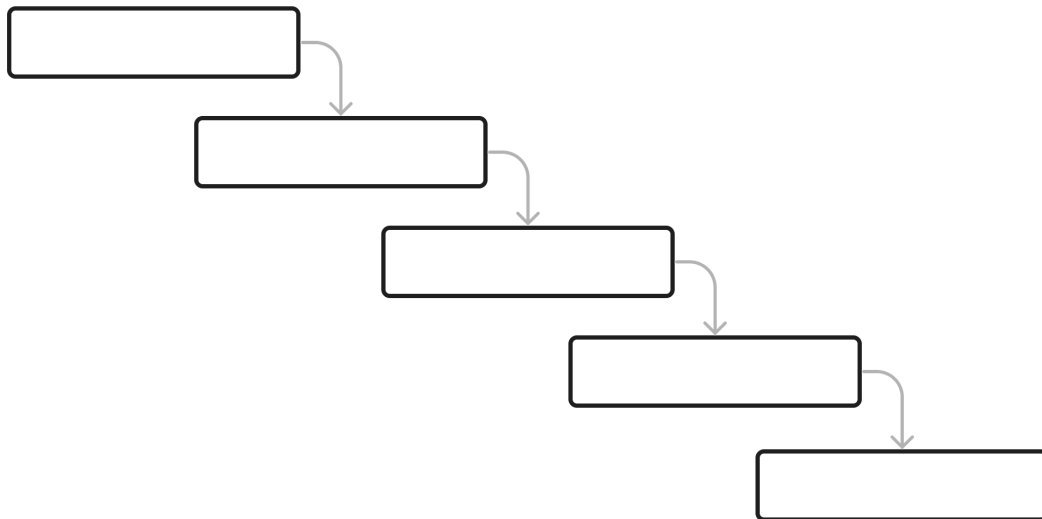# 1.1. A Brief History of Agile

Agile project management is an iterative approach to project management that focuses on continuous releases and incorporating customer feedback with every iteration. It is a popular methodology for software development, but it can also be used in other industries.

Waterfall vs. Agile

Waterfall is a sequential project management methodology that refers to the linear ordering of phases. One phase is completed at a time, and the next phase is not started until the current phase is done. This process can be likened to a waterfall, starting at the top of a mountain and flowing to the bottom.
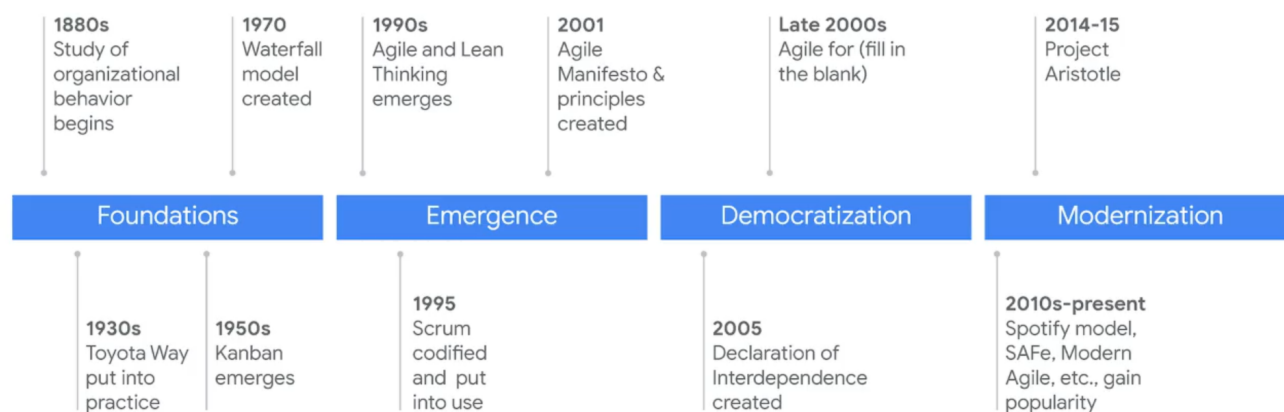
Agile, on the other hand, is iterative, flexible, and incorporates necessary changes throughout the process. Projects that adopt an Agile project management approach take an iterative approach, which means the project processes are repeated many times during the life cycle of the project.

In this case, the team operates within shorter blocks of time, called **iterations**. Individual iterations may be repeated depending on the feedback received. During each iteration, the team takes a subset of all the project's activities and does all the work required to complete that subset of activities. This process can be thought of as a series of mini waterfalls for each activity. This iterative approach enables the project to move quickly, as well as making it much more adaptable to change.

History of Agile

Agile methodologies emerged organically during the 1990s as the software industry was booming. Software startups like Google were leading the way in getting more software products built in less time. Meanwhile, the tech giants of the time were experimenting with faster ways to build better software and stay competitive. Software is not just the apps and websites that we all use every day; it also includes the code behind innovations in agriculture, medical devices, manufacturing, and more.

Agile in historical context

| Foundations | | Emergence | | Democratization | | Modernization |

1880s Study of organizational behavior begins

1970 Waterfall model created

1990s Agile and Lean Thinking emerges

2001 Agile Manifesto & principles created

Late 2000s Agile for (fill in the blank)

2014-15 Project Aristotle

1930s Toyota Way put into practice

1950s Kanban emerges

1995 Scrum codified and put into use

2005 Declaration of Interdependence created

2010s-present Spotify model, SAFe, Modern Agile, etc., gain popularity

Source: Unify Consulting 'Agile in Context' Timeline

So in this competitive growing environment, companies couldn't just create new, innovative products. They also needed to innovate the very processes they were using to develop these new products.

In 2001, the thought leaders and creators of some of these new processes, also called methodologies, came together to find common ground between their methods and solve a problem.

The problem, they agreed, was that companies were so focused on planning and documenting their project that they lost sight of what really mattered: pleasing their customers.

So these leaders came up with the Agile Manifesto to guide others on what they believe really matters when developing software, which is keeping the process flexible and focusing on people—both the team and the users—over the end products or deliverables.

Agile in Other Industries

Agile has been so successful in the software industry that its values, principles, and frameworks have been applied to nearly every industry. In fact, the Agile methods that one learns also draw heavily on Lean manufacturing principles that originated in Toyota's car factories in the 1930s.

Agile methods are also being adopted in the aeronautical, healthcare, education, finance industries, and even more. Agile is used everywhere.