Turning Point

Coaching

Agile Suitability Assessment:
Is your project right for Agile?

Identify Risks | Set Up for Success | Pinpoint Needed Change

I. About this Tool
Many organizations choose between Agile and Waterfall on an ad-hoc basis. However, leading IT groups recognize that the selection of the right methodology plays a key role in the realization of project benefits.

This tool provides a framework for assessing whether a project is suited for Agile and supports decisions related to:
• Mitigating risks specific to Agile delivery
• Determining the portion of the project portfolio that should use Agile
• Pinpointing necessary changes to team & stakeholders' skill sets to support Agile's use

II. Audience
This tool is geared toward project managers, development leads, and project oversight boards that make the decision on development methodology (often in consultation with their teams, the Head of Applications and/or the PMO).

III. Instructions
Pages 4 to 6 contain attributes organized into Project Characteristics, Sponsor and Stakeholder Characteristics, and Project Resource. Each attribute, contains a description that corresponds to a suitability score: (3) High, (2) Moderate, and (1) Low. Assign a score in the right column to each attribute based on how closely it aligns with your project.

Page 3 is a filled-in sample scorecard.

IV. Results Score
On page 7, tally your scores to determine if your project has a low, moderate, or high suitability for Agile.

V. Next Steps
For projects scored as "Consider for Agile," review your Section Scores and variance on individual questions from the "High Agile Suitability" description. Comparing your project's answers/characteristics to the High Agile Suitability model will point you to the project risks you may encounter with Agile.

For projects "Not Recommended for Agile," note that the Scorecard may surface risks that could negatively affect project outcomes even with traditional waterfall delivery. Larger, more complex projects may score lower on the Scorecard. However, these projects can be segmented into smaller initiatives and re-evaluated. Agile methodology is well-suited when complex projects have been broken into smaller initiatives.

SAMPLE	High Agile Suitability	Moderate Agile Suitability	Low Agile Suitability	My Score
Scoring	**3**	**2**	**1**	
<u>**Initiative Characteristics**</u>				
Project size	Duration > 12 weeks with a fully allocated team of at least 5	N/A	Duration < 12 weeks with a fully allocated team of at least 5	1
Requirements	Frequently changing / evolving	Subject to moderate recoverable change	Stable with low risk of change	2
COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) solutions / SaaS / vendor developing custom solution	No COTS solution or vendor has demonstrable agile experience	Vendor has demonstrable agile experience	Vendor has no / little Agile experience	2
Environments / legacy code / dependencies	No environment contention / legacy code structured for incremental delivery / few dependencies on other teams	Some environment contention / legacy code needs some re-structuring / some dependencies on other teams	Environment contention / legacy code not structured for incremental delivery / many dependencies on other teams	1
Work can be de-composed into work items that are small enough to be completed within a few days and provide testable business functionality	De-composition possible	Most of the work can be de-composed with a few exceptions	De-composition is not possible	3
Release Management	Can implement in multiple releases	N/A	Must release all functionality at one time	3
Scope, budget or deadline is flexible	Scope <u>OR</u> budget <u>OR</u> deadline is flexible	N/A	Scope <u>AND</u> budget <u>AND</u> deadline are fixed	1

Total 13.0

Initiative Characteristics	High Agile Suitability	Moderate Agile Suitability	Low Agile Suitability	My Score
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Work can be de-composed into work items that are small enough to be completed within a few days and provide testable business functionality	De-composition possible	Most of the work can be de-composed with a few exceptions	De-composition is not possible	
Release Management	Can implement in multiple releases	N/A	Must release all functionality at one time	
Scope, budget or deadline is flexible	Scope OR budget OR deadline is flexible	N/A	Scope AND budget AND deadline are fixed	

Total

	High Agile Suitability	Moderate Agile Suitability	Low Agile Suitability	My Score
Scoring	3	2	1	
<u>Sponsor and Stakeholder Characteristics</u>				
Sponsor buy-in For Agile methodology	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business organization willing to commit Product Manager, Product Owner's and SME's time to collaborate with team	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business, Sponsor, Stakeholders, etc. are comfortable with Agile metrics/reporting	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business has experience with or recent training on Agile (or is scheduled to be trained)	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business and IT Management understands role as Servant Leaders to establish boundaries, allow teams to self-organize, empower teams to organized / manage work & support teams in developing working software	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business sponsor / Product Owner available and able to make quick decisions on priorities	Yes	Somewhat	No	
Business representatives / SMEs able to validate and accept functionality as they are delivered in increments (in addition to QA / QE testing)	Yes	Somewhat	No	

Total

	High Agile Suitability	Moderate Agile Suitability	Low Agile Suitability	My Score
Scoring	**3**	**2**	**1**	
<u>Delivery Team Resources</u>				
Percent of resources that will be dedicated / allocated full-time (i.e. fully committed)	Core team is allocated full-time	N/A	Core team is not allocated full-time	
Supporting departments are allocated to incrementally create, build and support environments, continuous integration & continuous delivery efforts	Supporting departments are allocated & will be responsive	Some supporting departments are allocated & will be responsive	None of the supporting departments are allocated or can be relied upon to be responsive	
Delivery team menbers' skills (vs. roles)	All team members are utility players (i.e. generalists) that step outside their role	Some of the team members have generalist skills, some are solely specialized to their role	Each member of the team has a singular functional role/skill set and cannot / are not permitted to work outside of functional area	
Team members' Agile experience or recent training (or are scheduled to be trained)	All have Agile experience or training	Some members have experience or have received training; others unfamiliar with Agile	Most/all of the team are inexperienced with Agile / have not received training	
Testing / validation skils on delivery team	Testing / validation skills embedded in the Agile team	N/A	Testing skills lacking / limited; may create bottleneck	

<div align="right">Total</div>

Calculating Your Score

Tally your scores from the preceding pages using the chart below. The total of all three scores will reveal your project's suitability for Agile.

Initiative Characteristics Score (page 4)	
Sponsor and Stakeholder Characteristics Score (page 5)	
Delivery Team Resources Score (page 6)	
Total	

Understanding Your Score

For scores from 42 to 63, you should consider using Agile for your project
For scores from 0 to 19, Agile is not recommended for your project.
Scores that range from 20 to 41 require additional consideration before proceeding as there are risks to using agile that may impede delivery.

The next few pages provide more information on Agile's suitability for your project.

Initiative Characteristics	Relevance to Agile Delivery
Project size	Agile is a disruptive change at the outset that impacts a team's delivery. There needs to be sufficient time for the team to learn how Scrum / Kanban works and derive benefit from this
Requirements	Agile is well suited for initiatives with uncertain requirements or requirements that will evolve through iterations
COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) solutions / SaaS / vendor developing custom solution	COTS or SaaS modification / enhancement / configuration initiatives on existing products require vendors to be experienced with Agile and delivering increments over iterations
Environments / legacy code / dependencies	Initiatives that have environmental constraints, legacy code that is not structured for incremental deliver and/or a high degree of dependencies on external teams are not candidates for agile delivery.
Initiatives can be de-composed into independent work items that are small enough to be completed within a few days and provide testable business functionality	Initiatives where requirements are unable to be decomposed into smaller increments of valuable functionality that the business can test as they are completed are not well suited for agile
Release Management	Agile is structured to enable multiple releases of Minimum Viable Product increments for customer use whether tied to or independent of a larger release
Scope OR Budget OR Deadline is Flexible	At least one of these boundaries is flexible and can be changed when new information is learned as the team delivers increments of functionality during the iterations

Sponsor & Stakeholder Characteristics	Relevance to Agile Delivery
Sponsor Buy-in	Business sponsors' buy-in to using Agile helps ensure the proper level of business support for the initiative which increases the likelihood that it will succeed
Business organization willing to commit business owner's & SME's time to collaborate with team	Business Unit needs to commit at least 50% of an FTE as a Product Owner (and at least 25% of a Product Manager for programs) to collaborate with the team
Business, Sponsor, Stakeholders, etc. are comfortable with Agile metrics/reporting	Business leaders need to be able to read and understand Agile metrics & reporting so that they understand how the initiative is progressing
Business has experience with or training on Agile (or is scheduled to be trained)	Training or prior experience with Agile improves the likelihood that the Business will understand and effectively execute their role and responsibilities on an Agile team
Business and IT Management understands role as Servant Leaders to establish boundaries, allow teams to self-organize, empower teams to organize / manage work & support teams in developing working software	Business and IT Management (Team Leaders, Directors, etc.) must be comfortable in the role of a Servant Leader that supports delivery of software and commit to avoid micro managing Agile team members
Business sponsor / business owner available and able to make quick decisions on priorities	The business needs to commit individuals who are empowered to make decisions quickly in order to ensure Agile teams can deliver
Business representatives / SMEs able to validate and accept functionality as they are delivered in increments (in addition to ESQA testing)	Business support is needed to validate increments of functionality as they are produced by the Agile team

Delivery Team Resources	Relevance to Agile Delivery
Percent of resources that will be dedicated full-time (i.e. fully committed)	Generally, Agile teams need dedicated core team members to be successful
Supporting departments are allocated to incrementally create, build and support environments, continuous integration & continuous delivery efforts	Shared enterprise resources are available as needed to support Agile teams in delivering increments of working software
Delivery team members' skills	Team members should have (or be willing to develop) generalist skills that enables them to perform a few functions (e.g., coding, QA, testing, eliciting requirements)
Team members' Agile experience or training	Training or past Agile experience provides the foundation for the team to deliver using Agile frameworks and practices
Testing resources	Fully allocated testing people for Agile teams ensures a high degree of collaboration and that the product quality is high in order to avoid costly debugging later

Getting Started

If you think your project could benefit from Agile, but you're not sure where to start, we invite you to reach out for a complimentary consultation.

To learn more about Agile and how we help companies, teams, and individuals complete projects quicker and more cost-effectively, please visit our *Learning Center* or get in touch with us.

Get in Touch

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