# Embedding the Customer’s Voice

Giving the customer the possibility to participate in the development of a product by providing him transparency regarding the overall progress and implementing its feedback is one of the most important success factors. Especially if the final results of the collaboration are not explicitly clear or if the project is some kind of research work, it is of highest importance to gather the customer’s feedback continuously. The feedback serves as an input in adapting the product or even the process of development.

Especially in the area of software development, the need for constant interaction between a manufacturer and its customer is widely acknowledged. This fact can be demonstrated by the adoption of agile methods (see figure \ref{agileAdoption}). These methods, like XP, Scrum and FDD, offer the possibility of high transparency, short feedback-cycles and increased flexibility regarding – characteristics that proved themselves good and that are strongly wanted by the manufacturers adopting agile methods (see figure \ref{agileFeatures}).

## Determining the Modalities of Collaboration

To embed a process that as well satisfies the customer as it provides the manufacturer the possibility to get as much useful input and feedback as possible, the modalities of collaboration are negotiated as a first step. The salient points in this negotiation are

\begin{itemize}

\item{Who is the customers specialist contact person and how should the communication with him/her take place?}

\item{Who is the customers technical contact person and how should the communication with him/her take place?}}

\item{In which way will the customer contact our company if necessary=}

\item{What are the customers preferences regarding the reports on the project’s progress?}

\end{itemize}

While some of these points like the contact information of a certain person in charge are only of informational kind, other points like the desired way of communication are of high importance. Since there are certain preferences in our company regarding the length of the iterations and the way how the communication should take place, the CORE value of the customer’s answers in respect of our company’s preferences is calculated.

## Assessment of the first Steps taken towards the Requirements Specification