



Practical values

for software development

Practical values for software development

Software delivery management is a multidisciplinary framework which enables mature delivery by IT vendors to client organizations. Here are some key characteristics:



Establishing practical values for software delivery management is essential in a world of enterprise Agile practices



Racing to keep up with the rapid advancement of software development, practical values are preferred over traditional practices



Sharing experiences of practical themes over traditional themes is invaluable



Recognizing the importance of traditional themes, our objective is simply to realign them with more practical perspectives



Adopting practical values and perspectives is vital for both client and IT vendor organizations

The management approach has undergone a gradual transformation over past decades to align with increasingly Agile delivery practices. The emphasis on practical and iterative approaches has increased significantly since the Agile manifesto was embraced by the software fraternity.

Traditional management approaches are always respected and continue to deliver results. However, practical trends and values that are more readily accepted by organizations, are emerging. In this guide, we summarize the key practical values, comparing them to their traditional counterparts. The objective is not to downplay traditional practices but to highlight the benefits of adopting a more practical approach. Normally, each organization is expected to identify their best-fit approach for managing software delivery.

01. Practical scope management

Defining the project scope to improve delivery of the desired results

Practical theme

over Traditional theme

Scoping for business

Scope to determine the requirements of business goals to be delivered...

Scoping for IT

... rather than understanding the requirements for IT goals to be delivered

Business value objectives should drive the primary scope, while IT value lies in delivering the scoped business value.

Non-functional at par to functional requirements

Where modern applications are leveraging cloud, microservices and big data architectures, non-functional requirements drive or remain on par with functional requirements...

Non-functional under functional requirements

... instead of considering non-functional requirements to be secondary to functional requirements

Modern business applications have a central theme of wowing users with non-functional features, such as responsiveness, to enhance the value of functional features.

In and out of interface

Scalable, microservices-based applications scope requirements "in interface contract" and specify requirements "out of interface contract" for interfacing systems...

In and out of scope

...rather than taking a traditional approach to requirements either in scope or out of scope

Visualize the scope, end-to-end, as interconnected systems with contracts to deliver true business value.

02. Practical dependency management

Effective tracking of dependencies to ensure the project's triple constraints are met

Practical theme

over Traditional theme

Dependencies are user stories

Treat and track each dependency as a user story...

Dependencies are work items

... instead of treating and tracking it as a transactional work item

Each dependency needs to be mapped to specific business functionalities being delivered. They need to be tracked as user stories, linked to and impacting other user stories also correlated to those functionalities. This helps with aligning dependencies to business goals rather than treating them as transactional work items.

Business impact of dependency delays

Prioritize dependencies and invest in the mitigation of delays, based on their impact on business goals...

IT impact of dependency delays

...rather than prioritizing dependencies and investing in mitigation, based on their impact on IT goals without relating that impact to associated business goals

Every dependency needs to be assessed for its impact on the business goals, and the mitigation of delays needs to be prioritized accordingly. Often the big picture of business impact is obscured by the greater attention paid to impact on IT goals. Understanding the impact on IT goals is essential, but needs to be correlated with the corresponding business impact.

03. Practical estimation and efficiency management

Continually focusing on effective estimation and efficient delivery

Practical theme



Estimating work units

For a business functionality or technical deliverable...



Velocity stability as a metric

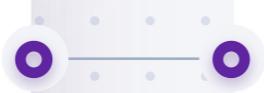
Measure team efficiency by tracking and improving velocity stability across multiple sprints...



First eradicate system inefficiency

Our first priority is to root-out inefficiencies in the organization, processes, tools and surrounding ecosystem...

over Traditional theme



Estimating person days

... instead of estimating the number of person days for that business functionality or technical deliverable



Individual productivity as a metric

... rather than measuring individual productivity



First eradicate human inefficiency

...rather than prioritize the eradication of inefficiencies in people. Often these are caused by system inefficiencies

Person days do not represent the amount of business functionality or technical work to be delivered, they are simply blocks of time. Estimation needs to be in logical units of work, relatable to the business function or technical work like story points.

For a given squad, variance in productivity of individuals is expected, acceptable and consistent at a certain baseline. Focusing on velocity improvement across sprints with a consistent error baseline, is more beneficial than attempting to reduce errors and remediate individual productivity. In cases of squad changes, re-baselining is required.

Greater value and efficiency can be derived by enabling an efficient system for people to be part of and deliver from, rather than focusing on identifying and eradicating inefficiencies in people, themselves, as a first priority.

04. Practical schedule management

Ensuring project timelines are met while still delivering desired results to stakeholders

Practical theme



Incremental value acceptance on a given schedule

Increase the incremental value accepted on each scheduled milestone...



Schedule driven by value and quality

Derive the schedule and quantum of delivery based on expected value and quality...

over Traditional theme



Schedule variance on a given schedule

... instead of focusing on variance from a planned quantum of value at each scheduled milestone



Value and quality driven by the schedule

... rather than customizing the expected value and quality to meet a desired quantum of delivery and schedule

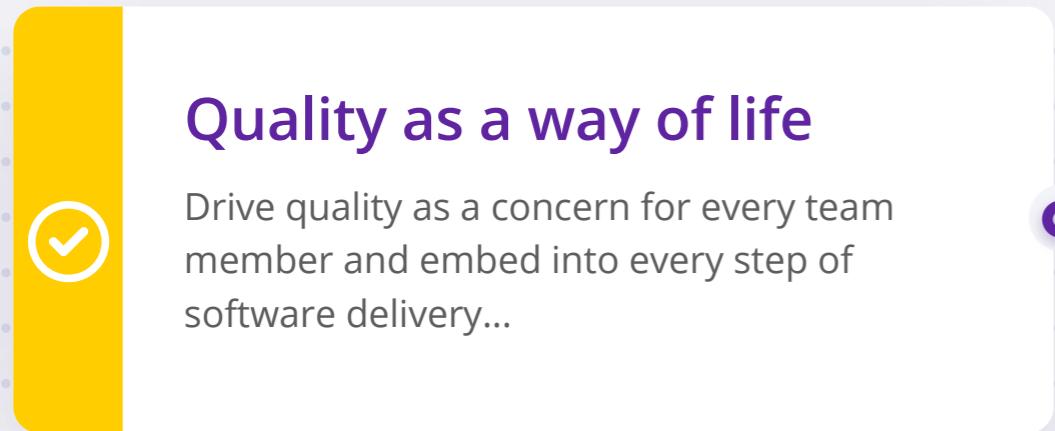
Focusing all energies on increasing the business-value delivered and accepted at each scheduled milestone, rather than on reducing the variance in planned value at that milestone, leading to significant business benefits, efficiency improvements and team engagement.

While time-to-market is key, establishing a right-first-time maxim creates the maximum positive impact on business. The schedule and quantum of delivery needs to be derived, based on the essential timelines required to deliver them at their expected value and quality.

05. Practical quality management

Ensuring top quality project delivery

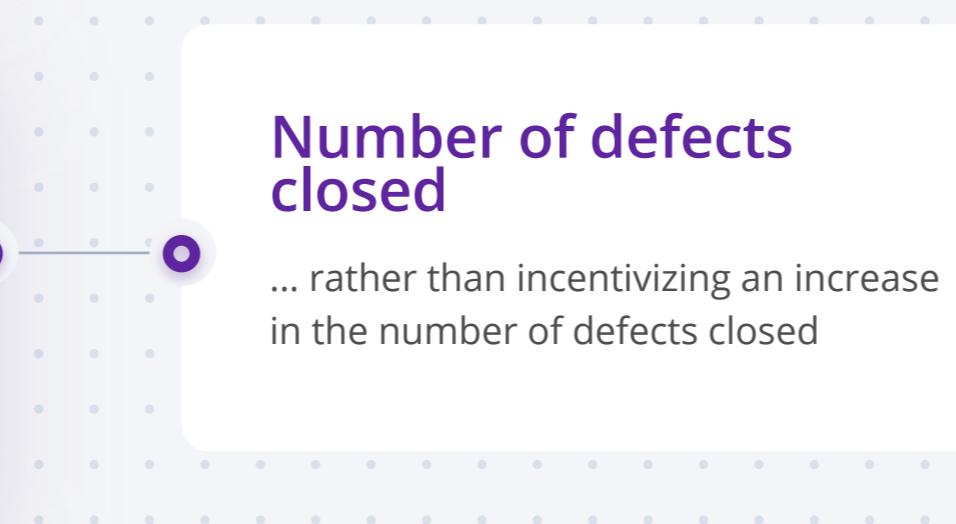
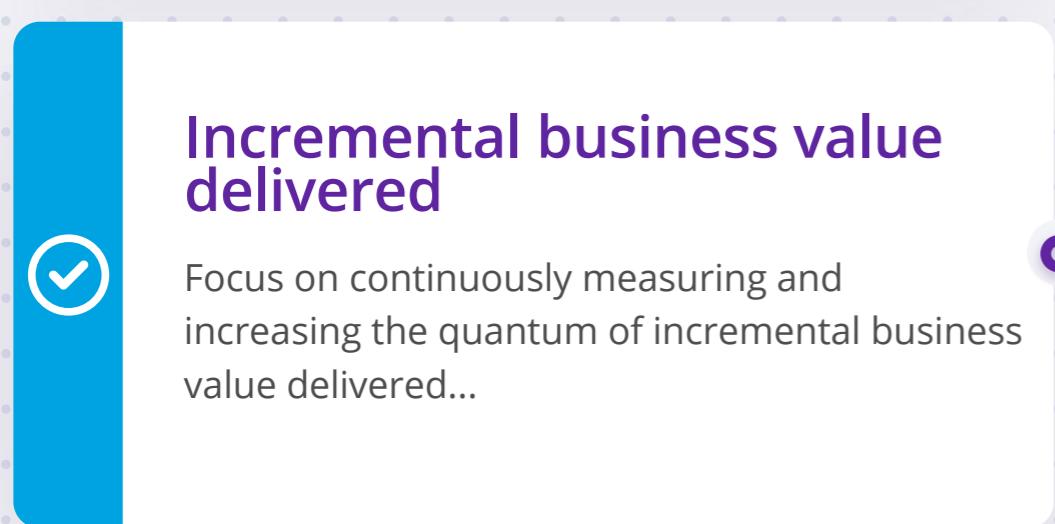
Practical theme



over Traditional theme



Quality assurance (QA) is often regarded as a distinct step in the software engineering process and the sole responsibility of the testing team. That needs to change because QA is a frontline concern for everyone in the team, and quality principles should be embedded into every step of software delivery.

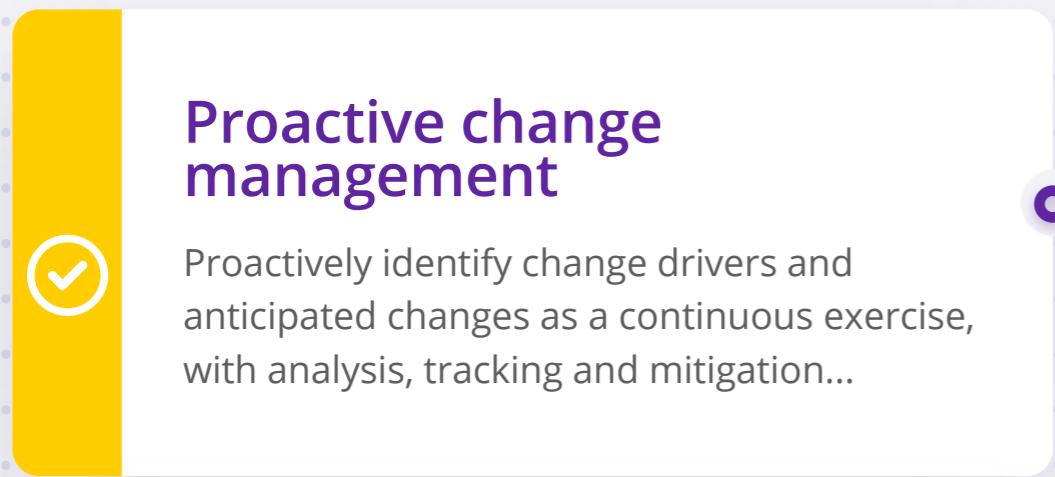


In themselves, a quantum of defects closed doesn't necessarily reflect increased business value. Focusing energies on continuous measurements and the improvement of business value delivered in each iteration of the software delivery, can lead to a significant increase in business satisfaction.

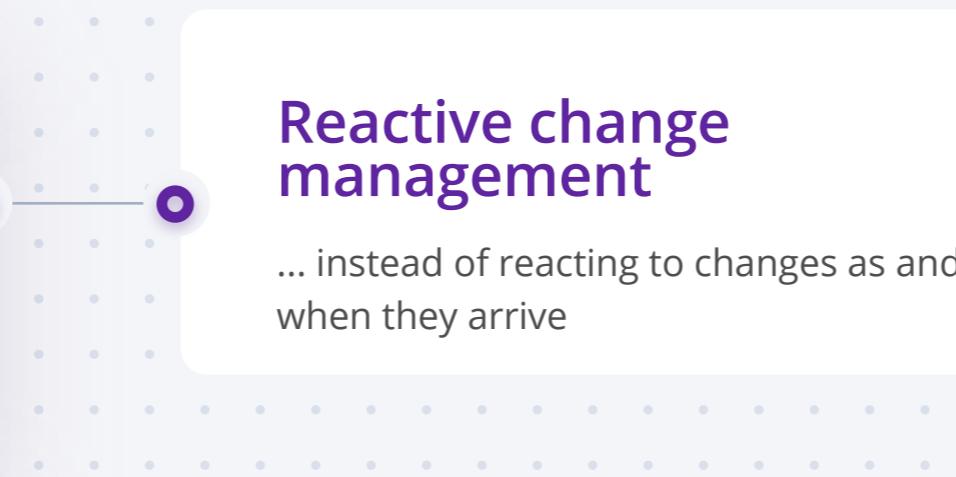
06. Practical change management

Maintaining a consistent focus on efficient and effective project change management

Practical theme



over Traditional theme



Focused effort to continuously anticipate sources of change. Anticipating changes and a proactive plan for mitigation can significantly reduce the business impact, compared to reacting as and when they arrive.



Often, encouraging changes in spite of the increase in IT effort — as long as they enhance the business value delivered — can lead to long-term benefits for both IT and the business. Even though there may be a short-term impact to time-to-market or costs, these sorts of changes lead to enhanced customer trust and improved brand value in the long run.

07. Practical stakeholder management

Continual 360-degree focus on stakeholder management

Practical theme

360-degree stakeholder management

 Focus on the satisfaction management of all key stakeholders including clients, IT-vendor organizations and IT-vendor employees...

over Traditional theme

Client satisfaction management

... rather than only focusing on client satisfaction

Holistic focus on managing all key stakeholders between client and IT vendor organizations, ensures satisfaction across the supply chain and enables delivery of maximum business value.

Holistic collaboration

 Build trust and promote holistic collaboration...

Bi-directional communication

... rather than complying with a set of outputs and reports for bi-directional communication

Timely and good quality outputs and reports can definitely help effective governance, but they don't promise increased trust and collaboration. Focus on key principles of integrity, challenge and behaviors go a long way in building effective business relationships across stakeholders.

08. Practical risk management

Proactive management of project risks

Practical theme

Risk mitigation as a mutual responsibility

 Mitigating risks needs trust, collaboration and engagement between IT vendor and client organizations...

over Traditional theme

Risk mitigation as a contractual liability

... instead of holding the IT vendor solely responsible for transferred risks as a contractual liability

In the modern era of enterprise Agile practices, risk mitigation needs significant collaboration between all parties in the supply chain, including the IT vendor and client organizations. No single party can be held solely responsible, and effectiveness of mitigation will be achieved only through mutual responsibility.

Risk database as a team asset

 Risk database needs to be shared transparently with the team...

Risk database as a management asset

... in place of being confined to management

Maintaining transparency for identified risks and mitigation to the fullest extent possible, can significantly increase trust and commitment in the team.

Risk mitigation is a team responsibility

 Hold entire team accountable for risk management...

Risk mitigation is a management responsibility

... rather than holding only management accountable for risk management

Every individual is accountable for risk identification and mitigation and establishing this culture empowers the team, engaging and making them more effective.

09. Practical metrics management

Unceasing application of measurements and improvements

Practical theme

over Traditional theme

Metrics based on need and value

Measure and track metrics based on the specific needs of the engagement...

Metrics based on standards

... rather than implementing metrics to comply with organization standards

A particular engagement might need specific and custom metrics to enable continuous improvement and cannot be mandated to implement all metrics according to organization standards. For instance, metrics for a managed delivery engagement can be significantly different than for a staff augmentation engagement.

Metrics aligned to project phase

Shortlist and implement metrics based on the phase of the project...

Metrics across project phases

... rather than implementing a standard set of metrics across all phases of a project

Continuously refine shortlist of key metrics based on business objectives and phase of project. Metrics to track the success of the development phase might be very different compared to the testing phase, for example.

Metrics mutual to business and IT

Metrics need to reflect the benefits for both business and IT...

Metrics distinct for business and IT

... rather than reflecting benefits distinctly for business and IT

Business and IT are strongly integrated in the modern world and metrics need to reflect unified success for both.

10. Practical value addition management

Making value addition an integral part of project management across all stakeholders

Practical theme

over Traditional theme

Value addition as a project

Treat value-addition initiatives with the same level of priority and importance as regular delivery projects...

Value addition as a special effect

... instead of treating them as special initiatives based on voluntary effort

Continuous improvements and value addition should be an ongoing engagement on par with regular delivery engagements to enable significant business value.

Tangible value to stakeholders

Value-addition initiatives need to focus on delivering tangible value to stakeholders...

Gold plating to stakeholders

... rather than gold plating to delight stakeholders

Every value-addition engagement needs to drive tangible value addition rather than additional beautification.