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Agile Approaches on Large Projects in Large Organizations
Author: Brian Hobbs and Yvan Petit
Book Review   Reviewer: Vickie Carvajal, PMP

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***Agile Approaches on Large Projects in Large Organizations***

Author: **Brian Hobbs and Yvan Petit**

Publisher: Project Management Institute, Inc.

List Price: $24.95   Format: soft cover, 133 pages

Publication Date: 2017   ISBN: 978-1-62825-175-3

Reviewer: **Vickie Carvajal, PMP**

Review Date: February 2018

Introduction

In this book, the authors' focus was to evaluate how Agile approaches are used in large projects in large organizations.

The authors provide a summary of how Agile methodolgies and approaches have evolved and are used in software development projects. Their primary focus of the book is to determine the success of Agile when used outside of small noncritical in-house software development projects executed by colocated teams.   They also included information regarding how the Project Management role has evolved due to Agile.

The research documented in the book primarily focused on answering a couple of questions:

- <u>At the project Level</u> - *What challenges are encountred when applying agile methods to large multiteam software projects and what practices have been developed to alleviate these challenges?*

- <u>At the organizational level</u> – *How does the context of large, complex organizations affect the adaptation and adoption of agile appproaches and vice versa?*

Overview of Book's Structure

The book was structured in 7 chapters:

        Chapter 1 – Introduction
        Chapter 2 – Literature Review
        Chapter 3 – Methodology
        Chapter 4 – Results
        Chapter 5 – Discussion

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Chapter 6 – Conclusion
Chapter 7 – Future Research

Within each chapter, the authors provide information supporting their focus for that chapter. There are 133 pages in the book. Chapter 1 is 3 pages long, Chapter 2 is 14 pages long, Chapter 3 is 9 pages long, Chapter 4 is 47 pages long, Chapter 5 is 5 pages long, Chapter 6 is 1 page long and Chapter 7 is 2 pages long. Also included were the following sections at the end of the book. Acknowledgments (1 page long), References (9 pages long), Appendix – Research Survey (33 pages long), About the Authors (1 page long).

Highlights

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chapter 1, the authors provide a background on Agile methodolgies and it's place in today's project management environment. They provide information found in existing literature and areas where there has been minimal focus, therefore putting into perspective the focus of the research documented in the book. They provide an introduction to the research included in the book and highlight that the focus is on the projects and the organizational context in which the projects are executed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 2, the authors provide an overview of existing Agile liternature and break down the existing Agile literature into verious topics including:

- Agile approaches
- Benefits of Agilebenefits of agile
- Agile and Traditional Project Management Approaches
- Scaling Agility
- Examples of Using Agile at Scale
- Scaling Frameworks
- Challenges of Scaling Up Agile

The authors primarily focus on proving details on what has already been published on the various topics included in the chapter. In addition they provide the already published challenges encountered in large-scale agile development projects below:

- Transformation Challenges
- Lack of Investment
- Difficult to Implement
- Coordination challenges in multi-team environments
- Different approaches emerge in a multi-team environment
- Hierarchical management and organizational boundaries
- Requirements engineering challenges
- Quality Assurance challenges

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- Integrating non-development functions in the transformation

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3 the authors provide information regarding the research published in the book, stating it is exploratory.

They explain the research was conducted in two phases: 1) conducted qualitative case studies and 2) conducted survey to confirm and augment the results of the case studies.

The authors provide details and examples of qualitative case studies, the survey instrument, data collection and analysis and the case sutudy organizations.

Chapter 4: Results

In Chapter 4 the authors provide results of the research conducted. They provide details of the research results broken down as follows:

I - Characteristics of the respondents,their organizations and their projects.
Respondent Demographics:
- Countries of Users and Producers of Software
- Description of the Organizational Context – Private and Public Sectors
- Description of the Organizational Context – Organization Size
- Description of the Organizational Context – Primary Activity
- Description of the Organizational Context – Use of Agile Approach
- Description of the Specific Projects

II - Implementation of Agile Approaches:
- Motives for Implementing Agile Approaches
- Disadvantages of Agile Approaches
- Conditions that Foster and Hinder the Implementation of Agile
- Implementation Strategies
- The Agile Sweet Spot
- Integration with Other Systems

III - The Project Front End:
- Sprint Zero
- System Architecture and Front-End Planning

IV- Project Organizations:
- Development Teams
- New and Modified Organizational Roles
- The Role of Product Owners
- The Role of Analysts
- The Role of Architects

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V - The Tools and Techniques Employed

VI - Scaling Frameworks

VII - Testing, Integrations and DevOps

The authors end the chapter by indicating what all the details of the results represent and summarize the patterns and differences observed in the results.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In Chapter 5, the authors further discuss and analyze the research results. They focus on the original two research questions, the results analysis and discussion topics including 1) team level analysis 2) project level analysis, 3) the interaction between the project and the organization, and 4) conflicts between large traditional organizations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In Chapter 6, the authors provide the conclusions based on the research. They conclude that larger organization are using agile methodologies for their software projects and that further research is needed.

Chapter 7: Future Research

In Chapter 7, the authors communicate the need of further research in order to answer still outstanding questions such as what will the project manager's role be in the future and how will Agile affect program and portfolio management.

Highlights: What I liked!

What I liked most about the book are the specific elements provided regarding what the research was aiming to answer and the detailed results. The authors were very transparent on the tools used and the results obtained.

Who might benefit from the Book

Everyone involved in project or program management would benefit from this book as it provides details on where and how Agile is currently used successfully and where there are still opportunities for improvement and growth when using Agile. Those involved in the management of small software projects may have already mastered the use of Agile but may benefit from from understanding how Agile is being used in larger projects and/or large organizations and leverage the research results and findings.

Conclusion

This book provides details regarding research conducted to seek answers regarding the use of Agile in large projects and large organizations. The authors provide succinct and

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thorough research results while providing background on research previously completed.

For more about this book, go to:
http://marketplace.pmi.org/Pages/ProductDetail.aspx?GMProduct=00101602601

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the PMI Dallas Chapter. Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact editor@pmworldjournal.net.

About the Reviewer

Vickie Carvajal, PMP

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Vickie Carvajal, PMP has more than 20 years of experience working in application services and consulting. She has provided project management for a variety of clients in various industries and countries. Vickie has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Angelo State University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from South-west Texas State University.