

Agile Project Management

As Applied in Harvard Business School's Information Technology Group (ITG)

Structure of Agile in ITG:

5 Agile Teams responsible for various business partners/initiatives.

Each Agile Team has representation from:
Quality Engineering
Software Development
Project Management
The Database Group

In ITG the Agile Teams are:

Blue Team:

Operations, Executive
Education, External Relations

Purple Team:

MBA and Doctoral Programs

Green Team:

IT Infrastructure

Red Team:

Department of Research and
Faculty Development, Human
Resources

Silver Team:

Strategic Initiatives

Why Agile in ITG?

- Provides a controlled response to change and risk management.
- ITG experienced numerous issues with late-stage changes and their negative impact on projects.
- Agile was a demonstrated project management methodology that would be appropriate for the rapidly changing and ever-evolving HBS culture.



1. Our highest priority is to **satisfy the customer** through early and continuous delivery of valuable services.
2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in the project. Agile processes **harness change** for the customer's competitive advantage.
3. Recognize that **changing requirements** force trade-offs between time, money, and scope.
4. Deliver **working solutions** frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
5. Business people and IT people must **work together daily** throughout the project.
6. Build projects and processes around **motivated individuals**. Give them the environment & support they need and trust them to get the job done.
7. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a team is **face-to-face conversation**.
8. **Working solutions** are the primary measure of success.
9. Agile processes promote **sustainable operations**. Sponsors, ITGers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.
10. Continuous **attention to excellence** and good design enhance agility.
11. **Simplicity**--the art of maximizing the amount of work *not* done--is essential.
12. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from **self-organizing teams**.
13. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then **tunes and adjusts** its behavior accordingly.

In ITG, the agile teams that make up the Project Management Office (PMO) strive to manage projects according to this Manifesto. These are the principles that guide software and product development. The standard Agile manifesto is adapted here for ITG.

How Agile was Implemented in ITG:

- ITG formed a pilot Agile Team to work on a portfolio of projects.
- This team worked for six months on various projects sticking as closely to the Agile Manifesto as possible.
- ITG slowly expanded the Agile methodology to the rest of its PMO as it realized the success of the pilot teams.
- Part of the process of realizing its success was communicating with business partners to get their input on the new processes.

Agile Terminology in ITG:

Project Team:

The group of project managers, developers, quality engineers, support personnel, and others who will work directly with the project.

Project charter:

An agreement between ITG and its business partners that shows stakeholders, project phases, deliverables, etc.

Standup:

A brief daily meeting of the project team and representatives from the business partner to discuss project status and steps to be taken that day towards completion.

Project Champions:

Members of the business partner department who will be responsible for liaising with ITG during the project and championing the product being developed with their colleagues.

Project Volume in ITG

Each year the Information Technology Resource Allocation Committee (iTrac) receives requests for projects and allocates ITG resources to various projects according to priority. For FY2014 requests totalled 75,000 hours. ITG has only 23,000 hours to allocate annually. This makes Agile necessary in order to lessen time spent accounting for change.

