

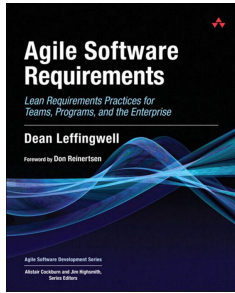


CE Department

Software Requirements Engineering

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These slides are designed to accompany Agile Software Requirements (2011) by Dean Leffingwell and support the university course Software Requirements Engineering, instructed by Mehran Rivadeh. Created and designed by Mahnaz Rasekhi.



Agile Software Requirements (2011)
Dean Leffingwell

Release Planning - The Introductory Section

Chapter 16

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Preparing For Release Planning

1. Preparing For Release Planning

- a. Release Planning Domain
- b. Planning Attendance Planning
- c. Release Planning Facilitator
- d. Release Planning Checklist

Preparing For Release Planning

- Given the importance of the event, the number of attendees, the input, and the expected outcomes, **planning for a successful event is a small project unto itself.**
- **For the first** such event, **there is** typically **much to do** to assure that cadence and release plans are well understood, teams know what they need to plan together, solution Vision is ready for presentation, and the logistics are prepared.
- **Over time**, however, **planning becomes routine** as people come to better understand their roles and the necessary preparation; the program should expect that the transaction costs and preparation overhead will decrease over time.

Release Planning Domain

- As we described in the previous chapter, some thought must be given to the makeup of **who participates on the Agile Release Train**.
- **Trains work best** when they constitute **50 to 100 team members** (5 to 10 agile teams) who **collaborate on a product** or system.
- And of course, **geographic co-location** is a prime consideration, because that dramatically **simplifies planning and execution**.

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Planning Attendance Planning

- **Should be done face-to-face.** This is consistent with both the Agile Manifesto and lean principles, because face-to-face communication is, by far, the most efficient way to make the batch transfer of information from product management to the development teams.
- One such planning session can replace thousands of e-mails, and **it happens 10 to 20 times faster;** imagine the impact on program efficiency.

Planning Attendance Planning

- Therefore, to make it feasible for as many members as possible to plan together, program travel budgets should be optimized around release planning sessions.
- Generally speaking, it isn't "new travel money" anyway, because it likely replaces a host of ad hoc, asynchronous meetings that would have otherwise been necessary.

Planning Attendance Planning

- In the event that the teams that need to plan together are so widely distributed that meeting face-to-face is impossible because of travel costs or restrictions, then it's likely that you have a highly inefficient organizational structure to support new development anyway.
- In that case, the enterprise should do the following:
 - ◆ Continually refactor teams and assignments to support ever higher degrees of co-location
 - ◆ Move entire projects, features, components, or subsystems to locales where a critical mass already exists or can quickly be assembled

Planning Attendance Planning

- In doing so, the enterprise will continuously lower the transaction costs of the planning event as well as decrease the costs and accelerate the feedback of the ongoing, and continuous, information transfer that is vital to development.
- However, in the likely event that all team members cannot be assembled in one place for release planning, then the program must make plans for communication with remote teammates so that planning is still simultaneous, though not to face-to-face.

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Release Planning Facilitator

- Release planning is a strategic event. As such, **it is replete with the challenges** and inherent **conflicts** of Vision (what we'd like to accomplish) versus reality (what we actually can accomplish).
- However, this potential for conflict is not bad, per se. Rather, **when properly managed**, the inherent mismatch of expectations **engenders** a **creative friction** between product management and development.
- If a team could do everything product management wanted them to do, then either product management isn't stretching far enough or the team is overcapacity. Rarely (never?) is either of these true.

Release Planning Facilitator

- And although it's true that we want absolutely need to create product flow, where input does match output, we can't simply achieve flow by just “backing off the accelerator,” or fewer cars will go down the freeway than it has capacity for.
- Yes, it's flowing, but it's too slow. Rather, we want to accelerate to the point of most efficient productivity, the point just below which congestion (in this case as witnessed by a combination of overloaded, multiplexed teams and badly matched expectations) occurs.

Release Planning Facilitator

- We can do this by mining this creative friction during release planning and watching for those sparks where real innovation can often be found.
- In other words, in the midst of a potential overload, it behooves all team members to find simpler ways to achieve the maximum potential value delivery.
- A few animated discussions along the way are likely and appropriate.

Release Planning Facilitator

- Like we said, it's a strategic event. Experience has shown that these events are more successful when a facilitator—someone who is not bound solely in product management or development—runs the event. It can be someone from inside or outside the company.
- Often, it can be a **project** or **program manager** who may well be struggling to find their role in the new agile enterprise anyway.
- These specialists often **have many** of the **valuable skills necessary to plan** and run such an event.
- However, they must not conflate that objective with the need to plan and run the program.

Release Planning Facilitator

- The Agile Release Train largely manages itself; we don't "program manage" it. However, **we do have to facilitate and manage the process effectively.**
- In any case, from here forward, we'll use the word **facilitator** to describe the **person who is largely responsible for running the actual release planning event.**

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Release Planning Checklist

- In preparing for a successful event, there are three primary areas of concern:
 - ◆ Strategic alignment and organizational readiness for planning
 - ◆ Management and development team preparedness for the event itself
 - ◆ The actual logistics for the event

Release Planning Checklist

- Since any one of these can interfere with the potential outcome—an actual, specific, and committed release plan—careful consideration of all three factors is warranted.
- In support of this, we have developed a set of checklists to assist those who are responsible for planning such an event.
- Since the lists are somewhat long and detailed, we have placed them in Appendix C, Release Planning Readiness Checklist.

End of Chapter 16 - The Introductory Section

Contributions

- Author of Reference Book: **Dean Leffingwell**
- Course Instructor: **Mehran Rivadeh**
- Slide Creator: **Mahnaz Rasekhi**
 - ◆ These slides are primarily based on Agile Software Requirements by Dean Leffingwell, with occasional adaptations to enhance clarity and engagement.