



# People Department

## Agile Way of

# Working Case Study

Sevla Serbest	Director of People, Modanisa
İrem Ekinci	Scrum Master, Assistant People Manager, Modanisa
Gözde Dağlı	Product Owner, People Manager, Modanisa
Ayşenur Dinçer	Product Owner, Assistant People Manager, Modanisa
Barış BAL	Business Agility Consultant, Agile HR Community Licensed Trainer, ACM

# Highlights

Our client, Modanisa.com is a global fashion e-commerce company that aims to meet modest women's desire to wear clothes that express their spirit. Their purpose is to build a global ecosystem that combines fashion and technology to serve the lifestyle needs of modest women.



**2011**  
launched



**Istanbul**  
born



**135**  
countries



**5**  
continents

Modanisa.com was launched on Mother's Day in 2011. The company was founded in Istanbul and it currently operates in 135 countries across 5 continents. Modanisa provides contents in five different languages: Turkish, Arabic, English, French, and German. 16 million visitors from all over the world visit the platform every month. Modanisa.com sells around 70 thousand different products of over 650 brands and it has 900+ international employees, along with subcontractors, with an average age of 28. As Turkey's first international online shopping platform and champion of e-export, they also aim to introduce small and medium-sized enterprises to the world and also to become Turkey's first "unicorn" company.



**16 million**  
visitors/every month



**650**  
brands



**70.000**  
products



**900+**  
employees



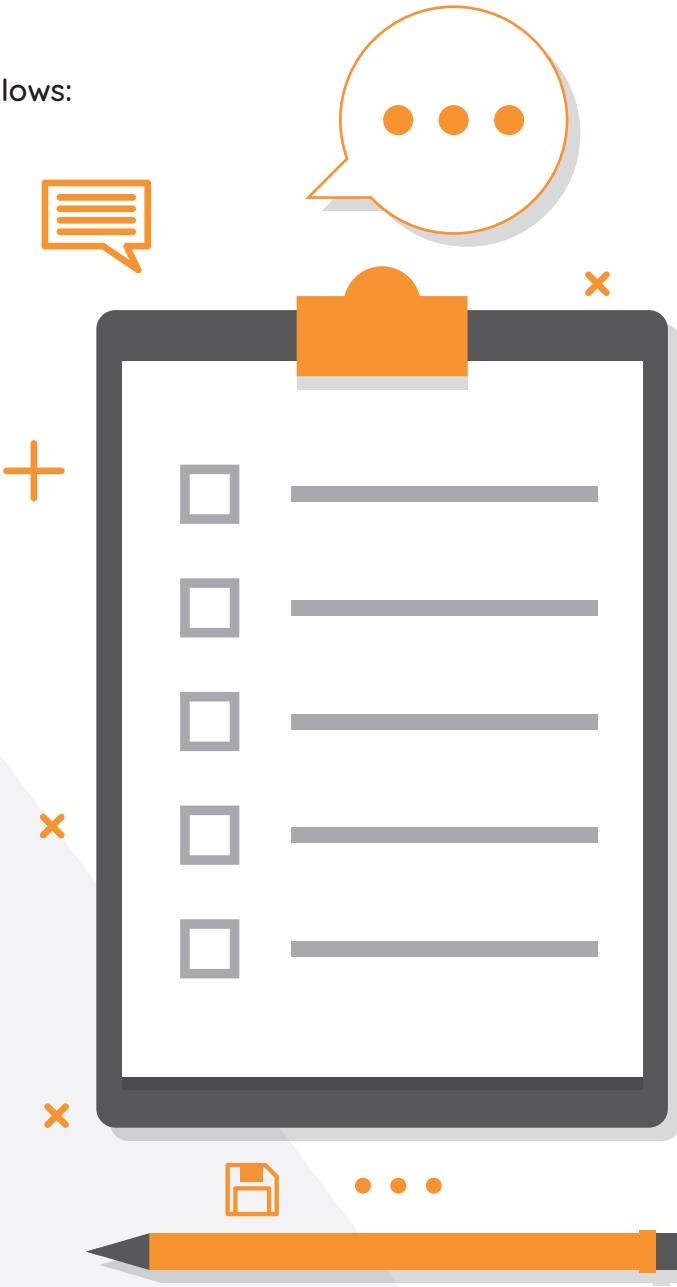
**Five**  
languages

Before starting the transformation of People Department, Modanisa.com had already been re-structuring its People Team, hiring new colleagues, re-building and/or starting People practices or principles from scratch. This situation led to a huge complexity in their domain and thus more dynamism in the team due to high growth targets set by the board resulting in challenges associated with retaining Modanisa team members and empowering them. Eventually they agreed on building a system based on Agile principles and practices to be able to better cope with this complexity while maximizing value creation.

# Main Challenges

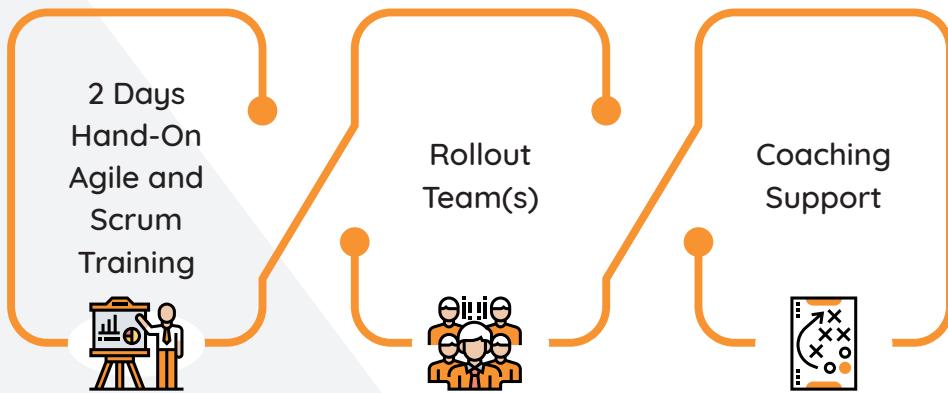
Their most significant challenges are as follows:

-  As mentioned above, the biggest challenge was that People Team was at forming stage by the time when transformation began. They were hiring new people, reforming and/or creating People practices & policies. However the fast pace of their business domain requires agility and time-to-market advantage. Coupled with high expectations of stakeholders being a new team raises the already high pressure.
-  People Team didn't have a systematic way of working yet. It created more unknowns than knowns, lack of appropriate time spent on analysis and planning of requests as well as lack of transparency.
-  People Team was trying to keep team structure flat rather than a hierarchical one. However they had been experiencing some problems in the information flow, misunderstandings on the scope of the works and lack of teamwork as members were new and that there were more than 15 people in the teams.



# Proposed Solution

We organized a couple of gatherings with the People Team and inquired about their challenges and expectations. After thorough discussions we co-created the following roadmap:



During the training, we discussed and experienced details of Agile Mindset, MVP concept and Scrum Framework. We also built an exemplary Product Backlog together with the rest of the participants to understand the nature of HR work domain and how to split Product Backlog Items into releasable working Increment.



# Proposed Solution

A couple of days after the training, we conducted a roll-out event with People Team. To briefly summarize the main objective of a roll-out event:

- 1 Reminding the discussions during the training
- 2 Creating team identities, selecting Scrum Team roles and deciding Sprint length.
- 3 Performing initial monitoring activity (a.k.a first retrospective of the team)

Together we decided to split into 2 teams and each team was working as business partner to enhance organizational objectives and add value to the company by working closely with assigned departments. Each team was aligned to work closely with assigned departments to improve performance, attract and retain talent, grow leadership, and enhance growth mindset to achieve the organizational objectives. For example, the first team is responsible for Finance Department on top of some other departments and yet this team was also responsible for all People processes like hiring, career planning, learning & development of Finance department. This was the first experiment we run to enhance collaboration between departments.

During the creation of team identities, we have used some microstructures from “Liberating Structures” techniques.

1 “1-2-4-All” Method: We used this technique to discover the names of the teams. In the end “Ninja Turtles” and “The Jetsons” were chosen.

2 Crowdsourcing Method: We used this technique to select Scrum Master role for the teams. This is a great way to do it since it democratizes the process. As an expert advice it is the best practice letting your teams to select Scrum Masters instead of assigning them.

Both methods enabled collaboration between team members and structured the discussions.



# Proposed Solution

As the last part of the event, we conducted initial monitoring activity where we used “Winds & Anchors” method. This method was used to discover the strengths and opportunities for development at the first day.

## Strengths



Working at a global brand creates lots of opportunities for personal development as well as a team.

Good communication between team members allows taking faster actions

Strong collaboration among team members creates a culture of self-organisation and supporting each other

## Opportunities



There are a lot of unknowns in many processes. This creates uncertainty and lack of proper planning.

Despite of having flat organisational communication style there are still some obstacles that cause failure of fast culture.

Lack of good communication between departments

# Proposed Solution

The outcome of the event was used to create a roadmap for People Department for greater Agility.

Upon completion of roll-out activity, both teams created their physical board to enable transparency. They initiated their Sprint cycles and started to run their Daily Scrums each day while following their selected Product Backlog Items supporting their Sprint Goal.

At the end of each Sprint, they conducted Sprint Review event with their key stakeholders where they showed the Increment to receive feedback. This helps teams and stakeholders to discover opportunities about what to improve next.

At the Sprint Retrospective, teams assessed their working processes and created improvement action plans for the upcoming Sprints. As an example, one improvement item discovered at Sprint Retrospectives was that they recognized the benefits of splitting into 3 teams.

During Sprints they discovered some of the routine work (administration processes such as payroll etc.) that require special competency and also affects Sprint execution. Then they decided to form a third team to deal with such daily work.

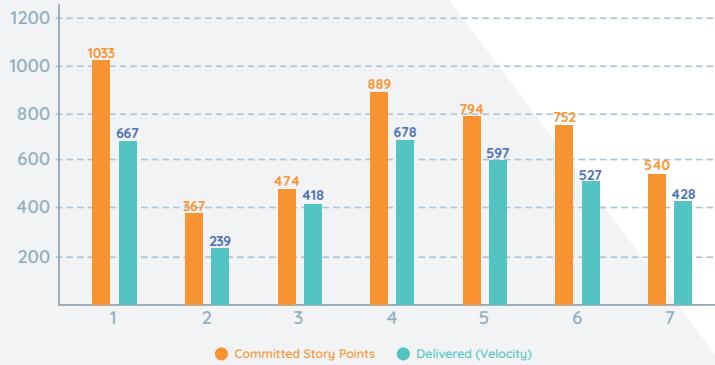


# Major Benefits of the Solution

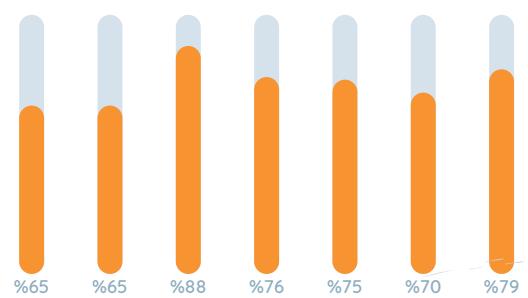
The biggest advantages for selecting Agile way of working are the transparent environment, fast and early feedback loops and teamwork which enables improved work outcomes. The new operating model has brought the following:

- 1 Data driven decision system is founded. Teams decide how much work will be done in the future based on historical data from the previous performances, the outcomes and the capacity.

**Velocity Chart**



**Delivered / Committed Rate**



- 2 Teams formed a transparent environment by using information radiators which they utilize on a daily basis. Consequently, empirical culture is growing and spreading throughout the rest of the department.



# Major Benefits of the Solution

3 The commitment of the teams has considerably increased as a result of enhanced teamwork and empowerment. At the end of the day, self-organization capability of the teams enhanced that gives leaders more time to focus on more strategic issues rather than day to day operations.

4 The new operating model has enhanced collaboration between People Department and other departments / stakeholders.

5 The foundation for Agile transformation of the rest of the organization was built. People Department has learned and experienced Agile way of working, its values and principles, as well as built the new leadership model. The next step is to start culture shift in the rest of the organization.

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Comments of Director of People,  
Sevla Serbest on transformation:

Since the teams chose to get the work done by themselves and were committed to this practice, it automatically enhanced ownership of the team. Transparency of the contribution on individual and team levels increased dramatically. The People Department strengthened planning and execution skills, that resulted in:

- Better time management
- Better prioritization on the work to be done
- Increase quality on done work

Overall motivation is higher thanks to better visibility of work results. This eventually has a positive effect on effectiveness and professional fulfillment. It results in improved communication with shareholders which helps to reduce stress and to increase productivity.”

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# Employee Survey Outcomes

We conducted a survey among People Department and collected some information to present some outcomes of this transformation journey. We strongly recommend such frequent surveys to companies' ongoing Agile transformation to collect insights from colleagues which is among the main pillars of this effort.

The survey was anonymous to ensure transparency while answering questions. The results are as follows:

**%70**

At least %70 of team members think that they are stretching themselves to apply all principles and values. They also try to use "inspect and adapt" philosophy in their daily lives.

**%90**

%90 of team members strongly believe that transparency has increased.

**%70**

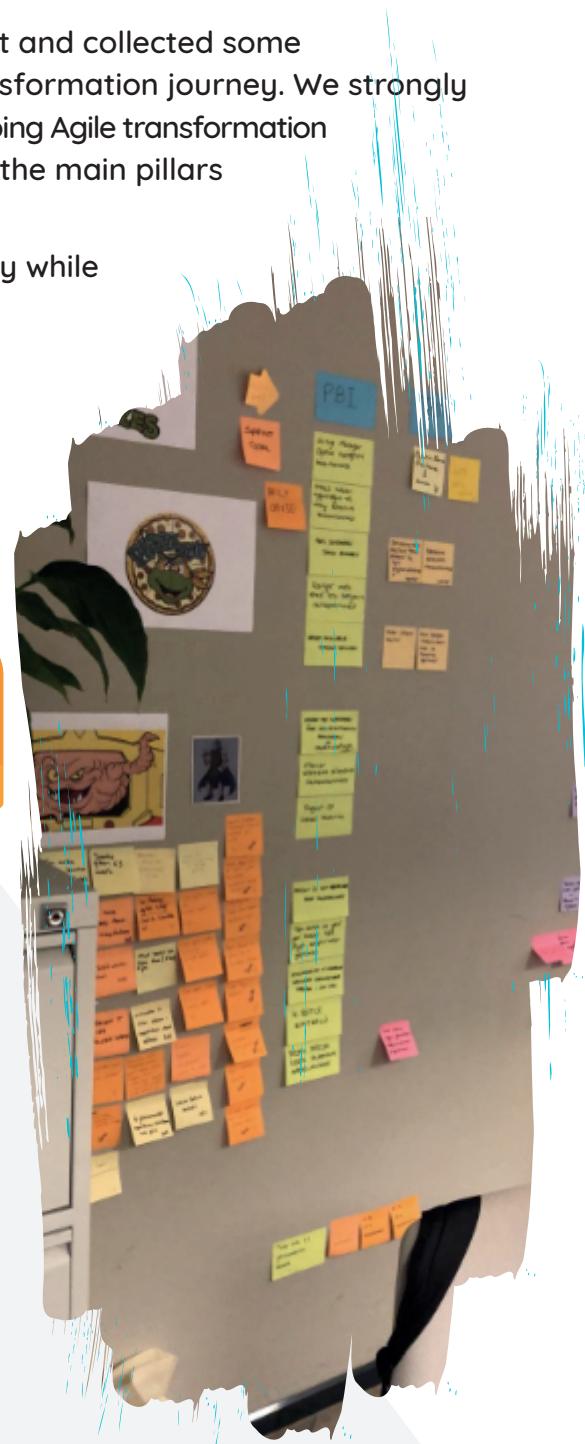
At least %70 of team members think that the quality of their work is higher.

**%90**

At least %90 of team members want to use Scrum framework.

**%80**

At least %80 of team members think that trust and collaboration between People Department and other departments is stronger.



# About ACM

## Fast Forward Your Business Digitalization

Make innovation part of your culture with our Agility services

### — Who We Are —

ACM is a leading Agile transformation and training company. ACM fast forwards numerous local and international clients to deliver more business value and to increase employee happiness.

As a thought leader in agility, ACM has led successful business transformation efforts in banking, telecommunication, technology, insurance, media, e-commerce, fast consumption, industry and production, and many more for the last 12 years.

### — Leader in The Region —

With its professional and quality-oriented service approach, it offers end-to-end and optional solutions that will increase the efficiency of organizations by employing AGILE methods. ACM which adopts the principle of rapidly producing , customer oriented and result oriented solutions with its specialized technical staff, tries its utmost to create a difference in the sector. With the successful transformation projects it has completed in Turkey and its region, it is committed to ensure the widespread of the Agile governance models in the global arena so as to enable the entities to achieve more successful results.

### — Professional Consulting Team —

Along with AGILE culture, ACM also provides support to the companies in AGILE engineering practices and DevOps topics. It is the leading company in the region providing services on Agile with its staff consisting of approximately 20 specialized and experienced consultants.

