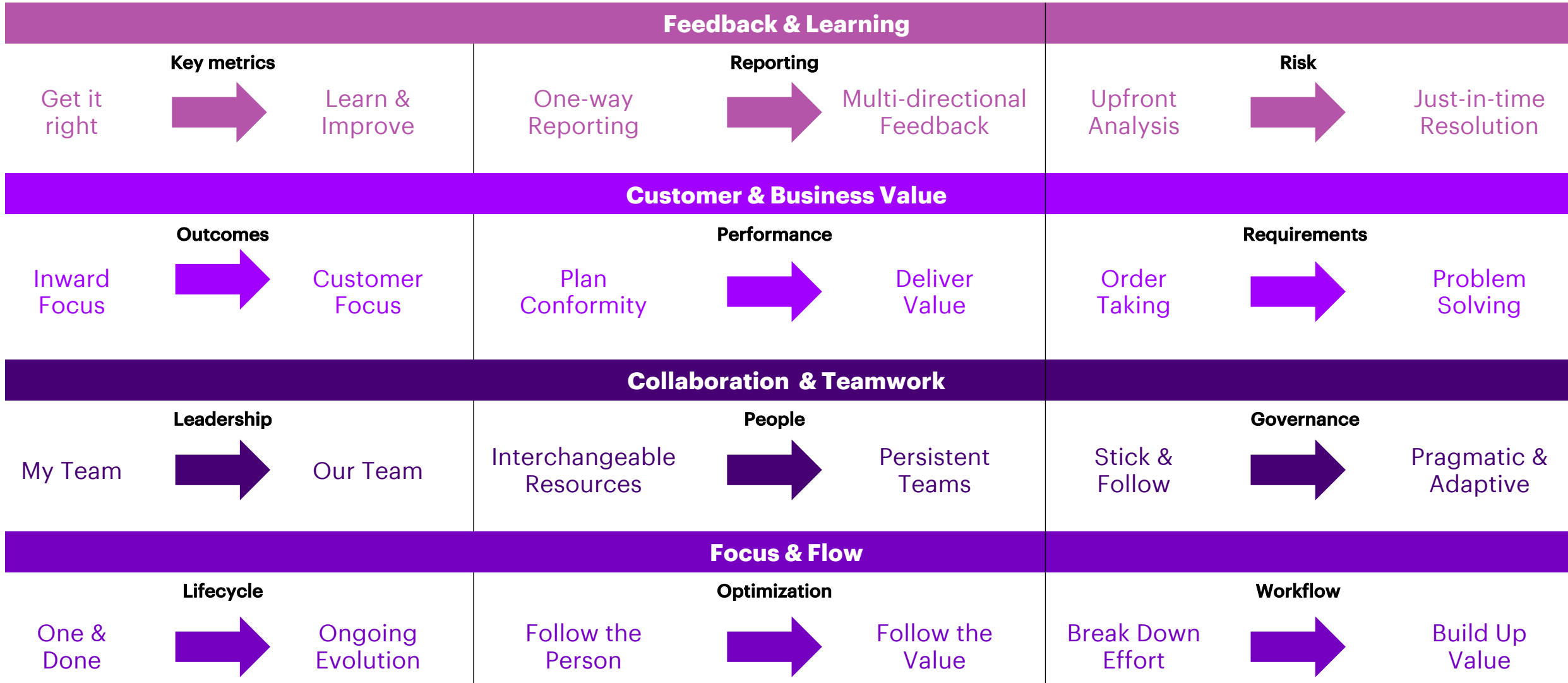


Shifting your mindset from **Project to Product**



12 keys for shifting from a project to product mindset



Feedback & learning



Key Metrics



Project

Get it right

- Change to Plan
- Estimates vs. Actuals
- Bug Counts

Product

Learn & improve

- Cycle Time
- Flow / Work in Progress (WIP)
- Time to Fix

Why shift?

Traditional metrics give the semblance of data, but improvement in these areas rarely improve product sales or reception.

Reporting



Up the ladder

Status, spend and risk are reported to management who then interpret and report to their management, and so forth.

Multi-directional feedback

Delivery, value and impediments are radiated in all directions through demos, conversations, visualizations, etc.

Unilateral reporting often hides real business risk: the view gets rosier and rosier as you go up each rung of the ladder.

Risk



Upfront analysis

One big, comprehensive assessment seeks to identify and mitigate all possibilities of risk.

Just-in-time resolution

Small analysis up front – just enough to start a pilot. Impediment resolution happens often through check-ins and synchronization across teams.

Often upfront assessments go looking for the infinitesimal risks that could lead to litigation and gloss over the real risks that happen in every project.



Customer & business value

Outcomes



Project

Inward focus

The focus is on Solutions / Systems – how to build, what to work on, what the system needs, etc.

Product

Customer focus

The focus is on the customer - what to deliver and why. Simulating & identifying valuable experiences is key.

Why shift?

System improvements aren't enough. You need to improve your system according to the ever-changing needs of the market and your specific customer.

Performance



Follow the plan

The mantra is "On time, on budget, on scope."

Follow the Work

The sweet spot is at the cross-section of feasible, valuable and desirable.

Artificial project targets not tied to customer value often lead to underwhelming performance in the market and affect brand promise and loyalty.

Requirements



Order taking

Project teams wait for orders from stakeholders and focus on documenting wants of the solution, rarely interacting with the end user.

Problem solving

Product teams discover problems and needs through user interaction, with user stories as placeholders for conversations.

Saying "no" to ideas that don't address real user needs makes room for requirements that have been validated early in the process before investment in a solution.

Collaboration & teamwork



Leadership



Project

My team

Leaders assign managers, teams and individuals to projects and tasks. Accountability is only felt at the top.

Product

One team

Self-organizing teams pull in work based on capacity. Servant leaders support collaboration and agility.

Why Shift?

When only leaders have accountability, reports don't buy in or feel they contribute to the success. Leadership rewards may climb while everyone else's stagnate.

People



Interchangeable resources

Exchangeable, individual contributors can be moved from project to project. Expectations do not change when team members do.

Team members

People work on dedicated and persistent teams, in pairs or swarms where possible. When members change, team reassesses capabilities and adjusts goals accordingly.

Ownership in results can ignite passion in ways that money alone cannot.

Governance



Stick & follow

Detailed standards, checklists, templates and review ensure people follow the "right" process.

Pragmatic & adaptive

Minimally sufficient guardrails for consistency are set up and revisited in real time as needed. This is often industry specific.

Rigid governance makes it difficult to adapt to real-time feedback. People feel disempowered to make impactful decisions and so keep their head down.

Focus & flow



Lifecycle



Project

One & done

One-time phases grouped into larger programs with clear stop and start dates.

Product

Ongoing evolution

Continuous, iterative & incremental loops (Plan-Do-Check-Act) with clear stop and start dates.

Why shift?

Quick, ongoing feedback loops allow organizations to adapt short-term needs while moving towards long-term goals.

Optimization



Follow the person

Resource efficiency focuses on each individual / team and maximizing hours available.

Follow the Work

Flow efficiency focuses on throughput, delivery of value across teams, and minimizing waste.

Optimizing the whole system connects and aligns the overall organization for greater flow of value delivery.

Work structure



Break down effort

Big plan / project placeholders are broken down into smaller pieces.

Build up value

Small experiments with incremental goals lead to minimal viable solutions.

Big plan upfront gives a false sense of security, which can lead to failed projects or successful projects achieved way out of scope.