Delivering Solutions with Agility Without Giving Up Quality

Challenges
Organizations must be more and more agile in order to stay competitive and improve their effectiveness in today’s fast-changing business environment. IT managers are often resource-constrained and have to ensure the durability and evolution of the information assets while meeting their customers’ (business users) requirements, who want to capitalize value as quickly as possible and accelerate their time-to-market with new solutions. One way to improve their effectiveness is by using best practices that strengthen their ability to consistently deliver solutions on time, within budget and with the expected quality level.

The Macroscope® Response: Adaptation of the ProductivityCentre and ManagementSuite methods, tailored to the specific needs of Agile projects.

The Agile Delivery Path combines and simplifies the processes and deliverables of the ProductivityCentre™ and ManagementSuite™ methods by integrating the techniques developed by the Agile community. As for all other Macroscope processes, all components of the Agile Delivery Path may be as well further tailored to the needs of a specific project.

The Agile Delivery Path comprises a specialized process, a set of deliverables, fundamentals, concepts, roles, techniques, and tools such as project plans that can enable you to quickly start an Agile project. Engineering discipline is built-in, making both project management and systems development processes predictable, significantly reducing risks related to an Agile project.

Approach
Specific Adaptation to an Agile Project
The Agile Delivery Path has been adapted from the ProductivityCentre and ManagementSuite methods for the specific needs of an Agile project. It provides a light version of the processes of both methods that combines project management and system development activities and emphasizes:

- Team work through workshops bringing together business and solution delivery resources
- Flexibility and capacity to adapt to changing requirements throughout the project
- Accelerating gradual delivery of functionality through short iterative cycles (releases and iterations) to allow early usage of the system, feedback from the client sooner and at regular intervals.
**Agile Common Practices**

The Agile Delivery Path uses the following agile common practices:

- **Short Iterative Cycles of Fixed Length**: The client is delivered working business functionality at regular intervals. These intervals are called cycles, iterations or time boxes.
- **Feature Planning**: The client is involved in the prioritization and delivery of small batches of business functionality.
- **Constant Feedback**: The business system management group (supervision) and delivery group (project management) are intimately involved in the development of the system; a wider client audience may assess the functionality at regular intervals.
- **Change Tolerance**: Changes to functionality are to be expected and incorporated rapidly into the delivery cycle.
- **Team Proximity**: The team works closely together, often in the same physical space.
- **Client Intimacy**: The business and IT staff jointly design the application.
- **Team Culture**: There is a common team philosophy and culture towards team success, that is marked by the successful delivery of a quality solution to the business.
- **Prototyping**: The use of prototyping is essential and supports the validation of architecture and design decisions.

**Agile Approach Characteristics**

A key agile fundamental embraced by the Agile Delivery Adaptation is that time and resources are fixed but functionality is not. This is a key differentiator from the traditional projects approach where functionality is fixed but time and resources may vary.

**Processes**

The Agile Delivery Path starts once the project “go-ahead approval” has been received. This approval may originate from the acceptance of a project proposal or an Opportunity Evaluation recommendation. The Agile Delivery Path usually ends once the system developed has been deployed and is under regular operational/maintenance support. However, it may also be used to perform maintenance and support activities.

The Agile Delivery Life Cycle comprises the three following phases:

- **Project Scope and Planning**: Achieve a common understanding of the purpose and scope of the business solution, shape its architecture and plan its delivery. A skeleton version of the system architecture based on current requirements (as opposed to foreseen ones) is defined and a preliminary plan for the delivery of the system by releases is established.
- **Release Design and Construction**: Produce the system components that provide the business functionality planned for the release and validate these components through acceptance testing.
- **Release Implementation**: Deploy the release software into the client’s production environment and prepare the organization for the release.
Agile Delivery – Application
The Agile Delivery Path supports a variety of initiatives described by the characteristics listed below and beyond, by further adapting the proposed approach.

Project Characteristics
- Small team in order to facilitate collaboration
- Skilled and efficient resources in a collaborative environment
- Project scope not specifically defined in a contract
- Technology is familiar to the project resources
- The project team can work at an acceptable pace that can be maintained throughout the project

Solution Characteristics
- Known business requirements and processes, although they may be subject to frequent changes in requirements
- The solution does not require that significant changes be made to the client's business processes
- Relatively simple system or complex system, but that can be broken down into smaller pieces for which complexity is manageable
- Low legacy and low integration system, which is self-contained or can be developed in isolation and does not require significant changes to existing systems

Agile Delivery is Especially Well Suited for the Following Cases:
- Projects for which a rapid and early delivery into the business user hands is required
- Exploratory and innovative projects, which have volatile requirements and must be highly adaptable
- Business and interactive applications
- Non-critical application or mission-critical applications where the critical aspects are defined as requirements from the start and are managed with special attention throughout the project

Leveraging ProductivityCentre and ManagementSuite
Although the Agile approach could be used on a self-sustaining basis within Macroscope, the project teams may look for further detail and guidance in specific areas. This is where the Agile Delivery process of Macroscope shines, by providing the related ProductivityCentre and ManagementSuite links for processes, activities, techniques, and related support material.

For example, although an Agile approach implies that minimal documentation be produced throughout the development process, this does not prevent one from documenting the system architecture and specifications more thoroughly at the end of the project, as would be done in a more “traditional” project, in order to facilitate subsequent maintenance activities or reuse of the system components.
ProductivityCentre provides several process patterns or “paths” that provide detailed and ready-to-use approaches for different types of delivery projects, including maintenance and operation.

ManagementSuite project management processes are based on the principles and framework proposed in A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) published by the Project Management Institute (PMI®). Fujitsu Consulting is officially recognized as a PMI Certified Education Provider.

Benefits

The Agile Delivery Path enables the reaping of benefits in terms of effectiveness, quality and knowledge management, including:

- Improved productivity of project teams
- Rapid adaptation to changes
- Short, feature-based iterative delivery cycles
- Improved solutions quality that meet business expectations
- Higher user satisfaction through alignment with the user’s needs
- Lower development and maintenance costs
- Reduced risk of error, rework, delay and budget overruns
- Improved access to industry best practice processes and experiences
- Solutions delivered on time, on budget with the expected level of quality

Bottom Line

The Agile Delivery Path helps you deliver high-quality software to the organization while controlling IT development and maintenance costs. Whether it involves developing customized applications or implementing Web-based applications, the Agile Delivery Path enables you to manage technological change with confidence.

About Fujitsu Consulting

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