

Project Type: White Paper

Details: Even though Agile software development is popular, it is not easy to implement. This white paper provides a strategy that companies can use to help them be more successful. It is the first in a two-part series.

Excerpt:

Executive Summary

Agile development practices are becoming increasingly popular as organizations try to keep up with market demands. However, adoption is not quick. According to a Forrester survey in December 2008, of the organizations who have adopted Agile, only 35% reported mature implementation; 50% have just started or are midway through implementation.

While the philosophy behind Agile is appealing, it is neither a quick nor a straightforward change. Organizations that try to adopt Agile too quickly are often discouraged with less than stellar results, and they are left wondering why Agile was not successful.

As Ken Schwaber, the co-developer of the Scrum process noted, "Many CIO's still think of Agile as more, faster. However, as organizations and projects flee the existing controls and safeguards of waterfall and predictive processes, they need to recognize the even higher degree of control, risk management, and transparency required to use Scrum successfully. I estimate that 75% of those organizations using Scrum will not succeed in getting the benefits that they hope for from it."

So what is going wrong? According to the 2008 "State of Agile" survey by Version One, the leading causes of failure for Agile projects were a company philosophy or culture at odds with core Agile values (23%) and lack of experience with Agile methods (21%). To address these challenges, it is a good idea to gradually introduce Agile into your organization, starting with a few internal projects and then expanding to more departments and more risky projects (i.e. customer-facing projects).

It's helpful to have a roadmap that guides you along the path to Agile adoption. While no two organizations follow exactly the same path or have the same timing, there are common trends you can extract from organizations that have successfully made the transition. This paper provides such a strategy and answers such questions as:

- What phases do organizations go through?
- What types of projects are best suited for each phase?
- How long will the stage last?
- What types of questions should you ask to make the transition as seamless as possible?

