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# What Are The Differences Of Agile?

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> **In our previous article**, we spoke of some useful ways to practice **Agile** in your company, or in your team. Moving forward to our next article, we will now discuss some of the major differences of Agile from conventional project management methods.

## Agile vs. Project Management

**[Agile]** is not about project management. At least, it's not about project management in the sense the term is typically used. You might ask: But what about all the Agile books and materials for people whose careers are built around project management? Isn't that what **[Agile]** is?

Commercially speaking, yes. But there is more to see in the big picture. Sometimes distinctions don't matter, but in comparison of agile versus project management, they do. The reason it matters is that traditional project management is about making big (long-term) plans, managing known constraints, optimizing around those, and generally treating people like interchangeable parts.

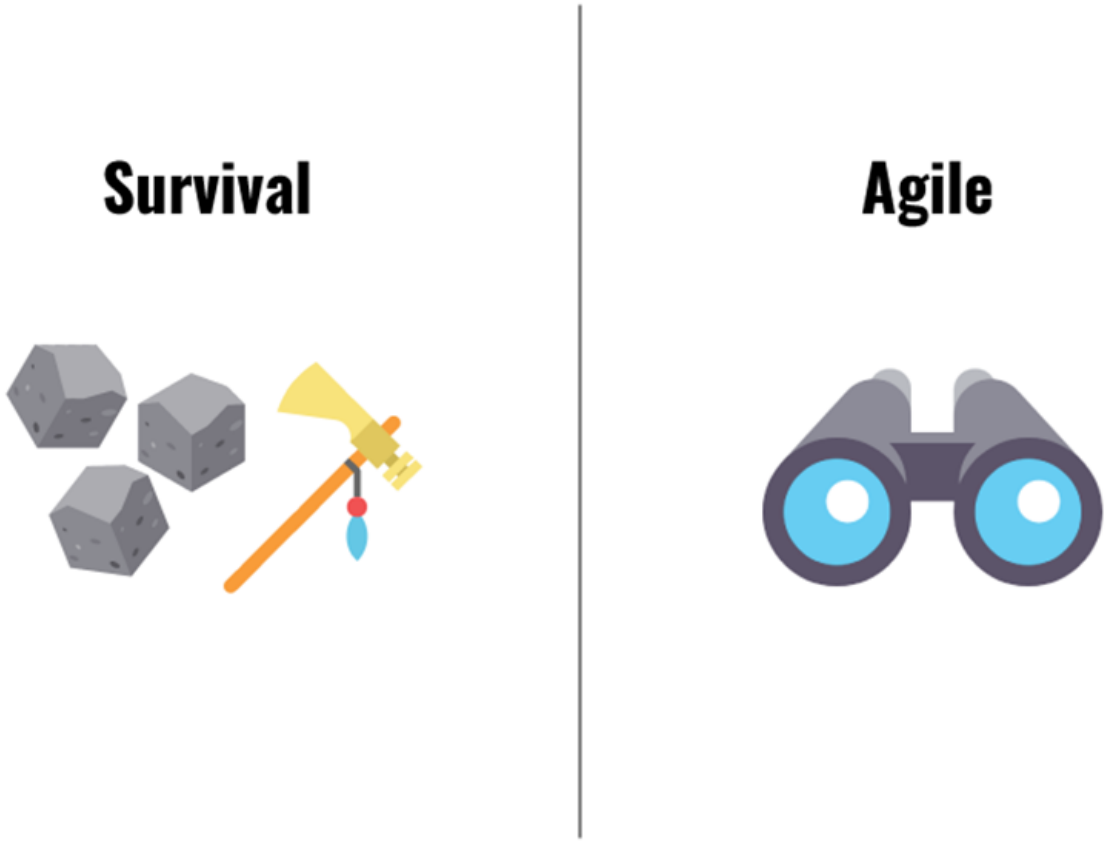
Agile is different in a way that matters a lot in practice. It's about focusing on interactions, also forming self-organizing, multidisciplinary and high functioning teams. That matters because if you shim Agile practices into the same old approach to managing projects, you end up setting expectations where you'll fall short. Then everyone thinks **[Agile]** doesn't work for the project and things usually get worse after that point.

[**Agile**] is a kind of un-project management. You can measure your success of "**managing**" by the frequency and depth of incidences where you have to ask or tell team members what to do. The more you see the team helping each other and taking initiatives to create a valuable outcome, the better you're doing agile-wise.

| Area | Not Agile / Before | Agile / After |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding of Valuable Outcomes | Vague, low | Specific, high |
| Inputs | Requirements | Narrative collaboration |
| Understanding of User | Low, distant | High, close |
| Management | Localized metrics | Team / project metrics |
| Blame-iness | High | Low |
| Collaboration | Infrequent & Formal | Frequent & easy |
| Plan | Plan | Experimentation |
| Testing & Validation | Few, far between | Many, frequent |

## Crucial Points that Differentiate Agile

[**Agile**] **requires;**



> To be observant

> To be cooperative

> Exchanging ideas and sharing them

> Discussing all ideas with the team to create the most optimum outcome

*Let's discuss some of the critical points that makes* [**Agile**] *different.*

## 1. Team Members

[**Agile**] team operates by constant questioning, reasoning and moves forward with an outcome focus in a cooperative way. Every iteration allows the team to work as a unit and helps them to create a valuable output in accordance with the desired outcome.

In [**Agile**], teams motivate each other without the barriers and the obstacles of hierarchy. Every member has a solid idea about their responsibilities. However, this consciousness is not brought to the table by the leading behavior of a project manager, but by the team itself. The team is able to make decisions on their own, for its own sake.



Although it seems like the amount of effort spent by team members in order to get to know each other and get used to each other is too much, after the first couple of days of a 14-day long sprint passes by, the effort is decreased greatly.

## 2. Time Management

In **[Agile]**, sprints are crucial in order to prevent the excessive amount of time spent on conventional project management methods. However, it is also crucial to comprehend that sprints can fix time, but not the content.

Sprints have a definite time period. It is not as flexible to resources and dependencies as they are in classical project management methods. The outcome which was obtained at the end of one sprint can be developed in another sprint.

## 3. Culture

Collaboration lies at the basis of the **[Agile]**. It is essential for everyone to know what work they will be doing and working in this respect to get a good result. As an experimental culture, Agile allows team members to share and exchange their ideas openly throughout the project process. If this environment has not been created, it means that the team has created the most important hurdle to reach the best result themselves.

## 4. Agile Coach vs. Project Manager

Agile Coach is not a traditional project manager. It has a **facilitator** role for the team. The point where Agile Coach differentiates from traditional project managers is ensuring that the team members do not stand aside after crossing out their to-do list and saying, "I have done my share." It is also Agile Coach's task to ensure mutual understanding and collaboration between the team members. This is one of the hardest factor of implementing Agile. At this point, the Agile Coach needs to understand each and every colleague very well. This is of utmost importance to produce a worthwhile output.

## 5. Methodology

Different methods such as **Scrum, Kanban, Extreme Programming (XP), Crystal** etc. can be applied to manage the Agile process. When you use one or several of these methods, you need to be careful to choose the most appropriate one for your company's structure and act flexibly to get the best outcome.

**For example;** **Scrum** is one of the most commonly used Agile methodology. It emerged as a product development method in the mid-1980s and was later adapted to software and Agile principles by **Ken Schwaber and Mike Beedle**. Daily stand-up meeting are Scrum's best-known rituals.

**Kanban** was developed in the late 1940s by **Taiichi Ohno** to prevent single accumulation of inventory and work breakdowns on factory floor in Toyota. As a way, Kanban deals with the concept of "flow" in the process of doing business. It is concerned with the evenness of the output, produced by the team, to the product development process. As is, it is similar to Lean management.

Kanban is not an **[Agile]** methodology like Scrum or XP. It can be used to enhance the work process after choosing one of these methodologies. It is not alternative to Scrum or XP, but complementary.

## 6. Product/Service Output

Producing appropriate output according to user/customer expectancy lies at the heart of the Agile method. However, determining the needs of the end user working accordingly does not necessarily mean that the user expectation will be fully met. At this point, factors such as user not knowing what they want since the beginning or failure to describe what they want properly. This situation can be solved by practicing the Agile method frequently.

**Throughout our series of articles, we tried to handle Agile with a focus on its principles, application methods and its differences from conventional project management methods.**

**If you want to implement Agile into your company as it becomes a leading way of doing business in VUCA world, contact us via info@stratejico.com address.**

Comment & Questions We would like to hear your thoughts on this report. Please get in touch with us.

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