



FLIGHT LEVELS

EMPOWERING ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY



UNLOCK THE FULL POTENTIAL OF YOUR AGILE TRANSFORMATION

It's possible with Flight Levels!

This whitepaper will help you understand **what Flight Levels is**, **how it works**, and **how it can help transform your organization**.

What is Flight Levels?

Flight Levels is a groundbreaking thinking model that delivers a holistic approach to reenergize stalled transformations.

Flight Levels is an outcome-producing thinking model that offers the clarity and conciseness needed to address transformations grappling with persistent challenges or straying from their envisioned path. As a dynamic and versatile thinking model, Flight Levels equips you with the tools to swiftly steer transformation, leveraging existing investments and sparing the workforce from yet another complete overhaul.

The Story of Flight Levels

Flight Levels was designed by Dr. Klaus Leopold to solve a recurring problem in many of the organizations he worked with. In 2011 Klaus noticed that companies were making enormous investments into Agile transformations with the result that teams were now working in agile silos instead of functional silos, a lack of collaboration across agile teams, and a transformation that failed or fell asleep.

When Klaus began sharing his thoughts during several international conferences, regardless of country, the audience returned with the same feedback “that’s the exact story of my company”.

With this problem in mind, Klaus wrote the book “Rethinking Agile: Why Agile Teams Have Nothing To Do With Business Agility,” which has become the basis for Flight Levels. Today, the Flight Levels model is taking off with enormous market demand and is quickly becoming an indispensable and complementary tool for all organizational transformations.

**“We should build Flight Level systems with people, not for people”
- Dr. Klaus Leopold**

WHY FLIGHT LEVELS?

The Flight Levels model achieves peak returns on your investments by boosting your organization's transformation efforts with outcome-driven engagement.



**Improve
Organizational
Performance**



**Build
High-Velocity
Workflows**



**Revitalize
Struggling
Agile Transformations**

The Flight Levels Advantage

- ✓ **Lightweight and Cost-Effective**
Orders of magnitude cheaper than Agile frameworks and methods.
- ✓ **Organization-Wide Collaboration**
Coordinate work effectively and establish work flows across silos.
- ✓ **Making Strategy Happen**
A well-established system for executing organizational strategy.

What Can Flight Levels Do For You?

- Identify New Opportunities
- Reduce Time to Market
- Increase ROI
- Manage Bureaucracies
- Minimize Mission Impact
- Adapt to the Unexpected

Organizations That Have Found Success With Flight Levels



BOSCH



AIRBUS



Mercedes-Benz



thyssenkrupp

SIEMENS

ExxonMobil

Volkswagen



HOW IS FLIGHT LEVELS DIFFERENT?

Flight Levels helps **operational teams, management, and executive leadership** align their efforts by ensuring that the right people **talk about the right things at the right time** - while having exactly the right information they need to make decisions. Best of all, Flight levels provides a wealth of **ready-made patterns** that can be adapted and put to use immediately.

How Flight Levels Compares to Other Agile Frameworks

- Flight levels are neither vague nor overly prescriptive
- Unlike many Agile frameworks, Flight levels can be used by the entire company (it is non-IT specific)
- Flight Levels happily co-exists with Scrum and/or Kanban, as well as LeSS or Nexus
- Flight Levels are relatively simple to learn
- Flight Levels do not require specialized tools (physical whiteboards, digital whiteboards, or Agile lifecycle management tools work well)
- Flight Levels can be used as an effective and accelerated way to introduce the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)

Portfolio Management With Flight Levels

The Flight Levels model bridges communication gaps across your whole organization, allowing you to manage portfolios at the operational level as well as the strategic level.

Operational Portfolio Management

An operational portfolio is the collection of your organization's products, initiatives, programs, or projects. The main goal is coordinating work and managing dependencies across multiple products and services. Its focus is on getting things done. As such, delivery metrics like cycle time and throughput are our main concerns in this arena. In the Flight Levels model, operational portfolios are at Flight Level 2.

vs.

Strategic Portfolio Management

The strategic portfolio, on the other hand, is all about aligning projects, epics, or initiatives with business outcomes and strategy. It's like the compass that points your delivery toward strategic goals. We track progress not by delivery metrics but by business metrics such as the number of paying customers, revenue, and products sold. In the Flight Levels model, strategic portfolios are at Flight Level 3.

HOW DOES FLIGHT LEVELS WORK?

The fundamental idea of Flight Levels is to **design change while maintaining mission or business agility**. Flight Levels is a **flexible** thinking model that is **infinitely adaptable** to the unique needs of any organization. It fits into any environment and improves that environment step by step. The Flight Levels framework achieves this by applying five activities across three levels.

The Three Levels

FL 1 - The Operation Level

That's where teams are doing their operational work. The teams should apply these five activities and incorporate them into their daily work. Usually, an organization has more than one team, so you would see multiple Flight Level 1 systems.

FL 2 - The Coordination Level

Flight Level 2 is the world of your products and services. On Flight Level 2, you ensure that the right team is working on the right stuff at the right time. With this level, you make your work "flow" across multiple groups, products, and services by continually applying the five activities.

FL 3 - The Strategic Level

At Flight Level 3, you connect the corporate strategy with the operational work of the people, and you provide contextual information so that it is clear to everyone why certain things are done and how the five activities are executed.

The Five Activities

1. Visualize Your Situation

See what's really going on in your organization. The first step to improving is to thoroughly understand your current situation.

2. Create Focus

Shift your perspective from starting work to finishing work. Starting work costs money while finishing work brings money, so stop starting and start finishing.

3. Establish Agile Interactions

Have the right conversations at the right time. People drive improvements, so the right people must be connected at the right time to make change happen.

4. Measure Progress

Establish feedback loops that tell you whether you are progressing toward your goals and desired outcomes.

5. Improve

Continue to constantly improve and challenge how you work. This means you are iterating over these five activities again and again and again. Improvement is an ongoing activity, and you are never done with it.

FLIGHT LEVELS TRAINING

The complete Flight Levels training program is designed to help you **navigate and lead change** in your organization. It doesn't matter if you are working in Kanban, Scrum, SAFe or any other setup. Flight Levels will empower you to bring **business agility** into your environment.

Who Should Take Flight Levels Workshops?

- Leadership
- Middle and Senior Managers
- Transformation Leaders
- Enterprise Agile Coaches
- Organizational Designers
- Agile Team-Level Coaches & Trainers

Flight Levels Workshops



Introduction to Flight Levels

Gain a fundamental understanding of the Flight Levels Model and its foundations.



Flight Level 2 Design

Establish collaboration and manage resources better across teams, departments, products, or services.



Flight Level 3 Design

Design systems for strategy execution & align long-term company goals with daily operations.



Flight Level Systems Architecture

Achieve business agility at scale with a systematic approach to organizational improvement.



Flight Level Change Leadership

Enhance your approach to organizational change by executing Flight Levels initiatives at all levels.

WHY ARIEL PARTNERS?

Ariel Partners is a **certified Flight Levels Academy Company Partner**. We provide comprehensive Flight Levels training and support organizations in introducing and leveraging the Flight Levels model for **enterprise agility**.

Your Flight Levels Guide



Craig Strong
CTO of Ariel Partners

Craig Strong has over 25 years of experience in information technology, ranging from his undergraduate studies at MIT to successful implementations of Agile and DevOps practices on enterprise-level commercial and government software projects. Due to his outstanding track record in Agile coaching, teaching, and facilitation, Mr. Strong is one of the first individuals in the United States authorized by the Flight Levels Academy to teach certified classes.

Contact Us

Learn more about how Flight Levels can provide a competitive advantage in your next mission or business endeavor.

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