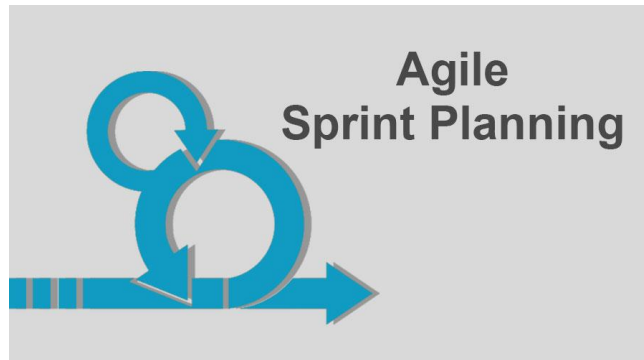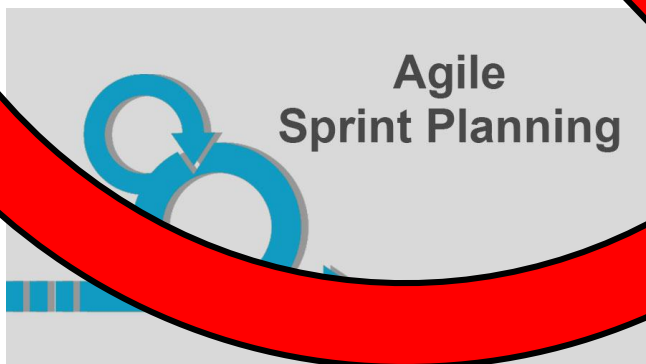# Crash course into agile thinking

Ben Brandwood

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None of these tools will make you Agile. Just the same as having a cement mixer makes you a builder, or having a ruler makes you an architect.

So what is Agile?

The Agile Manifesto

We are uncovering better ways of developing
software by doing it and helping others do it.
Through this work we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
Working software over comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
**_Responding to change_** over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on
the right, we value the items on the left more.

The Principles

- *We follow these principles:* Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.

- Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.

- Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.

- Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.

- Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.

- The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.

- ***Working software is the primary measure of progress.***

- Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.

- Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.

- Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.

- The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.

- At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behaviour accordingly.

Agility in Practice

Read these two books by Gene Kim. It codifies agile thinking and approaches to real-world IT organisations and challenges. They are in the form of novels.
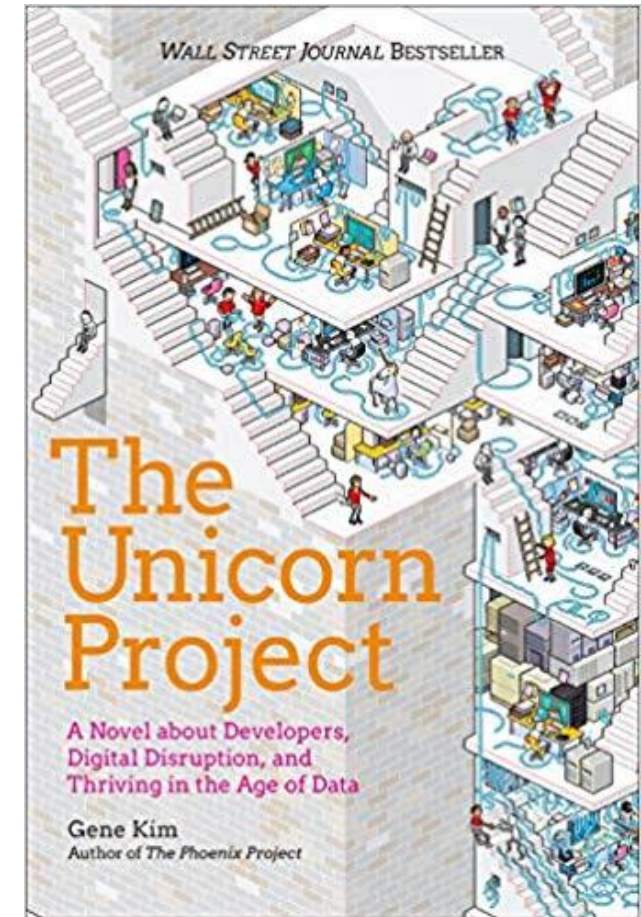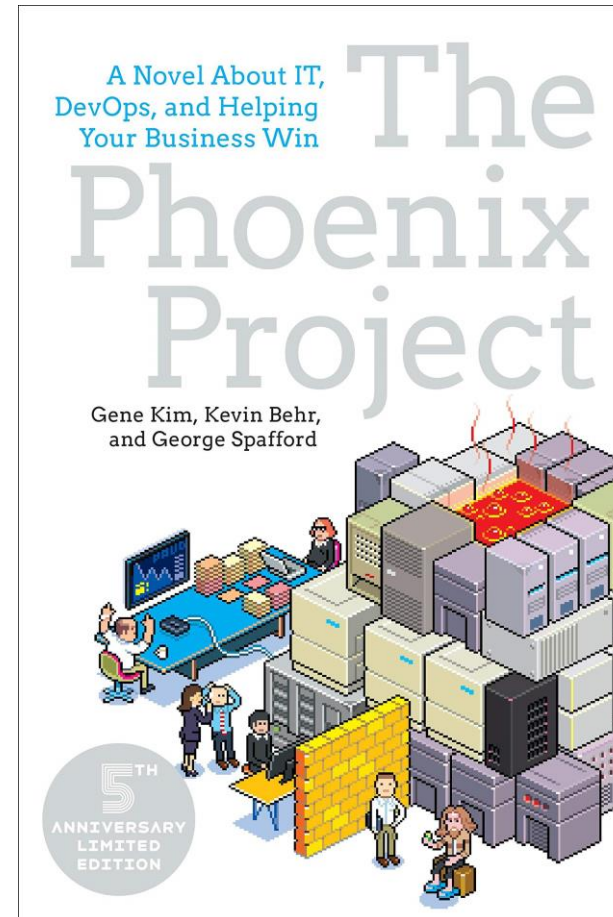
The "Five Ideals"

The First Ideal: *Locality and Simplicity*

   - Reduce dependency links to increase autonomy and flexibility.

The Second Ideal: *Focus, Flow and Joy*

   - Is our work marked by boredom and waiting for other people to get things done on our behalf?

The Third Ideal: *Improvement of Daily Work*

   - From the Toyota Andon Cord principle, also used by Microsoft "we must raise improvement of daily work over daily work itself"

The Fourth Ideal: *Psychological Safety*

   - Safety to talk about problems, foster acceptable risk taking. Honesty requires the absence of fear.

The Fifth Ideal: *Customer Focus*

   - Where we ruthlessly question whether something actually matters to our customers, as in, are they willing to pay us for it or is it only of value to our functional silo.