PM World Journal (ISSN: 2330-4480)   *Managing Offshore Development Projects*
Vol. XII, Issue VII – July 2023   Author: Upadrista Venkatesh
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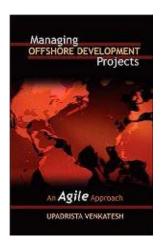
PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***Managing Offshore Development Projects: An Agile Approach*** [1]

Author: **Upadrista Venkatesh**

Publisher: Multi-Media Publications Inc

List Price: $24.95 USD   Format: softcover, 255 pages

Publication Date: 2008 ISBN: 978-1-897326-68-8

Reviewer: **Arati Bheemidi**

Review Date: June 2023

Introduction

In today's global environment where fierce competition exists across organizations to bring in new services or products, organizations are leveraging latest high technology systems to gain market share. In this process they are outsourcing their software development projects to offshore countries. It is extremely important for offshore service providers to manage and execute these projects effectively to reduce the risk of failure. This book talks about the processes, technologies, people and techniques which can help reduce this risk and improve overall project performance when executing offshore projects. Author describes his real-world experiences related to the problems he has seem, strategies he has developed, experimented and executed for the successful project implementation using Agile Methodology.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is organized well instilling the six agile principles through various chapters systematically.

Chapter 1 describes the engagement model when developing software projects and why the traditional waterfall methodology doesn't work and why there is a need of specific engagement model for offshore projects execution.

Chapter 2 discusses the specific criteria that should be looked for when deciding which projects should adapt agile for their implementation, as every project development may not be work with agile.

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In the software industry, successful engagement is always around people and resources. Chapter 3 describes how Resources make the winning engagement and strategies' to hire the right teams, and to keep them motivated

Chapter 4 discusses one of the key agile software principles of teams focusing to create a working software over comprehensive documentation

Chapter 5 discusses how one of the successful engagement strategies is having good architecture and design.

Chapter 6 discusses the core principles for setting up a team environment for successful Agile Implementation.

Chapter 7 focuses on how to target the programming and testing approaches for an agile engagement.

Chapter 8 discusses Agile quality processes and tools to track project management activities.

In Chapter 9 the author discusses his experiences with how Agile helped to solve customer dissatisfaction issues.

In Chapter 10 the author discusses strategies of how leaders should orient towards optimization.

Highlights

Chapter 1 describes the engagement model when developing software projects and why the traditional waterfall methodology doesn't work and why there is a need of specific engagement model for offshore projects execution. It explains failure reasons related to trust, different time zones, and requirement misunderstandings, documentation and quality requirements when executing traditional 'Waterfall' method. Author proposes companies to use Agile, a specific methodology and the reasons why this methodology works for offshore projects. He also discusses traditional software development methodology and why it is not working to meet customer expectations. The book discusses six agile principles in detail and how this methodology can satisfy the customer as well as execution teams. It also mentions that agile principles shouldn't be taken as strict guidelines, but tailored as per the organization's needs for all engagements.

Chapter 2 discusses the specific criteria that should be looked for when deciding which projects should adapt agile for their implementation, as every project development may not work with agile.

In the software industry, successful engagement is always around people and resources. Chapter 3 describes how Resources make the winning engagement and strategies' to hire the right teams, keep them motivated. Discusses about four phase

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approach when planning a new engagement while addressing these four questions; where do I want to be? where we are? How do I get there and Implement and measure.

Chapter 4 discusses one of the key agile software principles of teams focusing on creating a working software over comprehensive documentation. Discusses user stories concepts with real world examples and how these user stories can help engagement to be effective via customer/stakeholder elicitation, estimation and prioritization of user requirements with the development teams. This also demonstrates that collaboration is key to design and deliver small parts of a software application in short time spans instead of creating huge documentation. Some of the experiences and the lessons authors share is to achieve quality output and the need to build a quality cycle into the process from the outset. The goal has to be to document only what is needed as part of the process of producing working software and do not document as a parallel activity.

Chapter 5 discusses one of the successful engagement strategy is having good architecture and design. The author illustrates strategies/ways for successful architecture, few of them are to leverage simple design and easy to use framework, finalize the architecture before design of first story card begins, communication and collaboration with architects, design and development teams when architecture changes iteratively, have development team build a Proof of Concept (POC) collaborating with architect and design teams before proceeding to application and database design. Below are core principles that need to be followed, architect a simpler system, design the entire system not just the surface, design with evolutionally and user-driven process, design rapidly and iteratively rather than try to build a final design all at once; favor simplicity over complexity and collaborate extensively.

Chapter 6 discusses the core principles in setting up team environment for a successful Agile Implementation. The author concludes that 'the team works well when we try to provide an uninterrupted work environment'. Some best practices are to ensure teams sit together in close proximity, have daily stand-up meetings not lasting for more than 20-30 minutes with team and relevant stakeholders.

Chapter 7 focuses on how to target the programming and testing approaches for an agile engagement. Leverage Pair Programming technique for programming and iterative testing concepts like pre-user acceptance testing and final user acceptance testing, automation techniques for testing.

Chapter 8 discusses about the Agile quality process and tools that track all project management activities like tracking of requirements, design documents, tests and defects so that everyone directly or indirectly representing a project has a real-time picture of the project's features and quality, priorities roadblocks and risks. Author recommends all the tracking templates in a centralized database that will help any organization gather metrics from projects which can be helpful for any new assignments initiated with a similar background.

In Chapter 9 author discusses his experiences as how Agile helped to solve customer dissatisfaction issues via surveys/interviews over a period of intervals related to quality of delivery, schedule deviation, effort deviation, resource competency, production defects. He shares his experience to prepare for success with the right goal and thorough analysis, overcome hurdles as they occur, do your best and then deal with circumstances. All this is called as Agile.

In Chapter 10 author discusses strategies of how leaders should orientation towards optimization. Optimization is all about utilizing the available resources efficiently to the best possible extent, these resources can be humans, processes, hardware, software, or a combination of all. Planning to place the right resources at the right time to generate best resource performance should be ensured by leaders along with providing the right environment to the resources. Successful leaders have the desire to do more, the ability to lead, have a positive attitude towards bonding and effective problem- solving and negotiation skills.

Highlights: What I liked!

The author has successfully explained the agile concepts methodically in each of the chapters by providing his personal success stories by data collections, his analysis and conclusions using metrics via tables and charts. He explains the problem, his detailed analysis and reasoning of what needs to be fixed, strategies to help fix the problem. His reasoning around mindset changes and his continuous energy and passion for successful engagement is shown in of the chapters.

Who might benefit from the Book?

Any individual involved in software development life cycle process from developers, testers, managers, program managers would benefit from the book, as it has many strategies for successful agile implementation.

Conclusion

I thoroughly enjoyed reading and reviewing the book and lost track of time in a few of the chapters. Its shows the author's passion to help organizations engage software projects through agile implementation.

For more about this book, go to:
https://www.google.com/books/edition/Managing_Offshore_Development_Projects/1k-8NwAACAAJ?hl=en

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About the Reviewer

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Arati Bheemidi is Senior Program Manager in one of the American largest Banking Organization. She manages multiple multimillion dollar large programs in the organization leveraging agile methodology and tailoring as per the organization needs. She mentors and coaches the teams to get the optimized output and greater productivity on her teams. She has been a Project leader with 20+ years of IT/User experience delivering programs and solutions in Financial, Retail, Manufacturing, Supply Chain, Human Resources. She's had a diverse exposure to a wide variety of technologies, with broad, practical expertise in solution architecture, design, delivery, and implementation in heterogeneous enterprise environments. She has a growth mind-set with a willingness to challenge existing design and an ability to evolve into new project delivery paradigms. She bridges gaps with project management organizations (PMOs), technical teams, business stakeholders, executives and vendors, collaborating to analyze business needs, develop project plans and schedules, and complete deliverable within deadlines and budgets. She has managed global offshore teams.

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