



Beyond resilience.

**Designing businesses that
thrive in disruption**

Executive summary

Organisations are increasingly operating in a world defined by unpredictability; an environment of disruption is now the norm. Pandemics, geopolitical shocks, inflation, supply chain volatility - these are no longer anomalies but defining features of the global economy. In this context, strategies built for stability collapse under the weight of constant change. Resilience can no longer be a reaction, it must be designed into the very fabric of the organisation.

“Adaptive business design” provides a solution. It shifts the focus from protecting against disruption to harnessing it. It embeds adaptability at the core of the organisation. Adaptive business design enables organisations to turn turbulence into momentum - to become faster, stronger, and more aligned precisely because today’s environment demands it.

Leading organisations are already proving the point. They are using adaptive business design to rewire decision-making, to scale with speed, and to align their people, processes and technologies to immediate new realities. The results are profound: greater adaptability, sharper execution, and a stronger competitive edge.

Rewiring a leading health business for growth

Emerging from the pandemic, one of Australia’s largest healthcare providers partnered with Argon & Co to rewire its organisation for adaptability and growth. A legacy operating model was replaced with a future-ready design that aligned strategy, structure, and decision-making. The result: a cohesive national organisation with new ways of working, improved efficiency and service quality, and a culture built for adaptability in a changing market.



How a €3 billion food giant delivered a historic transformation

A multi-national food manufacturer recognised that its ambitious growth plans were being constrained by inconsistent ways of working and a fragmented IT landscape. With the support of Argon & Co, the company connected all its functions and 18 international geographies through shared ways of working. This included the design of adaptive business capabilities and processes, data and information, governance and organisation design. Leveraging this design Argon & Co supported IT vendor selection and the successful implementation of new enabling IT systems and ways of working, setting the organisation on a new path of sustainable growth.



This whitepaper sets out the case for change. It explains why legacy approaches are no longer suitable in today’s context, and how a business design-led model can create organisations that don’t just survive disruption, but thrive because of it.



Designing businesses that thrive in disruption

For organisations navigating today's era of disruption, resilience and adaptability are no longer optional - they are strategic necessities. From supply chain breakdowns and geopolitical conflict to inflationary pressure and systemic shocks, organisations face a web of interconnected challenges that expose the limits of traditional risk planning. With uncertainty showing no signs of easing, the ability to predict the next crisis is fading fast.

Responding to known threats is difficult enough, but in a world where leaders can't know which risks to prioritise, the shortcomings of conventional models are stark. Adaptive business design offers a new path. It designs the organisation's operating model to be both resilient and agile. It enables organisations to evolve through disruption - becoming stronger, faster, and more aligned under pressure.

Adaptive business design embeds adaptability, clarity and cohesion into the DNA of the organisation - throughout its systems, processes and behaviours. It shifts the orientation from withstanding shocks to learning from them and getting better because of them - ensuring that each disruption leaves the organisation better equipped for the next.

This whitepaper explores the principles of adaptive business design: why traditional risk management is no longer sufficient, how adaptive models work in practice, and what it takes to build organisations that thrive in disruption.

Why traditional risk planning is no longer enough

For decades, risk planning has been a cornerstone of organisational resilience. By identifying potential risks, assessing their likelihood and impact, and developing mitigation strategies, businesses have been able to contain emerging threats and maintain stability. This approach worked well in environments defined by predictable, known risks.

But today's challenges are anything but linear. Traditional models, built on historical patterns, are ill-equipped to address the scale and complexity of modern disruption. Rapid technology shifts, sudden regulatory pivots, or geopolitical shocks all reveal how prediction-driven frameworks fall short.

In an environment defined by uncertainty, resilience doesn't come from predicting future scenarios - it comes from building adaptability into the organisation itself. That means shifting from allocating resources to hypothetical threats,

to preparing teams to adapt and respond to unexpected pressures.

In practice, adaptive business design treats resilience and adaptability as core design outcomes – as important as those shaped by strategic imperatives. The result is an operating model that creates the conditions for leaders and employees to learn faster, act sooner, and respond to complexity with confidence. This is a form of “barbell thinking”: protecting the organisation on one side, while simultaneously challenging assumptions and attempting to break the old model before the market does on the other side. The balance creates an organisational system that can absorb shocks, pivot rapidly, and capture new opportunities as they emerge.

Leading “frontier firms” are already designing their businesses this way - embedding adaptability into their design, and reaping the benefits of creating anti-fragile organisations that turn disruption into long-term advantage.





Boosting resilience through adaptive business design

Adaptive business design is as much a cultural transformation as it is an organisational one. To capture the full benefits of adaptability, businesses need a root-and-branch redesign - embedding adaptive business design into every level of the enterprise.

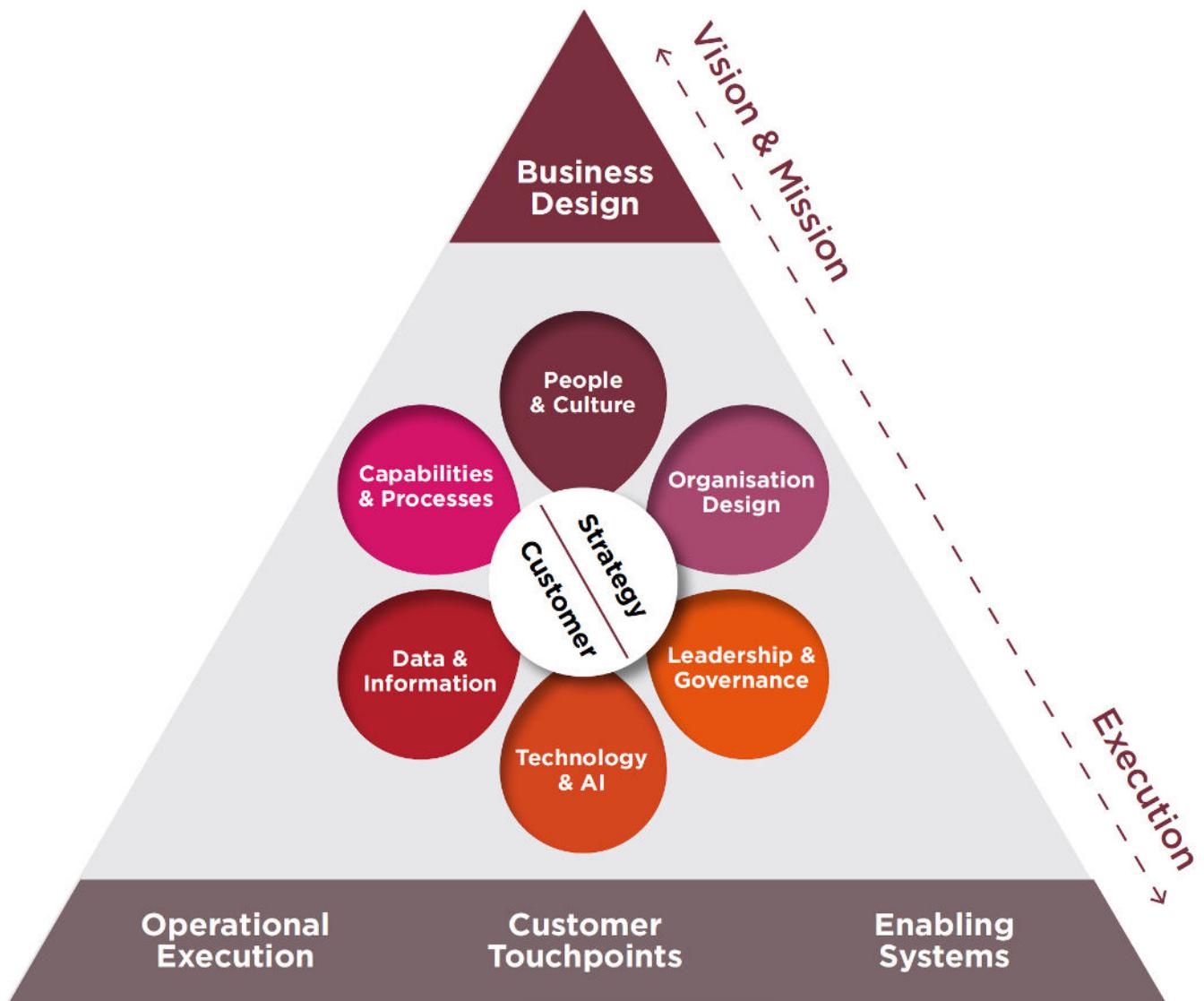
Adaptive business design aligns vision with day-to-day execution. It provides a platform for strategy-led value creation - translating ambition into integrated capabilities, structures, ways of working, and enabling systems. Unlike traditional operating models, which are often static and siloed, adaptive business design is future-oriented, cross-functional, and transformational.

At its core, adaptive business design bridges the gap between strategy and implementation. It requires rethinking strategically critical capabilities and re-engineering them to create adaptability at scale. This requires viewing the organisation as an integrated system - and carefully selecting design responses across processes, team and role design, leadership and governance, technology and AI, data and information, and people and culture elements. These responses are both top down and bottom up in nature. The right design response is

unique to each organisation, but adaptive designs often feature:

- Sense-and-respond processes that detect weak signals early and enable rapid action (incorporating data science and predictive analytics, horizon scanning, competitive intelligence)
- Capabilities that allow leaders and employees to make decisions with confidence even when dealing with incomplete or imperfect information
- Cross-functional ways of working and resource deployment models that connect people across silos to tackle complex problems collaboratively
- Plug-and-play supplier ecosystems where partners can be swapped in and out without major disruption
- A positive risk culture that encourages balanced risk-taking within clear boundaries
- Leadership transparency where risks and trade-offs are openly discussed, intelligent risk-taking is celebrated, and learning is prioritised
- Distributed accountability that creates a bias for action and reduces dependency on top-down decision-making

What is business design?



Business Design is:

- Future oriented
- Connects across boundaries
- Holistic
- People centred
- Technology agnostic
- Transformational

The six pillars of adaptive business design

1. Clarify vision and strategic intent

Leaders must define and clarify the organisation's future direction and priorities - why now is the time for change, and how adaptability will create advantage. This creates alignment around a shared ambition and establishes the principles that guide design. It also ensures that resilience is built into the strategy itself - not bolted on later. Adaptive business design is not an abstract exercise; it is anchored in commercial goals, external pressures, and internal priorities. This early work also begins to reveal design choices that best fit with strategic objectives, such as a focus on growth, customer experience, and cost efficiency.

2. Align critical capabilities

With strategy defined, a capability model provides a clear view of what the organisation has today and what it must build. Leaders identify the capabilities that are strategically critical, assess maturity, and highlight gaps between the current and future state. This capability-led lens creates a common language across functions and aligns leadership on the levers that drive resilience and value.

3. Design the future model

With priority capabilities agreed, the organisation must define how these capabilities will come together to deliver the required outcomes, how processes will run, how teams and roles will be structured. This includes the flow of data across the business and enabling technologies and the governance needed to support it. This goes beyond considering steady state conditions but also considers how the organisation will operate under stress. This includes rethinking how decisions will be made, and how leaders will lead, while ensuring data, technology and governance enable adaptability at scale. The future model is designed not just for efficiency, but for agility in the face of disruption.

4. Integrate from top to bottom

Resilience is compromised when silos fragment the organisation. Adaptive business design connects every part of the enterprise into a cohesive system, aligning KPIs, role definitions, and governance. This

integration strengthens adaptability by ensuring that when one part of the business shifts, the rest can flex in unison.

5. Drive tailored change management

Embedding adaptability requires cultural as well as structural change, supported by tailored change management. There needs to be shared ownership of the new design, helping employees embed adaptability within their daily work - understanding not just the "what," but the "why." By making adaptability visible and meaningful to every role, the organisation ensures that adaptability is lived, not just designed.

6. Execute with a flexible roadmap

True resilience comes from action - but rigid plans fail in volatile environments. An adaptive roadmap sequences initiatives, allocates resources, and sets clear checkpoints, while remaining flexible enough to pivot as conditions change. It defines the work of the executive team to effectively lead the new model, and the sequence of changes to build momentum and buy-in. This balance sustains momentum and allows the organisation to learn and adjust as it transforms.

Together, these six pillars embed resilience and adaptability into the organisation's DNA - aligning vision, capabilities, design choices, culture, and execution into a system that grows stronger through disruption.



Case study: Rewiring a leading health business for growth

Emerging from the pandemic, one of Australia's largest healthcare providers recognised the need for a strategic reset. Growth from priority customer segments had stalled, competitive pressures were intensifying, and the organisation needed to unlock the benefits of its new technology investments. To protect market share and position itself for new opportunities, greater adaptability was essential.

Realising its legacy operating model was a barrier, the business engaged Argon & Co to co-design a future-ready model. Together, we undertook a comprehensive review of the operating model, aligning it to a new strategic direction and creating a phased roadmap for implementation. Executive workshops defined and tested future scenarios, while bottom-up insight sessions with employees ensured the design was grounded in frontline realities.

The result was a transformation into a cohesive national organisation, underpinned by new ways of working and decision-making capabilities that instilled operational excellence and adaptability. The new model improved service quality, efficiency, and employee engagement — critical foundations for sustaining competitiveness and driving future growth.



Case study: How a €3 billion food giant delivered a once-in-a-decade transformation

With ambitious growth plans, a leading multi-national food company found it was constrained by inconsistent ways of working and a highly fragmented IT landscape. With the support of Argon & Co, it embarked on a 'once in a decade' transformation. Transformation began with the company's executive team agreeing new priorities and guiding principles, leading to an agreed vision for future business capabilities.

Next, Argon & Co worked with business leadership and subject matter experts from across 18 international locations to design ways of working that connected all functions including commercial and brand management, supply chain, finance, procurement, manufacturing, and quality. This included the design of future, adaptive business capabilities and processes, data and information, organisation design and governance.

Leveraging this design Argon & Co supported IT vendor selection and the successful implementation of new enabling IT systems and ways of working. At the same time, it optimised the organisation's costing, pricing and margin management, standardised data, KPIs and governance structures, and embedded shared ways of working across the business, setting the organisation on a new path of sustainable growth.

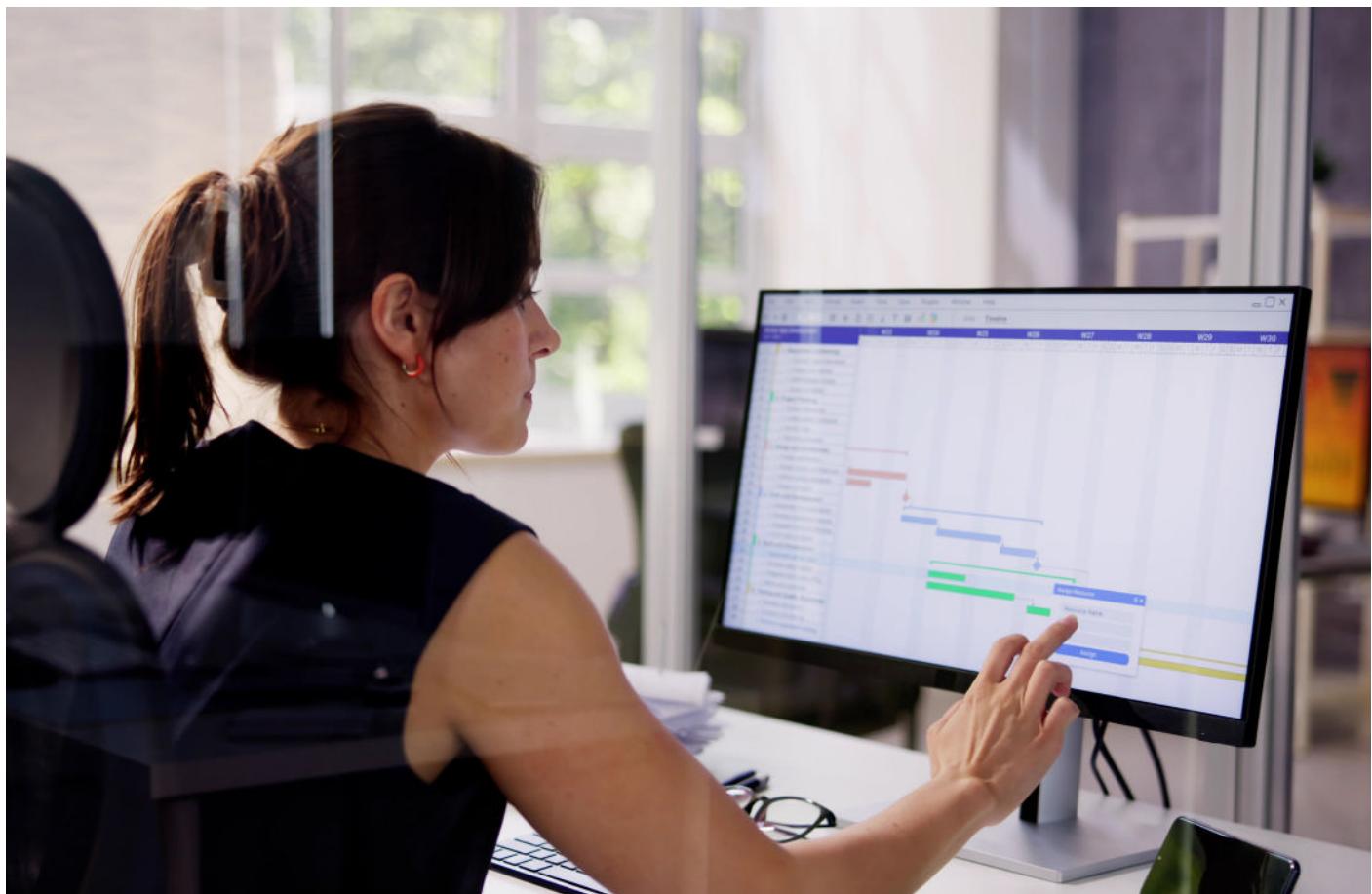
Driving growth through adaptive business design

In today's turbulent environment, resilience is no longer about surviving disruption — it is about turning uncertainty into advantage. Traditional risk frameworks built on prediction are proving inadequate against today's scale and speed of change.

Adaptive business design provides a pathway for organisations to continually realign strategy, capabilities, and culture - building operating

models that not only withstand shocks, but grow stronger because of them.

At Argon & Co, we help organisations design for resilience and adaptability, positioning them to seize opportunities in volatile markets. To explore how business design could strengthen your organisation's adaptability, contact us to start the conversation.



Acknowledgements



This whitepaper has been developed collaboratively by our Operations strategy and transformation team.

Our team brings together deep technical expertise, operational experience, and strategic insight to uncover the root causes of complex challenges and deliver results that matter. We focus on practical, optimisation opportunities while embedding real change and building lasting impact.

Our approach is positive, flexible and personal - combining rigorous analysis with constructive challenge where needed. By engaging stakeholders at every level, we ensure solutions are not only designed well, but also implemented successfully.

About Argon & Co

Argon & Co is a global management consultancy that specialises in operations strategy and transformation. With expertise spanning supply chain planning, manufacturing, logistics, procurement, finance, and shared services, we work together with clients to transform their businesses and generate real change. Our people are engaging to work with and trusted by clients to get the job done. We have 17 offices across Europe, Australasia, America, Asia and the Middle East.

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