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Waterfall vs. Agile

When executing a project, there is a multitude of methodologies on how to execute a project in a timely and orderly fashion. Two commonly used methods are the waterfall and agile approach. Each of these methods has their advantages as well as their drawbacks.

The waterfall approach is comprised of seven stages that are linear to each other. When utilizing this approach, a bulk of the project is laid out in the early stages, and the team is aware of what the project is supposed to look like and what it should entail. This can allow the creation of the project to move forward at a quicker pace because most of the design has been established and the goals are straightforward. It is also easier than other methods to track progress and keep within the time constraints. Some downsides to the waterfall method are that stages must be completed before moving into the next stage of development. Since the project is laid out in the beginning, the customer may be intimidated that minor features have to be set early in the project without seeing how the project comes together. It also becomes harder if the client wants to add more features down the line. Another downside to the waterfall approach is that if the client does not like the way their project came out; it would require a significant amount of time and resources to go back and alter it.

The agile approach is comprised of several sprints that were allotted time spans in which they should be completed. Each sprint consists of a list of deliverables that should be completed within the time span. This approach is a more hands-on approach for the customer and allows them to review each portion of the project as it is completed. This allows the customer and project manager to make changes to the project if necessary. This eliminates the possibility of the customer having issues with the final result and calling for a costly overhaul. Some downside to the agile approach is that the project is affected by the degree of customer involvement. If a customer is tentative about what they want or they simply do not dedicate the proper amount of time to the project, it could complicate the project and slow down production. If a sprint takes longer than the allotted time, it ultimately pushes back production of other sprints that will drive up production costs. Also, the agile method works to its full potential when team members focus solely on the project at hand and not devoting time to any other projects.