Is Agile Project Management an Oxymoron
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Michael Nir

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- M.Sc. Engineering, PMP®, SAFe™ accredited consultant
- Author of 11 bestseller business books
- Global clients - telecoms, hi-tech, software development, R&D environments and petrochemical & infrastructure
- Integrating the hard and soft parts of Business, Development and more
Chuck Cobb

- Thought leader in Agile Project Management
  - Author of five books and numerous professional articles on Agile Project Management and Business Excellence
  - Adjunct Professor at Boston University where he will be teaching the university’s first graduate-level course on Agile Project Management
  - Developed online training program for Agile Project Management with over 2,400 students – find them on Udemy!
  - Guest speaker at numerous PMI, Agile, and executive-level events

- Pragmatic real-world orientation
  - Expert-level Project Manager with over 25 years of program/project management experience
  - Extensive hands-on experience with a broad range of industries and application areas
  - Over 15 years working with many companies on developing and improving project management and software development processes

IS “AGILE PROJECT MANAGEMENT” AN OXYMORON?
Starting with the end in mind

Understand the benefits of integrating Project management “know how” with Agile development and how they complement each other

We are sometimes confused...

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Objectives

✓ Understand stereotypes and misconceptions that exist about traditional project management and Agile in order to develop an objective view of what Agile Project Management is
✓ Learn to see Agile and traditional project management principles and practices as complementary rather than competitive and learn how to blend Agile and traditional project management principles and practices together in the right proportions to fit a given project situation
✓ Learn the general differences in an Agile Project Management role and the shifts in thinking that project managers might need to make to operate successfully in an Agile environment
✓ Discuss specific roles for Agile Project Managers in an Agile environment and the skills that will be needed to play those roles

What’s Ahead?

1. Agile and Waterfall
2. What’s Project Management?
3. How did we get where we are today?
4. What’s Really Different About Agile Project Management?
5. Agile Project Management Roles
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Are we using words the same way I do???
What Do People Really Mean By “Waterfall”?

- Take a few minutes to discuss with the person next to you.

- What do you think people mean when they use the word “Waterfall”? Is it clearly defined?

- What are 3 main characteristics of a “Waterfall” approach?

Debrief – “Waterfall” – plan driven...

- Catch all phrase
- Broad range of plan driven approaches
- No single discrete approach
What Do People Really Mean By “Agile”?  

➢ Take a few minutes to discuss with the person next to you.

➢ What do you think people mean when they use the word “Agile”? Is it clearly defined?

➢ What are 3 main characteristics of an “Agile” approach?

Debrief – “Agile” – adaptive iterative...

✓ Catch all phrase

✓ Broad range of adaptive approaches

✓ No single discrete approach, though Scrum seems to be the current winner
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✓ Catch all phrase
✓ Broad range of adaptive approaches
✓ No single discrete approach, though Scrum seems to be the current winner

Perceptions and thinking process get in our way

➢ We like to think in dichotomy: “binary” or “good-and-bad”; right-wrong;
➢ These patterns limit our choice
➢ Easier to accept a simple myth than it is to accept a complex reality
Moving Forward

| Enterprise Business Management | ? |
| Project Portfolio Management | ? |
| Program level | ? |
| Project level | ? |
| Team level | ? |

Plan-driven | Hybrid | Agile

Continuum – How do we deliver in our org.

Hybrid Agile Processes

Agility

Plan-Driven Approaches

Iterative Approaches

Adaptive Approaches

Increasing Agility and Adaptivity

More emphasis on higher-level planning

Planning limited to team-level planning
Which approach fits here?

A project with a relatively high level of uncertainty calls for a more adaptive or agile approach
Selecting approach parameters

Where Will Your Company Wind Up?

Business Environment and Culture

Waterfall

Agile

Control

Agility

Process (Level of Control)

Environment & Evolution

Customer Collaboration

Planning Approach

Key Questions:
• What’s the right balance of control and agility for your company’s business?
• How much cultural change is your company willing or able to undertake to create a more agile approach?

Moving Forward

➢ How do we create something that works, rather than how do we become Agile

➢ Words are a funny thing; they create reality – the T-shirt downstairs for example
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Project Evolution

- Early History – Egyptian Pyramids c 3,000 – 1,500 BC
- The Great Wall of China c 700 – 200 BC
- Transcontinental Railway 1863-1869
- Frederick Taylor – Studies of Work
- Henry Gantt – Order of Operations in Work c 1900
Project Evolution

Manhattan Project 1945

Large Government Programs (e.g., Polaris) 1950 - 1960

CPM, PERT Invented 1950 - 1960

However, this is not the current environment

Environment changes perception and policy

How users see the programmers

How programmers see the users

www.managedagile.com
www.sapf.cs.com
Moving Forward

- Recursive relationship: environment, our perceptions of what is required and the policy we have in place

- Agile Project Management – maybe we can use a brush sometimes... risk management...

What’s Ahead?

THE HOW

1. Agile and Waterfall
2. How did we get where we are today?
3. What’s Agility and what is Project Management?
4. What’s Really Different About Agile Project Management?
5. Agile Project Management Roles
"AGILITY"

Agile....

- We mostly set year 2001 as the beginning of Agile
- Ignore previous relevant work OUTSIDE software that preluded
What is this thing called Agility?

- Concern about the decline of US manufacturing industry and loss of competitiveness
- 1990 - US Congress instructed the Department of Defense to create a task force to make manufacturing more competitive – result is Agility

Agility ..... 

GOLDMAN, NAGEL AND PREISS, 1995

"Agility is dynamic, context specific, aggressively change embracing, and growth oriented. It is not about improving efficiency, cutting costs, or battening down the business hatches to ride out fearsome competitive storms. It is about succeeding and about winning profits, market share and customers in the very centre of competitive storms that many companies now fear"
Agility - the basis of competition, business practices, and corporate structures

- At this point in time, Agile Manufacturing is not fully understood in the industrial and academic worlds, and the conceptual aspects are still being defined.
- Because it is so topical everything gets labeled or relabeled as Agile, and confusion results ~ September 2000

http://www.cheshirehenbury.com/agility/agilitypaper1095.html

“PROJECT MANAGEMENT”
Agile/ Project Management

- Profession?
- Skill set?
- PMBOK? PRINCE2?
- A specific behavior?

**Difficult to articulate**

What Do People Mean By “Project Management”?

- Take a few minutes to discuss with the person next to you (another one)
- What do you think people mean when they say “Project Management”
- How would you define: “Project Management”
These discussions promote the necessary collaboration

Project Management – PMBOK®

- Project management, then, is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements.

Project management knowledge draws on ten areas:

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<th>Scope</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>Cost</td>
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Agile Project Management

- Toolset?
- Roles?
- Values?

When it comes to agile project management roles, it's worth noting that most agile processes - Scrum in particular - do not include a project manager. Without a specific person assigned, agile "project manager" roles and responsibilities are distributed among others on the project, namely the team, the Scrum Master and the product owner.

- Mike Cohn – Mountain Goat Software
Agile Project Management

Agile Project Management For Dummies
From Agile Project Management For Dummies by Mark C. Layton

Agile project management focuses on continuous improvement, scope flexibility, team input, and delivering essential quality products. Agile project management methodologies include scrum, extreme programming (XP), and lean, among others. These methodologies all adhere to the Agile Manifesto and the 12 Agile Principles, which focus on people, communications, the product, and flexibility.

Agile Project Management

➢ There’s more to project management...

➢ What do we want to add?

  ▪ Risk
  ▪ Program – delivery manager
  ▪ Procurement
  ▪ Stakeholder
  ▪ Complexity – interdependencies
  ▪ Chartering
Single AGILE framework for delivery

- Enable operating beyond the team level
- Hybrid flavors of “plan-driven” and adaptive
- The essence of initiating, planning, controlling, executing and closing
- Used to complement the team level Agile
- Mapped to the existing Agile approaches

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The HOW is different

- What core Agile values need to be carried to ‘Project Management’?

- Example....

Perceptions...again

- Take a few minutes to discuss with the person next to you.
- What is your image of a ‘traditional project manager’?
- What would an ‘Agile’ project manager be like?
- What kind of project would require an ‘Agile Project Manager’ and what would the role be?
Perceptions...Prejudice...

- Dichotomizing process – tendency to operate in stereotypes:
  - “All project managers are command-and-control oriented”
  - Project Managers are rigid and inflexible
  - Project Managers only know how to manage by the “Waterfall” methodology
  - Project Managers cannot adapt to an agile environment
Impacts of the environment

- Project managers behave according to the environment they operate in – change the environment
  Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time – J Sutherland

- What is the essence of the PM role?

Moving Forward

- Foster agreement
- Change leadership
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We need more

- Can we identify PM roles that are missing?
  - Team roles
  - Enterprise-level Project/Program Role
  - PM in a hybrid Agile project – example?
Enterprise-level Project/Program Role

- Providing Project/Program Management of Large, Complex Initiatives Requiring Additional Planning and Management Above the Team Level
- Planning and Leading Enterprise-level Agile Transformations Designed to Align with the Company’s Business Objectives

Example – Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare
(Provided by Michael Hurst)

Overview:
- Very Large, Complex Effort with Approximately 100 Teams
- A Large Part of the Development Effort Was Outsourced
- Hybrid Agile/Plan-driven Approach

Key Success Factors:
- Immediacy and Persistency
- Leadership Support
- Well-trained People
- Cultural Change
- Integrated, Hybrid Methodology
- Tools
- Collaborative Approach with Other Companies
- Early Planning
- Execution and Bringing it Home

Results:
- Very Successful Hybrid Approach and Portfolio Management
- Agile Contracting Approach
- Ranked #1 for Nine Years in Member Satisfaction and Quality of Care Despite Massive Changes
Hybrid Agile Project Role

- Blending Traditional Agile and PM Principles and Practices in the Right Proportions to Develop a Hybrid Management Approach When Required
- Taking a more iterative and adaptive approach to traditional project management projects

Situations Where a Hybrid Approach Might be Needed:

1. Contracts, Especially Fixed-Price Government Contracts
2. Regulatory Requirements
3. Other Special Requirements Including Adapting to Corporate Business Strategy

Example – General Dynamics, UK
(Provided by Nigel Edwards)

Overview:
- Large, Fixed-Price Government Contract
- Used Hybrid Management Process Based on DSDM
- Prioritized Requirements to Manage Scope

Key Success Factors:
- Relationships, Professionalism, and Transparency
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Teamwork
- Conflict Management
- Risk Management

Results:
- Collaborative Approach to Contract Management Was a Big Win
- More Efficient Project Management Approach
- Very Successful Project and Highly Satisfied Customer
Using Agile Concepts in Non-Agile Projects

- Collaborating with the Business Users
- Emphasis on Maximizing Business Value
- Reducing Unnecessary Documentation and Overhead
- Improving Project/Process Efficiency

Inspiration from Lean / DFT

- Plan Driven – Horizon Planning - Seasonal
- TAKT (sprints) – two weeks
- Kaizen – Production Teams – Kanban – iterative adaptive
Complete the matrix...

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Summary

- Stereotypes and misconceptions
- Agile and traditional project management principles and practices as complementary
- Shifts in thinking
- Specific roles for Agile Project Managers
Take a minute to reflect...

- What have been the most important concepts and insights during our session?
- How do you plan to use them?
- Write it down and discuss with your partner

We kinda hope that there’s this silver bullet that will help us avoid the pains (conflicts) and we’ll reach organization Nirvana. Actually the tension of Management (leadership) - R&D / development is that enables great results
Moving forward - Takeaways

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