

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



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

Author: **Brian Hobbs & Yvan Petit**

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Reviewer: **Thomas Goller**

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Introduction

This book tackles a topic for which not much research and information is available, how the Agile methodology has been applied to large projects in large organizations and challenges faced by those projects and organizations. The authors have completed some excellent research and the book is the sharing of the research and conclusions based on their analysis. Also included are the actual surveys used and an extensive list of references which will be of interest to the reader desiring a deeper dive into areas and topics discussed.

The analysis of existing literature shares a brief overview of Agile and potential benefits that entice companies to use Agile as well as the challenges associated with transformation, company investment, implementation of the methodology, teaming, existing management practices/culture and requirements management. This produces the context for the case studies and questionnaire used for research.

The research methodology and empirical results are presented, and definite themes emerge that large organizations with large projects will want to be aware of, especially if they are planning or in the process of implementing Agile. The depth of the analysis will raise important questions in the reader's mind and provide insight into challenges they face within their organization.

Overview of Book's Structure

Starting with a brief but effective overview of the Agile methodology, a base understanding is provided which provides the reader with a foundation to effectively interpret the remainder of the book.

Sharing the details of the research premise, organizations targeted, results and the actual questionnaire is done in such a way that it flows very nicely. The style in

which it is presented is extremely informative and enjoyable as it builds upon what was read earlier. In addition to the research, the authors share insights into deeper aspects to consider which are especially useful in the reader is in a transition situation and especially if they are leading such a transition

This is followed by a discussion and conclusion section which brings the research filled journey to a completion and insights into where to go next with future research.

The book then closes with the actual questionnaire used and references section which will prove invaluable as the reader will likely thirst for more facts.

Highlights

The book takes on a daunting topic, the challenges faced when the Agile Methodology (which is extremely effective in small to medium sized environments) is applied by large organizations for large projects. The challenges associated with scale are not to be underestimated and go beyond how to guides, training challenges, and the issues associated with the project. There are very real challenges associated with transformation, culture, investment and leadership in large organizations that have equally large consequences.

To provide real insight, research an analysis of existing literature as well as case studies and questionnaire results across a broad enough sample is required. The authors leverage existing literature and research to formulate a very solid understanding of the challenges faced by large organizations and large projects. The authors provide real data, real analysis to show the seriousness of the challenges and potential impacts. Key data points are correlated across the case studies and questionnaire feedback with an explanation on how they relate and support the premises stated in the book.

Beyond the data, the authors dive deeper into the challenges of applying Agile in a large company and project and provide insights into strategies for implementing Agile, the importance of architecture and early planning as well as the role changes that will be needed within the organization for a successful transition to Agile. The discussion section includes a look into conflicts between Agile principles and organizational behavior and the interaction between the project and the organization.

Adding the details of the questionnaire and the resources section really elevates the usefulness and impact that this book will have. By covering the majority of challenges that can occur and providing quick access to additional knowledge and thought leadership, this book will be an ongoing source of insight and wisdom for all who read it.

Highlights: What I liked!

I especially like the way the authors set up the essential premises for the research by analyzing existing research, their accurate assessment set the stage for real learning through case studies and questionnaire data. Being able to dig deeper into specific

topics through their cited references is quite valuable as one tries to gain insight into challenges faced by their specific organization.

I also liked they way the authors interweaved the data, analysis and results with insights into how to start to address the issues. It is difficult to provide guidance on such a broad range of potential application, but I found myself making notes to gain deeper insight into my organization and steps to take towards overcoming the challenges I know are there.

This book will be a resource in my personal library that will continue to give me insight and be an ongoing source of deeper insights and knowledge.

Who might benefit from the Book?

There are a few types of people who should have this book on their short list to read:

- Anyone leading an Agile transition in a large company
- Leadership that is considering shifting to Agile in a large company
- Leadership currently transitioning to Agile that needs more insight and supporting data on the challenges they are facing
- Anyone in a large organization that prefers data driven insights and actions who is or will be involved in an Agile transition

Conclusion

This book is an excellent and very quick way to gain a lot of insight in a relatively short amount of reading time but desires the conclusions to be supported by ample data and information. Anyone facing a transition to Agile or in the process of transitioning that needs a deeper insight into the challenges and possible ways to overcome those challenges will benefit from this quick read. The authors do an excellent job of being concise while explaining the conclusions they reach and then providing a very robust reference list that the reader can pick and choose where to dive deeper. Overall a great balance of providing great information quickly and succinctly and putting the reader in a position to decide where else to deepen their knowledge.

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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Thomas Goller is a PMP certified project manager who holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado. Mr. Goller has over 25 years of experience in the communications industry ranging from R&D Product Development to Operations and IT projects. He has been privileged to lead teams from 5 to 800, using both Waterfall and Agile methods, and helped successfully transition from Waterfall to Agile for an organization of over 500 engineers. Mr. Goller's current project is a pilot project which starts the transition to Agile for his current organization.

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