

BUS 173 W — An Introduction to Agile Project Management

W1: Assignment:

After reading the case study below, perform the following:

Explain to Claire and Ashley why an Agile approach should be utilized for their project rather than a traditional approach. You will probably need to write a couple paragraphs, include examples and use what you learned about the agile principles and mindset to make your case. Pretend that you are in a meeting with C&A Foods management so write as if you are talking to them.

Answer:

I recommend using a flexible Agile project management approach for our innovative online shopping platform. We at C&A Foods put a high emphasis on customer services such as the weekly education seminars or the cooking classes introducing organic food choices. We need to make sure that the technology we use for the online platform incorporates all those distinctive features of C&A Foods that make us special in the eye of our customers. The fact that many tourists from outside the West Coast like our shops means that our unique retail offering appeals to the growing number of health-conscious customers. We need to make sure that the C&A Foods online platform incorporates relevant video content and the crucial customer interaction that is one of the success factors of our physical retail stores.

Traditional project management or TPM assumes that we have a clear vision of all the details of what we are going to build. In TPM all the documentation and product specifications are done at the beginning of the project and changing the product specification at a later stage is difficult. A TPM Work Breakdown Structure or WBS describes all steps necessary for implementing a state-of-the-art online shopping experience, defining project scope, cost and the schedule. Subsequent changes in project scope lead to higher costs or to project delays which project sponsors and PM's typically try to avoid. In comparison, the Agile approach embraces change by focusing more on the project's goals and less on predefined project scope, allowing new ideas from all kind of people involved in the project to develop over time. An Agile project management approach uses project scope, cost and the schedule as constraints as well, but a special emphasis is given to value goals and quality goals. An example for an Agile PM value goal is to build a releasable online retail platform and an Agile quality goal is to build a reliable, adaptable online platform. Achieving the value goals and the quality goals within the budget, the timeframe and within a predefined project scope are the Agile PM constraints. Nevertheless, in Agile PM the definition of the project scope is not as detailed as in Traditional PM, which makes the Agile approach more flexible implementing changes during the project. According to "The Agile Manifesto", the APM approach values working software over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiations and responding to change over following a plan.

W1: C&A Foods Online Store Case Study

Claire and Ashley started a retail business called C&A Foods that sells healthy food products. C&A Foods was started in Seattle, WA and has grown to over 50 stores throughout Washington, Oregon, and California. Lately they have been receiving numerous requests from tourists who don't live near a retail store to be able to order their products online and have them shipped. These travellers come from around the world as C&A Foods stores are in international cities like San Francisco and Seattle.

Therefore, Claire and Ashley have decided to initiate a project to build an online store for their products. Since Ashley is the marketing and sales expert and Claire is the finance and accounting expert, Claire has been chosen to sponsor the project while Ashley will take the role as the Product Owner.

Their biggest concern is quality. In the retail space they can control the quality and have earned their reputation by outstanding product quality and high-quality customer service in terms of flexibility, product knowledge, and quick issue resolution. Part of this customer service involves weekly education seminars or cooking classes for customers. These classes are held free of charge and their objective is to educate their current and potential customers in healthy food choices. Ashley and Claire would like their online customers to have the same experience if possible, but they are not sure what that would look like.

Additionally, Claire and Ashley are insistent that innovation is key – they would like to stay competitive by offering their products like no one else. When asked what that means they are not sure but are confident that the team will figure it out.

Claire and Ashley do not have any experience with technology; therefore, they have hired you to manage the project. You have determined that an agile project management methodology would be best for this project.

You know from above what Claire and Ashley's priorities are. Your team has informed you that anything to do with videos or customer interaction is going to be difficult. The actual shopping experience is not as complicated.

Comments:

NICE job, very good argument for agile to the customer.

Debra Hildebrand, Apr 11 at 3:10pm