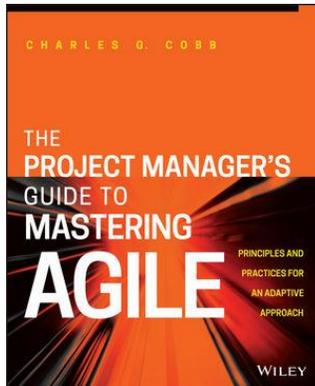


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***The Project Manager's Guide to Mastering Agile: Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach***

Author: **Charles G. Cobb**

Publisher: Wiley

Format: Soft cover; 403 pages List Price: \$65.00

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Reviewer: **Nazanin Mehrooz, PMP, CSM, SA**

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Introduction to the Book

Many industries and organizations are moving away from use of waterfall methodology and adapting agile. Some project managers find themselves more comfortable with using the waterfall approach to manage their project and find it challenging to adapt to this new approach. This book is intended to help them understand agile principles and find ways to transition to the new approach more smoothly. The book also raises visibility into areas where a blend of both approaches may be beneficial to organizations based on the type of work that needs to be managed. Understanding the limitations and benefits of each approach will help project managers address this need better.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is broken down into the following parts:

1. Fundamentals of Agile
2. Agile Project Management
3. Making Agile Work for a Business
4. Enterprise-Level Agile
5. Case Studies
6. Appendices

There are a total of 22 chapters and 4 appendices. The book serves well as a textbook course with summaries of key points and questions which will deepen the understanding and foster additional discussions at the end of each chapter. These

would be ideal topics to start additional discussions in related forums or mentoring sessions.

Highlights: What's New in this Book?

Often when you read books about agile, I discover page after page about all the negative aspects of utilizing waterfall methodology. What I liked about this book is that it raised awareness that some parts of a project may be better managed in a waterfall process based on the type of work and external dependencies. It also helped to understand the limits of each approach rather than thinking there is a magic bullet which covers everything. The focus should be a more balanced integration of both rather than a competitive approach of picking the best methods. Many organizations are utilizing a hybrid approach between the two and discovering it serves them well.

Highlights: What I liked!

I really liked the way this book was laid out. It has a great deal to offer for everyone. It provides a good starting point of understanding why agile has become more popular and the benefits it offers. It clearly describes the different roles, principles and values in simple language and offers sufficient details around each to reinforce the concepts nicely. Additionally, it provided best practices around backlog grooming, pattern-based development approaches and automation testing.

For those who have already had exposure to the agile principles and benefits, the author provided other valuable insights in this book by sharing how to utilize various tools to enhance communication capabilities for both co-located and distributed teams.

For me, the area where I got the most value from this book was how to work towards scaling agile from a few distributed groups to an enterprise level approach. Utilization of VersionOne was also an area of interest for me, so I was glad to Author incorporated plenty of examples and illustrations of using the tool.

Shortfalls: What was Missing?

I can't think of a thing this book is missing. If I had to work really hard at finding a stretch area, it would be to cover benefits of other useful tools like Team Foundation Server (TFS) which is a Microsoft tool. Those who have worked with it often speak of the each of integration with other Microsoft tools and the additional benefits it provided to them in comparison to VersionOne.

Who might benefit from the Book?

This book is very beneficial to anyone who is beginning to think about or has begun to incorporate agile methodology into their group or organization. It is also beneficial for

any project manager working on projects where benefits of balancing aspects of both waterfall and agile methodology can be realized.

Others who would benefit from reading this book are leaders in the organizations like program managers, directors and general managers to determine best ways they can support agile teams and incorporate one of several enterprise-level agile frameworks like Scaled Agile (SAFe), Managed Agile Development, and Disciplined Agile Delivery. Reviewing the case study will help understand the challenges faced in an organization to address the transformation.

Conclusion

The author did a great job of covering many topics in this book from fundamentals of agile, how to make it work for your organization and offering a case study to bring it all together for the reader.

For those who are seeking a better understanding of the differences between agile and waterfall, recommended practices for applying agile at a team and organization level and distinguishing between the enterprise level frameworks, this book covers it all and is a must have.

The Project Manager's Guide to Mastering Agile, by Charles G. Cobb, published by Wiley; 2015, ISBN 978-1-118-99104-6; 403 pages, soft cover. More at <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118991044,subjectCd-BA31.html>

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Nazanin Mehrooz is a certified project manager, scrum master and SAFe Agilist. Nazanin started her career as a software developer and transitioned to leading mid-size teams as a functional manager and (most currently) a senior project manager and Release Train Engineer in Technology Services at BNSF. Her background includes managing a portfolio of 30+ projects with budgets exceeding 15 Million USD. Nazanin is an active volunteer for the PMI Dallas and Fort Worth Chapters.

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