AGILE PASSPORT
Popular Misconceptions of Agile

1. Only for use on IT projects isn't it?

WRONG

No, Agile principles can be applied to any type of project.

Incorrect

2. Agile Means "No Commitment"

Some think that Agile teams don't make commitments - it's just six to eight developers working until someone declares "We're done!". On the contrary, successful Agile teams are extremely realistic and transparent in what they promise to deliver.

3. Agile Development is Not Predictable

False

Successful Agile teams bring predictability to development because every step of the way they're communicating, deploying and adapting to change (and keeping the documentation current). Every two weeks, they release a set of features that they stated two weeks prior they were going to work on. They meet expectations and deliver on their predictions.

Not True!

4. Agile Is a Silver Bullet

Proponents of Agile will sometimes claim that moving to Agile will "fix all your problems." That isn't the case. It's important to stress that the Agile Manifesto is a set of values and principles that define a core attitude for software development. These values point to collaboration, rapid feedback loops and quality. In this way, Agile exposes your problems. Once exposed, teams can work to eliminate friction and blocking issues.

5. Agility Helps in Every Case

WRONG!

Just as Agile isn't a silver bullet, there are cases where the popular Agile software development methodologies aren't a good fit. Developing systems that put human life at risk (such as the NASA space program) require a much higher level of requirement and design, and can be a good argument for a waterfall-style approach. Of course, even in those situations, the values of collaboration, communication and rapid feedback loops - as well as a focus on quality -- all apply. And the NASA space program didn't go from zero to a man on the moon; it iterated by starting with the X-15 rocket, and then the Mercury and Gemini programs, before the eleventh Apollo mission actually landed humans on the moon.

6. There's Only One Way to Do Agile

FALSE!

The Agile Manifesto consists of four values and 12 principles; it doesn't document implementation details. As long as you're adhering to the Agile Manifesto's values and principles, you should be considered Agile.

7. Agile Doesn't Need Up-Front Design

INCORRECT

There's a misconception that Agile teams do all their design work "on the fly." What is true is that design needs to be done at the last responsible moment. This could be up front for some design aspects. This is commonly referred to as emergent architecture and design. It emerges as needed - not before and not after. "Big, up-front design" tries to answer every single question prior to the questions even being surfaced. Agile teams design the big rocks first, then the medium rocks and, finally, the small rocks. This process correctly identifies the questions as they become clear, therefore providing the correct answers when needed.

8. Agility is Pain-Free

Not True

Transforming from a traditional waterfall team into a successful Agile team is not an insignificant effort. There are serious growing pains involved with such a transformation; you won't just completely change everything about your culture overnight. It will take study, practice and courage to make the change. The goal is to make sure that you fail fast when you try new things, so you can quickly try a new approach. If you can work your way through the learning curve, you'll end up much better off in the end.

9. Agile means No Documentation

Wrong

You can have as much documentation as you like in Agile. Documentation is just another deliverable, if it brings you value then schedule it and produce it like anything else. Please be aware: documentation is often unread, often fails to communicate, is used as a defensive tool and is typically the second most expensive think on a large project (after rework).

10. Agile means No Planning

INCORRECT

No, again, Agile probably has more planning. Planning is spread out through the whole development exercise rather than at the front and it is the work of everybody rather than one or two anointed individuals.

WRONG!

11. Developers get to do what they like

Agile needs more discipline from the team and what gets done should be lead from a specific role usually the Business Analyst. If developers are doing what they like then there is a failure of in this role.

12. Agile doesn't work for fixed deadline projects

False

Agile works best in fixed deadline project environments.