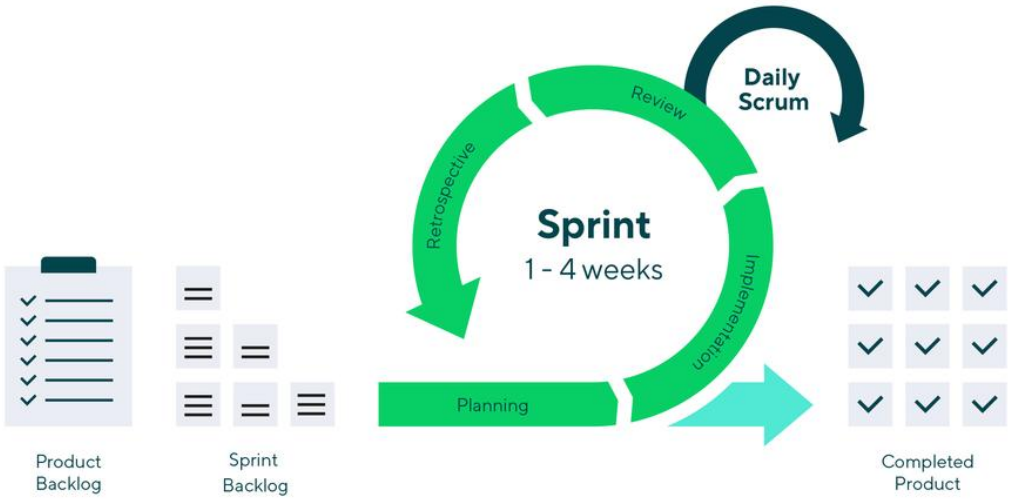
What is Agile methodology?

The Agile methodology is a collection of project management frameworks that break projects down into smaller phases. It relies on iterative cycles, allowing teams to adapt to changes and regularly refine their work. Agile is built on four main values from the Agile Manifesto:

- **People over processes**: Teams work together closely, solving problems through open conversations.
- **Working solutions over detailed documentation**: Agile teams prioritize building and testing usable products over writing lengthy reports.
- **Customer collaboration over rigid contracts**: Agile encourages ongoing discussions with customers to adjust work as needed.
- **Adapting to change over following a strict plan**: Agile teams stay flexible, ready to adjust to new information, customer needs, or shifting priorities.



Understanding 12 agile principles

1. **Make customers happy through early and continuous delivery of useful software**: Customers don't care about your internal processes — they just want a product that works. Traditional methods make them wait months (or even years) for a finished product. Agile flips that by delivering small, usable updates early and often.
2. **Embrace changing requirements, even in later stages**: If you're afraid of change, Agile probably isn't for you. Some teams try to fight evolving requirements, but customer needs change. Agile embraces that instead of resisting it.
3. **Deliver work frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference for the shorter timescale**: Some teams spend months planning before they write a single line of code. That's often a mistake. Agile cross-functional teams break projects into short cycles (usually two to four weeks) and release something usable at the end of each one.
4. **Stakeholders and developers must work together daily throughout the project**: One of the biggest reasons projects fail is due to a lack of communication. Too often, business teams and developers operate in silos, leading to misunderstandings and last-minute chaos. Agile fixes this by ensuring daily collaboration between everyone involved.

5. **Build projects around motivated individuals, giving them the environment and support they need, and trusting them to get the job done**: Some leaders think strict oversight ensures productivity, but in reality, micromanagement slows teams down. The best Agile teams are made up of motivated, self-driven people who take ownership of their work.
6. **Face-to-face conversations are the most effective method of communication**: Want a faster way to solve a problem? Talk about it. When teams rely too much on emails and messages, misunderstandings pile up. Agile teams prioritize face-to-face conversations because they strengthen team cohesion.
7. **The main measure of progress is working software**: If the product doesn't work, nothing else matters. Agile teams focus on delivering functional software, not just plans and projections.
8. **The working pace should be constant yet sustainable**: Working at full speed all the time isn't sustainable. Burnout leads to mistakes, missed deadlines, and high turnover. Agile teams pace themselves so they can deliver consistently without exhausting their people.
9. **Pay continuous attention to technical excellence and good design**: Rushing to meet deadlines often leads to unmaintainable code. Agile teams don't sacrifice quality for speed. They ensure that what they build is reliable, scalable, and well-designed.
10. **Keep things as simple as possible**: Complexity kills progress. The more complicated your processes, the slower your team moves. Agile teams strip everything down to the essentials.
11. **The best results come from self-organizing teams**: The most effective teams organize themselves, distribute work, solve problems, and make decisions without waiting for approval.
12. **The team reflects on how to become more effective at regular intervals, adjusting behavior accordingly**: If you're not improving, you're falling behind. Agile teams constantly evaluate what's working and what isn't and then make adjustments.

Agile vs traditional approaches

Traditional project management approaches, like the Waterfall methodology, follow a strict, step-by-step process where each phase must be completed before the next begins. This approach works best for projects with stable requirements.

Agile takes a different path. It breaks projects into smaller, repeatable phases where teams build, test, and adjust continuously. Customers are involved throughout, and teams can change direction anytime based on feedback or new priorities. This makes Agile better suited for fast-changing projects where adaptability and speed are key.

Benefits of Agile methodology

Faster time to market: Agile's short, focused cycles allow teams to release updates or products earlier. This helps businesses respond to market demands faster and stay ahead of competitors.

Better stakeholder involvement: Regular collaboration ensures that products meet real customer needs, not assumptions. Feedback is gathered throughout the project, reducing the risk of delivering something that misses the mark.

Increased team productivity: Teams break work into smaller tasks and review progress often, which helps them spot obstacles early, adjust priorities quickly, and improve processes over time. This leads to better outcomes and reduces wasted effort.