

PMI®—Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)®

Knowledge and Skills: Part 2

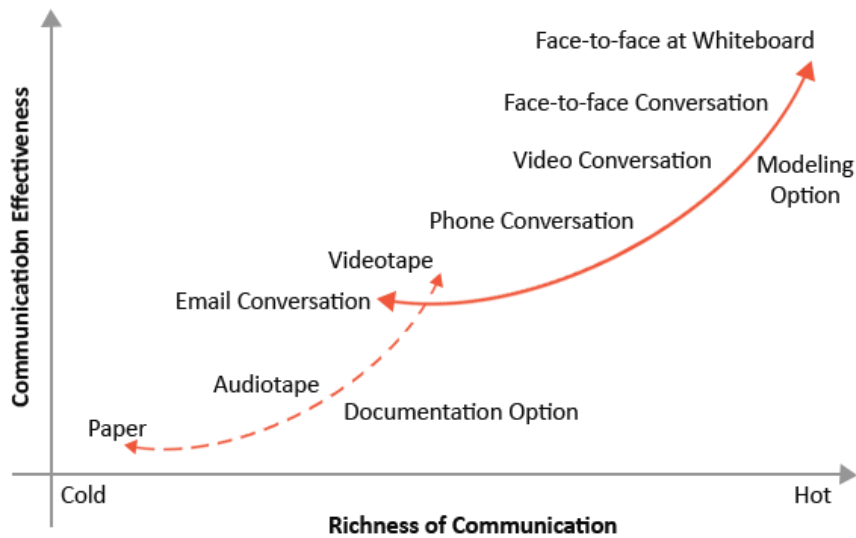


After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain Agile communications management
- Identify the feedback techniques in Agile
- Describe incremental delivery and Agile knowledge sharing
- Explain the Agile problem solving techniques
- Recognize Agile leadership and its best practices



There are various channels that can be used in Agile communication.



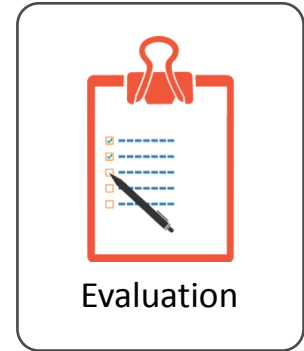
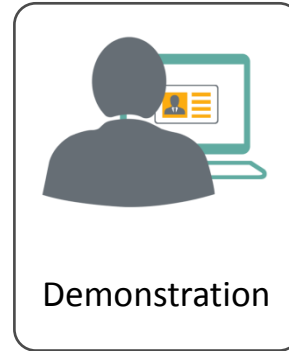
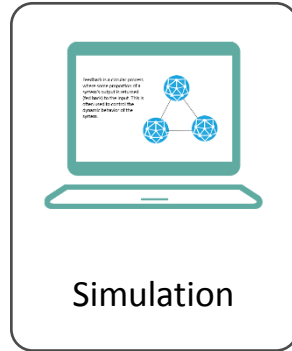
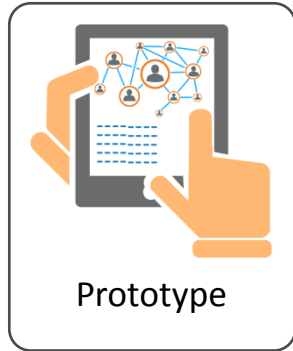
Agile emphasizes face-to-face communication as its preferred channel for communicating.

Agile recognizes the need for communication and provides a variety of tools and checkpoints to avoid the classic project mistakes of mismatched expectations and confusions.

- Daily stand-up meetings
- Frequent demos in Agile software development
- Retrospectives
- Business involved in requirements gathering
- Planning sessions
- Group-based estimation

Feedback is a circular process where some proportion of a system's output is returned (fed back) to the input. This is often used to control the dynamic behavior of the system.

Following are the commonly used feedback techniques:



The feedback systems built into the Scrum methodology are as follows:



Daily feedback
on sprint
planning



Process
feedback during
retrospectives



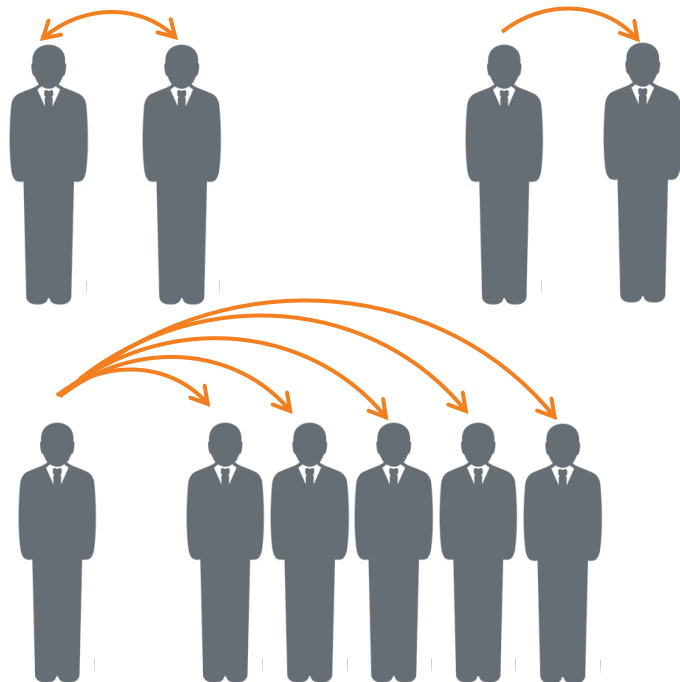
Product
feedback after
each sprint

Incremental delivery is building the products in a way that they could be deployed at the end of one or more iterations. Partial deliveries of the final product are made as early as possible if they are beneficial to the business. The benefits of incremental delivery are as follows:

- It provides early feedback to the project that helps in improving the development of rest of the product.
- It provides early return on investment (ROI) which can be used to finance the rest of the project.
- It facilitates the moving of product into service.

Knowledge sharing is an important mechanism for scaling Agile projects. In Agile, knowledge sharing is encouraged by several practices:

- Release and iteration planning
- Pair programming and pair rotation
- On-site customers (XP) or Product Owners (Scrum)
- Daily Scrum meeting
- Cross-functional teams
- Project retrospectives



In Agile, knowledge can be shared within the team using different forums:

Release and Iteration Planning

Knowledge on system requirements and the business domain between the on-site customers and the developers are shared.

Pair Programming and Pair Rotation

Knowledge of various kinds, some explicit but mostly tacit, is shared between the pair. This includes task-related, contextual, and social resources.

Daily Scrum Meetings

Team members report their work progress since the last meeting. Such meetings provide visibility of one's work to the rest of the team.

Success of a team depends on how the project problems are solved. In Agile, problems have to be checked at various levels:



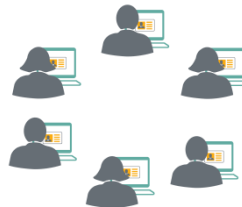
Process level

How are we doing with Agile adoption?



Quality and performance level

How can the team do better?



Team dynamics level

How can the team become a better team?

Following are the various problem solving techniques used in Agile projects:

- Establish yourself as a Devil's Advocate: The goal is to help the team re-verify their assumptions.
- Don't let team linger on meta-problems: They are distractions from the real issue.
- Be kind, rewind: Ask lots of questions and push the team back towards the root problem.
- Ask probing questions: Make the team talk through each decision and ask questions.
- Use reflective listening: Paraphrase what the other person has said, with an intent of confirming the understanding.
- Avoid injecting your ideas: Do not prompt the team to select a new idea, even if the new idea could be a better approach.
- Lead them to the answer: If the team is not making progress, lead them to the solution by providing small cues.

An Agile leader has to embrace the Agile principles of being flexible and adaptable and also motivate others to follow it. Management and leadership are often believed to be synonymous with each other, but they are not.

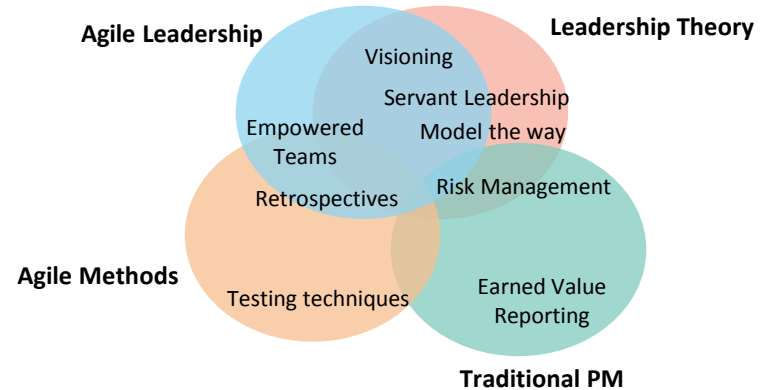
Management Focus	Leadership Focus
Tasks/things	People
Control	Empowerment
Efficiency	Effectiveness
Doing things right	Doing the right things
Speed	Direction
Practices	Principles

Agile Leadership (contd.)

“Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.”

- Forbes Magazine

The discipline of Agile leadership overlaps with other disciplines.



Following are the attributes that an Agile leader has to demonstrate:

- Model desired behavior: Follow the four most highly valued characteristics of a leader: honesty, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring.
- Create and communicate a vision: Define clear goals or a vision for the future, in accordance with the organizational goals.
- Enable others to act: Foster collaboration by building trust and strengthen others by sharing power.
- Challenge the status quo: Search for innovative ways to change, grow, and improve by experimenting and taking risks.
- Encourage and get the right people involved: Recognize contributions of the team and appreciate individual excellence.



QUIZ

1

Which of the following is not a feedback mechanism in Agile?

- a. Prototype
- b. Simulation
- c. Demonstration
- d. Post Project Review



QUIZ

1

Which of the following is not a feedback mechanism in Agile?

- a. Prototype
- b. Simulation
- c. Demonstration
- d. Post Project Review



Answer: d.

Explanation: Post Project Review is not an Agile feedback mechanism.



QUIZ
2

Which of the following is a key attribute of Agile leadership?

- a. Creating and communicating a vision
- b. Ensuring governance and standards are followed
- c. Applying a management framework to make and review decisions
- d. Implementing a strong organizational model



QUIZ
2

Which of the following is a key attribute of Agile leadership?

- a. Creating and communicating a vision
- b. Ensuring governance and standards are followed
- c. Applying a management framework to make and review decisions
- d. Implementing a strong organizational model



Answer: a.

Explanation: Agile leadership ensures that a vision for the project is created and communicated.



QUIZ
3

What is the best description for the Agile problem solving technique “Be Kind, Rewind”?

- a. Ensure that you start any problem solving at the beginning of the problem.
- b. Always obey the prime directive and treat people kindly and with respect.
- c. Ask lots of ‘why’ questions to get to the root of the problem.
- d. Ensure that the best response to a problem is reviewed for all participants.



QUIZ

3

What is the best description for the Agile problem solving technique “Be Kind, Rewind”?

- a. Ensure that you start any problem solving at the beginning of the problem.
- b. Always obey the prime directive and treat people kindly and with respect.
- c. Ask lots of ‘why’ questions to get to the root of the problem.
- d. Ensure that the best response to a problem is reviewed for all participants.



Answer: c.

Explanation: Ask lots of questions(why) and continue pushing back towards the root problem.



QUIZ
4

If a project team is experiencing difficulty with very low velocity, at what level the problem should be reviewed first?

- a. Process level
- b. Quality and performance level
- c. Measurement level
- d. Management Level



QUIZ

4

If a project team is experiencing difficulty with very low velocity, at what level the problem should be reviewed first?

- a. Process level
- b. Quality and performance level
- c. Measurement level
- d. Management Level



Answer: a.

Explanation: A team experiencing low velocity is probably having difficulty applying or following agile practices; process level would be the best place to start problem solving investigations.



Here is a quick recap of what was covered in this lesson:



- Different medium and communication channels have different levels of effectiveness. Agile emphasizes face-to-face communication as its preferred channel for communicating.
- Commonly used feedback techniques in Agile projects are prototypes, simulations, demonstrations, and evaluations.
- Incremental delivery is building the products such that they could be deployed at the end of one or more iterations.
- In Agile, problems have to be checked at process level, quality and performance level, and team dynamics level.
- Management is getting people to do what needs to be done. Leadership is getting people to want to do what needs to be done.
- An Agile leader has to embrace the Agile principles of being flexible and adaptable, and also motivate others to follow it.



THANK YOU