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And the importance of Human Experience in sustaining this in practice



**Read Part 1: Future Ready Agile - March 2026 News Bulletin**

# AGILE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

## From Adaptation to Endurance

Our previous bulletin explored Agile as an operating capability and where that capability becomes real within the organisation as a condition for future readiness.

In this issue, the focus shifts from change to sustainability — and how organisations sustain that adaptability over time without fragmentation or loss of alignment.

This edition explores Sustainable Business as the grounding of the Defined Dynamics Agile Operating Model — what it means to sustain performance, responsiveness, and long-term value and the role of Human Experience (HX) in sustaining this in practice.

# Sustainable Business as an Agile Operating Model

~ Mark Bayley ~

From Sustainability as an Initiative to Sustainability as a Capability



Sustainable business is often introduced through programmes, reporting frameworks, and external commitments. While these are necessary, they do not, on their own, create sustainable organisations.

**Sustainability** is a **strategic capability**, embedded in how the organisation is designed to operate.

## The Sustainability Tension

Within most organisations, a persistent tension exists between:

- short-term performance
- and long-term value creation

This tension is often treated as a trade-off, rather is a function of how the organisation is designed.

When operating models prioritise:

- centralised decision-making
- rigid structures and delayed feedback loops

sustainability becomes disconnected from execution. It is managed separately, rather than embedded in the operating model.

## Where This Tension Shows Up

- decisions favour immediacy over longevity
- sustainability remains conceptual rather than operational
- operational pressure overrides strategic intent
- organisations oscillate between control and reaction

Under these conditions, sustainability cannot take hold.

## Agile as the Enabler of Sustainability

To move beyond this tension, organisations require the ability to:

- sense change in real time
- respond without delay
- and adapt without destabilising the system

Within Defined Dynamics, Agile has been adapted from an IT delivery methodology into an organisational operating capability — extending beyond delivery into how decisions are made, how work flows, and how organisations adapt to change instantly.

This distinction is critical.

Agile, in this form, enables:

- decision-making closer to the work
- faster movement from insight to action
- continuous alignment across the organisation
- and reduced friction within the system

Sustainability, in this context, is enabled through the organisation's ability to operate adaptively.

### **From Adaptability to Sustainability**

Agile allows organisations to respond. Sustainable business requires that this responsiveness can be maintained.

Sustainability cannot be achieved in a system that cannot adapt.

Sustainable business is not a separate agenda. It is the outcome of an organisation designed to operate adaptively.

Within Defined Dynamics, Agile is positioned as the capability that enables this — as an embedded way of operating across the organisation.

Agile embedded as an operating capability	When Agile Capability is not present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decisions remain dynamic rather than delayed</li> <li>• teams respond without unnecessary escalation</li> <li>• feedback loops support continuous adjustment</li> <li>• and pressure is distributed across the system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainability initiatives remain surface-level</li> <li>• decision-making slows under pressure</li> <li>• teams experience conflicting priorities</li> <li>• and adaptability becomes reactive rather than embedded</li> </ul>

Agile Capability therefore enables organisations to sustain:

- performance
  - responsiveness
  - and value creation
- simultaneously.

The question that follows is how this capability is sustained in practice.





## Human Experience (HX) and Its Role in Agile Sustainable Business

~ Angela Gail James ~  
Human Experience as the Sustaining  
Layer

Sustainable business is realised through how work is experienced in practice. While Agile enables responsiveness and adaptability, the ability to sustain this depends on how people experience and hold this way of working.

This is where Human Experience (HX) becomes critical.

Human Experience (HX), as introduced through Volution's work, extends beyond traditional people practices into a strategic function shaping how work is experienced and held across the organisation

HX shapes how work is lived — how decisions are experienced, how pressure is held, and how individuals operate within an Agile environment.

### **From Activation to Sustainability**

Previous bulletins positioned HX as the activation layer — enabling Agile to take hold within the organisation. In the context of sustainable business, this role deepens. HX becomes the sustaining layer.

It ensures that adaptability can be held consistently in practice — supporting clarity, continuity, and the ability to operate under ongoing demand.

## **The Human Demand of Agile Sustainable Business**

Agile operating models require individuals to:

- operate with greater autonomy
- respond in real time
- navigate ongoing ambiguity
- and durably sustain performance

Without alignment between structure and lived experience, pressure builds within the system. This affects:

- decision-making
- clarity
- and the ability to sustain performance

Sustainability is therefore experienced AND structural.

## **HX and Leadership**

At a strategic level, Agile, Leadership, and Human Experience operate in continuous relationship — shaping how the organisation responds, adapts, and sustains performance.

Leadership informs HX, and HX informs leadership.

Together, they shape how the operating model is realised in practice.

HX enables leaders to:

- operate with clarity in complexity
- make decisions with confidence
- sustain performance under pressure
- and support teams in navigating ongoing change

## **Positioning HX as a Strategic Function**

To sustain Agile and sustainable business together, organisations must evolve how they understand Human Experience.

HX is a strategic function rather than an extension of HR.

Sustainable business is realised through the continuous interaction between structure, leadership, and lived experience. Human Experience holds this interaction and is how the organisation sustains adaptability — through people, as a way of operating.

# HUMAN EXPERIENCE (HX)

THE STRATEGIC FUNCTION THAT CONNECTS AND SUSTAINS



As explored in this edition, Agile enables organisations to respond and adapt, while Human Experience ensures that this can be sustained in practice. What follows is where this becomes real.

**In Agile Part 3 - April 2026**, we explore the role of leadership in activating future-ready sustainable business — and how the Agile Operating Model and Human Experience are brought together in practice.

**We welcome the opportunity to explore Agile Future Ready Sustainable Business with you.**

