Agile Project Management: Myth or Fact?

Shadreck Mudziwepasi
Certified Disciplined Agilist
Agenda

• The Context of Large Organizations
• What is Agile Project Management
• Agile Roles: Scrum Masters
• Using PMOs to add Value
• Without a Project Manager?
• Conclusion
Large organisations and the Cynefin model

"Stewart identifies battlefields, markets, ecosystems and corporate cultures as complex systems that are "impervious to a reductionist, take-it-apart-and-see-how-it-works approach, because your very actions change the situation in unpredictable ways."

What is Agile Project Management?

- Perhaps the most pure - definition of Agile Project Management comes from the Disciplined Agile Manifesto itself:
  - Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
  - Consumable Solutions over comprehensive documentation
  - Stakeholder collaboration over contract negotiation
  - Responding to change over following a plan

- Agile Project Management is an iterative development methodology that values human communication and feedback, adapting to changes and producing working results
Agile Roles – Scrum Masters

- Scrum Masters / Coaches are very good in providing stewardship of their teams’ values, processes and behaviours
- In some organisations, they are viewed and treated almost as command and control Project managers – made “responsible” for increasing velocity or productivity for example. This is a clear antipattern
- May not always possess the political skillset necessary to effectively navigate organisational channels – this limits their ability to “remove impediments” beyond a very basic team level
Using PMOs to add Value

• Real-Life Examples of Agile Project Management:
  • Baseball Game
• A baseball manager very much has to be an Agile Project Manager.
• Every Season is a major project made up of 162 games, and each game is an iteration of that project
• Imagine if the baseball manager put the same players in the same positions, battling in the same order for all 162 games despite injuries, poor performance, or bad match-ups
• In fact, Agile is all over baseball. Infield scrum meetings at the pitcher’s mound, phone calls to the bullpen (not emails), a concrete result (win or loss) at the end of every iteration

©DisciplinedAgileConsortium #DADay2018
How do PMOs add value?

• Act as diligent organisational navigators, facilitators and negotiators
• Work hand-in-hand with the coaches, POs, and the entire team in order to ensure early and effective communications and alignment
• Have neither the time nor the slightest inclination to micro-manage team
• Are firm advocates and contributors to the constant evolution of organizational governance and agility

Therefore,

• The notion that, complex organisations can effectively deliver high-quality business solutions without the help of skilled project managers is a remains a myth.
• The fact is that we still need the political savvy, organisational awareness and time-proven techniques that professional project managers bring to the table
Without a Project Manager?

• The following are a few (alas typical) organizational dysfunctions that I always encounter in situations that lack skilled PMOs:

• Why was something so risky left until later iterations?
• Why have we waited until it was inevitable to invite corporate security and privacy functions to the table? (in cases that involve security issues)
• Why was a 2-month reality vs. plan gap allowed to develop?
• Why wasn’t anyone checking in with marketing and trends more frequently
Conclusion

• The answer to all these type of questions can be best summed up as: 20\textsuperscript{th} century agile and its resistance to the very idea of project managers – in addition to a hyper focus on Business value. However PMOs seem to add great value to the other types of work (architecture, technical debt, risk reduction).

• Lightweight DA Milestones and governance address these issues quite directly and efficiently in its enterprise model.
The DAD Milestones & Enterprise Model

DAD Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Fundamental Question Asked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder vision</td>
<td>Do stakeholders agree with your strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proven architecture</td>
<td>Can you actually build this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued viability</td>
<td>Does the effort still make sense?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient functionality</td>
<td>Does it make sense to release the current solution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production ready</td>
<td>Will the solution work in production?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delighted stakeholders</td>
<td>Are stakeholders happy with the deployed solution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!