



# AGILE CULTURE

as a conduit to competitive advantage

Highest level of security



Asia's largest  
Financial Wellness  
platform

A study of agile culture adoption  
among India's enterprises



The Refyne community is greater in scope than an isolated task, role or a single company's vision. It is about laying down the path to bring fresh, engaged, and capable people to their work desks. It seeks to make working populations exuberant and exemplary in what they achieve, beyond the winds of change and challenge.

The thought-leaders, thinkers, and mentors handpicked to become part of this community have a larger vision - because they are the trailblazers who can visualise beyond the today, beyond the here and now. These inspiring personalities - a burgeoning gathering of HR, business, and industry greats - believe in standing shoulder-to-shoulder to make India's workplaces resilient and triumphant. Here's to the betterment of the world of work, as we step into a new era of sustainable, enduring growth.

**- Team Refyne**

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# 1. A world of possibilities with an agile work culture

Agile workplace culture is a set of core values, attitudes, operating principles, and practices that make innovation possible. People vested with an Agile Culture trust in themselves and their team members. The workforce thus forged can back itself through a variety of challenges, both large and small, to emerge with creative problem-solving.



Agile Culture allows people to multiply their power and optimises outcomes in tangible ways. Agile Culture that has been imbued successfully into an organisation shows its impact on:



## A. The Agile Culture mindset and core guidelines

People working in an agile organisation have a deep appetite for trying things out, worrying less about outcomes in favour of the process, and using their intellectual curiosity to refine workflows for efficiency. This way, better quality and outcomes are achieved organically.

A core value of Agile Culture is handling change clinically. Setting aside the fear of failure, people in this setting support each other through periods of change, with realistic milestones and goals. Project management and change management principles are deployed to make changes seamless.

Agile working culture values **experience** in seeing projects through. Even negative experiences teach lessons, and the agile mindset is all about taking those lessons forward.

Given the many benefits in store for agile workplaces, it is unsurprising that pioneering Indian companies have opted for an agile culture after their own fashion.



Here's a look at how they fare in the current climate.



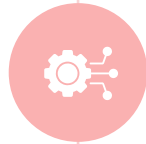
## 2. Industry view: How Agile Culture adoption looks right now

Agile Culture has truly arrived at the Indian workplace. From open office to the use of first name, it has been around since the turn of the millennium, but today's agile workplace is set apart by thoughtful appendages and amenities.



## The change is in the mindset

Outcomes now take precedence. The best people for the conduct of that project, and the most effective ways for them to come together are valued, and other conditions are relaxed.



## Technology and tools

Reducing human effort and repetition is possible through software, SaaS packages for specific needs, applications and APIs, management information systems, and databases that shave time off from tasks such as computation, searching and querying.



## Project management

It is charged up by kanban boards and gantt charts alongside hot-desking via apps. Digital whiteboards are all the rage so ideating becomes smooth. Further, productivity tools from Pomodoro apps to Asana, Trello, and Zapier up operational efficiency and visibility of projects.



## Designated zones

Collaborating is tricky, but it is crucial for scaling and improvement of outcomes. Agile workplaces increase collaboration through quiet zones. Meeting rooms lie adjacent to cafeterias. Activity spaces are in style, with gamified meetings and brainstorming.



## Agile work locations

Professionals work remotely, joining meetings virtually, sometimes asynchronously to accommodate different time zones or travel schedules. Digital nomads thrive in this setup too!

## A. An industry-wide view: The wins for Agile Culture

**63% of Indian HR leaders are now focused on using agile practices<sup>1</sup>** in hiring and being more employee-centric. Globally, 79% of surveyed executives are **batting for agile practices.<sup>2</sup>** PCMM (People Capability Maturity Model) and VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) models acknowledge that both business environment and evolution of human capital are highly dynamic, and plan accordingly to move alongside them to reap desired outcomes.

Agile innovation can come in small features and practices. **85% of today's workplaces in India<sup>3</sup>** have stand-up meetings as a way of keeping in the loop.

Agile hiring takes pride of place, with **31% improvement in recruiter productivity<sup>4</sup>** observed by Gartner.

Agile project management is on the horizon of immediate goals for at least **46% of organisations.**



1. [How agile HR practices boost employee satisfaction and organizational success by Economic Times](#)

2 & 4. [Accelerate global growth with an agile HR strategy by Safeguard Global](#)

3. [Important Project Management Statistics for 2024 and beyond by Quixy.com](#)



**91% of professionals** believe that their organisations could handle projects **better**<sup>1</sup> and that the challenges are project management related.

Gallup further **reinforces the effectiveness of agile models**<sup>2</sup> in employee engagement, feedback models, and salary negotiation stages with the following metrics:

**14%**

increase in productivity

**10%**

improvement in customer loyalty

**18%**

uptick in sales

**23%**

increase in profitability

**14%**

growth in organisational participation

1. [Important Project Management Statistics for 2024 and beyond by Quixy.com](#)

2. [Gallup's Employee Engagement Survey: Ask the Right Questions With the Q12® Survey](#)



### 3. Trends in HRM emerging from the agile model

The need for agile workplace culture and execution is now well-established. The ways to do it, however, need to be intentional, gentle, and gradual.



## **CRM**

Agile working environments work best alongside Customer Relationship Management packages. Being agile is all about responding quickly to customer queries, keeping track of customer journeys, and making them feel seen – all of which becomes more organised and streamlined through CRM software.

## **Gamification for creativity**

HR gamifies learning, testing, and upskilling. “Buddying up” is common, reaping great dividends for both the teacher and the student. Gamifying training, employee engagement initiatives, and even bonding exercises stimulate teams in helpful ways.

## **Hiring agility**

The agile model brings the best out of recruiters as well as the tools at their disposal. Recruiters who are more autonomous make decisions quicker, reducing time-to-fill. They now hire from greater talent pools, taking on contingent workers, remote and hybrid employees, and consultants.



## Organisational structure

Agile work culture encourages a flat organisational structure. The processes and outcomes arise less from authority and more from being procedure-driven. Individuals and teams are empowered and make decisions quickly.

## Project management

Agility in project management involves identifying which processes require iterative methods and which ones need adaptive approaches. Figuring this out can mark out the ones ripe for the use of AI and ML-based solutions. This disambiguation reduces inefficiencies and TAT<sup>1</sup> to counter the nearly 80% projects that run into delays.

## The HR log

Agile HR is supported by databanks and documentation. Leaders and decision-makers know exactly how a past policy, procedure, or initiative panned out. The records in turn, guide them toward data-backed future upgrades.

1. <https://quixy.com/blog/important-project-management-statistics/>

## A. Refyne brings up the Agile Culture subject

With these benefits and pathways in vogue, and wanting to analyse them through the lens of concurrent industry wisdom, Refyne chose to have Agile Culture for the theme of its exclusive thought-leadership conference on HR and business success - **Spectrum**. The concerted effort of all the invite-only industry experts converged on how Agile Culture can become transformative within the climate of massive macroeconomic and microeconomic change.

The chosen leaders rose to the occasion with practical takeaways, shared experiences, and anecdotes to propel India's workplaces forward.





## B. Why Refyne chose Agile Culture for Spectrum

In December 2023, Refyne Spectrum, an annual thought-leadership conference, was held in Phuket, Thailand, focusing on the theme of Agile Culture. It engaged Indian HR and business communities in dialogue on industry trends. The event highlighted the rapid pace of change in India, marking a milestone for organisations striving for success.

## C. Refyne Spectrum: The conference

At Spectrum, Refyne's CEO & Co-founder elaborated on why and how they have simplified personal finance. Refyne deploys employee wellness through its agile approach. Sonam Wangchuk, an inventor and environmentalist, advocated for agility and showcased adaptability in various environments.

He emphasised neuroplasticity's importance, shared stories of his pupils and team, and stressed adapting learning and lifestyle to environmental changes. His agile approach to life and determination in facing challenges resonated with the Spectrum audience, especially as Sonam highlighted practicality, logical support, and passionate empowerment.



**Sonam Wangchuk**



**Chitresh Sharma, CEO & Co-founder, Refyne**



During the Spectrum conference, panellists discussed the importance of various factors in fostering an Agile Culture. Mr. Amit Das, CHRO, Times of India Group, emphasised resilience and smart learning, Ms. Kavita Kurup, Chief People Officer of UST, highlighted tailored recruitment programs for leaders, and Mr. Haneesh Nambiar, Head of HR at Apollo Pharmacies, underscored the significance of business-driven factors in shaping an Agile Culture.

Connectedness fosters agility and growth through collaboration among professionals, leaders, and entrepreneurs. Dr. Sanjay Muthal, Board Advisor, Refyne and CEO at Argolynx Consulting, who addressed the cohort, outlined the holistic wellness benefits of Agile Culture in his address, resonating with the business leaders at the event.



Dr. Sanjay Muthal

Refyne's Chief Marketing Officer Ms. Pushkina Nautiyal and Mr. Susir Kumar, Chairman VFS Global AG, discussed the importance of an Agile Culture in today's dynamic landscape. With 33 years of experience, Susir highlighted HR's role in showcasing India's talent through intellectual prowess, productivity, and accountability. He upheld HR's significance in driving innovation, nurturing talent pipelines, and sustaining upskilling efforts to uphold India's reputation for excellence.



**Susir Kumar & Pushkina Nautiyal**



## **D. How Refyne showcased agility**

Refyne was founded on agility and aims to enhance financial security and wellness for the Indian workforce. The team values innovation, learning from failure, and prioritises its people and community. With a focus on "financial wellness for Indians," they offer tech-driven solutions to address funding challenges.

## 4. What can companies achieve with an agile work culture

Agile teams make swift decisions, prioritise customer understanding, innovate through experimentation, continuously improve, work flexibly, and collaborate for fast, smart solutions.





## Agile decision-making

In agile work cultures, autonomy is highly valued. It cascades from top to bottom, empowering teams and individuals to become self-sufficient and organised. This autonomy results in faster decision-making, reduced project turnaround times, and quicker resolutions for any delays.



## Customer experience and satisfaction

Agile organisations prioritise understanding their customers, aiming to maximise customer lifetime value through exceptional service and continuous innovation.



## Innovation

In agile workplaces, product research and development accelerate with creativity leading the way. Fear of failure is replaced by a culture of experimentation, fostering rapid iteration. This mindset not only multiplies value but also enables scalable growth.

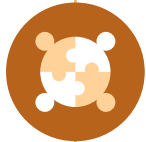






## Flexible working models

Agile workplaces prioritise flexibility, allowing individuals to showcase their competencies and creativity. Working conditions adapt to suit preferences, fostering fresh perspectives on problem-solving and unconventional approaches.



## Continuous improvement

Agile work culture thrives on continuous improvement, constantly refining processes and outcomes. It fosters a mindset of solving new challenges, leading to ongoing learning, professional development, active feedback, and shared growth.



## Shared purpose and collaboration

Agile teams collaborate seamlessly, offering expertise wherever needed, resulting in faster, smarter solutions without gatekeeping.



## A. Indian companies acing their agile practices



Cisco India prioritises agility and flexibility of work culture. Employees are encouraged to work from home. They align with project stakeholders on feedback directly. This helps with TAT as well as team building. Upskilling on the job is encouraged because of blurred lines between developers and QA.

The business environment taps creativity and innovation and teams match requirements with tech-based intelligence.

Other employee engagement practices and agility in approach show in the networking opportunities created, opportunities for internal promotion, and professional autonomy.



Tata Steel created an agile working policy and broke it down into absolutely remote workforce and flexi work from home – the latter meaning employees are required to live in specific work locations, but can continue to work from home.

The workplace agility drew positive feedback, especially when it was continued beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tata Steel, the old guard of India Inc. switching out of in-office models to flexible working models indicates a milestone adoption of agile practices and the advantages they bring.





Accenture India follows agility in business transformation as well as employee work culture, recognising that its people are its greatest resource. Upskilling, reskilling opportunities are aplenty.

People show passion and innovation since their benefits packages, career development initiatives, and networking opportunities are in keeping with changing trends, processes and market cues.

Each person feels empowered, and often volunteers to refer friends and family when positions open. These are agile ethos that help Accenture score continuous improvement and adaptability.

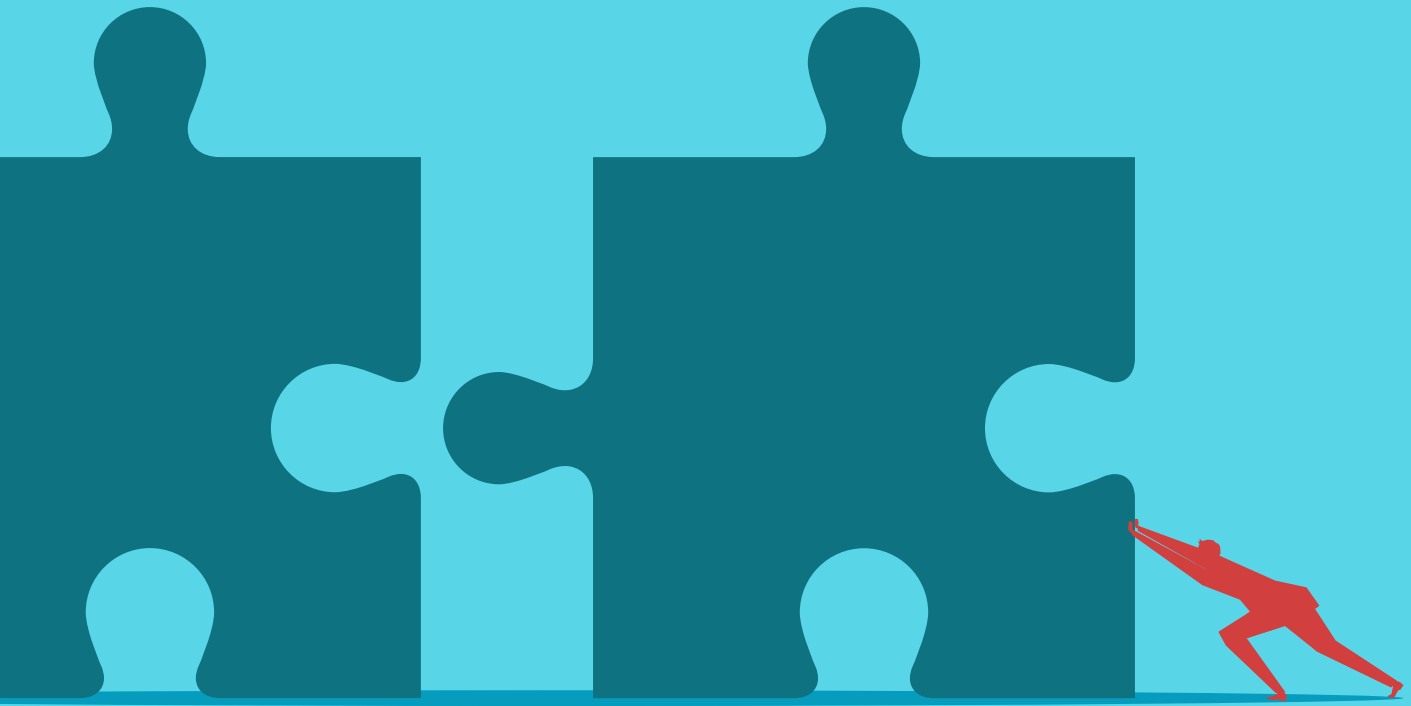


Indian Railways came out with the 'hungry for freight' campaign in 2023 based on agile principles. They upped Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) via direct bids from individual and firms. Freight prices became competitive.

Government tenders were encouraged for laying new freight corridors, which include private freight terminals. This brought about a new service delivery standard which brought about a national transporter usage hike by 16%.<sup>1</sup>

Even as early as 2022, the long-term vision of Indian Railways had borne a 7.5%<sup>2</sup> increase in cargo transported, thanks to the agile approach.

1. <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/railways-hungry-for-cargo-indian-railways-earns-rs-135387-crore-from-freight-transportation-in-fy-2022-23-till-january-2974745/>  
2. [https://www.business-standard.com/content/specials/how-rail-freight-is-powering-india-s-express-delivery-future-123121800925\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/content/specials/how-rail-freight-is-powering-india-s-express-delivery-future-123121800925_1.html)



## 5. How to implement Agile Culture

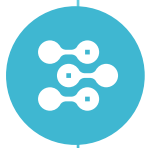
Agile Culture must percolate into an organisation starting from the very top. A flattened organisational structure becomes a reality when the top cadre introduces informal interactions and activities that allow people to bond.

## A. Practices to put Agile Culture into place:



### Empowering agile champions

Assign role models and custodians for a new, agile mode of working. These are the people who can watch out for old habits and gently nudge people toward new and better ways of working. Mentors would also help.



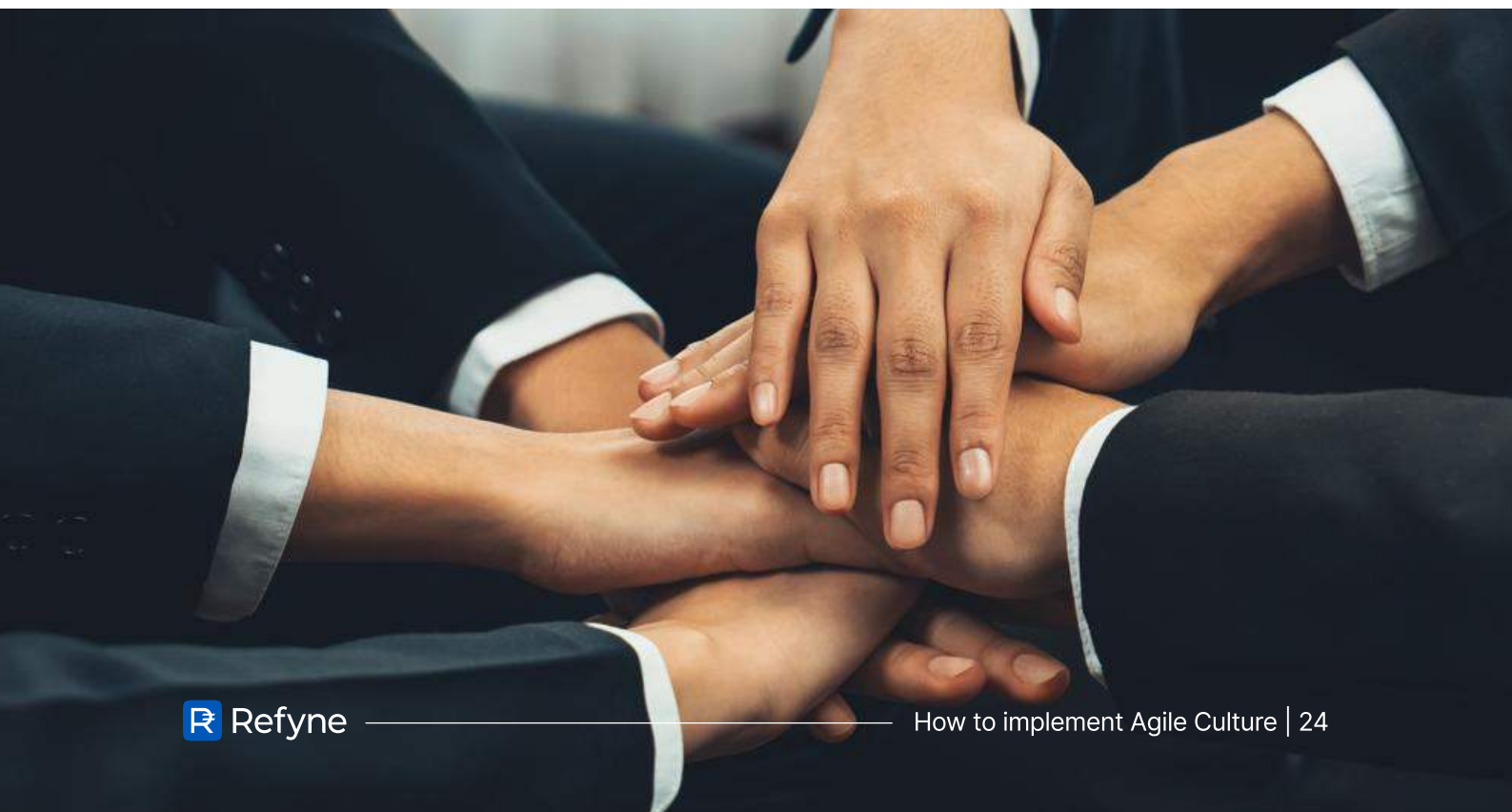
### Make room for technology

Project management suites, CRM, kanban, and productivity tools simplify workflows, enhance collaboration, and boost efficiency.



### Dynamic team building strategies

Build teams through informal activities, games, and getaways. Venturesome ideas may be edited organically with time. Note that the convention must be open to testing and revision.





## Learning from failures

Talk about failures and setbacks openly - compare notes and learnings so that everyone benefits from the lessons learned.



## Encouraging ownership

Agile training has to be deliberate. Tell employees that they are the decision-makers, and create ownership & accountability.



## Regular check-ins

Regular check-ins and reviews are essential in the agile model to assess team and division performance and ensure a smooth transition. All levels of the organisation must exhibit and model agile behaviours, which can eventually be reflected in performance evaluations and benefits packages.



## 6. Conclusion

Agility must become part of the way all the people in the organisation live and breathe. Onboarding recruits, lateral movement of individuals, even new product development and R&D can follow agile models.

An agile workplace is not afraid to learn from the customer. The market is the best teacher, and an agile business can respond quickly and meet the consumers where they are.





25

Networking events  
organised

500+

CHROs in  
attendance

5k

Readership  
(Newsletter & Blogs)



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