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Chris Wauters
Area Lead for ING Digital Workplace Services

Riding the agile wave

How ING and Fujitsu work agile in workplace and infrastructure management.

In recent years ING has switched to agile working. This was no minor decision as it applied not only to IT departments but to the bank as a whole. As a consequence, workplace and infrastructure services could not remain behind. To explore the implications of this change, we interviewed Chris Wauters, Area Lead for ING Digital Workplace Services, and Sandra Scharff, Delivery Executive at Fujitsu. In November 2016, two years into a five-year contract, ING and service provider Fujitsu adjusted the operating model set out in the contract to an agile way of working.

In the transition to agile, the governance organizations of ING and Fujitsu transformed into joint multi-disciplinary teams known as squads (see paragraph 'Squads'), who manage and control operational services that are delivered offshore by Fujitsu's Global Delivery Centres (GDCs) in India and Portugal. It's a radical change that affects almost all 54,000 ING employees worldwide. To ensure that we always focus on the employee, the customer journey was adopted as the guiding principle for the new way of working, with the Net Promoter Score as the instrument for measuring satisfaction.

Speed

Chris Wauters explains the reason for introducing agile working: "In the past, it took us quite a while to implement innovation. We were organized according to some sort of waterfall model.

If there was a request from an ING department, it went from desk to desk, first within ING and then within Fujitsu, before people started working on it. An important motivation behind us embracing the agile way of working was shortening time to market and improving employee engagement."

Big bang

Agile working within Digital WorkPlace Services was not introduced step by step, as you might expect, but as a big bang. Chris Wauters: "You either go for it, or you don't." On the 1st of November 2016, a kick-off took place at an external venue to emphasize the importance of change for employees. Since then, employees have been intensively trained by agile coaches to adapt to the new way of working.

Just do it

Contractually, nothing has changed between the parties involved. However, the joint step has required a great deal of trust. Sandra Scharff: "We said: let's just do it together and we will find a solution if we get stuck somewhere in our collaboration." The new experiences that Fujitsu is currently gaining with this collaboration are a valuable competitive advantage in a market that is increasingly embracing agile working.

Squads

ING's squads are organized around one or several workplace and infrastructure services and are responsible for the complete set of tasks related to these services. The operational activities are executed mainly at Fujitsu's GDCs, which aren't part of the squads. In the GDCs, service owners are appointed and assigned to the squads. A squad is a non-hierarchical, self-organizing team that is organized in accordance with the well-known agile way of working, with roles such as product owner and scrum master. Staff form horizontal guilds, in a specific field such as security or architecture. These guilds guarantee knowledge exchange and cohesion between squads.

Responsibility

In terms of governance, quite a lot has changed. The teams carry integral responsibility for their services and the corresponding Net Promoter Score. In addition, they are now responsible for services that were previously provided by supporting departments. Every three months, they determine their goals independently. These goals have to correspond with the 18-month plan and the 2020 workplace vision for ING. "What strikes me as a manager is that teams are very ambitious and quite often I have to lower one of these ambitions to keep the squad commitments achievable, instead of raising the bar," says Chris Wauters.

Impact

What is the impact of agile working on the stability of workplace service and infrastructure provision? According to both Wauters and Scharff, the agile way of working has had a positive – and certainly not a disruptive – influence. Chris Wauters: "Employee satisfaction has increased in many areas; we score higher marks for our services." Sandra Scharff: "This is confirmed by the decrease in the number of incidents, while at the same time we have been able to realize 20 to 30 per cent more innovation and change."

Lessons learned

This past year's experiences have been more than enough to formulate a number of lessons learned. Chris Wauters: "Providing guidance to the squads is crucial. That is why we have used agile coaches for a longer period of time compared to what was originally planned." Another lesson learned is the challenge of timely administering contractual changes within the squads. For larger projects that require commercial negotiation, the squads still need support from procurement and finance functions to avoid delays. As a last lesson, the ING management also has to learn. Top managers should also



adopt agile practices, evaluate themselves through a way of so-called retrospectives and invite feedback. These are major components of the agile way of working.

Maturity

All in all, ING and Fujitsu are extremely satisfied with the new way of working and collaboration. "This is a collaboration that focuses on speed, quality and innovation, very different from the 'flat outsourcing' model of the past, which is mainly focused on price. We think that the maturity of the organization is a vital consideration for the success of agile working." The win of a Tommie Award from ICT Media as the 'Most Successful Company in Sourcing' and the interest in the market for developments within ING suggest that this maturity is coming along well.

*This interview was conducted by **Frank Boekel**, Account Managing Director for ING at Fujitsu.*

About ING

ING is a global financial institution with a strong European base, offering banking services through its operating company ING Bank. The purpose of ING Bank is empowering people to stay a step ahead in life and in business. ING Bank's 54,000 employees offer retail and wholesale banking services to customers in over 40 countries.

For more information, please see www.ing.com.

About Fujitsu

Fujitsu is the leading Japanese information and communication technology (ICT) company offering a full range of technology products, solutions and services. Approximately 155,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries. We use our experience and the power of ICT to shape the future of society with our customers.

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