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How to Start Applying the Agile Methodology?

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In our previous article, we mentioned concepts such as user story, iteration, a retrospective which are essential when implementing the **[Agile] methodology** and we briefly explained the requirements needed to be provided in order for an **[Agile]** project to be successful.

In this article, we will look at the useful implementations to put this method into practice, if you are organizing an Agile team in your company or if you have joined an **[Agile]** team.

1. User Story

A user story is one of the main inputs to the product/service development process. It can be considered as a syntax with 3 components. When developing a product, the user story must be able to respond to these 3 components.

"As a [person/user/character],

[I want to do] something,

So that I can derive [reward/benefit]"

2. Narrative Collaboration

Providing a discussion environment through user story is a healthy way to clarify the need amongst the team, to speak the same language and to determine the product/output requirements. **[Agile]** is separated from traditional methods through this collaboration.

3. Sprint

Another method that distinguishes **[Agile]** from traditional work method is the sprint programme which improves the product/service development process, often hampered by documentation and inadequate communication, in 2-4 week iterations. In this process, the interaction of the team is kept alive by daily meetings and feedback activities. Keeping iterations short, observation levels high, doing a retrospective when the process is over helps to determine what works and what needs to be improved.

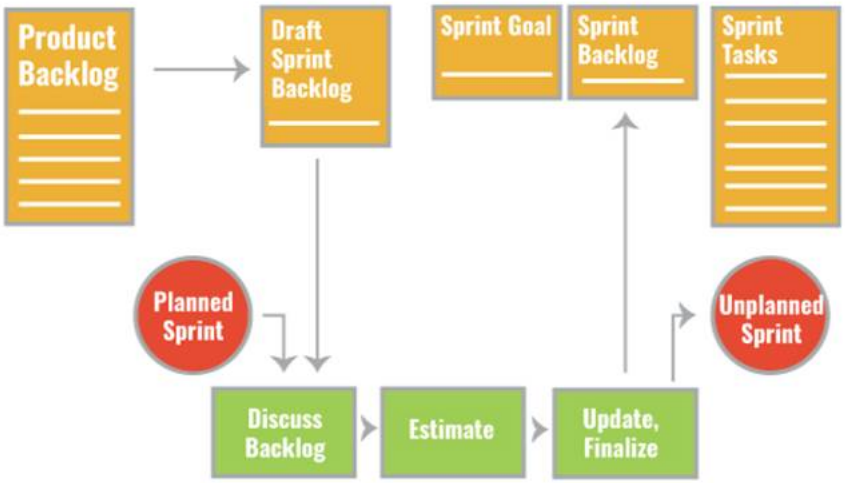
4 elements are required for iterations to pay off:

- **Applicable ideas:** It is not a realistic approach to expect a healthy outcome by taking an idea that requires 9-month work process and implement it in a 2-week **[Agile]** iteration. Without losing the big picture, ideas must be divided into smaller chunks, thus implementable steps.

- **Keeping the problem's focus in mind:** As ambiguity is in innovation's nature, teams shouldn't forget about the problem that is trying to be resolved whilst focusing on a generating specific solution; only this way flexibility can be provided and different solutions with different perspectives can be brought.

- **Retrospective evaluation: [Agile]** method won't be beneficial if the team does not carry out a regular and consistent evaluation of what is useful and what needs improvement.

- **Multidisciplinary teams:** Dedicated and self-organizing teams became productive and became an indispensable element for every new company seeking innovation. Organizational structure split into silos and projects dividing company resources into departments are now called the old normal and are seen as non-usable elements.

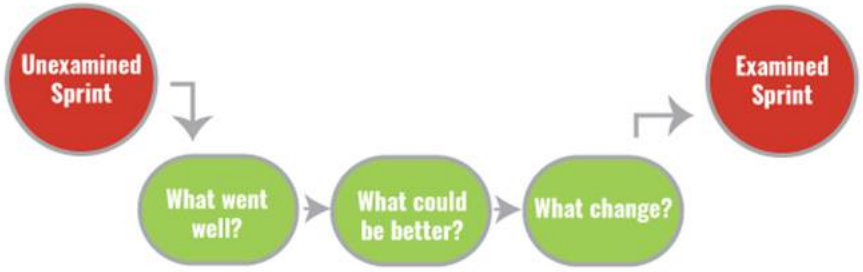


How to implement sprint?

It is crucial to remember: **Not perceiving iteration as a magic wand touching upon the product!** Iterations will be beneficial for time management, yet the quality of the end product/service depends on the team and its ability to self-organize. The first sprint can be put into practice after the process has been started by selecting a set to minimize in the next iteration from the list of ideas gathered in consideration of providing a good product/service.

Over the course of sprint, in high-functioning **[Agile]** teams, individuals organize themselves to distribute the work in the most optimum way, help each other and make sure that everything is understood correctly. To ensure this, they make short and daily stand-ups preferably 15 minutes long and it is ideally desirable for everyone to respond to the following questions. (4th question was added by StratejiCo.)

1. **What have I succeeded yesterday?**
2. **What will I success today?**
3. **Which barriers are slowing my process?**
4. **What do I expect from my team mates?**



How to implement retrospective?

One of the most important activities to realize the output of the **[Agile]** method is a retrospective evaluation. This feedback work, which the team will probably spend around few hours after an iteration is done, will contribute to avoidance of possible mistakes in the future.

One of the most used methods for this evaluation is **"5 reasons"** method. When something goes wrong in the process, it is necessary to ask the question "Why?" 5 times to get to the bottom of the problem. The result from this should make a rule that can be followed in the next iteration on what to do and how to do.

We have further deepened our processual approach with concepts such as iteration, sprint, retrospective exclusive to Agile method. In our next article, we will look at the differences that distinguish **[Agile]** from other methods.

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