

Transforming IT Work Processes & Beyond at Utah Valley University

UVU **DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION**
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY



Strategic Vision and Goals



UVU recently underwent an IT departmental reorganization designed to improve alignment and results across the university. However, while the structure was in place, a unifying vision and strategy for *how* teams would work within this new model were still emerging.

To address this gap, a **Transformation Leadership Team** was established to define the strategic direction, guide cultural and operational change, and ensure the reorganization translated into measurable outcomes. This team became the central driver for establishing clarity of purpose, shared goals, and a unified approach to continuous improvement.

This **Transformation Leadership Team** created a plan – vision and goals (next slide) to follow over the course of time and make a sustainable and meaningful change.

Strategic Vision and Goals



Agile Transformation Vision

The University aims to create a responsive, collaborative, and transparent environment by embracing agile principles.

Breaking the Silos

Bringing the teams/partnerships together to break barriers of collaboration and communication.

Lean Portfolio Management

Aligning departmental goals with university priorities enhances focus and drives institutional success.

Delivery Framework

Adopting a standard delivery framework across DX fosters transparency and informed decision-making.

Outcome focused

Delivering and measuring the impact or value delivered.

Continuous Improvement Culture – Make it Stick!!

Promoting continuous improvement accelerates project delivery and improves stakeholder satisfaction.



Identify Current Challenges

Key Issues Facing UVU



Lack of Strategic Focus

The university struggles with misaligned goals and fragmented initiatives due to an unclear strategic direction.

Absence of Cross-Campus Partnerships

Limited collaboration between Dx and other departments causes lack of trust, isolated efforts and duplication.

Excessive Work in Progress

High volumes of ongoing tasks lead to delays and reduced productivity on across teams.

Siloed IT Culture

Minimal collaboration and transparency in IT hinder information sharing and coordination.



Breaking the Silos

First BRP (Big Room Planning)



Problem – Lack of Collaboration

Solution – The first step toward collaboration and alignment was to bring people together—literally.

The **Big Room Planning (BRP)** event marked the beginning of a new way of working. It allowed teams that had been operating in silos to meet face-to-face, connect over shared objectives, and openly discuss dependencies and priorities.

This was more than just a meeting—it was the *first cultural shift* toward transparency, cross-team collaboration, and collective ownership of university-wide initiatives.

Partnership Directors



Problem – Lack of Customer Centricity

To ensure that IT efforts were fully aligned with the university's mission and the needs of each division, UVU created the **Partnership Director** role.

Solution – These individuals serve as strategic liaisons between IT and their assigned university divisions—building relationships, understanding unique business needs, and championing a customer-centric mindset.

The Partnership Directors help bridge the gap between vision and execution by ensuring that technology initiatives directly support academic and operational outcomes across the institution.

Single Priority Queue



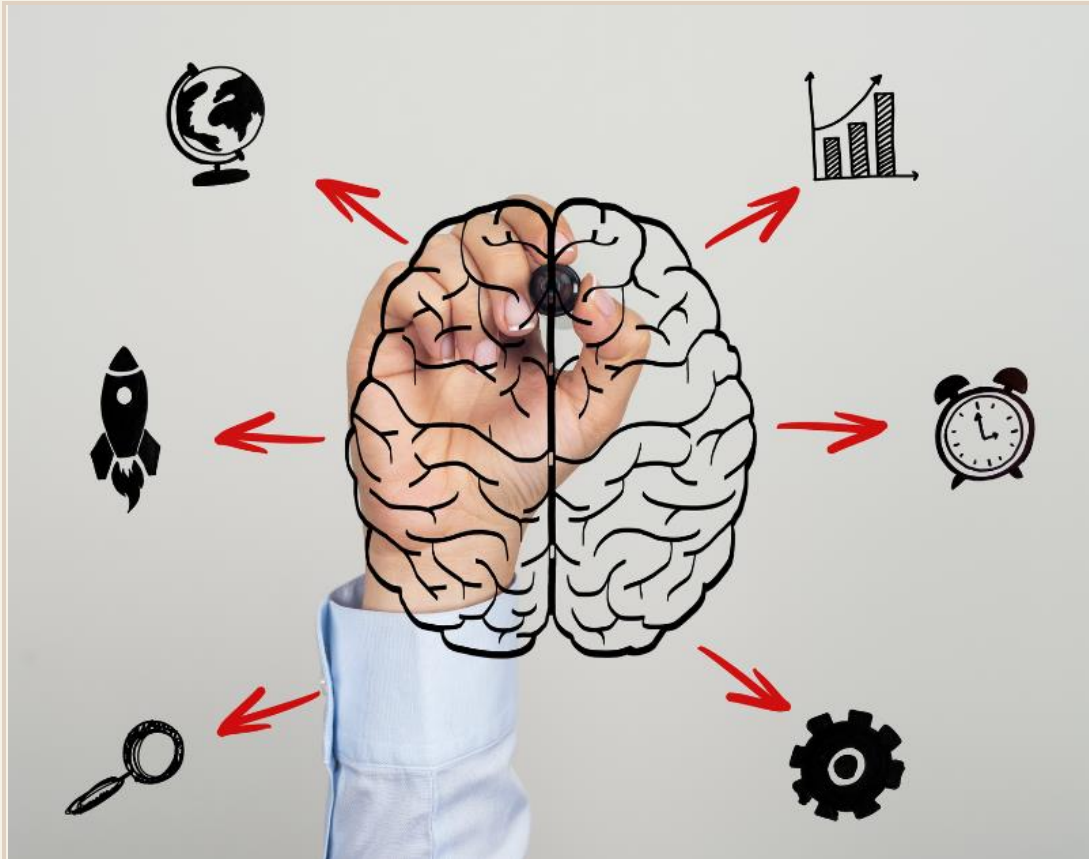
Problem – Prioritization

Before the transformation, delivery teams within the Digital Transformation (Dx) division often operated independently, each responding to different priorities. This fragmentation made it difficult to maintain focus or deliver consistent value.

Solution – To create transparency and alignment, the transformation team established a **single, unified backlog**—a consolidated queue of University priorities.

This single source of truth enabled leadership and teams to work from a shared understanding of what mattered most, facilitating better coordination, resource allocation, and progress tracking.

Agile and Iterative Principles Adopted



Problem – Mindset

Recognizing that true digital transformation is a journey—not a single event—UVU's transformation team adopted an **iterative and agile mindset**.

Solution – Rather than attempting large-scale, one-time change, the focus shifted toward **continuous improvement**: learning, adapting, and evolving over time.

The transformation team developed a roadmap for adopting agile principles, establishing feedback loops, and setting measurable goals for improvement in collaboration, delivery, and culture. This approach acknowledges that sustainable transformation is built on gradual progress, supported by open communication and an environment that embraces learning.



Lean Portfolio Management

LPM is a core competency of any organization, especially relevant in agility transformations within universities or large institutions. It helps align strategy with execution, optimize value delivery, foster communication and improve transparency across departments.

Strategic laddering



Challenge – Strategic misalignment, siloed departments, excessive WIP(work in progress)

Solution – Aligning departmental goals with university mission and refinement the portfolio backlog regularly to identify the misalignment.

1. **From Vision to Themes:** University vision and mission guide the creation of strategic focused themes.
2. **Objectives and Initiatives:** Strategic themes break down into specific objectives, supported by initiatives and epics to drive progress.
3. **Execution:** Teams develop user stories and tasks to deliver outcome aligned with strategic initiatives.
4. **Measuring Success:** Defined outcomes and metrics track success and ensure alignment with university priorities.

Continuous Improvement & Agile Training / Mentoring



Challenge – Too busy to reflect and Improve

Solution – Continuous Improvement is essential in a university's Lean Portfolio Management (LPM) journey because it ensures that the institution remains adaptive, efficient, and aligned with its strategic goals. As a start we established the following to reflect & Inspect regularly to plan and act on it to improve:

1. **Retrospectives:** Regular retrospective sessions for teams, leadership and execs to look at what's working and what's not for their teams.
2. **Coaches 1:1:** Continuous 1:1/teams coaching to provide required training and mentoring. This helps to identify the problems/gaps faced by all Dx members generating potential areas of improvement for transformation team to refine processes and outcomes.
3. **Metrics & Dashboards:** Tracking and measuring the right things.

Operating Cadence



Challenge – No consistent rhythm or structure leading to confusion, misalignment and inefficiency.

Solution – Operating Rhythm is the heart of any IT institution ensuring required alignment, communication and collaboration.

1. **Retrospectives:** Reflect and Improve.
2. **Daily stand ups:** Share progress and blockers.
3. **Portfolio syncs(BRP Sync):** Align initiatives with strategy and share Progress or any blockers.
4. **Portfolio Refinement:** Ensure initiatives are aligned to strategy and are prioritized in right order.
5. **Feedback Loops:** Reviews, 1:1s, etc.

Standard Tracking Toolsets



Challenge – Varied tools being used creating fragmented understanding. No Visualization, no metrics and no single source of truth.

Solution – Operating Rhythm is the heart of any IT institution ensuring required alignment, communication and collaboration.

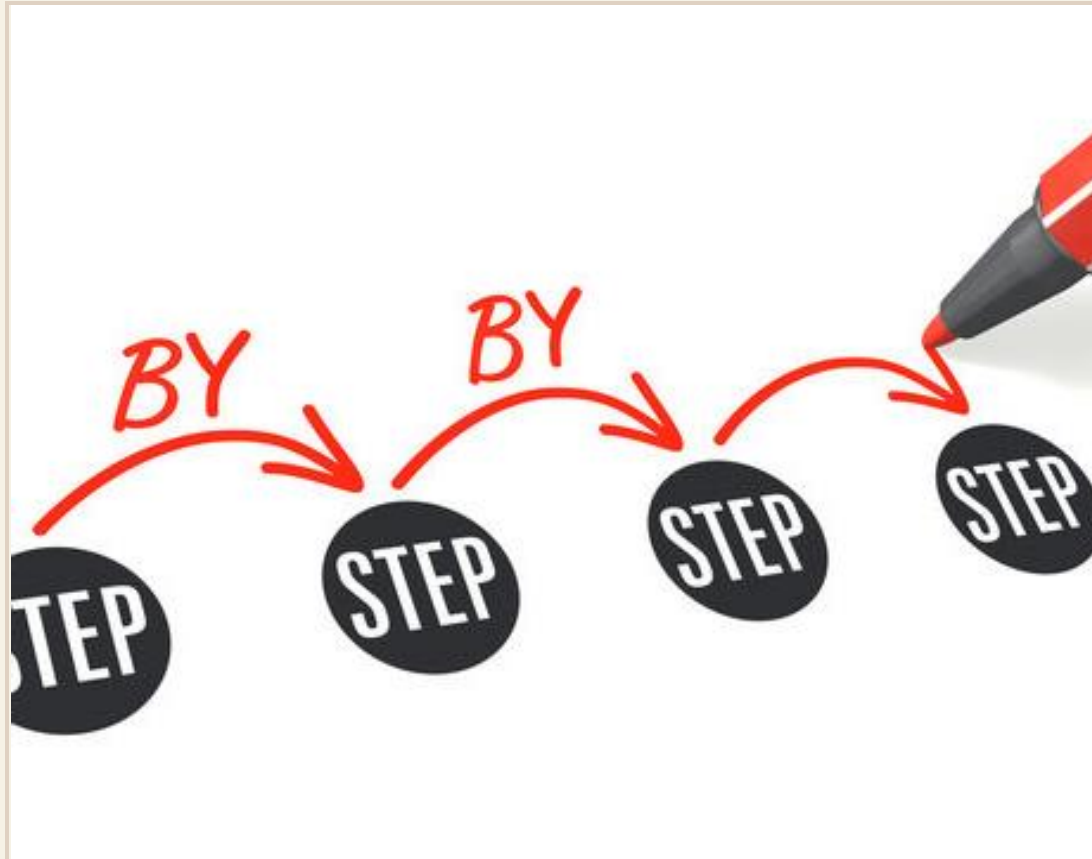
1. **Portfolio & Project Management:** For managing initiatives epics, features, and user stories across agile teams and portfolios
2. **Visualization & Dashboards:** For mapping processes, strategic ladder, and collaborative planning
3. **Collaboration & Communication :** For team communication, file sharing, and integration with tracking tools & documentation and knowledge sharing
4. **Strategic alignment & OKRs/Goals:** Tracks Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) aligned with strategic goals and creating roadmaps
5. **Continuous improvement:** Tools to capture feedback and lessons learned enabling retrospectives and process refinement



Delivery Framework

As the transformation gained traction, UVU turned its focus toward **building a consistent, transparent, and accountable delivery framework** — one that would bring structure to how work is planned, executed, and measured across teams. The goal was to remove confusion, define ownership, and empower teams through clarity and shared purpose.

Process and Role Clarity Established

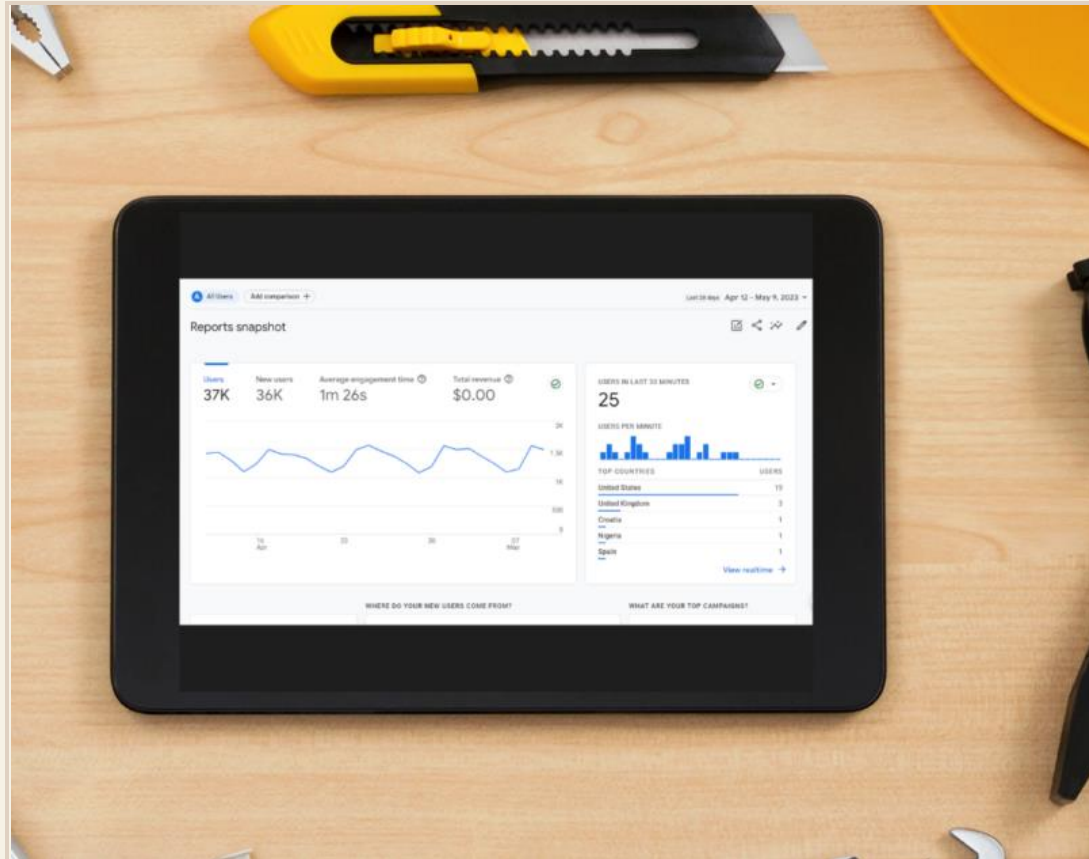


Challenge – Lack of Clarity

A key barrier to effective delivery was not a lack of effort—but a lack of clarity. Roles, responsibilities, and processes were often undefined or interpreted differently across teams, creating gaps in ownership and accountability.

Solution – Working closely with the Transformation Leadership Team, UVU defined and documented the **core delivery expectations**—clarifying who owns what, how decisions are made, and how teams collaborate from idea to outcome. This brought structure and predictability to an environment that had long relied on tribal knowledge and assumptions.

Standardized Tools and Artifacts



Challenge – Lack of Standardization

A lack of tool and artifact standardization had made it difficult to track priorities or maintain a consistent delivery rhythm across the Digital Transformation (DX) teams.

Solution – By introducing a **standardized toolset and set of delivery artifacts**, UVU created a single language for planning, execution, and reporting. This consistency brought greater visibility into campus-wide initiatives and improved coordination between IT and university partners.

Standard – Work Breakdown Structure



Challenge – Outputs vs Outcome

Solution – To reinforce alignment and focus on value, teams adopted a **common work breakdown structure** based on clearly defined outcomes and acceptance criteria.

This shift allowed work to be discussed in terms of the *value delivered* rather than just the *tasks performed*. It elevated conversations between IT and campus partners, transforming delivery teams into true strategic partners rather than simple service providers.



Outcome Focused

We are here! - The next phase of UVU's transformation focuses on redefining *what success looks like*.

UVU is committing to becoming **outcome-focused** vs output based.—valuing the impact and results of the work over sheer activity.

This shift encourages intentional delivery, data-driven prioritization, and alignment to the university's strategic goals.

Standard Prioritization Model



Challenge – Reactive Approach

Historically, UVU's delivery model thrived in chaos—operating on a “first in, first out” basis, where the loudest or most urgent voice often determined priorities. This reactive approach led to fragmented efforts and diminished focus on long-term value.

Solution – To deliver with intent and *prioritize outcomes over urgency*, the Transformation Team developed a **Standard Prioritization Model**.

This framework enables UVU to assess and rank initiatives based on strategic alignment, impact, and value.

It empowers Partner Directors and DX teams to have meaningful, data-informed conversations with division leaders—ensuring resources and efforts directly support the university's broader mission and objectives.

Managing Work In Progress (WIP)



Challenge – Non-Stop Task Switching

Many teams operated under the weight of competing demands, taking on excessive work without visibility into true capacity.

This “**serve everyone at once**” mentality caused bottlenecks, delayed delivery, and eroded quality. Without defined limits, *everything was started, but little was finished.*

Solution – The transformation effort introduced structured **WIP (Work In Progress)** management practices to balance workload and improve flow.

Teams are being trained on **capacity planning, estimation**, and throughput awareness—enabling realistic forecasting and improved delivery predictability.

By embracing the principle of “*Stop starting, start finishing,*” UVU teams are learning to work smarter, not harder—creating a sustainable environment for discovery, delivery, and innovation.

Leadership Coaching and Cultural Growth



Challenge – Leadership Mindsets

New ways of working cannot thrive without new ways of thinking. Legacy behaviors—reactive decision-making, unclear accountability, and limited empowerment—needed to evolve to support a collaborative and trust-based culture.

Solution – **A structured leadership coaching program** is needed to develop modern leadership skills across all levels of the organization.

This initiative focuses on clarity, accountability, servant leadership, and fostering psychological safety within teams.

By equipping both executives and frontline leaders with the mindset and tools to lead through change, UVU is building the foundation for *sustainable transformation*—where leadership is practiced, not just positioned.



Make it Stick!!

We have done great!! Now let's ***make it stick*** ensuring the change is sustainable and university can make changes as required.

Make it Stick!!



Challenge – Inconsistent Data

Varied tools being used creating fragmented understanding. No Visualization, no metrics and no single source of truth.

Solution – Capability building to develop the skills, structures, and mindsets needed to **sustain and scale agile practices** across the institution.

1. CoEs for Skill Development

- Training DX teams, and leadership in Agile, Lean, and LPM principles.
- Help build expertise in tools like Jira, OKRs, Kanban, and Scrum.

2. Role Clarity

- Help defining existing roles bringing clarity to roles and responsibilities (e.g., Product Owners, Scrum Masters, Agile Coaches).
- Empowering teams with autonomy and accountability.

3. Process Maturity

- Sustain and improve standard delivery frameworks and operating cadences.
- Creating repeatable, scalable processes for initiative delivery.

4. Cultural Shift

- Moving from command-and-control to collaboration and transparency.
- Encouraging experimentation, feedback, and continuous improvement.

5. Tool Enablement

- Implementing and integrating standard tracking toolsets.
- Ensuring teams have access to dashboards, boards, and reporting systems.

6. Leadership Engagement

- Building strategic alignment through Lean Portfolio Management.
- Creating governance structures that support agility, not hinder it.

Thank you!!

