

Agile Project Management Is Not Just a Change in Methods, It is a Shift in Metrics and Mindset.

As the Agile Project Management approach becomes more mainstream, organisations considering its implementation are deluged with questions. Is agile project management right for us? Does our current structure support this change? How will we measure progress? Though replacing traditional project management methods may seem like a leap, taking an agile approach can actually increase productivity, improve accountability and speed delivery across all team members. But simply designating an Agile Project Manager (PM) is not enough. The entire organisation must support, engage and embrace new methods and metrics in order to reap the benefits.

If You Want to Go Agile, Your Organisation Has to Be Agile

One of the key strengths of traditional project management practices is that they provide a robust, time-tested toolkit of metrics and reporting techniques that grant immediate visibility into the timed progress of a project. Because each assignment is divided into a series of granular, linear tasks it is easy to track development. With the agile project management approach however, the emphasis is more focused on achievement of the mission than a master checklist of tasks. Agile PMs are dedicated to upholding the project vision, while empowering team members to fulfil responsibilities through collaboration and self-direction.

Often many staffers are working simultaneously on different aspects of a project to meet a common end goal, which means their accomplishments may not translate easily into traditional charts and checkboxes. However, there are plenty of effective agile tools and metrics to measure and report progress—if your agile PMs are strong enough to mentor teams and clients through the process and your organisation can be flexible and open to new methodologies.

The Right Tools for the Agile Job.

To learn more about the advantages of tools utilised to successfully track agile projects, download ESI's white paper, "Metrics for Agile Projects: Finding the Right Tools for the Job."

www.esi-intl.co.uk/agilemetrics



Re-thinking Project Metrics

The agile PM is responsible for understanding the progress the team is making and for reporting the pace and movement to key stakeholders. The tools utilised are designed to give a range of project tracking depths—from top-level, at-a-glance representations like iteration status and burn-down charts, to more detailed, issue-specific examinations during daily stand-up meetings. In either case, all efforts are extremely concentrated and efficient in order to maintain momentum and remove any barriers or obstacles.

Staunchly traditional organisations may be fearful that agile project management is more chaotic and less detail-oriented. But agile methods can actually free the PM from over-planning and minutia to shift more attention to fulfilling the project vision itself. Agile PMs are not so much task masters and controllers of each and every developmental step in the process as they are the keepers of momentum, motivation and empowerment. With support of senior management, organisations and clients that adapt to and support agile metrics can receive the same high quality of reporting with perhaps even more satisfying emphasis on the main objectives.

THE AGILE DIFFERENCE	
Traditional Method	Agile Method
<p>Gantt Chart Detailed bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of each activity and the dependencies among steps.</p>	<p>Burn-Down Chart At-a-glance graphic that plots the number of story points or tasks of a project against the number of iterations. If the project is on track, the trajectory will slope down to show progress. An upward slope, indicating an increase in story points, identifies the presence of issues and obstacles.</p>
<p>Status Meetings A scheduled sit-down meeting where the PM reviews details on each task in a project, its status, current deliverables and future due dates. The PM is the task master for all aspects of the project.</p>	<p>Daily Stand-Up Meetings A short, stand-up gathering with team members where the PM gets quick answers to “What has been done since the last meeting? What needs to be done before the next one? And what obstacles did you encounter to distract you from your goal?” The PM gets the necessary facts to stay informed, but each team member retains responsibility for task details.</p>
<p>Client in Waiting The client dictates the objective and then waits for project completion. He is kept informed of budget or timing issues after they arise.</p>	<p>Client Engagement The client is an active part of the development process. Because the project is somewhat fluid, the client participates in daily stand-up meetings and decision making, and is privy to progress and issue reports along the way. The agile PM ensures a close relationship with the client and must mentor the client through the process.</p>



To find out how ESI International can help your company successfully implement agile project management, please contact ESI at enquiries@esi-intl.com or +44 (0)20 7017 7100.