

Inspiring project management with Agile

Laurens Bonnema
& Dick Croes

Authors: Laurens Bonnema & Dick Croes
Cover design: Laurens Bonnema & Dick Croes
ISBN: 9789464855661
© Laurens Bonnema & Dick Croes

Preface

We live in an age in which many changes impact our lives. Not all of these changes are unexpected, but they have a huge impact on our society and the quality of life as well as in the field of professional project management. Not only in the type of projects that we are presented with but also in the way in which we manage these projects. This requires new leadership. In project management and the way in which we make these projects a success.

Project management is and remains a people profession, regardless of the approach. But right now, we need to be agile and show resilience in order to be distinctive and successful.

Scientific research has shown that 40% of all economic activity in the Netherlands is project-based and that percentage is increasing. Because complexity is increasing, the issues require an international solution (such as sustainability). More and more organizations are organized in a project-oriented way and tackle their issues accordingly. Project management is increasingly becoming a distinctive competency.

To successfully bring a change (project) to conclusion, a number of elements are needed. In addition to knowledge of the field and the sector, a good methodology or framework is of great importance. But also professionals with the right competencies. These elements are inextricably linked. An IPMA Certificate is of great value to gain insight into your competencies as an Agile project professional. Understanding where your strengths lie, which project suits you best, or what you need to further develop yourself, is a good step in your professional development. Craftsmanship remains the basis.

In recent years, the Agile approach to tackling projects has really taken off, with more and less success. An Agile approach requires a different mindset from the person driving the change, from the professionals involved in various teams and—and this is sometimes overlooked—from the organization in which the Agile project is executed.

An Agile project cannot do without sufficient project management, predictability, determining functionality and decision-making to achieve a successful conclusion.

The book that lies before you now, 'Inspiring Project Management with Agile', provides a good handle for implementing this in projects with an Agile approach.

This book is written by two people who have more than earned their spurs in Agile Project Management in recent years. Laurens Bonnema and Dick Croes have managed to bundle their enormous knowledge and experience and look at the world of Agile project management from a broad perspective and what makes these projects successful. This combination has enabled them to compile this valuable book and to make a major contribution to the professionalization of our beautiful profession.

Project success is a choice!

Joop Schefferlie
IPMA President

Preface by the authors.

Years ago we ran into each other at an event of the Agile Consortium where we both were speakers. We already knew each other because we previously worked together on the development of the Agile Master exam. At the bar after the event we decided to write a book together. Since we both had project management backgrounds, this seemed like THE topic for this book. Because we both had busy jobs as Agile Coaches the writing, certainly at the start, didn't go very fast. Moreover, we had to get used to each other because we both have a different style of writing. At one point we reserved our Sunday mornings for writing. Rented an office in Rotterdam where we were faithfully present every Sunday at 9 o'clock in the morning. In between we also rented a bungalow for a few weekends to work out complex subjects. But it wasn't just writing the book, we exchanged our experiences, gave each other tips on how to do things better in our assignments and became friends too. At one point we said to each other: "Even if this book is never published, we would never have wanted to miss this, these Sunday mornings have been so valuable." But now it is really there. A book about inspiring project management with Agile. We hope that reading this book gives you as much inspiration as it gave us on our Sunday mornings. But we are now faced with another dilemma: how are we going to fill in our Sunday mornings?

Dick & Laurens

Table of content

1	Introduction	11
2	What is Agile?	15
2.1	Agile thinking and way of working	15
2.2	The Agile Manifesto	18
2.3	Principles.....	22
3	What is a project?	33
3.1	Managing an Agile project.....	39
3.2	Project management structure	40
4	Preparation.....	45
4.1	Stakeholders	45
4.2	Procurement and outsourcing	49
4.3	Communication.....	52
5	Time, costs and other project constraints.....	57
5.1	The iron triangle.....	58
5.2	The golden pentagon.....	59
5.3	The diamond octagon.....	61
5.4	The platinum decagon	63
6	Risks	67

- 7 Planning an staffing71
 - 7.1 Planning.....71
 - 7.2 Staffing.....79

- 8 Boot camp83

- 9 Execution101
 - 9.1 Check, control, monitor105
 - 9.2 Compliancy & Quality Systems.....115
 - 9.3 Visual management with Big Visual Information Radiators123

- 10 Completion.....137

1 Introduction

This book is about Agile project management. 'Agile' means flexible, so it is about managing projects with quick and easy grace as opposed to traditional waterfall project management, which focuses on realizing a pre-established plan with as few deviations as possible. Agile originated at the end of the last century as a counterpart to the waterfall approach. This resulted in the Agile Manifesto¹ in 2001 at a conference near Salt Lake City. At that time, the term Agile also emerged as a collective term for a non-traditional, short-cycle project approach. The essence of the Agile approach is expressed in the Agile Manifesto and the underlying Agile principles.

An Agile project approach is aimed at projects where the end product of a project is not fully ironed out in advance or when it can be expected that the requirements and wishes of the client with regard to the end product will change during the project.

Before starting a project, and whether or not to execute it in an Agile manner, the question arises whether there is a project at all. "Is this really a project, or a line activity that is being approached on a project basis for budgetary reasons?" Setting up a project organization is overkill for a line activity. It is better to simply place a line activity in the line organization, if necessary with special attention in the form of putting it on the agenda in regular meetings. For this there is no need for project management. A real project is a unique initiative of a temporary nature with a clear objective. For such an initiative, a separate project organization is created to operate separately from the line organization. This requires project management.

¹ <http://Agilemanifesto.org/>

The aim of an Agile project setup is to leave sufficient room for advancing insight from the stakeholders, who, for this purpose, are expressly involved in the project as closely as possible. Due to the regular delivery of (partial) products at a fixed time intervals, delivery is short-cycled, the overview is preserved and the risks are limited and spread.

From the point of view of a project manager, an Agile approach mainly helps to focus on the essence of project management.

It is usually not possible to exactly predict in advance what will happen during the execution of a project. A good project plan takes this into account. The classic way to take unexpected events into account is to build in buffers in the detailed planning. By properly managing the utilization of the buffers, the project can be completed within the agreed time and budget. However, buffers have an important drawback: work tends to fill the time available for it (Parkinson, 1955). The built-in buffers are therefore almost always used.

One of the core values of Agile is adapting based on feedback. This applies not only to requirements, wishes and design, but also to the plan and timeline. Therefore, most Agile projects make use of rolling wave adaptive planning. This way of planning is not reserved for Agile projects per se, but an internationally recognized best practice that has been included in the Project Management Body Of Knowledge (PMBOK) by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

We also apply the principle of the rolling wave adaptive planning² to the total project by not drawing up a comprehensive plan and starting immediately with a complete project team.

² <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/manage-innovation-programs-rolling-wave-3515>

The outline planning consists of four parts, namely:

1. Determining the scope by determining project objectives
2. Refining the scope by translating objectives into features
3. Estimation of the features in terms of time and money
4. Realization of the first features and validation of the previous estimates with one team.

With the insights obtained, we staff the rest of the project team and plan the remaining project in more detail in the project kick-off boot camp. This boot camp is an important element in the Agile project approach because it lays the foundation for collaboration in a project context.

In this book, we guide the reader through the entire process of Agile project management.

