

The AGILE MIND-SET

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Making Agile Processes Work



Supplementary resource for the book *The Agile Mind-Set*. More at www.TheAgileMindsetBook.info

Planning with the Agile Mind-Set

EVOLVE THE SOLUTION

- Grow the solution in response to needs. Adapt it to learning about both the needs and the implementation.
- Make the design pliable and simple enough that future adaptations are practical and require little correction or undoing.
- Distinguish the parts that are likely to change from those that are not.
- Plan collaboratively, as everyone has a voice.
- Build for changeability and low cost of change.

TIME-BOX THE WORK

- Do “big work” in a sequence of small time-boxes.
- Given a time-box, have the team identify the best results/outcomes they can achieve. These include value (features and capabilities); risk reduction; and learning and feedback (experiments).
- To plan a meaningful iteration (time-box):
 - ✓ The team must have a good idea about the top few valuable outcomes.
 - ✓ The iteration needs to be long enough for the team to accomplish meaningful results.
 - ✓ The iteration must be disturbance-free.

BE EFFECTIVE, THEN BE EFFICIENT

- Never work for too long without feedback.
- Seek feedback on *something built*, not only on the idea or specification of it.

PLAN FOR LESS

- YAGNI: Will you *really* need this item?
- Otherwise, perhaps you don't *really* need it *now*?
- Split items and commit only to the first few parts.

GUIDELINES FOR SPLITTING ITEMS

- “What’s our biggest unknown here?”
- “What’s the best thing we could learn here?”
- “Which 20% would yield 80% of the return?”
- “If we had only X units (of time or money) to spend, what would we choose to do?”
- “Which assumption or hypothesis should we prove—or disprove?”
- “Which part has the highest cost of delay?”

GUIDELINES FOR ESTIMATION

- Estimate only small- and medium-size work.
- See the big picture, not a pile of tasks.
- Focus on team outcome, not individual busyness.
- Be sure the whole team estimates collaboratively.
- Use team units (the team owns the outcomes).
- Change the estimation method if it doesn't work.
- Distinguish ideal effort from actual time.

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