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Agile Approaches on Large Projects in Large Organizations
Author: Brian Hobbs and Yvan Petit
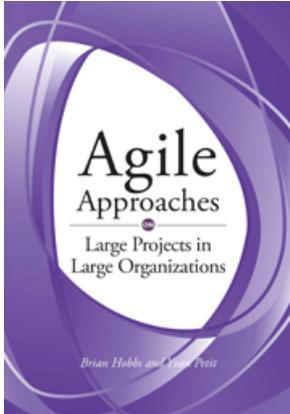Book Review
Reviewer: Anita Goldshine

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

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

Author: **Brian Hobbs and Yvan Petit**

Publisher: PMI

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

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Reviewer: **Anita Goldshine**

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Introduction

Agile is known to work well for small software development projects, but what challenges do organizations encounter when trying to apply agile methods to large, multi-team projects? And how does the context of large, complex organizations affect the adaptation and adoption of agile approaches? These are the primary questions the researchers explored through case studies and surveys, and a thorough technical analysis of the data.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book starts with a good Executive Summary followed by seven chapters. The first two chapters provide the background of the research study and a thorough literature review with emphasis on scaling agile.

Next the authors describe the methodology they followed for conducting the case studies and the survey and collecting and analyzing the data. The case studies encompassed nine projects in three organizations spanning both commercial and public sectors. The resulting data and detailed analysis is presented in Chapter 4.

The subsequent chapters interpret the data and raise questions and issues for further study.

Highlights

Through their thorough collection and analysis of data, the authors were able to identify several common elements among the organizations, such as the common use of Scrum and pilot projects, front-end activities, and handling of scope definition and product detail. But they also noted there were at least as many significant areas

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of variation as there were similarities. These included widely varying implementation strategies, the extent of front-end planning, participants' roles, knowledge of agile and extent to which agile approaches are established, and even the use of the term "sprint zero".

Highlights: What I liked!

While it was not surprising that organizations tend to encounter some significant difficulties applying agile to large projects, the variations between the application of agile by the different organizations were very interesting – particularly the role (or lack thereof) of the project manager. In some organizations, the PM role had been eliminated on the agile projects, while others retained the role and some even had multiple PMs with different foci.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Anyone interested in academic research of the evolution and progress of agile would likely enjoy reading this book in its entirety. For those who don't want to dig into all the details of the research, the main points are covered by reading the Executive Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion.

Conclusion

It is clear from this research that applying agile to large projects is still early in its evolution. While there are some common threads in the successful approaches employed by many organizations, there are also striking differences, not the least of which is the variation in the roles of team members.

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

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About the Reviewer

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Anita Goldshine is a project manager for a cybersecurity consulting firm in the nation's capital. She is a certified PMP and has over 30 years' experience in the information industry, including software development and business process reengineering on both small and large-scale systems and processes. Her background includes technical writing and business analysis. She is a member of the Silver Spring and Montgomery County chapters of PMI.