



Enabling Transformation: Creating a Global Agile Curriculum for a UK Banking Icon

Case Study Financial Services Company



Case Study

Financial Services Company

Company Details

Industry: International Finance and Banking

Company Size: 83,000 Employees

Location: London, UK With Regional Offices Worldwide

Products: Asset management, personal and commercial banking, credit cards, investment management, mortgage loans, wealth management

Cprime Services: Group Training, Technical Coaching, Agile Training and Coaching

The Problem: As new technology and innovative financial products disrupted the traditional banking ecosystem, this major UK Bank turned to Cprime to promote Agile change.

Overview

This Cprime client has demonstrated a commitment to innovation that has seen it through almost 350 years of consistent growth.

The bank's portfolio continues to expand as it embraces emergent technologies. These include quantum computing, blockchain, smart contracts, and developments in machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI). As a result of its dedication to developing tech, today the bank has an ever-evolving portfolio of services that include retail, commercial, wholesale, and investment banking, as well as private banking and wealth management.

The numbers tell the story. In 2021, the bank reported annual revenue of US \$27.17 billion and assets under management totaling US \$586 billion. It has 83,500 employees spanning 40 countries globally.



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Out With the Old—Adapting a Global Enterprise to Agile Ways of Working

Fintech and the international banking industry are driven by a series of innovations in computing and software development. They are also all about the marriage of financial services and information technology. The smartphone, however, changed the way everyone from institutions to individuals conducted their financial affairs. Overnight, startups and established tech players like PayPal, Google, and Apple took the once-exclusive payments sector mobile. The bank needed to react quickly to remain current and competitive.

“It was a time of change; dedicated and more adaptable forces were entering the financial marketplace and they were able to release technical products and services in a much more rapid and innovative way,” explains Alex Gray, Cprime Lean Agile Coach & Trainer.

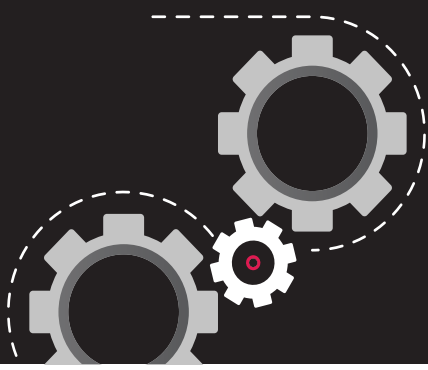
In 2015’s disrupted tech landscape, the bank’s size and established processes were working against it. Consequently, management realized they needed to move to a more Agile way of working throughout the entire organization. They wanted to accelerate the way the bank delivered value to remain competitive. This also helped them meet both business objectives and shareholder expectations.

“There is a huge amount of innovation going on at the moment, and companies that do not change will not survive,” summarized the executive sponsor in charge of the bank’s technical development.

Cprime, an Agile Transformation Partner Capable of Developing, Scaling, and Transferring Knowledge

The bank was prepared for change. It had already developed and tested its Agile Change Lifecycle (ACL) framework in key business units. The issue, however, was putting that framework into practice universally. They needed to stitch together the “islands of Agile excellence” the ACL team had established during the proof of concept. To achieve that, the bank needed an Agile transformation partner capable of developing, scaling, and delivering the knowledge. For that, they turned to Cprime.

“The organization’s ACL team were very knowledgeable — we weren’t teaching them,” says Gray explaining the nature of the engagement. “Cprime’s role was purely to design, build, and deliver the training to their people across multiple business units, across multiple geographies. They had the expertise, but with their current resources, they couldn’t transmit it to tens of thousands of people worldwide.”



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Agile training developed through Agile methods

Gray and the Cprime team began by employing Agile methodologies to create the training that would facilitate the transformation. It started with a single course.

"We held initial workshops with the bank's ACL group to understand the scope of the roles, the skills, priorities, course objectives, and learning outcomes they expected. Then we sprinted and reviewed, iteratively developing the course with their input," recalls Gray. "When that was done, we reviewed the pilot with the executive sponsors and added their feedback for the final iteration." With its initial resources, the two-person Cprime team delivered a new course, complete with supporting materials, in just under one month.

"All of the ACL training material we produced encouraged personal growth in addition to focusing on business outcomes. We upskilled teams in Agile techniques and practices that would be useful in their current and future roles."

-Alex Gray, Cprime Lean Agile Coach & Trainer

Meeting client demand across continents

In addition to creating the coursework, Cprime was responsible for the knowledge transfer. "On the learning and development logistics side of things, we collected demand data regarding where their people were, how many to expect in each location, and when they would receive the training," says Gray. "We also established how many trainers we would need to bring on and where to locate them."

Once that was taken care of, it was a matter of recruitment and getting the trainers up to speed on the new framework as it evolved alongside the bank's developing objectives.

"We recruited trainers from multiple sources, vetting and quality checking each candidate. Then we designed a straightforward pairing, or "train the trainer," approach to bring up each new trainer's skills and familiarize them with the ACL coursework," says Gray. "First, an expert trainer ran the course, then we would flip that around and run it again with the expert observing and offering feedback to ensure each new associate trainer had mastered the materials." This allowed Cprime to move incrementally from course creation to delivering ACL sessions at scale in two months.



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Organizational Transformation

Over 18 months, Cprime consequently produced eleven bespoke courses for different roles and practices to support the bank's ACL framework. The Cprime team also recruited, qualified, and managed a total of 43 Lean-Agile associates. All told, they conducted ACL training with bank employees in business units from twelve countries across four continents. The countries covered included England, Scotland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Czech Republic, South Africa, Australia, Singapore, China, India, USA, and Israel.

"Cprime was able to scale out the delivery faster than the bank could accommodate," remembers Gray. "They had the desire and demand to roll it out, but their internal logistics weren't able to match our pace." The sticking point was the in-person sessions and the number of locales involved. "Everything was face to face, there was no Zoom or video conferencing. All of the classes were in-room, highly interactive, two- or three-day sessions," recalls Gray.

The phase one ACL rollout had a far-reaching influence within the organization. "Within the first year, we had the equivalent of 800+ teams working with the ACL approach," reports the initiative's executive sponsor. "We're pleased with the scale and pace of adoption and at the same time we are well aware that this is just the beginning, that lasting culture change takes years."

Delivering business objectives and forging relationships

In terms of its transformation goals, with its new ways of working the bank reported a 300 percent increase in development throughput, which the bank determined by comparing its baseline average to the number of post-training stories completed per month, per app. After attending ACL training, the bank's developers also reduced code complexity by 50 percent with a corresponding 50 percent increase in testing coverage.

"For the past six months, more than half of our strategic applications now deploy business value to production at least once every four weeks," the sponsor adds. "From our surveys, we can also see that those teams working with an Agile approach are happier."

At the end of the 18-month rollout, satisfaction with the transformation cut both ways. Above all, the results of the working relationship between Cprime and the bank exceeded the expectations of everyone involved.

"One of the real successes of the engagement was having that rapport with the bank and working collaboratively with them in an Agile way to deliver such widespread change," concludes Gray. "The fact that we maintain that strong relationship, and continue to work with them whenever they have new coursework to be developed, says it all."



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Featured Team Member



Alex Gray

Lean Agile Coach & Trainer

Alex is a professional, versatile and enthusiastic Certified Scrum Trainer® / Lean & Agile Coach. He has well over two decades of experience working in technology teams and over a decade of that experience working in agile transformations. Alex has worked in complex environments for organizations from medium to large in size, in many sectors including financial services, medical, gaming, telecoms, and others.

About Cprime



Cprime is an industry-leading, full-service global consulting firm with a focus on providing integrated and innovative solutions around digital transformation, product, cloud, and technology. With over 20 years' experience, we provide strategic and technical expertise to businesses across more than 50 industries. Our team of advisors and technical experts have the know-how to meet organizations where they are to develop actionable solutions and solve business challenges. We also collaborate with our expansive network of partners to design, deploy, and harmonize technology stacks across organizations. Our mission is to empower visionary business leaders and teams to reimagine the future of work to achieve better outcomes.