More FAQs About Agile

1. Is Agile only for Developers and Project Managers?

No, it isn't. Agile is for anyone and for everyone. There are people from different roles, countries, regions, industries, etc. applying Agile in their projects.

2. Does Agile equate to Scrum? Are they equal or the same thing?

Technically no, in reality yes. Allow me to clarify this, Scrum is one of many Agile methodologies, but Scrum is the most popular and widely used of all Agile methodologies. Hence, when people are talking about "Agile" they are generally referring to Scrum. Most people don't even know there are other methodologies besides Scrum. If you want to learn more about the other methodologies, just go to this link.

3. But isn't there an equivalent to the PMI (Project Management Institute) for Agile? Or a more "formal" way to get certified?

No, not really. There are many companies offering "Agile certifications" and they charge from $500 up to thousands of dollars to teach you pretty much what you will learn in this course. Yes, trust me. I have been in many Agile training's, with different companies in different countries. They might go into more depth and take hours to teach you about user stories, but in essence, the training you will go through is the same. Having said that, if you do want to go to a more detailed training or a face to face event, please do so.

4. Can you provide an example of a company that offers Agile certifications? I would still prefer something more "formal" like the PMI.

Sure, there are many. Depending on the country you reside in, you will find different options. In Australia, Asia, Europe and the U.S. an example is Rally. Here are two more examples of companies providing Agile certifications: the PMI itself and the ScrumAlliance. But feel free to Google "Agile certification" you will find many options.

5. What is the best way to start doing Agile?

Finish this course and then start an Agile project. Like anything else, practice, practice, practice. It's not hard and you will enjoy working with Agile. Like anything new it might seem different at the beginning and maybe even weird, but over time you will get the hang of it and start to feel more and more like an expert. Next time you're in a room full of people and someone asks what a User story is or what the word Retrospective means you will be able to explain that easily.

6. Do I have to stick to the book? e.g. Do I really need to meet with my team daily for 15 mins (the "Stand-Up")?

Nobody can force you. That is entirely up to you. Agile as a methodology encourages you to do so, and that's the theory. But let's take this to the real world. We all know that practice varies from theory. Say for example you are working on 10 projects at the same time. Yes, it happens. If you were meeting 15 mins daily for each project that means you would be spending 150 minutes of your day just in stand-ups which would be completely inefficient and unproductive. So you might need to turn your daily stand-up to a "weekly" stand up for some of those 10 projects. Yes, I know this is not ideal or what theory dictates. But we have to adapt. We have to be flexible, the Agile way. Another option would be to talk to your Manager so you can only focus on a few/major priorities.

7. Is it true that Agile means no planning and no documentation?

No, nothing is further from the truth. In Agile you plan and document all the time, but you keep it lean. You do it quickly and efficiently. You don't write 50 page documents that nobody is going to read. If you write something you keep it short and simple. You perform Planning in your Sprint Planning sessions prior to starting every sprint and you document all the time by writing down your user stories. You also document your retrospectives and before starting your project you also perform your due diligence (business plan, resourcing, etc. like you would on any project).

8. Is Agile only for IT projects?

No, it isn't. Agile was born in IT, but it is used across all industries. So people use Agile for sales, operations, procurement, marketing projects and more. Pretty much for anything you can think of. People even use it for things such as planning weddings. So for their personal projects.

9. So are you saying Agile is suitable for any project?

No, I'm not saying that. Agile is not suitable for any and every project. But it is for the vast majority of projects.

10. But how do I know then if my project is an Agile project or not?

Ask yourself questions to determine whether the characteristics of the project fit an Agile project. For example, does the customer want to be involved in the development process and have input along the way? Is the customer willing to receive an initial product quickly and then enhanced versions over time? Is the delivery time frame a short one, a year tops? Or is it more of a multi-year project, very complex, very formal, bureaucratic, etc.? And so on. You get the picture. When you put the project to the test with these type of questions (and others you can think of), you will be able to answer yourself whether the project is suitable for Agile or not. Trust your instinct, trust what you have learned.

11. What does MVP stand for?

MVP is an acronym for Minimum Viable Product. It basically means keep it simple!!! Don't build a Ferrari if all you need is a skateboard! A lot of times people over complicate things in projects and sometimes end up in never ending cycles of finding the "perfect" solution, or building the "perfect" app or product; or they might want to test, fix, test, fix, test and so on which usually ends up in the project unnecessarily extending itself. Agile, encourages you to build the minimum you really need (without compromising quality of course) and then iterating over time. So don't be afraid to release something to the market or into production and then improving it. Companies do this all the time! Even established companies do it, once they become Agile.