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To Agile or Not to Agile

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An ambitious, knowledgeable and available business representative(s)

The Agile process is purposefully collaborative. Through the nature of the technical development exercise, the development of tools to enable an untested business process, or both, Agile approaches can help an organization bring functionality to fruition quickly and effectively. This quick and effective approach does not come without impacts however. Those impacts fall in the area of the time involved by people who have business experience (and are usually pivotal in the execution of day-to-day operational processes) working extensively with the project’s technical team members.

The primary characteristic that makes Agile methodologies…well…agile…is the methodology is designed to be responsive to immediate and/or evolving needs. Knowledgeable business people need to consistently reassess the product of the project, the business needs at a micro-level, the priority of the functionality needed by the end customer, and are responsible for the business integration of functions into previously developed pieces of work. The bottom line is that the business value comes about more quickly due to a well coordinated effort between technical team members dedicated to the project tasks, working in concert with business team members who are equally dedicated. As a team, the business and technical project members enable the frequent adjustments and evaluations required to develop a product without the pre-requisite documentation and analysis that is customarily performed in “waterfall” project lifecycles. Business people are key – if they are not available and appropriately dedicated and knowledgeable, the premise of utilizing Agile methods fails to deliver