



The Ultimate Cheat Sheet for Agile Scaling

When scaling your Agile implementation, there are several frameworks and methods available to help you. Before you pick one, check out “[3 Misconceptions Your Boss Has About Agile Scaling](#)” and “[4 Reasons Not to Scale.](#)” Choosing the right framework starts with leveraging values and principles to guide your scaling efforts.

To help you navigate the most common Agile Scaling frameworks and methods, we’ve created the ultimate cheat sheet comparing the core of the 6 most common—[Large Scale Scrum \(LeSS\)](#), [Scaled Agile Framework \(SAFe®\)](#), [Scrum@Scale](#), [Kanban](#), [Disciplined Agile Delivery \(DA\)](#), and [Nexus](#).

Scaling Principles

The following chart illustrates where the approach resonates with the principles from [The Manifesto for Scaling Agility](#) and where some thought might be required. Where there is indigo, you will find it easier to align with the principle; where there is aqua, you will have to do more work to align the framework to the principle.

Principle	LeSS	SAFe®	Scrum @ Scale	Kanban	DA	Nexus
If you can achieve your goals with a single team, do not scale. Employ the minimum number of people required to meet your strategic outcomes.	■	■	■	■	■	■
If you have a single team and it cannot deliver effectively using Agile principles and practices, do not scale. Succeed with a single team first.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Respect and trust your people; foster a climate of open, honest, rapid, and empathetic communication.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Continuously improve across all levels and maintain focus on the whole; prioritize collective high performance over the performance of any individual team.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Keep teams and their work loosely coupled to preserve flexibility; minimize handoffs and dependencies with cross-functional teams and clearly decomposed work.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Radiate information between and among teams to develop shared understanding and promote asynchronous communication; create visibility across the entire work system.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Aim for a minimally viable bureaucracy and nothing more; effective and repeatable practices, policies, and procedures will emerge as you scale.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Decentralize decision-making; push authority to teams so that they can quickly take advantage of emerging opportunities.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Prioritize experimentation for each individual team over conformity across the organization. Celebrate the learning that comes from experimentation—successes and failures—across all teams.	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ensure each team is working towards the shared vision and delivering real value regularly and consistently. Demonstrate progress with frequent validations by stakeholders.	■	■	■	■	■	■

■ Principle aligns ■ Principle may be at odds

Disciplined Agile Delivery

Seven core principles establish the foundation for a context-sensitive approach aligned to the goal of delighting customers; the multitude of specialist roles can inhibit agility if not done right.

Kanban

Fosters continual improvement through a focus on service orientation—satisfy the customer—disciplined change management, and team empowerment. The lack of a prescriptive approach is a benefit but may challenge some organizations.

LeSS

Uses a concise set of principles to support continual improvement and process evolution; ultimately focuses on just a single product.

Nexus

An overlay framework that helps align three to nine scrum teams as they work together against a single product backlog; relies on a managerial layer—the integration team—to ensure effective coordination.

SAFe®

Well-structured framework with configurable options for organizations of various sizes; relies on customized terminology and extensive training for success.

Scrum@Scale

Employs a scrum-based, scale-free structure to align product management and delivery at all levels of the organization; emphasis on a single framework may prevent the use of effective alternatives.

How do you choose the right approach for you?

Every organization has different context, and the context can vary across the organization, over time, and between teams. To choose the right path for you:

1. Focus on your goals, and build shared understanding of them across the organization.
2. Select the practices most appropriate to achieve your goals in your context—regardless of the framework or method.
3. Experiment across teams to identify practices that work and ones that do not; build on those that do.
4. Deliberately embrace an evolving collection of practices which continually moves you towards better achievement of your goals.

Tailor the best features of different frameworks and create a customized fit for your organization's context with a pattern of deliberate, mindful experimentation aligned towards your goals.

Looking for help with your Agile Scaling approach?

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About Us

Excella is an Agile technology firm helping Washington, DC's leading organizations realize their future through the power of technology. We work collaboratively to solve our clients' biggest challenges and evolve their thinking to help them prepare for tomorrow. Together we transform bold ideas into elegant technology solutions to create real progress.

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