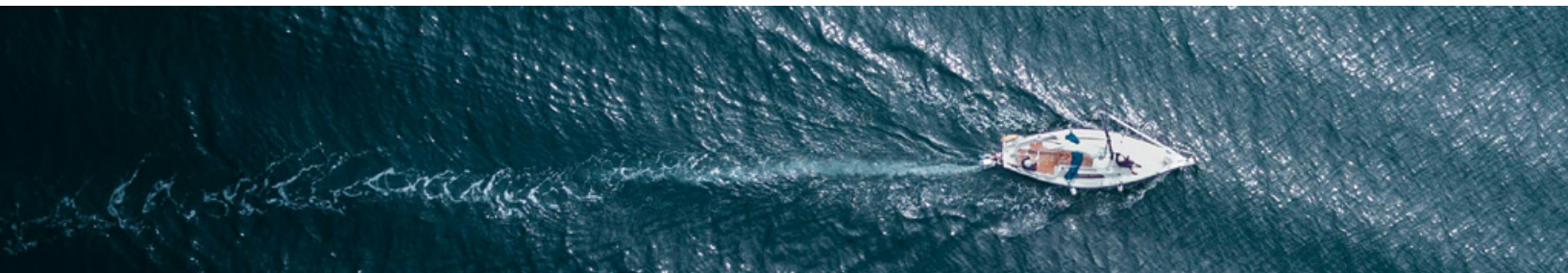
Cadence is about establishing a consistent and predictable rhythm in decision-making and communication to ensure the organization operates synchronously. This predictability in operational tempo enables leaders to delegate responsibilities effectively while maintaining oversight, ensuring that strategic adjustments are timely and based on accurate, current information. Institutionalizing Routines that support strategic goals will create a reliable framework for action.

These established routines standardize performance across the organization and build a foundation of trust—employees understand their roles clearly and how these roles contribute to the organization’s broader objectives. Robust Feedback mechanisms such as back briefs are essential for maintaining a dialogue between employees at all levels and leadership.

These feedback loops ensure that decision-making is responsive and informed, facilitating quick adjustments that align with employee insights and strategic imperatives. Strategic empowerment under this model does not simply make employees ‘feel better’; it strategically aligns their actions with the organization’s goals in a mutually beneficial way.

## A Trustworthy System of Decision-Making and Leadership

Creating a blend of Informed Awareness, Coherence, Purposeful Rhythms, and Strategic Empowerment enables leaders to shift to a model that emphasizes control through direction and development, fostering autonomy without compromising alignment. Trust can grow both ways—with the leader trusting the teams and the teams trusting the leader. This is the first step toward more networked forms of leadership. The trust established through these conditions allows for a more agile, responsive organization where empowerment directly supports strategic success and competitive advantage.





*Thriving in Cycles of Change means we implement smaller and more rapid cycles of change.*

- Dennis Stevens

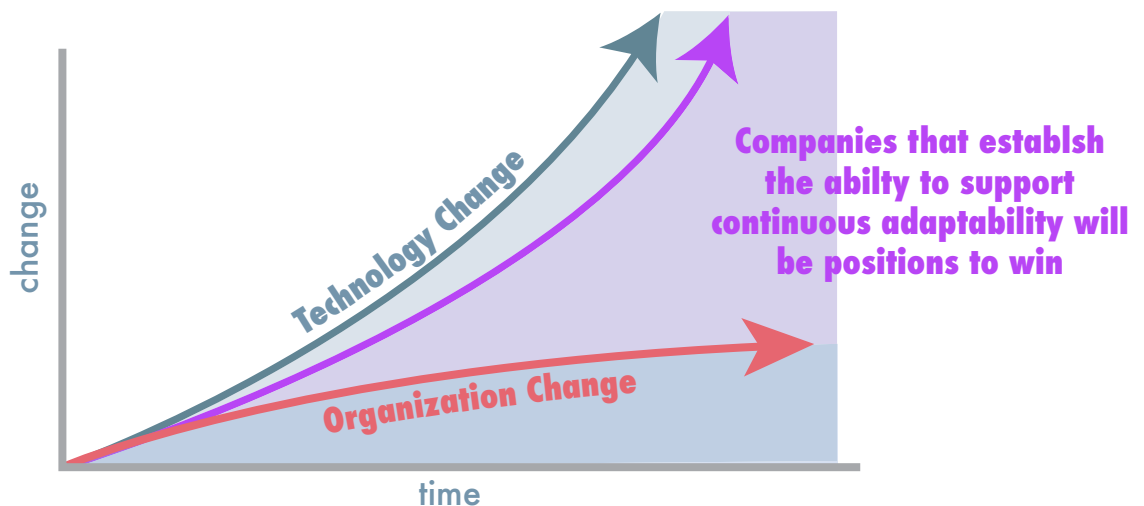
# Becoming an Adaptable Organization

## Accelerating Change in a Rapidly Evolving World

As we saw in the evolution of America's Cup Sailboats and their crews, the Rhythms and Cadences must be aligned and move faster than the competition. The accelerated pace of operational and change rhythms in today's business landscape necessitates a significant shift in organizational leadership models.

Traditionally, top-down leadership frameworks allowed for methodical planning and implementation of strategic changes, paced according to more predictable business cycles. However, with the advent of generative AI and other transformative technologies, these rhythms have quickened dramatically, outpacing the capabilities of the old hierarchical models to manage change effectively. However, creating a new change model isn't merely an aspirational idea. It demands concrete actions from leaders that can systematically reshape an organization to be more agile, resilient, and high performing.

Leaders are tasked with designing organizations for effective delegation, enhancing and integrating mechanisms for sensing and adapting, and operationalizing structured collaboration. This comprehensive approach establishes a robust framework that equips leaders with the necessary tools to drive continuous improvement and maintain strategic alignment within a rapidly evolving environment. Just as the America's Cup yachts have



had to adapt to modern technologies to remain competitive, so must organizations evolve. More agile, technologically adept competitors will drastically outmaneuver companies clinging to outdated operational models. Adopting advanced technology and strategically shifting workforce capabilities are not just beneficial but essential for thriving in today's dynamic business landscape.

A systematic approach is vital to ensuring these transformative changes are strategic and practical. It helps deliver tangible benefits at every step of the transition. By engaging deeply with leadership teams, we establish and sustain new operational cadences and methodologies, ensuring that the organization's capabilities continuously align with market demands and technological advancements.

## Building a No-Regrets Foundation for Adaptability

Creating the conditions for becoming an adaptable organization is a journey that pays off from the start. It involves establishing an ongoing series of passes through a cycle that targets and implements strategic improvements. These are structured passes through Designing for, Orienting for, and Operationalizing Adaptability. Each pass through the cycle will deliver strategically aligned business value AND improve the conditions for adaptability. Establishing the cycle starts with a small pilot targeting a specific leverage point. Through the initial cycles, we co-create the tools and understanding within management to operate the cycle with limited support into the future. The goal is for leadership to become self-sufficient in operating the cycle and executing improvements over time.

## Initiating Change with Strategic Vision

The journey toward organizational agility begins with a comprehensive planning session involving essential leadership. This initial step is crucial as it sets the direction for the future state across various domains. Leadership teams collaborate to articulate clear "from-to" states, establishing specific objectives and expectations that guide the transformation journey from its inception. In this step, the Strategic Tempo

is instantiated. We establish a systematic scheduling of activities that keeps the organization aligned with its strategic goals. This regular rhythm of strategic reviews and updates helps synchronize team activities with the overarching strategic vision, maintaining focus and coherence across the organization and allowing it to adapt swiftly to new insights and changing conditions. The Strategic Tempo includes managing obstacles and risks and developing a clear path to achieve the outcomes.

## Assessing the Organizational Landscape

Change can only begin once organizations thoroughly understand the current state of the organizational landscape. An assessment of the current state deep dives into the organization's capabilities, pinpointing gaps and opportunities ripe for development. Detailed assessment tools, we measure aspects such as coherence, informed awareness, purposeful direction, and strategic empowerment—each serving as a cornerstone in the architecture of our agile transformation.

Leverage Points are places in an organization where targeted actions can improve adaptability and resilience. These points relate to the conditions for adaptability and show where leadership can make changes to create a more agile and responsive environment. Asking for more cohesion is not enough – actions are needed. The Leverage Points of using cross-functional teams and having meetings with clear agendas where work is assigned and feedback is collected will help the organization communicate and collaborate better. The idea of Leverage Points is that strategic action can be taken and measured to produce the desired changes.

By identifying and acting on leverage points, leaders can systematically address any gaps in adaptability conditions, ensuring the organization is prepared to handle immediate disruptions and positioned to seize emerging opportunities effectively. The interplay between the adaptability conditions and the leverage points allows for a dynamic framework in which organizational design and leadership actions harmonize to propel the organization forward, adapting swiftly to changes in the competitive landscape.

This strategic approach ensures that adaptability is not left to chance but is a deliberate outcome of focused leadership and structured organizational enhancement.





## Designing for Adaptability



Designing for adaptability involves envisioning the foundational structures and systems that support an adaptable organization. As each leverage point is assessed, improvement is made. This includes

focusing on team design, interaction design, and shared models that support adaptability.

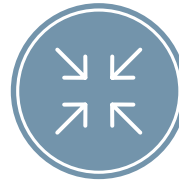
**Team Design** involves establishing clear roles and responsibilities for all team members, developing explicit decision-making frameworks, and designing interaction models that promote open communication and collaboration. These elements ensure that the organization operates efficiently and that all members are aligned with the organizational goals.

**Interaction Design** is essential for supporting effective delegation and accountability. Organizations can ensure alignment and streamline decision-making processes by creating articulating interaction structures, cadences, and routines, transparent escalation processes, and developing guidelines for strategic intent. Interaction models help maintain Coherence and purposeful direction within the organization.

**Shared Models** play a crucial role in creating Coherence. Developing and maintaining comprehensive business capability models, customer journeys, value propositions, and personas ensure that all organization members have a shared understanding of the business and its strategic goals. Integrating these models into strategic planning and decision-making processes helps align the organization's efforts and resources toward common objectives.

**Operational Excellence** ensures that all operations are optimized and aligned with strategic objectives – typically leveraging digital and AI enablement to enhance or redesign processes to support these goals.

## Orienting for Adaptability



Orienting for adaptability focuses on leveraging customer focus, data-fueled decision-making, and environmental tuning to align everyone on the improvement's intent. Aligning on intent rather

than directive and detailed requirements improves adaptability in the organization. Over time, the ability to delegate intent improves, ensuring the organization can effectively react to and anticipate changes. Orienting for Adaptability is intentionally developing the organizational muscles to decide where to improve and what changes to make to optimize the organization's achievement of its strategic intent.

- Customer focus involves integrating customer feedback mechanisms into strategic planning. Creating roadmaps based on customer feedback and data insights ensures strategic alignment across all initiatives. These roadmaps provide a clear direction for the organization, outlining key milestones, resource allocation, and timelines. Regularly reviewing and adjusting these roadmaps to reflect changing conditions and new insights allows the organization to remain agile and responsive. This iterative process ensures that the organization can pivot when necessary and capitalize on emerging opportunities. By continuously refining the strategic roadmaps, organizations can maintain their focus on core objectives while adapting to the evolving landscape.

- Data-fueled Decisions emphasize the importance of using advanced data analytics for informed decision-making. Organizations must maintain high data quality and governance standards and implement real-time data collection and analysis systems. Organizations can gain insights into market trends, operational efficiency, and potential risks by leveraging data effectively.

- Environmentally-tuned involves conducting regular analyses of the external environment to anticipate changes. This includes monitoring market trends, technological advancements, regulatory changes, and competitive movements. Using insights from environmental scanning to inform strategic planning helps organizations

stay ahead of potential disruptions and seize new opportunities. A proactive observation and information-sharing culture ensures the organization remains well-informed and responsive to its environment.

- **Delegating Intent:** Leaders must articulate a vision of the future that guides the organization's actions and decisions. This includes aligning strategic intent, budgets, communications, and expectations. Ensuring all decisions and actions are aligned with the organization's overarching goals is crucial. The rhythm also involves managing obstacles and risks and developing a clear path to achieve strategic objectives.

ensures that responsibilities are well-defined and understood. This clarity helps prevent overreach and ensures that decisions are made at the appropriate level. Providing middle management with frameworks for operationalizing accountability is crucial for effective delegation. These frameworks include setting performance metrics, providing regular feedback, and offering support and coaching to teams. Ensuring efficient escalation processes for issues beyond team control helps address bottlenecks and enables timely decision-making. Organizations can foster a culture of autonomy and innovation by empowering teams with explicit decision-making scopes and accountability frameworks.

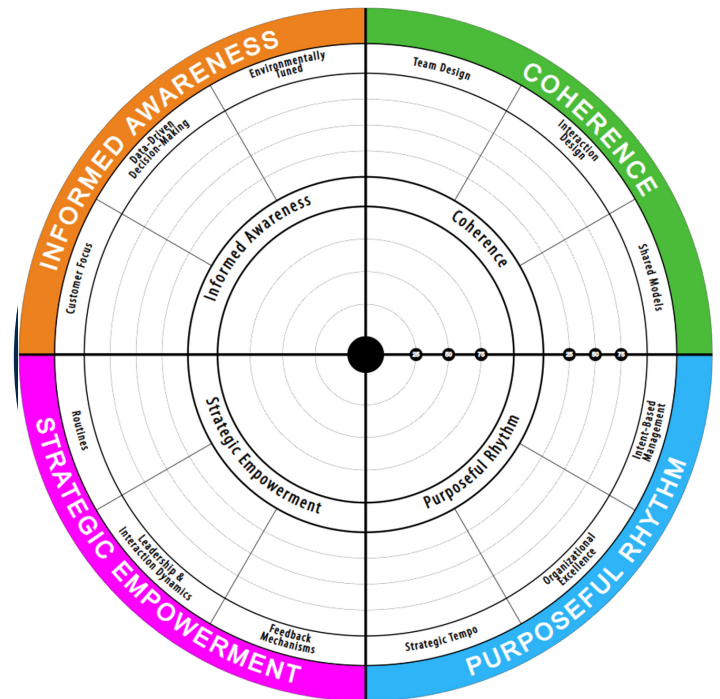
## Operationalizing Adaptability



Operationalizing adaptability is vital for ensuring that the strategies and systems designed to foster organizational flexibility are effectively executed. This process is anchored by a structured cadence

of routines that operationalizes strategic intent, ensuring the organization remains proactive rather than reactive in a dynamic market environment..

- Routines are the practical mechanisms through which strategic intent is operationalized daily. They are designed to integrate accountability into every aspect of organizational functioning, ensuring that each team member is aware of and actively contributing to the strategic goals. Through these routines, organizations embed a culture of responsibility and ownership, where middle management plays a crucial role in driving performance and adaptability. Management is accountable for ensuring these cadences are well-prepared and effectively implemented, fostering a consistent environment supporting strategic objectives.
- Feedback mechanisms within these routines focus on providing thoughtful and constructive insights that align with strategic intent. Feedback is designed to be actionable, fostering continuous improvement and innovation. By incorporating structured feedback loops, such as reflective discussions and progress reviews, the organization ensures that all members are engaged in a dialogue that promotes growth and responsiveness.
- Leadership Dynamics are essential for strategic empowerment. Establishing explicit decision-making scopes and boundaries for teams



## Sustaining Through Leadership and Continuous Evolution

Sustainability in agility comes from a dynamic, ongoing engagement with new operational cadences and methodologies. Leadership is pivotal here; leaders transition from traditional command roles to function as facilitators and coaches, embodying a servant leadership mindset that empowers teams to experiment, fail fast, and learn rapidly.



# Leadership as the Catalyst for Transformation

Leadership must evolve from traditional roles into proactive architects of change. This involves creating and integrating conditions that allow organizations to be guided with intent and vision. Leaders should adopt a “Systems Thinking” perspective, understanding that adaptability is no longer achieved through central control and enforcement, but rather through organizational design and leadership approach.

This strategic shift necessitates a comprehensive approach involving Informed Insight, Cohesion, Purposeful Rhythm, and Strategic Empowerment working together to enhance organizational resilience and empower leadership and the broader workforce. By establishing adaptive systems and fostering a culture of strategic empowerment, leaders pave the way for their organizations to excel.

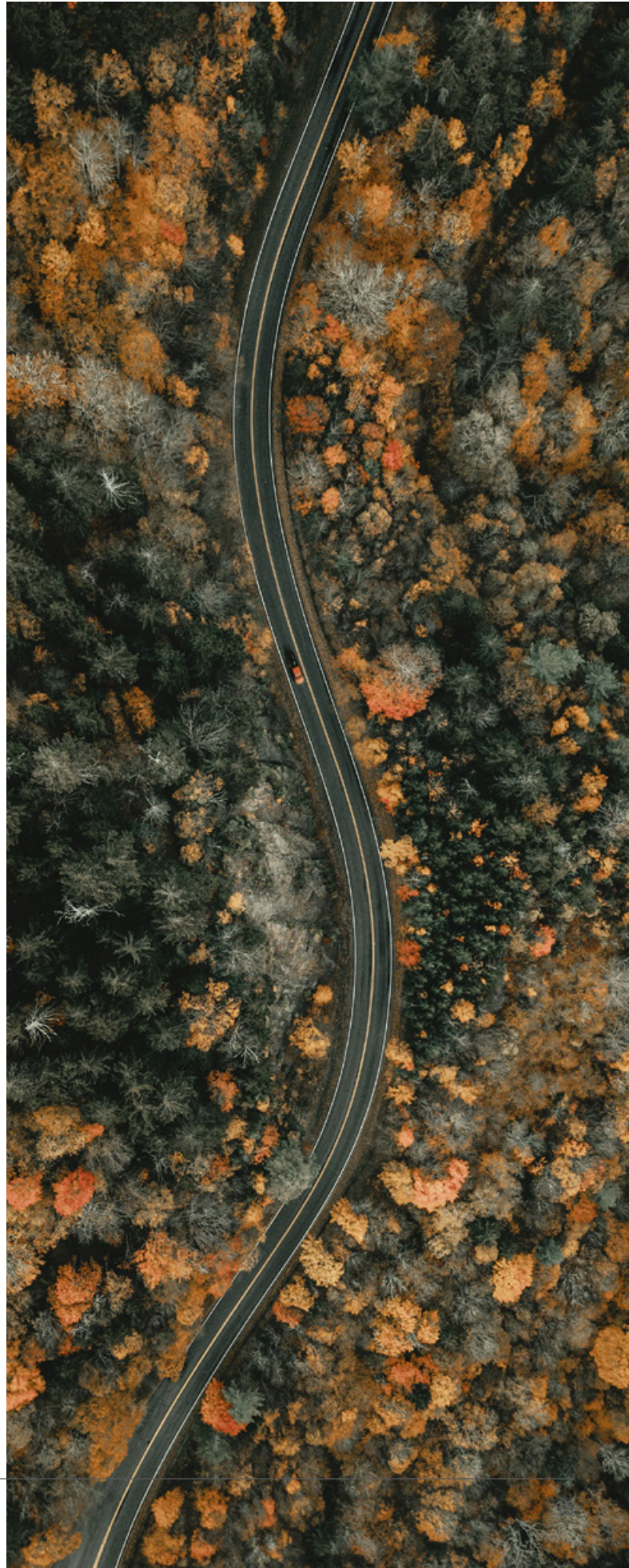
Adaptable leadership requires leaders to leverage their innate strengths. It is not about sacrificing individual needs for the greater good but balancing power structures with accountability and empowerment to achieve business outcomes. Leaders continuously explore ways to ensure their organizations thrive in a dynamic environment.

## The Imperative of Adaptability

**Competitive Necessity:** In an environment where technology can rapidly reshape industries, having an agile, insight-driven, and strategically empowered organization is crucial for survival and growth.

**Strategic Investment:** Each step toward becoming an adaptive organization is a calculated investment in the future, designed to enhance resilience, foster innovation, and build a competitive edge.

**Risk Mitigation:** By proactively adopting a structured adaptation strategy, organizations can significantly decrease the risks of rapid market and technological changes.





# Conclusion

Leadership in this transformative era involves more than understanding the need for change; it requires a clear, actionable plan that leaders can confidently execute. The path outlined here provides a structured approach to building an adaptive organization, emphasizing the importance of visionary leadership, strategic assessment, and phased implementation—all geared towards ensuring that the organization not only adapts but thrives in the face of future challenges. This strategic framework not only prepares the organization for the present but also equips it to lead and succeed in the evolving global landscape. This strategy ensures that your organization not only survives but thrives and leads in a rapidly evolving global environment. The support of external partners in reshaping leadership and organizational structure provides essential perspectives and guides your journey toward greater agility.



# About Dennis Stevens, Founder of OrgWright, LLC

Dennis Stevens is a visionary leader and seasoned consultant with over three decades of experience at the intersection of technology innovation and organizational leadership. Beginning his career in the United States Marine Corps, Dennis honed an appreciation for what can be accomplished with well-formed teams, clarity of purpose, and effective leadership.

Transitioning from the military into the technology industry, Dennis embraced the challenges of integrating software solutions with business strategies. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to found multiple companies, including Responsive Software Solutions, Synaptus, and Knowledge in Process. He led cutting-edge technology development in these firms, acted as a CIO, and spearheaded significant business transformation initiatives. His leadership during several technology evolutions deepened his understanding of the intricate relationship between technology and business success.

In 2011 Dennis co-founded LeadingAgile, where he solidified his reputation for innovative problem-solving and scalable business solutions. He helped create and implement a model for scaling transformation across over 150 firms, demonstrating his ability to drive sustainable and meaningful organizational changes. This experience honed his approach and understanding of creating meaningful and lasting organizational change.

Building on these experiences and recognizing that technological change was accelerating, Dennis founded OrgWright to help organizations develop their internal ability to adapt continuously to technological changes.

## About OrgWright

Founded in 2024 by Dennis Stevens, who co-founded LeadingAgile. OrgWright exists to guide leaders through the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Our mission is to build leadership teams that drive dynamic organizations, enhancing adaptability and strategic execution, enabling businesses to achieve sustainable growth and maintain a competitive edge. This approach ensures that organizations are not just reacting to change but are proactively creating an environment where adaptability is part of the organizational DNA.

[www.orgwright.com](http://www.orgwright.com)





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