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Agile Project Management

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Benefits of Agile Project Management

Agile project management was created around the following statements of values and principles: individuals and interactions over processes and tools, working software/product over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation, and responding to change over following a plan. Agile project management is an iterative approach to product development and provides benefits that traditional management cannot. Some of the benefits that the Agile method brings are that customers and developers are closer together throughout the development process, it encourages honest face-to-face communication, and allows for added flexibility in the development process as needs and priorities arise.

# Agile Vs. Traditional Project Management

Iterative and incremental development brings benefits to the different Agile flavors of development. This can take on as many different forms and is called a number of different things. One popular method of Agile known as Scrum contains sprints, which are short-duration, timeboxed iterations that are anywhere from 1 week to one calendar month in length in order to produce a potentially shippable product(Rubin, chp. 1). This factor gives users the early sight of elements of the deliverable product. The deliverables can and are then reviewed early on and allows for feedback. Most importantly this ensures that the interpretation by developers of a business or users’ needs are successful before the development teams continue into the next sprint. Traditional project management is focused on a great amount of planning before any work is completed. Therefore, the whole project is planned before any development even begins, which could take up to 6 months just to create the documentation. It also does not allow for any feedback from the consumer or customers. In the business world where time truly has a monetary value, having a potentially deliverable product every 4 weeks allows for profit to be made throughout the entire project with Agile.

Another benefit of the Agile method of project management is the establishment of a truly effective team. The sprints allow for greater focus and help to avoid the “them and us syndrome”(Project Management Informed Solutions, 2019). Agile facilitates daily interactions between the developers, users, and business managers. This face-to-face communication allows for honesty and creates a greater sense of security that a project cannot stray too far off track. Also, the allowance for the customer or users’ feedback after every sprint period ensures the greater success of the project as a whole as it brings the developers and users closer together (Project Management Informed Solutions, 2019). Traditional project management does not implement the ‘togetherness’ like Agile. The planning commences and the requirements and documentation are created and then it is handed off to the designers who create the physical plans. Then the plans are given to contractors or developers and are implemented. There is little to no opportunity for team members to work in collaboration or for customers to provide feedback.

Flexibility in the development process is another benefit implemented in Agile project management. With the established feedback loops, the team can work on the needs and priorities that arise as each sprint is accomplished. Also, with the focus of the development being through sprints changes can be completed quickly, as to not waste time or money going through another planning and redesign phase (Dossey, 2019). This flexibility mitigates risks or generating an undesirable or ineffective product. Traditional project management carries a hefty amount of risk because it lacks feedback and flexibility (Dossey, 2019). Everything is completed in one long span of time without providing for feedback opportunities. The project is constructed according to the design and is only reviewed at the end of the project. Thus, if there is an aspect that customers or even the entity paying for the project that they do not like or wanted to implement in a different way, there is no going back, and the project is just simply finished.

# CONCLUSION

Although Agile project management brings many different advantages and perspectives when compared to traditional project management, there are still instances and situations in which Agile is not suited. For example, government-issued projects usually pay at the end of each major milestone, therefore the Agile approach is not compatible. Other situations where agile is not appropriate include when your team is not self-organizing, the customer requires neat documentation, requires approvals at each stage, the project is not urgent, is too complex, or novel(Rubin, chp.3). Overall Agile project management brings iterative and incremental development which in-turn allows for flexibility as well as the allowance for highly effective teams with excellent honest communication. Traditional project management is still necessary for some instances; however, project managers should consider learning and using both as a way to diversify management style and complete projects in the best way possible.

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