



Introduction to Agile Software Development

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What is agile?

Observations

- No **single recipe** that results in perfect software every time. Agile teams have **ideas and ground rules that help to guide the team** to make the right choices and avoid problems, or deal with them when they emerge.
- A **good developer** almost always has opinions about the **whole direction of the project**
- **Changes are unavoidable**
- Software is an highly **added value artefact**, quality is strongly dependent from **people**

Bibliography

Textbook



Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene

Learning Agile Understanding Scrum, XP, Lean, and Kanban
O'Reilly 2015.

What is agile?

Set of methods and methodologies

- more effective work
- more efficient work
- make better decisions

Promises

- On time
- high quality
- highly maintainable
- user happy
- working normal hours

What is agile?

Different mindset, based on ideas, values, and principles

- focus on teams over individuals
 - sharing knowledge
 - taking responsibilities
 - taking decisions
 - feeling commitment

Note

Manager and Developers generally have different perspectives on the same project. This affect the introduction of novel approaches to development. e.g. introduction of a daily standup meeting

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Agile values

A group of highly skilled and innovative people started agile as a revolution against the “waterfall mindset”.

Agile values

- Individuals and interactions **over** processes and tools
- Working software **over** comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration **over** contract negotiation
- Responding to change **over** following a plan

Can waterfall work?

- Good communication
- Good practices
- It's more important the creation of the plan than sticking to it

The big issue ... Requirements up-front!

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The big issue . . . **Requirements up-front!**

Better-than-not-doing-it

For a “waterfall” team one of the most complex issue in PM is the **transition toward** an Agile mindset

Going agile is not equal to **becoming an agile team**

- Not just tools, techniques, and practices (can just lead to a **better-than-not-doing-it** effect)

Agile tools, practices, techniques

- test driven development, automated build script, build server, scrum, iterations, task board, velocity, burndown charts, user stories, product owner, release plan

In a fractured perspective everyone has a different view of the agile practice

Often team's members just improve their **individual capabilities** in activities for which they were already good at

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Individuals and interactions **over** processes and tools

A great tool can sometimes help you do the wrong thing faster

It is important to understand people in the team:

- how they work together
- how each person's work impact everyone else

Working software **over** comprehensive documentation

Value

Often complex software documents **have no readers**. Agile methodologies aim at providing **working software** that **adds value to the organization**

Obviously this does not mean that no documentation should be provided. Instead **documentation should save more ant time and effort than it costs**:

- comments
- javadocs
- test-driven development

Customer collaboration **over** contract negotiation

The objective is to provide **valuable software to the customer**, so software that he/she really needs.

Issues

Up-front requirements reduce customer involvement and the possibility **to revise the plan after the contract is signed**

Agile methodologies foster **inclusion of the customer in the development team** and strict cooperation.

Give customers what they really need, and not just what they ask for

If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses
Henry Ford

Responding to change **over** following a plan

A plan provides a **comfortable path toward the development of a possible wrong software**. Agile methodologies ask for taking into consideration any change that could emerge.

Task board

The use of a task board is a practice helping the team to take the **right decision when a change emerge**. Three sections each one containing user stories (in general) in on of the possible three different states (**To do, In progress, Done**).

- electronic format vs. paper based

Interesting questions

- When the agile manifesto talks about not having comprehensive documentation, does that mean we don't have to write anything down?
- I've definitively heard that agile means doing any planning, and instead jumping straight into programming. Isn't that more efficient?
- Can I have the developers on the team go agile, but leave the rest of the team alone?
- If I'm not using Scrum, XP, Lean, Kanban, does that mean my team isn't agile?

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Agile principles

Principle motivations

The Agile manifest signers identified **ground rules and ideas** that **help the team to make the right choices and avoid problems**. 12 principles were then defined.

Principles can be organized according to four sections:

- **delivery**
- **communication**
- **execution**
- **improvement**

Principles list – Delivering the project

- 1 Our highest priority is to **satisfy the customer** through **early and continuous delivery** of **valuable software**.
- 2 **Welcome changing requirements**, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the **customer's competitive advantage**
 - Nobody get's in trouble when there's a change
 - We are all in this together, including the customer
 - We don't sit on change until it's too late
 - Changes are not solutions to previous mistakes
 - Learn from the changes
- 3 **Deliver working software frequently**, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
 - Practice of timeboxed iterations

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Principles list – Communicating and working together

Objective is somehow to suggest the definition of as much documentation as you need to run the project. AND this depends from **communications habits**. Waterfall **real practices on changes often do not reflect theory**

- 4 The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is **face-to-face conversation**.
- 5 Businesspeople and developers must **work together daily** throughout the project.
- 6 Build projects around **motivated individuals**. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
 - rewards on bug metrics for individuals is not a good idea
 - CYA attitude

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Principles list – Project execution

- 7 **Working software** is the primary measure of progress.
- 8 Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to **maintain a constant pace indefinitely**.
- 9 Continuous attention to **technical excellence and good design** enhances agility.

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Principles list – Costantly improving the project and the team

- 10 Simplicity – the art of **maximizing the amount of work not done** – is **essential**.
- 11 The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from **self-organizing teams**.
 - the work generally starts from user stories
 - incremental design, instead of big design architecture covering all requirements
- 12 At regular intervals, the team **reflects on how to become more effective**, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

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FAQs

- I'm a project manager, and I'm still not clear on how I fit into an agile team: What's my role in all of this?
- If the whole team plans together, then does that mean nobody is in charge? How are decision made?

Bibliography

-  **Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene**
Learning Agile Understanding Scrum, XP, Lean, and Kanban
O'Reilly 2015.
 - Chapters 1, 2 and 3