

# **Ten Key Benefits of Agile Project Management**

## Better Product Quality

Projects exist to build great products and purpose-driven outcomes. Agile methods have excellent safeguards to make sure that quality is as high as possible. Agile project teams help ensure quality by doing the following:

# Higher Customer Satisfaction

Agile project teams are committed to producing products that satisfy customers.  
Agile approaches for happier project sponsors include the following:

## Reduced Risk

Agile project management techniques virtually eliminate the chance of absolute project failure — spending large amounts of time and money with no return on investment. Agile project teams run projects with lower risk by doing the following:

# Increased Collaboration and Ownership

When development teams take responsibility for projects and products, they can produce great results. Agile development teams collaborate and take ownership of product quality and project performance by doing the following:

## More Relevant Metrics

The metrics that agile project teams use to estimate time and cost, measure project performance, and make project decisions are often more relevant and more accurate than metrics on traditional projects. Agile metrics should encourage sustainable team progress and efficiency in a way that works best for the team to deliver value to the customer early and often. On agile projects, you provide metrics by doing the following:

- » Determine project timelines and budgets based on each development team's actual performance and capabilities.
- » Make sure that the development team that will be doing the work, and no one else, provides effort estimates for project requirements.
- » Use relative estimates, rather than hours or days, to accurately tailor estimated effort to an individual development team's knowledge and capabilities.
- » Refine estimated effort, time, and cost on a regular basis, as the development team learns more about the project.
- » Update the sprint burndown chart every day to provide accurate metrics about how the development team is performing within each sprint.

## Improved Performance Visibility

On agile projects, every member of the project team has the opportunity to know how the project is going at any given time. Agile projects can provide a high level of performance visibility by doing the following:



# Increased Project Control

Agile project teams have numerous opportunities to control project performance and make corrections as needed because of the following:

- » Adjusting priorities throughout the project allows the organization to have fixed-time and fixed-price projects while accommodating change.
- » Embracing change allows the project team to react to outside factors such as market demand.
- » Daily scrum meetings allow the scrum team to quickly address issues as they arise.
- » Daily updates to sprint backlogs mean sprint burndown charts accurately reflect sprint performance, giving the scrum team the opportunity to make changes the moment it sees problems.
- » Face-to-face conversations remove roadblocks to communication and issue resolution.
- » Sprint reviews let project stakeholders see working products and provide input about the products before release.
- » Sprint retrospectives enable the scrum team to make informed course adjustments at the end of every sprint to enhance product quality, increase development team performance, and refine project processes.

The many opportunities to inspect and adapt throughout agile projects allow all



# Improved Project Predictability

Agile project management techniques help the project team accurately predict how things will go as the project progresses. Here are some practices, artifacts, and tools for improved predictability:

- » Keeping sprint lengths and development team allocation the same throughout the project allows the project team to know the exact cost for each sprint.
- » Using individual development team speed allows the project team to predict timelines and budgets for releases, the remaining product backlog, or any group of requirements.

# Customized Team Structures

Self-management puts decisions that would normally be made by a manager or the organization into scrum team members' hands. Because of the limited size of development teams — which consist of three to nine people — agile projects can have multiple scrum teams on one project if necessary. Self-management and size-limiting mean that agile projects can provide unique opportunities to customize team structures and work environments. Here are a few examples:

- » Development teams may organize themselves into groups with specific skills or that work on specific parts of the product system and features.
- » Development teams may organize their team structure around people with specific work styles and personalities. Organization around work styles provides these benefits:
  - Allows team members to work the way they want to work
  - Encourages team members to expand their skills to fit into teams they like
  - Helps increase team performance because people who do good work like to work together and naturally gravitate toward one another



# Higher Team Morale

Working with happy people who enjoy their jobs can be satisfying and rewarding. Agile project management improves the morale of scrum teams in these ways:

- » Being part of a self-managing team allows people to be creative, innovative, and acknowledged for their contributions.
- » Focusing on sustainable work practices ensures that people don't burn out from stress or overwork.
- » Encouraging a servant-leader approach assists scrum teams in self-management and actively avoids command-and-control methods.
- » Having a dedicated scrum master, who serves the scrum team, removes impediments, and shields the development team from external interferences.
- » Providing an environment of support and trust increases people's overall motivation and morale.
- » Having face-to-face conversations helps reduce the frustration of miscommunication.
- » Working cross-functionally allows development team members to learn new skills and to grow by teaching others.