AGILE PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

THE BRIDGE TO STRATEGIC AGILITY

HENNY PORTMAN | RINI VAN SOLINGEN

FOREWORD

I am originally from India. My father was a diplomat and, in my youth, I lived all over the world. When I was 16 years old, we came to the Netherlands. And when our family moved on three years later, I decided to stay here. I learned the language and started studying computer science at TU Delft. I married a (tall blonde) Dutch woman, have a Dutch passport, and live with her and our three daughters in the heart of Delft.

This year I will turn 54, so I have been living in the Netherlands longer than I have ever spent in India. The Netherlands feels like my homeland and India feels like my motherland. My parents have since returned to India and visiting them still feels a bit like coming home. I love the dynamism, the chaotic, the "living in the moment" of India. And yet I also feel at home in the Netherlands, where things are organized. In traffic you only honk your horn in case of danger and you show up on time for an appointment.

Perhaps that combination is what attracts me so much to agile. For me, agile combines the dynamism and agility of India with the structure and predictability of the Netherlands. The best of both worlds, so to speak. Hence, I did not hesitate for a moment when I came across agile in 2009. I started a company - Prowareness - that helps clients in the Netherlands with agile transformations, training, and coaching. From that, another company emerged: DevOn, which uses agile teams from India and Poland to deliver working software to Dutch clients every two weeks. A total of over four hundred employees now work here. And both companies are still growing. My youngest company is Agile Cockpit, which makes cloud-based software products for agile organizations. Among other things, with functionality for portfolio management on top of Jira and Azure DevOps, enabling quick strategic direction.

All of this comes together in the Waada Group. Waada means "promise" in Indian language. That promise is to help people and organizations get closer to their mission. My personal belief is that helping others get closer to their mission leads to greater success, more energy, and a more meaningful life. I am very happy to contribute to that.

But what on earth does that have to do with agile portfolio management, you may ask. Well, actually a lot. In recent years, agile transformations have taken place in many Dutch organizations. In many cases, we have had the privilege of guiding them. And with success: people and teams gained more autonomy, their energy and satisfaction increased, and they succeeded in delivering more value in a short cycle. However, these transformations were mainly "horizontal": at the executive level of the teams.

Now it is time for a step up the "organizational Maslow pyramid". The legs of the organization can now walk. The only question is: where are they walking to? The horizontal agile transformation was about doing things right. The vertical transformation is about doing the right things. Making organizations more agile is a multidimensional game. Now it's time for the managerial dimension: it's time for agile portfolio management.

In fact, it strikes me that in practice strategic management has difficulty connecting with the reality of the teams. There is planned thinking at the board level and discovery at the team level. But what if it were possible to connect these two worlds? I am convinced that it is only when we better connect the boardroom with the agile teams that the agility of organizations can really flourish.

Many CxOs in the Netherlands are looking for solutions to further increase the speed and agility of their organization. Through the Thought Leaders Network[1], I speak to many of them on a regular basis. They read books to find answers to their questions. Plenty of books have been written about agile teams, but not yet about agile portfolio management. That is why I am extremely happy that Henny and Rini have written an insightful book about agile portfolio management. It is here in front of you: the book is finished. It also feels a bit like my book. Secretly, I was the instigator - Henny and Rini will confirm that. But beyond that I have not been involved. It really is their book, and they should be proud of it!

Agile Portfolio Management: The Bridge to Strategic Agility is strong in content and a good tool for making the strategic management of organizations more agile, step by step. The book consists of ten practical and compact chapters with reflection questions, concrete tips, and references to further literature. In addition, the book contains practical cases that show how some Dutch

1 http://www.thoughtleadersnetwork.nl/

companies have set up their portfolio management. But above all it is a very nice book. It looks beautiful. And the analogy “building a bridge” between strategic management and operational execution has also been visually implemented to perfection.

So, I congratulate Henny and Rini and I heartily recommend their book. If you want to make your organization integrally agile and are looking for a seamless connection between control and execution, then this book provides the tools to make that happen. First and foremost, I hope you enjoy reading it, but above all, I wish you a lot of success in putting all the inspiration from this book into practice!

Ir. Vikram Kapoor, CEO Waada Group
Delft, January 12, 2023

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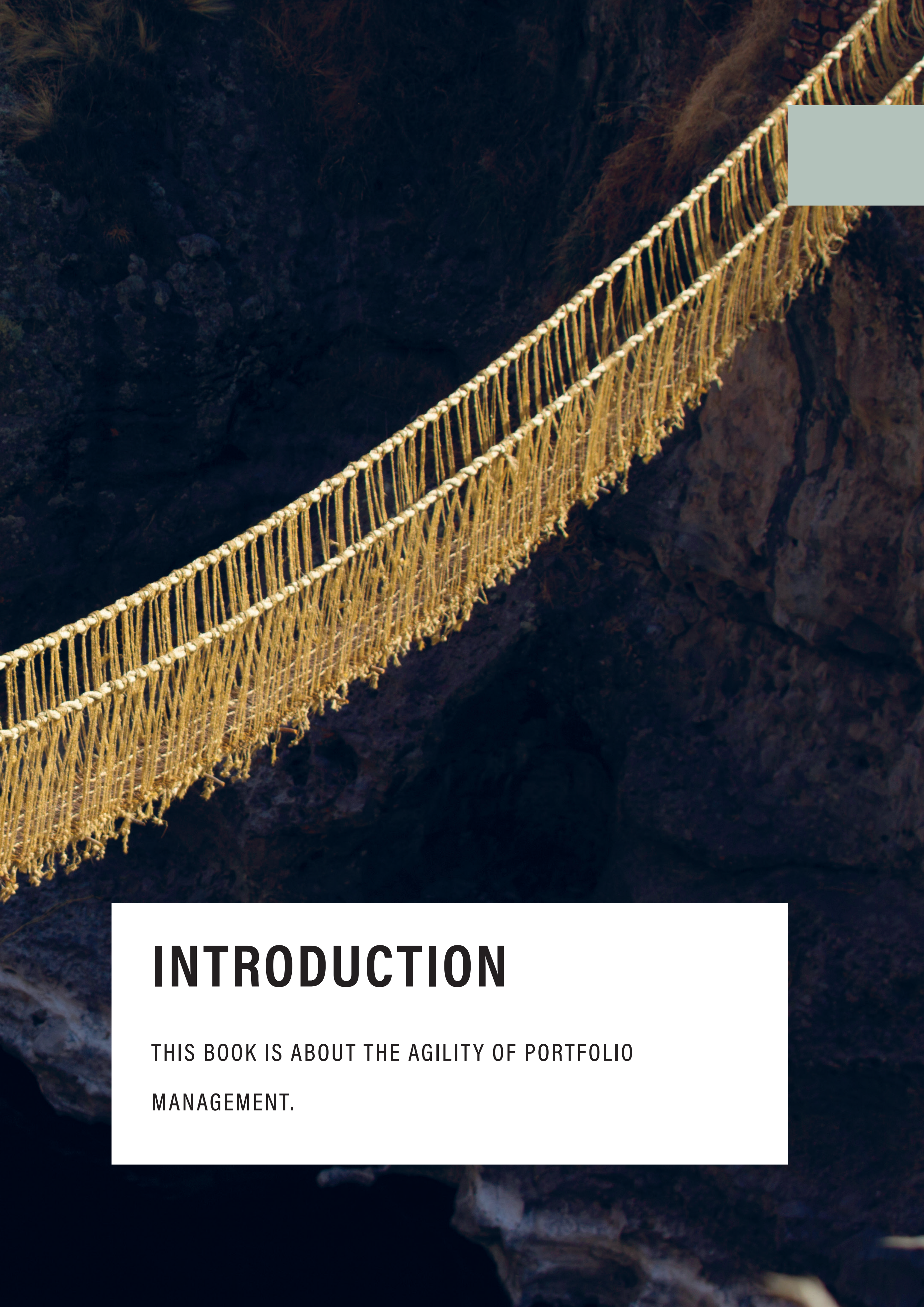


INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT THE AGILITY OF PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT.

In order to manage all programs and projects in a centralized manner, portfolio management has been established in many organizations.
Its purpose is to organize the selection, combination, and sequencing of initiatives in such a way that the underlying strategic goals are achieved as optimally as possible. This considers all practical constraints and dependencies, both external (with customers, suppliers, and regulators) and internal (with teams, architecture, and strategic agendas).

This makes sense. The totality of resources, time, and capacity is of course limited. However, the fact that nowadays many more organizations use agile working methods in the execution of projects and programs has consequences for control too. After all, execution takes place by stable agile teams (often organized in chains). It is necessary for portfolio management to take this into account. After all, governance via programs, projects, budgets, and resources (plan-based portfolio management) is now shifting to governance via roadmaps, backlogs, sprints, and teams.

The term “agile portfolio management” can mean two things:

1. portfolio management that already during organization considers that the execution will be agile. This portfolio management for *agile execution* is primarily plan-based, looking far ahead to the order of strategic initiatives and those imposed by regulators. Especially during the preparation, just before the execution, work is arranged so that agile teams can work on it in their quarter (PI) and sprints. The feedback loop on impact is closed only after a strategic initiative is fully completed;
2. portfolio management that leverages the short-cycle benefits of execution through greater flexibility in portfolio management itself. This *agile method* of portfolio management is primarily discovery-based, looking ahead to strategic initiatives based on goals and providing ample opportunities to adjust if strategic assumptions prove incorrect. During a quarter (PI) and sprints, a feedback loop on impact is already in place so that during implementation strategic adjustments can also be made from portfolio management.

The biggest opportunity to make organizations even faster, more agile, and more successful currently seems to be making portfolio management more agile and discovery-based in practice. This offers opportunities to make strategic portfolio choices more flexibly and to feed them with real data from real customers. The main advantage is that the intended impact of the portfolio can

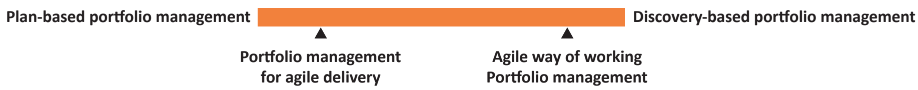


Figure 1: Two interpretations of agile portfolio management

be achieved faster, by scaling up earlier where the intended impact occurs. And by stopping initiatives where this impact is lacking. This also frees up capacity sooner to be used again for the next steps.

Here, however, there is no right or wrong. It is more of a scale running from fully plan-based portfolio management at one end to fully discovery-based portfolio management at the other.

In practice, there are plenty of situations where portfolio management can perfectly well be more to the left (plan-based portfolio management). Consider, for example, the expansion of a high-voltage grid by a grid operator, where necessary land acquisition and permit applications can take many years. If the Department of Public Works wants to make all its structures carbon-neutral, a multi-year plan provides more insight than a schedule for the next quarter.

However, if an organization wants to be able to respond increasingly quickly to external changes where uncertainty is trumped and many assumptions are made, a higher degree of agility is desired and portfolio management will have to be more discoverable (agile mode of portfolio management). For example, consider a digital transformation of an insurer that has a lot of work done manually by its own staff and has the ambition to get its customers into a self-service mode. Whether that will work, how it will work exactly, and what the impact on customers will be is then largely unknown in advance. Making strategic choices far in advance is therefore difficult, but the goal of that transformation remains intact.

Areas of focus for change

So, there is a continuum from plan-based portfolio management to discovery-based portfolio management. This involves portfolio management for agile execution on the plan-based side and an agile method of portfolio management on the discovery-based portfolio management side.

Every organization has a current situation that fits the now and usually a future situation that fits the requested change. However, that desired change is not one-dimensional. Measures of varying degrees of agility span multiple dimensions. How far do you plan ahead? How much do you do at a time? How do you make strategic choices, who does this, and when? And how firmly do you make these choices?

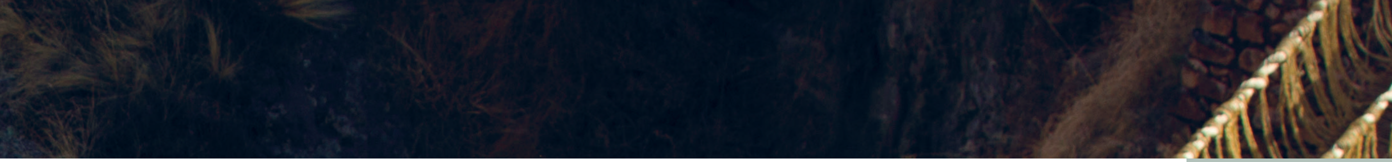
In this book, we describe ten focus areas to increase (or decrease, as that too may sometimes be desired) the agility of portfolio management. Making changes in practice in those ten areas will bring the current situation closer to the desired situation. These ten dimensions are detailed later in this chapter (pages 23-26). Each focus area is then further explored in its own chapter.

Should everything then become more and more agile?

Each area of interest is also elaborated on as a dimension: from less flexible and more planned (left) to much more flexible and more discovery-based (right). In doing so, this book seems to introduce an aspiration to the right after all: the more agile the better. The title of this book also seems to imply that far-reaching agility is the goal. This is partly true, but not quite.

First, in this book we take an “agnostic” view of portfolio management in practice. In other words, there is no right or wrong way to set up portfolio management. There is a setup for portfolio management. Period. Without judgment. Organizational situations are specific and the people in the organization adapt their way of working to their customers, propositions, market, products, users, employees, and so on. To judge them would do injustice to all the people who put their heart and soul into this.

Second, agile or agility is not an end in itself. Agility is subservient to the intended goals. Each situation requires a certain degree of agility. A sailboat is more agile than an oil tanker but they both have their own scope and the agility to match. Portfolio management is agile anyway. The only question is whether it is agile enough (or perhaps too agile) for the scope to which it relates. In agile transformations, people often speak of dividing the tanker into a fleet of sailboats, because that increases the organization’s agility. For issues that a single team can pick up, this is certainly useful, but it remains to be seen whether the same is true for large initiatives that require many teams. After all, you really can’t transport oil with a fleet of sailboats.



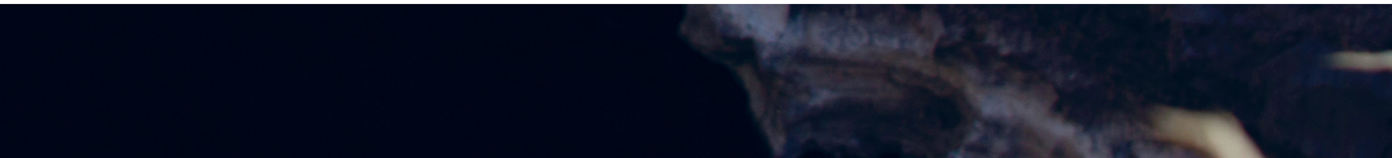
Third, in today's digital world, developments follow one another in rapid succession, and with them grows the need for faster adaptation. In this book, we assume that this need for agility will increase rather than decrease over the next decade. And that portfolio management is about to enter the critical path for the strategic success of organizations. Execution through agile teams is already agile, so to make the whole process more agile, it is crucial to make portfolio management more flexible and discoverable as well. In many cases, the oil tanker has already been divided into a fleet of sailboats, but the captain is still at the helm in the original wheelhouse. The next step in the agile transformation of organizations is often no longer with the teams but lies at the strategic steering from the portfolio.

So yes, this book assumes a changing movement toward greater agility, toward agile portfolio management. In that movement, we contribute practical improvement opportunities for practice. At the same time, this movement is nonjudgmental: any design of portfolio management is good for that particular environment. If agility needs to rise, this book offers inspiration and direction. Moving step by step toward discovery-based portfolio management helps increase strategic agility.

Structure of the book

The ten areas of interest form the pillars of this book. A chapter is devoted to each of them. Each chapter starts with a number of reflection questions to determine for yourself to what extent a focus area has been consciously set up within one's own organization.

For each focus area, we name the most dominant control variable and discuss why this focus area can make portfolio management more agile. Where possible, we also outline a theoretical framework using models. At the end of each chapter follows a summary using practical insights and/or basic principles that can be used to improve one's own practice. Every practice situation is different, of course, but the basic principles can be used as inspiration. We also outline some steps to improve the focus areas in one's own organization. Finally, reference is made to background material for further reading.



THE BASIS BEHIND PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

In essence, portfolio management comes down to answering the following four questions:

1. Are we doing the right things?
2. Are we doing things the right way?
3. Are we getting things done?
4. Are we achieving the desired value?

Portfolio management coordinates the delivery of the change strategy.

Answering the first question, *"Are we doing the right things?"* is one way to primarily test whether an initiative is contributing to the desired organizational goals. This applies to both plan-based and discovery-based portfolio management.

The second question, *"Are we doing things the right way?"* relates to execution. This is about the execution of the work itself and the creation of the intended products or services. In plan-based portfolio management, which involves allocation of project budgets, one of the things we look at is how projects and programs are plotted over time (portfolio plan) and how they are executed. In discovery-based portfolio management, portfolio roadmaps and portfolio backlogs are defined, which are picked up by stable teams (pull) and worked out based on Scrum, for example.

The third question, *"Are we getting things done?"* is about implemen-tation monitoring. Plan-based portfolio management involves periodic project

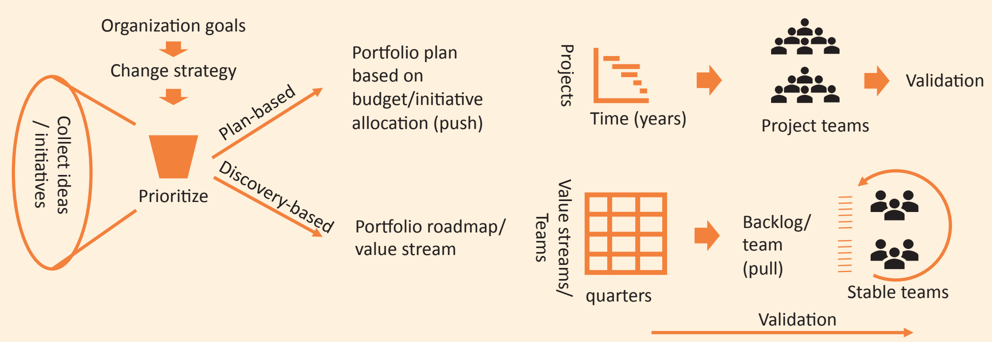


Figure 2: Portfolio management in essence - planning and discovery

progress reports that are aggregated at the portfolio level and a portfolio board that reviews these reports and initiates actions if necessary. In more discovery-based portfolio management, you might think of setting up an Obeya where the management team can monitor the achievement of organizational goals and act if necessary. Here, reporting (also) takes place in terms of outcome and impact. In plan-based portfolio management, the final question, *"Are we achieving the desired value?"* is usually a real test only after delivery of the projects and programs. In discovery-based portfolio management, this involves a more continuous validation of delivered value after delivery of each increment. This is possible because teams work iteratively and deliver incrementally. So, testing for deliverables does not have to wait until everything is finished.

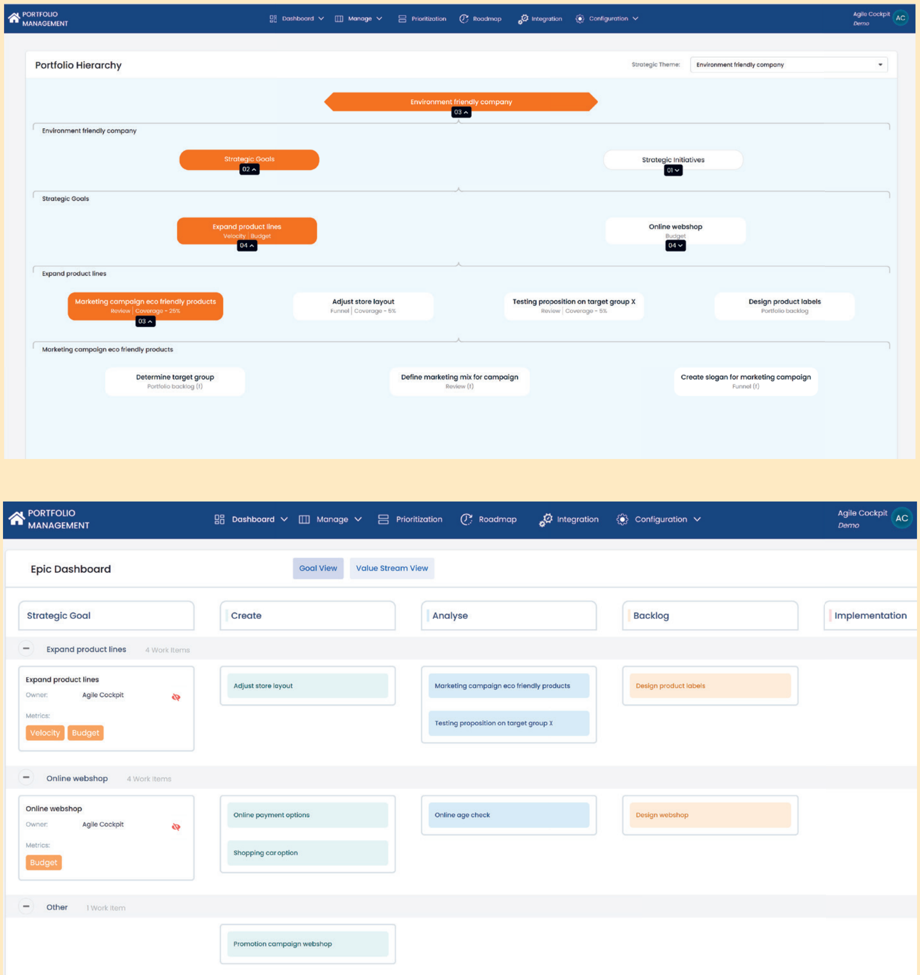


Figure 3: Portfolio hierarchy with strategic goals and initiatives

PORTFOLIO FRAMEWORKS

Several portfolio frameworks are available for setting up portfolio management. Plan-based portfolio management frameworks include Management of Portfolios (MoP) (Axelos) and The Standard for Portfolio Management (PMI). Frameworks with elements of discovery-based portfolio management include Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) (portfolio level), AgilePfM (Agile portfolio management), Disciplined Agile portfolio blade (DA), Evidence Based Portfolio Management, and Continuous Innovation Framework (COIN). In the following sections, MoP and SAFe are explained in more detail. These frameworks are the most widely used in practice and are sufficiently representative to make sense of both sides of the scale.

Management of Portfolios (MoP)

Management of Portfolios (MoP) assumes two portfolio management cycles. The left-hand cycle (portfolio definition) in the figure below answers the first question, *"Are we doing the right things?"* The other questions are addressed in the right-hand cycle (portfolio delivery). The organizational energy forms the connection between defining and delivering.

The left-hand portfolio cycle (definition) is divided into five sequential activities:

- **understand**: this should result in a clear and transparent picture of current projects and initiatives and those in the pipeline that are necessary to help achieve the organization's desired objectives;
- **categorize**: during the "understand" activity, a complete list of initiatives is created from which to build the portfolio. Dividing this list into categories or segments makes it easier to understand the composition of the portfolio. This helps with strategic alignment: the allocation of available resources to individual segments should reflect their relative priority;
- **prioritize**: supported by the portfolio office, senior management prioritizes the portfolio, taking into account an appropriate balance between risk and return;
- **balance**: to be successful, the final portfolio must be balanced. Does the portfolio cover all strategic goals? What does the delivery of different initiatives mean for the organization? Implementing too many initiatives at the same time within the same department is going to squeeze and may not produce the desired results. Have the necessary people and resources to achieve the portfolio been checked? Is the number of initiatives in the same stage of development reasonable and is the overall risk profile of the portfolio acceptable?

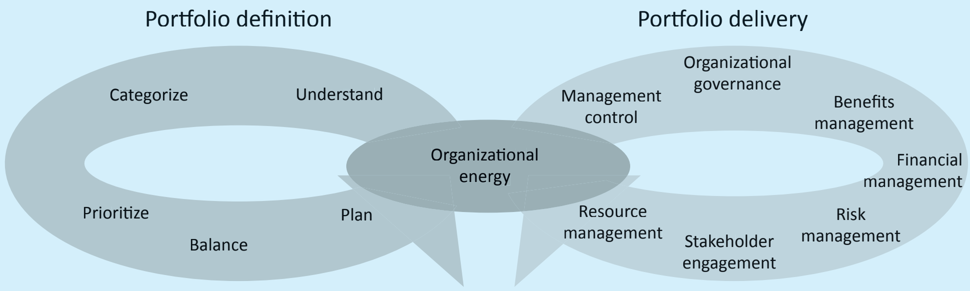


Figure 4: Management of Portfolios (MoP) overview

- **plan**: here a strategy and a plan of execution for the defined portfolio are prepared, which must be approved by the portfolio steering body. This plan can then be used to report, assess, and manage progress. MoP assumes a plan that is prepared annually.

The right-hand portfolio cycle (delivery) includes seven activities, which can be performed in any order:

- **management control**: provide clarity on the decisions to be made, where and when they will be made, and what criteria they will be based on;
- **organizational governance**: regularly monitor and control progress at the individual and portfolio level against the portfolio strategy and portfolio execution plan;
- **benefits management**: identifying and managing the revenue to be achieved through the portfolio to ensure optimal deployment of people and resources and to contribute maximally to operational and strategic goals;
- **financial management**: ensure that portfolio management processes and decisions are aligned with the financial management cycle, and that financial considerations are an important element in all decisions regarding the release of initiatives, both at the individual and portfolio level;
- **risk management**: consistent and effective management of risk, both at the individual and collective level. This is essential to the successful delivery of individual initiatives and the portfolio as a whole and to the ultimate achievement of the organization's strategic goals;
- **stakeholder engagement**: a coordinated approach to engaging and communicating with stakeholders to ensure that the needs of portfolio customers are identified and appropriately engaged;
- **resource management**: establishing mechanisms to understand, manage, and deploy the amount of people and resources available and needed.

Organizational energy connects and drives the two cycles of portfolio manage-ment. Successful portfolio management can only be achieved when employees are truly engaged, focused on the right goals, and feel they are working together as one team. Organizational energy is the fuel for realizing change.

Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)

The Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe)[2] integrates lean, agile, and DevOps into a comprehensive operating system that helps organizations survive in the digital age by delivering innovative products and services faster, more predictably, and with higher quality. SAFe is built around seven core competencies of a lean and agile organization, including team and technical agility (including ARTs), agile product delivery, and lean portfolio management.

Lean Portfolio Management (LPM) aligns strategy and execution by applying lean and systems thinking to:

- **strategy and investment funding**: ensures the entire portfolio is aligned and funded to create and maintain the solutions needed to meet business objectives. This requires collaboration of business owners, portfolio stakeholders, technologists, and enterprise architects;
- **agile portfolio operations**: coordinates and supports decentralized program execution and promotes operational excellence. This requires the collaboration of the Agile Program Management Office/Lean-Agile Center of Excellence (APMO/LACE) and *communities of practice* (CoPs) for *release train engineers* (RTEs) and *scrum masters*;
- **lean control**: this covers oversight and decision-making on spending, audit, and compliance, forecasting spending, and performance measurement.

Within LPM, the strategic portfolio assessment, portfolio sync, and participatory budgeting events are central. *Strategic portfolio assessment* ensures continuous alignment between strategy, execution, and budget. The event focuses on achieving and improving the portfolio vision and is usually held quarterly, at least one month before the next PI planning meeting.

Portfolio sync provides insight into the portfolio's progress toward its objectives. Topics typically include assessing the implementation of enterprise-wide initiatives (often called epics), the status of KPIs, addressing

2 https://scaledagileframework.com/lean-portfolio-management/

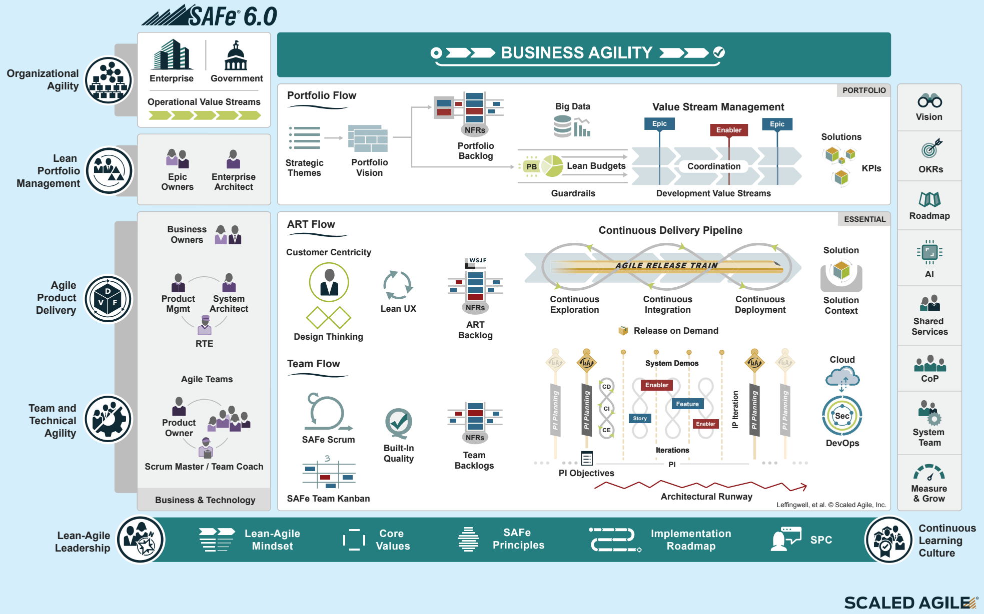


Figure 5: Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe - version 6.0)

dependencies, and removing barriers. The portfolio sync is usually held monthly but may occasionally be replaced by the strategic portfolio assessment.

Participatory budgeting (PB) is an LPM event in which a group of stake-holders decides how to distribute the portfolio budget among solutions and epics. The higher the budget, the more teams can work on the solutions and epics. Budgets (number of teams) are usually adjusted twice a year using PB. If they are adjusted less frequently, spending is fixed for too long, limiting agility.

Portfolio Kanban system

The portfolio Kanban system[3] provides LPM with the ability to manage the flow of epics. It brings structure through analysis of initiatives and provides a transparent and quantitative basis (lightweight business case) for decision-making around whether to place certain epics on the portfolio backlog.

3 This paragraph is an adaptation of a paragraph on the portfolio Kanban system in *Scaling Agile in Organizations* (in Dutch), Henny Portman (2020), Van Haren Publishing.

The first step (collect) gathers all ideas and initiatives, such as new products, changes in the market, or laws and regulations. In the second step (assess), which is limited to the number of initiatives to be picked up (WiP limited), an initial assessment is made using an *epic value statement*. This statement contains just enough information to allow a meaningful discussion of the initiative. So it should be possible to get an initial indication of the initiative's potential value to the organization, the effort required to pick it up, and the potential cost if it is not picked up (*cost of delay* - CoD). Prioritization takes place through the SAFe prioritization mechanism WSJF (*Weighted Shortest Job First*, see Chapter 2).

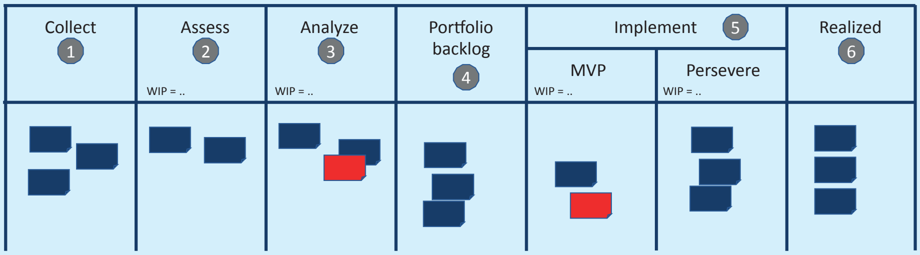


Figure 6: Portfolio Kanban

In the third step (analyze), further analysis takes place, solution alternatives are discussed, and a lightweight business case is prepared (also WiP limited). The WSJF can be adjusted based on the information obtained. Based on the business case, a decision can be made to add the epic to the portfolio backlog.

In the next step (portfolio backlog), prioritization using WSJF takes place again each time a new epic is added. In the fifth step (implement) (again WiP limited) the *epic owners* and product management perform an initial decomposition into epics and *features*. Ownership is then transferred to the *Agile Release Trains* (ART). Actual delivery takes place in the teams and starts at the next PI planning event, initially implementing an MVP. If the outcome of the hypothesis testing is positive, then more and more features are added. If the outcome is negative, then the epic can be modified, or the epic is discarded. Progress monitoring at the epic level continues. The last step (realized) provides insight into the delivered epics.

TEN FOCUS AREAS TO MAKE PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT MORE AGILE

1. **Set up short-cycled portfolio management.** Change to a high-frequency rhythm of portfolio management. Coming together more frequently for smaller decisions is better than getting together rarely for big decisions. Apply a rhythm (organizational heartbeat) of short weekly meetings, monthly adjustment meetings, and a quarterly to look further ahead. The control variable is *cycle-time/horizon*.

2. **Reduce the number of parallel initiatives.** Cross-functional agile teams are super powerful in delivering results predictably, but focus is a crucial precondition. Switching focus between sprints or (even worse) working on multiple projects during a sprint makes teams demonstrably less productive - *100% resource utilization means 0% flow*. This calls for fewer projects at the same time. Finish one before the next is picked up. Fortunately, an agile organization is already set up for this because it creates a pull system (from the product backlogs). In addition, splitting up pieces of work and making them smaller is a core idea within agile, which strengthens the pull system and increases flow. The control variable is *work in progress (WiP)*.

3. **Manage by value.** Portfolio management tends to focus on the output of projects and programs, because it is determined in advance which systems or functionalities will be delivered. Underneath this focus on output, however, lies an assumption. The assumption that this output will also lead to a certain outcome. However, this is not at all certain. Evidence is still lacking; it is only a (strong) suspicion. In agile portfolio management, it is therefore necessary to shift portfolio management (and therefore also progress reporting) from output to outcome. This results in short- cycled insights into which value has been delivered and proven, and therefore which uncertainty has been reduced. The control variable is *result orientation*.

4. **Keep strategic options open.** Portfolio management decisions are uncertain. They are based on the assumptions that initiatives will deliver value, that the timelines chosen are achievable, and that the capacity and competencies needed are available. The remarkable thing is that those uncertainties are not primarily on the table. Conducting portfolio management in the form of possible scenarios

and options, combined with choices in terms of assumptions, helps to explicitly name these uncertainties. In doing so, it is useful to look further ahead with scenarios beyond the current boundaries. The control variable is *strategy changeability*.

5. **Start validation as early as possible.** Portfolio management decisions are uncertain. They consist of assumptions that initiatives deliver value, they consist of assumptions that the chosen timelines are feasible, and they are made based on assumptions that capacity and competences are available. However, omnipresent uncertainty is not usually considered. Performing portfolio management in terms of possible scenarios and options, combined with choices in terms of hypotheses, helps to explicitly express this uncertainty. In addition, it helps to look further ahead with scenarios beyond the current boundaries. The control variable is *validation focus*.

6. **Involve product and business owners in portfolio management**. Demonstrating success - the portfolio must help to achieve the organizational strategy - and testing assumptions takes place in the development organization. The people who determine what is picked up first are the product owners and business owners. They can turn portfolio hypotheses into experiments that are at the top of the backlog for the next sprint. This feeds the portfolio process with real data. Therefore, involve product and business owners intensively in portfolio management and while making choices. They have short lines of communication with the knowledge and know-how in their teams. There are typically several routes possible toward an intended goal for which the required effort differs greatly. That knowledge is extremely valuable when making trade-offs. The control variable is *decision-making structure*.

7. **Feed portfolio management with data**. Make portfolio decisions based on data and evidence rather than opinions and assumptions. The short-cycle rhythm of agile teams offers the possibility to deliver data quickly. This creates a short feedback loop between portfolio level and execution level and greatly improves the quality of portfolio decisions. Portfolio management can be enriched bottom-up. OKRs (objectives and key results) offer good tools for this while considering an appropriate degree of uncertainty. In addition, it is not just internal data that is desired, but also external data - what is happening

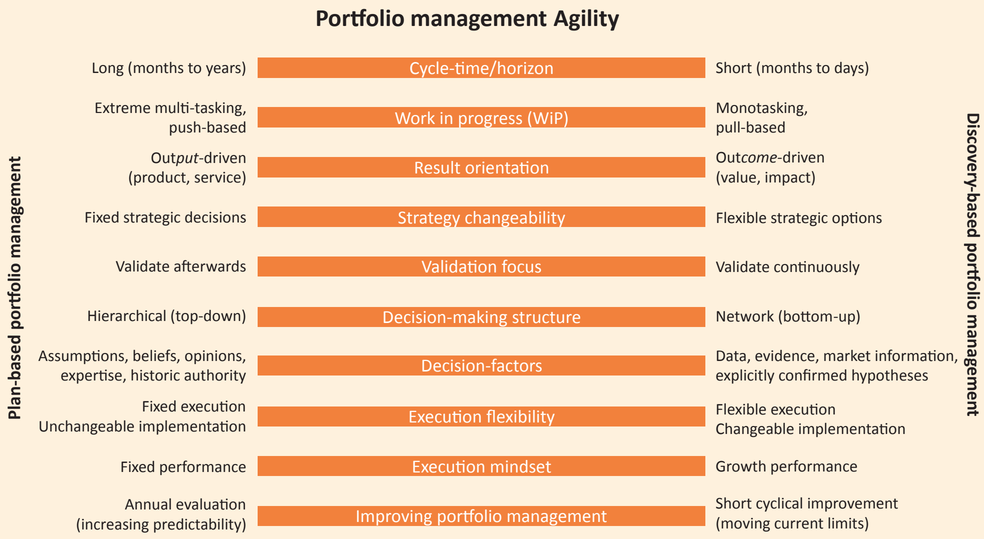


Figure 7: Ten dimensions to make portfolio management more agile

elsewhere, what is on the horizon, and which disruptive innovations may be relevant? Set up an Obeya that can be used by the product and business owners. The control variable is *decision-factors*.

8. **Make choices reversible.** Due to the uncertainty of whether portfolio choices are correct, it is necessary to ensure that they can be reversed. This can usually only be achieved by first splitting them up and making them smaller. The result is a series of smaller choices, each of which is reversible, and they can therefore be carried out as an experiment. Make use of MVPs (Minimum Viable Products). Irreversible choices are only desirable after success has been proven. Success is then scaled and the need to be able to return becomes less and less important. The control variable is *execution flexibility*.

9. **Grow delivery capabilities.** Many portfolio decisions are made based on current team performance, often under the assumption that it will remain constant. However, the opposite is true. Therefore, continue to invest in strengthening the delivery capabilities of teams. For example, by making and reducing interdependencies between teams visible, increasing their *cross-functionality*, simplifying their architecture,

and investing in far-reaching automation. The more powerful the implementation apparatus, the stronger the impact of portfolio management. Such investments in execution capacity are part of the portfolio. Align the number of teams and their competencies with the strategy, and periodically review how many and what kind of teams are needed for the portfolio in the future. The control variable is *execution mindset*.

10. **Continuously improve portfolio management.** Finally, even portfolio management itself is not constant. Periodic improvement and learning by doing are also part of it. Retrospectives are an excellent tool for this. The control variable is *improving portfolio management*.

"To achieve goals you've never achieved before, you need to start doing things you've never done before."

- Stephen Covey

WHERE DO MOP AND SAFE STAND IN TERMS OF AGILITY?

In Figure 8, MoP and SAFe are plotted on the continuum from plan-based to discovery-based portfolio management, which is the basis of this book.

This figure supports the view in practice that MoP is more suited to plan-based portfolio management and that SAFe fits discovery-based portfolio management better, although it still has quite a lot of plan-based elements. A framework that fits the far right of the figure and fully describes discovery-based portfolio management has not been found (at the time of writing this book).

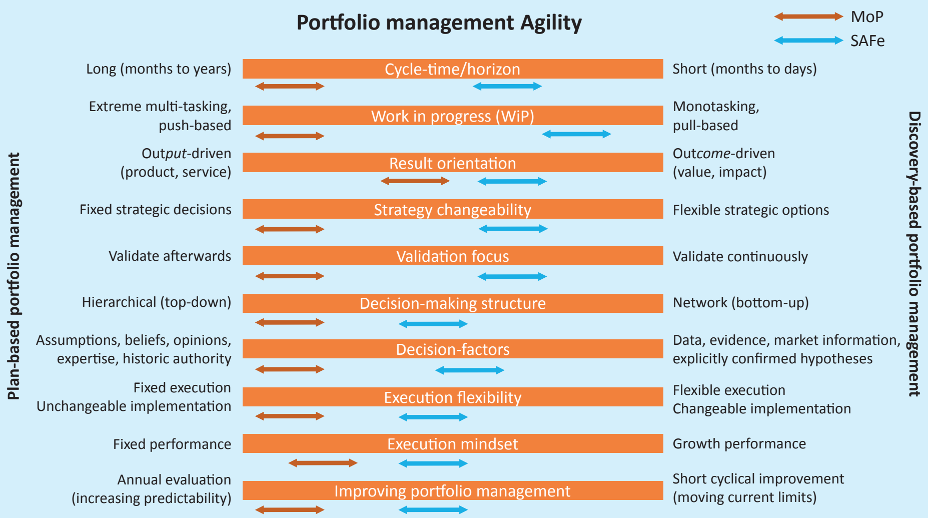


Figure 8: MoP and SAFe plotted on the ten dimensions

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Henny, owner of Portman PM[O] Consultancy, has over 40 years of experience in the project management domain. He was the project management office (PMO) thought leader within the NN Group and responsible for the introduction and application of portfolio, program, and project management methodologies in Central and Eastern Europe and Asia. He trains, coaches, and manages (senior) program, project, and portfolio managers and project sponsors at all levels, and has founded several professional PMO communities.

He is/was an accredited P3O®, PRINCE2®, MSP®, MoP®, PRINCE2 Agile®, AgilePM®, AgilePgM®, and AgileSHIFT® trainer, as well as an SPC4 SAFe® consultant trainer. He is a P3M3® trainer and assessor, and a PMO Value Ring certified consultant. On behalf of the International Project Management Association (IPMA), he assesses large and mega projects for the Project Excellence Award. In addition, Henny is an international speaker, author of many articles and books including *Scaling agile in organizations*, *Agile with a smile* (together with Bert Hedeman and Dion Kotteman), *A practical PMO and Management of portfolios, programs and projects*, and regular blogger (hennyportman.wordpress.com).
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Rini van Solingen

Rini van Solingen (Prof.dr.) is a speaker and author. His expertise is speed and agility of people and organizations. He is a part-time professor at Delft University of Technology and lectures regularly at Nyenrode Business University in master classes and MBAs. Rini is also the CTO of Prowareness and non-executive board member of Momo Medical Inc.

Rini is (co-)author of a number of (management) books on agility, including: *AGILE*, *How to lead self-managing teams*, *The Power of Scrum*, *Formula X*, *Scrum for Managers*, *Toolkit for Agile Coaches and Scrum Masters*, and *Agile Transformation*.

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He would love to hear from you and will always get back to you. Rini would also be more than happy to come and give an inspiring (virtual) lecture at a company event, knowledge session, or conference. This is both his biggest passion and his greatest strength.