Chapter 1 Guiding Principles

" ... the biggest influence **agile approaches** have had on me is the idea that teams' approaches should be based on values and principles rather than a set of practices."

"Manifesto for Agile Software Development"

"Principles behind the Agile Manifesto"

McDonald's philosophy ("Guiding Principles") central to his approach to knowledge work
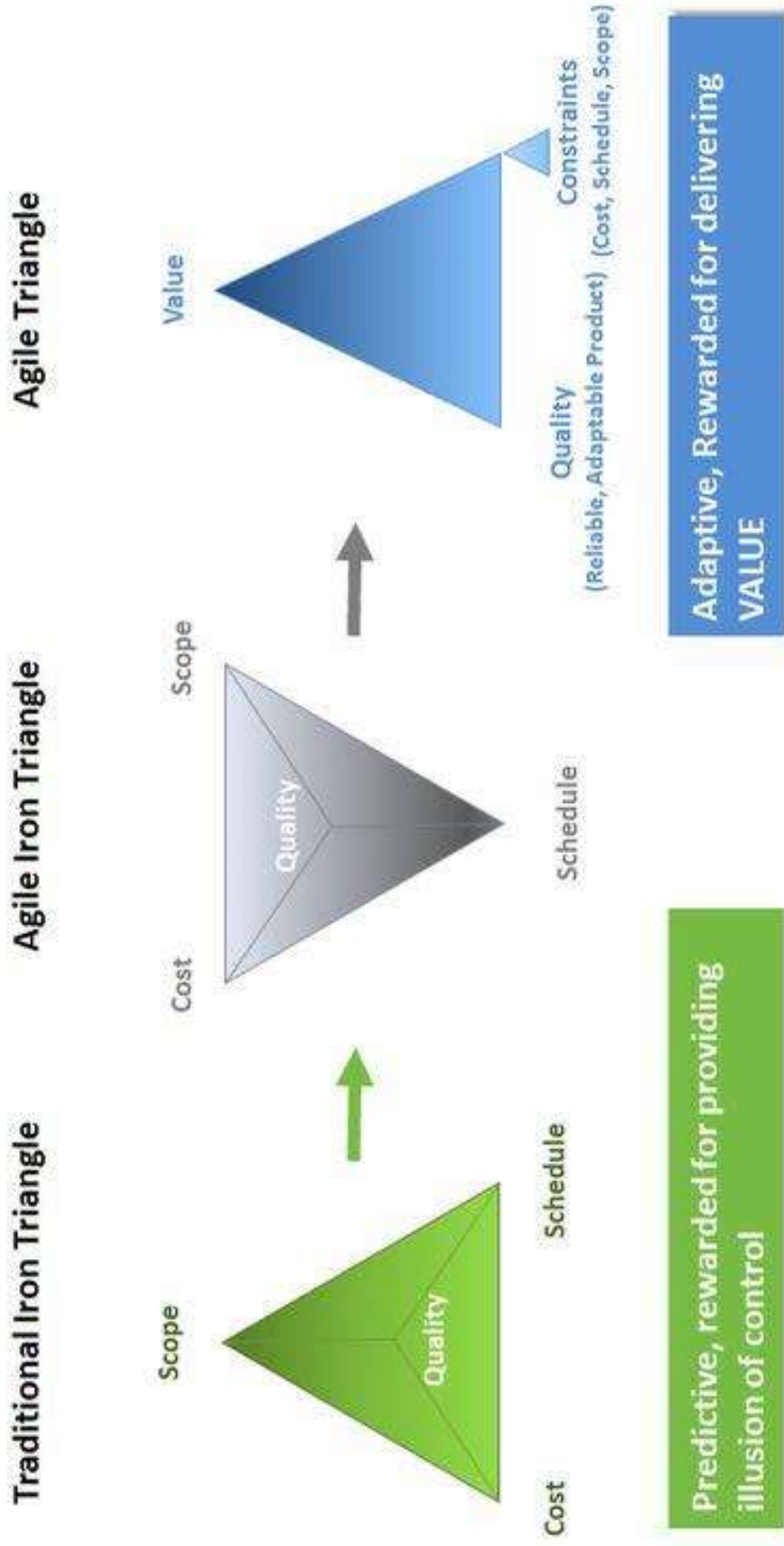
Guiding Principles

Desirable characteristics for any initiative [1] :

- Deliver value
- Collaborate
- Iterate
- Simplify
- Consider context
- Decide wisely
- Reflect and adapt
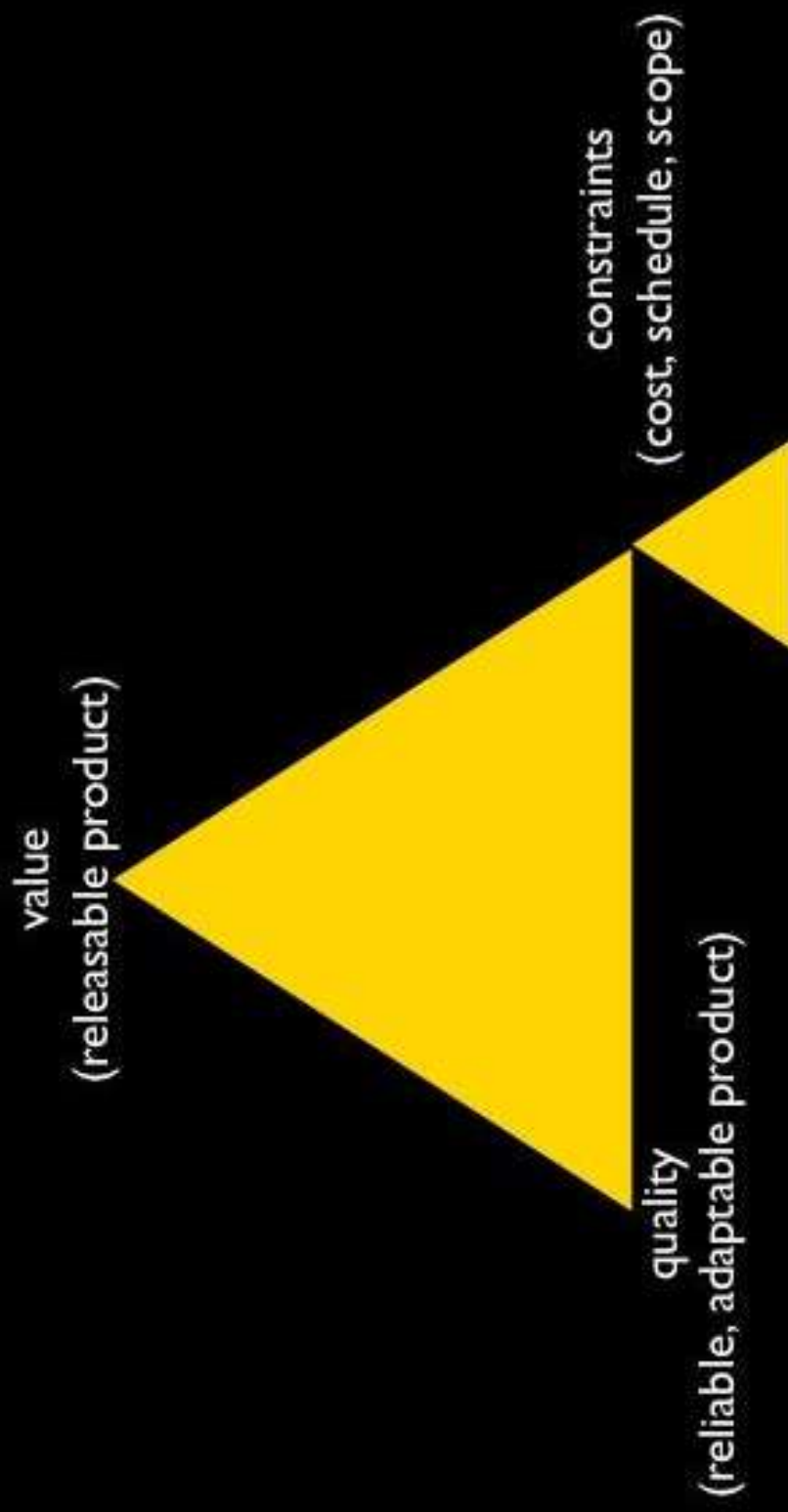
[1] based on agile principles

Deliver Value

- Only happens when what you deliver satisfies your stakeholders' needs.

Traditional Iron Triangle

Scope

Quality

Schedule

Cost

Predictive, rewarded for providing illusion of control

Agile Iron Triangle

Scope

Quality

Cost

Schedule

Agile Triangle

Value

Quality
(Reliable, Adaptable Product)

Constraints
(Cost, Schedule, Scope)

Adaptive, Rewarded for delivering VALUE

Source: Agile Project Management: Creating Innovative Products, Second Edition By: Jim Highsmith Publisher: Addison-Wesley Professional

Deliver Value

agile triangle

value
(releasable product)

quality
(reliable, adaptable product)

constraints
(cost, schedule, scope)

Jim Highsmith: *Agile Project Management*

Limit features to those that provide true value

- Features that seem like good ideas, in most cases, are not essential

  "Solve the problem the project set out to address"

- What is the desired outcome?

  Rather than being distracted by functionality that users may use or requirements that stakeholders view as valuable… but do not have any relation to the desired outcome.

  Gold-plating that is anything **but** Gold

Collaboration

- **Collaboration** elevates groups beyond cooperation, adding an essential ingredient for emergent, innovative, and creative thinking.

- With **cooperation**, the properties of the group's output can be traced back to individuals, whereas with **collaboration**, the properties of group output exceed anything that could have been achieved individually.

- When a team is **truly collaborating**, its members build on top of each other's ideas, and the collective result is beyond what any one member could have envisioned.

- **Cooperation** is a prerequisite to **collaboration**.

Cooperation

- **Cooperation** between group members involves the smooth transfer of work in progress, work products, and information *from one member to another*.

- The team has a shared commitment to a common outcome, and individuals coordinate their activities in ways that support other group members.

- In a cooperative team, members interact in an egoless manner and understand their individual roles as they relate to the group's objectives.

Team work

- Barriers prohibiting effective communication should be removed from the team environment

- Team members are needed that can effectively facilitate group interaction

- Team members should be most familiar with the work and should do the self-organizing together

- Team members should volunteer to work on various items as opposed to being assigned...

Team Lead

- Those with seemingly more experience… often become team "leads" …

- To often, team leads morph into command-and-control behavior styles …

  Assuming a " boss" role

  As a result, team members stop collaborating and wait to be told….

  Top down – command and control – "leadership" stops collaboration

Another approach…

- The team set working agreements… making it possible to talk through issues without "drenching" is protocol and process

- "Collaboration means that the people working on the project form a real **team**, not a **work group**

  … working through difficulties without sulking or rushing off to find the nearest decision maker."

  Collaboration means team members commit to meeting a joint goal…

  They are not afraid to step outside their area of specialization to help others on the team

What of the Business Analyst?

- The analyst work is shared
- The BA is dedicated full time to a team as a team member
- Roles are blurred as a result of this type of collaboration.....
- The team, as a result, is better positioned to deliver frequent increments of work from which they can receive meaningful feedback

... Agile like

Iterate

- Build the software application, feature by feature...

- ... in effect, rehearsing the team approach and the design decisions

- ... the team has the opportunity to propose an approach and try it out without building so much that is typically wasteful

- The key to an iterative approach is getting some actionable feedback on the output from the iteration so the team can determine if they are on the right course to the desired outcome

(think **SCRUM** and **Sprints**)

The author's (as a BA) role

The Conference Submission System

Iterations provided benefits....

As **Product Owner** he can assess the work and provide feedback....

... either on the *look and feel* or the *functionality* provided

Front end and Back end....

... the work was done in multiple releases

... allowing for feedback from users that influenced the design

Simplify

"maximize the amount of work not done"

Agile Manifesto

The **goal** is to deliver the minimum of output that will maximize outcome....

... doing so by using processes that are absolutely necessary

"When your team starts a new project, you should first determine the activities that are absolutely essential for the success of the project and then....

... do only those activities."

Author's advice...

"By starting with a small set of activities, you're giving your team a fighting chance of maintaining a streamlined process.

Simplify means taking the most straightforward path to your destination and ruthlessly questioning why someone wants to take a different path."

More advice

"Don't fall into the trap of developing a needlessly complex solution."

Consider Context

" … when choosing processes, practices and techniques be sure they are doing the things that will make lead to success and not doing things that don't need to be done."

Project teams need to determine what practices, processes, and techniques they will use… and be willing to change practices if needed.

Decide Wisely

The need for clear decision making....

The person(s) making the decision (hopefully) are as informed as possible and are able to make whatever decisions that are made... stick

Cognitive Biases... Dan Ariely **(video)**

In the long run, it's not about the money

(at least for most)

Reflect and Adapt

Continuous learning… from experience

"Your team should seek to use change in order to make sure the project's outcome meets the needs of your stakeholders when the result is delivered, not just the perceived needs of the stakeholder when the project started"

Retrospectives provide teams with a mechanism to discuss what transpired on the project … what went well, what opportunities for improvement exist… what corrections need to be made

… to learn

"If you remember nothing else..."

- You are delivering value when you maximize outcome with minimal output.

- Your team should constantly look for ways to work together to deliver value.

- Shorten the feedback cycles to encourage continuous learning.

- Don't do anything you don't absolutely need to do... to deliver value.

- It depends.

- Be intentional about your decision making

- Learn from the past to improve your future