



CC41. Business agility

Centres of excellence club



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Introduction

At a time of rapid change across both the public and private sectors, Agile project management methodologies have risen in prominence because they allow organisations to respond to unpredictable circumstances in an incremental, evolutionary manner.

However, the constantly shifting nature of Agile projects raises unique risks and challenges. Whilst some of these risks are clear for everyone involved, other challenges remain dormant and hidden and can impede or even sabotage a project unless correctly identified.

For CITI's 41st CofEe Club, held at the BBC in Manchester, it was timely to theme the day on the topic of Agile. Specifically, what are the unique challenges that Agile poses? Are other approaches more suitable under different circumstances? Is a mix of Agile and traditional methodologies viable in the right setting or never the twain shall meet?



CofEe club event 41 - Business agility presenters

From left to right:
Natalie Waddie, BBC
Matt Thornhill, BBC
Neil Vass, BBC
Christopher Worsley, CITI
Samantha Hockenhull, Aviva
Aaron Newell, Aviva

When Agile simply isn't agile!

Agile methodologies, when executed well, on the right projects, with appropriate governance, can give excellent results. However, when used on the wrong projects, or managed using inappropriate governance, the results can be disastrous. At CITI, working with hundreds of organisations both here in the UK and abroad, we have identified some common factors and guiding principles for choosing the appropriate development method for each project and putting in place appropriate governance. These have been proven in the field and include:

- ***Waterfall methods are appropriate*** where requirements can and must be defined and agreed
- ***Agile methods are appropriate*** where requirements are unclear/emergent/volatile
- ***Traditional projects are judged*** during flight on their delivery of outputs within a set of constraints
- ***Agile projects are judged*** by their delivery of value to the stakeholders
- ***Governance is the single-most influential factor*** in creating successful outcomes
- ***Governance depends upon meaningful evidence.*** Hybridising traditional methods with Agile methods makes providing meaningful evidence near impossible.





Delivering mobile downloads across BBC

MATT THORNHILL, BBC

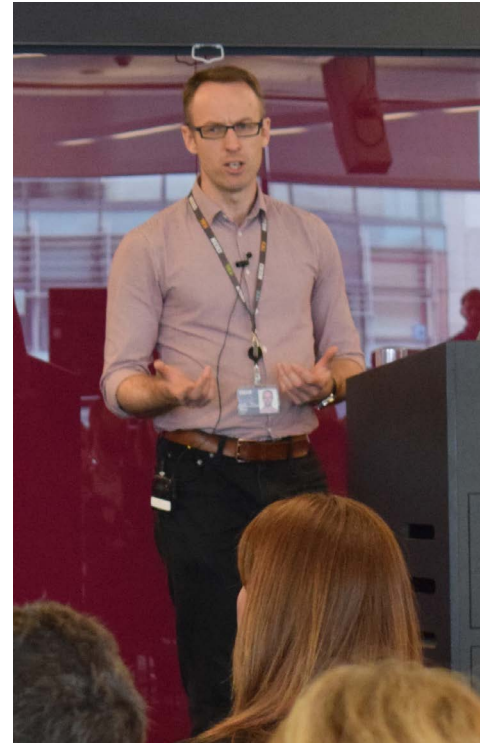
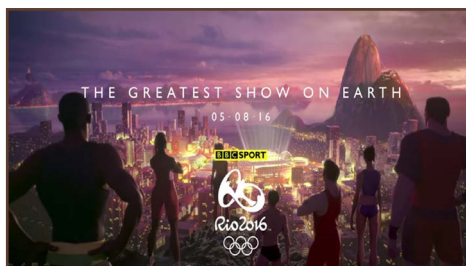
Matt discussed the complexities and challenges of managing the output of several Agile development teams across the BBC to deliver a new download solution for Mobile apps such as iPlayer and iPlayer Radio. He stressed the need for the whole team to buy into the overall direction and strategy as well as the importance of effective collaboration.
<http://citi.uk/cc/41/MT>



Adapting Agile in a services team

NATALIE WADDIE, BBC

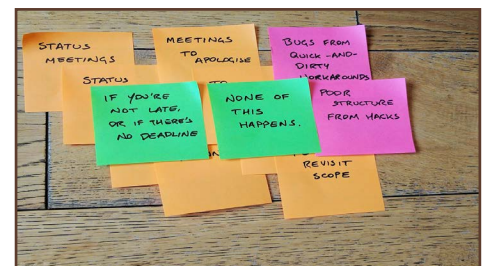
Natalie talked about her role as a senior technical project manager at BBC Sport and working within a team that supports multiple products across the BBC. Her talk focused on how the team have adapted Agile to work for them in high pressure, time critical situations such as covering the Rio Olympics for BBC Sport.
<http://citi.uk/cc/41/NW>



Delivering projects to deadlines

NEIL VASS, BBC

Neil took us through the planning and delivery of Terrific Scientific - an ambitious nationwide primary schools science campaign that came with strict deadlines. He stressed the need for openness about the levels of uncertainty inherent in a project and why simple data can be surprisingly useful as a project evolves.
<http://citi.uk/cc/41/NV>





Chasing value through being agile

Samantha Hockenhull and Aaron Newell

DEDICATED, CO-LOCATED

PLAN PLAN PLAN - DATA DATA DATA

THE SEVEN STEPS TO AGILE SUCCESS

In a dynamic and colourful presentation, Samantha and Aaron outlined the key learnings from having worked within the Integration Management Office for the merger of Aviva and Friends Life. Their task was made all the more difficult by news of the merger finding its way into the press ahead of schedule, which brought many of the deadlines forward.

Special emphasis was made of the need for co-location, sitting together and having a dedicated team room as well as only accepting the very highest standards. They also spoke of the use of a scrum to prioritise and place value on the activities that drive benefit – and by standing up whilst doing so to ensure focus and team participation!

By concentrating on the aforementioned tasks, as well as creating a rigorous plan that delivered key insights via the smart use of data, Samantha and Aaron played a key role in delivering £1.8bn of value to the newly merged company.

<http://citi.uk/cc/41/Aviva>

MOBILISE YOUR TEAM
THE BEST, 100% DEDICATED, CO-LOCATED

- 1) **The Best: DO NOT SETTLE.** Wait if you have to, and target diversity, innate motivation and bias for action
- 2) **100% Dedicated:** You cannot change the world off the side of your desk - it is not a part time job, don't treat it like one
- 3) **Co-location:** Sit together, secure a team room, mix it up

PLAN PLAN PLAN
DATA DATA DATA

- 1) Create one tool that drives the plans, data and reporting
- 2) Milestones, deliverables, actions – get the detail
- 3) Use the plan to give insight on where needs the focus
- 4) Use the RAG as a support not a whip
- 5) Baseline regularly to drive for pushes in activity

Chasing Value Through Being Agile

In a study of several hundred organisations executing change, it was found:

- 1) **PLAN FIRST THEN DO THE DEEDS**
- 2) **USE SCRUM**
- 3) **DELEGATION RESPONSIBILITY**
- 4) **STAND UP**
- 5) **CREATE YOUR OWN RAG**
- 6) **WORLDWIDE TEAM WORK**

SETTING A HIGHER STANDARD



Meeting the demands of agility

Christopher Worsley, CITI

MIXING IT UP - CHAOTIC GOVERNANCE

TYPES OF PROJECTS

UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES

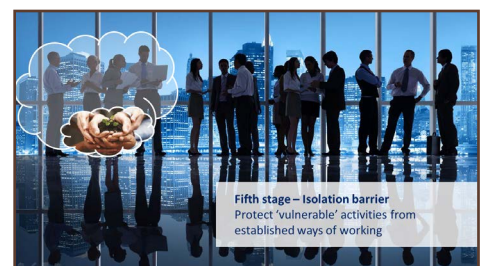
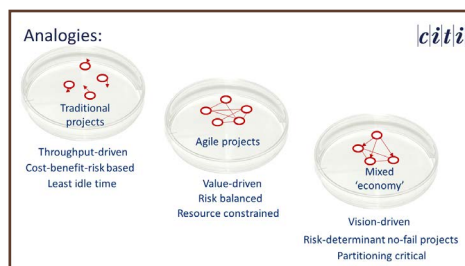
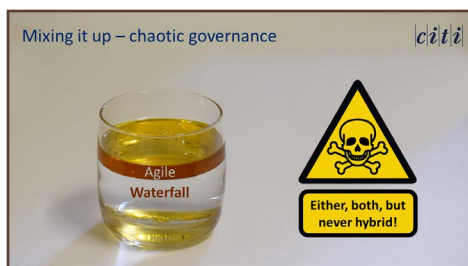
Christopher was recently involved in the review of a large transformation programme within a leading financial services organisation. This programme involved the use of both Agile and Waterfall development methods.

CITI's review, driven by a need to rescue the programme, identified a number of vital lessons learned which enabled

the programme to be turned around. Christopher's presentation focused on these lessons, most notably the need for effective governance especially when overseeing Agile projects that are highly fluid in nature. Another key lesson was the importance of understanding what types of projects were most suited to an Agile approach – as Christopher reflected, different project factors

caused different approaches to perform better. Of special emphasis was the finding that Agile and traditional methodologies are very bad bedfellows in the same project and, unless they are kept isolated from each other, cross-infection destroys productivity. If an organisation wants to use both they should proceed with considerable care.

<http://citi.uk/cc/41/CJW>



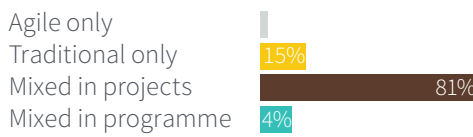
Online polls

We asked every participant to interact and contribute to our event’s live polling. The questions posed reflected the key issues surrounding Agile and were formulated to provide a strong insight into collective group thinking on the subject.

As an overview, it became clear that most participants’ organisations have already adopted Agile and many do so to drive innovation and deliver value-for-money in the process. As we have found in earlier CofEe Clubs, lack of engagement from sponsors and/or stakeholders was cited as a primary hindrance to the successful delivery of projects.

Poll one

What product development methods does your organisation use?



Tellingly, not one participant answered that their organisation used Agile as a sole methodology. 85% stated that they used a combination of both Agile and traditional methodologies, sometimes within the same project. This opened the debate over whether Agile and traditional methods could effectively work together.

Poll two

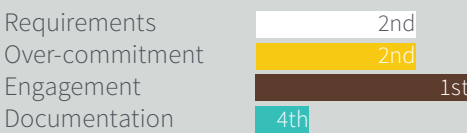
Senior managers are uncomfortable if projects and programmes don’t have well-prepared plans...



Over 80% of participants stated that their organisations’ senior managers are uncomfortable if projects and programmes don’t have well-prepared plans. In the context of Agile this is a significant finding and highlights the difficulties involved with the governance and oversight of Agile projects. It also underlines the challenges facing sponsors and stakeholders.

Poll three

Which of these are problems during product developments in your organisation?



Lack of engagement from both sponsors and stakeholders was ranked as the #1 problem for organisations within product development projects. The over-commitment of project sponsors was also cited as a key challenge, yet again underlining the need for effective and close governance.

Poll four

I believe a mixture of Agile and traditional approaches can be used effectively:



Less than half of participants believed that a mixture of Agile and traditional approaches could be used effectively in either a programme (39%) or project (32%). This provided further insights into the debate over whether Agile and traditional methods could effectively work together, a key topic addressed by Christopher Worsley in his session later in the morning.

Poll five

What does your organisation most value from these options?



The final question looked at what value participants’ organisations placed on a number of themes. Top of the list was delivering value for money followed by innovation - two themes that, under the correct circumstances, Agile methodologies are often lauded for. Third on the ranking was ‘clear and decisive governance’.

Christopher Worsley
CEO of CITI



Workshop outputs

Workshop one

What do governance executives want to see in order to decide that projects are 'finished'?

For traditional projects, and particularly those involving delivery of physical, rather than digital, products, there is a clear boundary line between project outputs and the business outcomes (which may not be measurable at the time the products are signed off).

In Agile, the distinction is less well defined for a number of reasons such as the lack of acceptance criteria or where customers expect that the cycle of incremental value delivery will continue after a nominal end date, etc.

In terms of evidence presented to allow projects to close, various approaches were reported including stakeholder agreement that critical success factors had been achieved; delivery of a previously agreed minimum viable product; all acceptance criteria were met; or a set of outputs were recognised as being fit for purpose.

Workshop three

What, from a governance perspective, do you think are - or would be - the 2 or 3 greatest risks the organisation faces if it decides to either implement Agile, or decides NOT to implement Agile approaches to product development?

When organisations had introduced Agile into a previously traditional product development environment three routes were described:

- Isolated pockets of Agile springing up
- Force majeure – with customer pressure for more responsiveness being interpreted by senior managers that the organisation must adopt Agile (because, to them, Agile meant getting 'pace')
- As the outcome of a 'balanced risk' assessment made by senior management based on an evaluation of factors that often were not fully explained.

Senior managers regarded implementing Agile as a significantly risky thing to do, ultimately because of the unintended transfer of power away from themselves as the decision-makers. It was also clear that senior management, in the main, were unclear exactly what they were exposing the organisation to when introducing Agile.

Workshop two

Have you found that the role of the sponsor and the types and levels of activity you get involved with differ between traditional and Agile or 'hybrid' projects?

The main difference cited was that Agile projects ought to be more visionary led rather than initiated under a command and control style. The leadership style was therefore found to be of great importance.

Another key difference with Agile projects was that the sponsor was required to give more time towards a given project; be more flexible with their governance structure; be content with a more informal planning procedure; be flexible with budgetary requirements; and place increased trust with their own team members.

The involvement of sponsors was keenly emphasised although not to a degree that suffocated a team and their ability to drive a project forwards in an innovative manner.

Workshop four

What experiences have you/your organisation had when using a mixture of Agile and traditional product development approaches?

It was generally agreed that hybridisation works when the development consists of non-strategic, small-scale, incremental design changes and where stakeholders are bought in to the approach and understand the implications of the hybrid approach. It was also deemed imperative that there was a commitment by all parties to collaborative working.

The challenges were multi-fold and included stakeholder/sponsor confusion and buy-in; educating the enablers from the business itself; and a mind-set shift by the purse-string-holders, and others requiring assurance of key milestones.

Resource sharing was also seen as a key challenge, especially in a hybrid environment. – different skills being deployed/developed in each method.



Handwritten notes on a flipchart, including the word "Outcomes" and several bullet points.

Hilary Small

Managing Consultant at CITI

Summary of the day

Our 41st CofEe Club event in Manchester was superbly hosted by the BBC and featured a number of highly engaging and absorbing presentations. Capped off by a series of afternoon workshops, the day raised a number of important issues surrounding Agile.

Top of these considerations is the need for enhanced and improved governance. This is perhaps not surprising - Agile is very much an evolutionary and fluid methodology which whilst highly adaptable, can at short notice move in different directions to those initially envisaged. If these directions are to remain aligned with to the initial corporate vision, then effective oversight and governance of Agile projects must remain a top priority.

This in itself raises issues, however, with lack of engagement from both sponsors and stakeholders cited as the #1 problem in product

development initiatives. It's clear that for Agile methodologies to work effectively, the engagement of sponsors and stakeholders is key. Not only that, but the sponsors must fully understand their heightened role in the governance of Agile-related projects and exhibit a closer degree of involvement.

Our next CofEe Club event will be held at the John Lewis Partnership HQ in Victoria, London on Thursday 8th June 2017. The event's theme will be decided in the coming weeks in liaison with our CofEe Club Advisory Board.

As always, the event is free of charge but we would urge interested parties to register quickly as places are limited - <http://citi.uk/CC/42>

Thanks to all those who took part.



Richard Bateman
National Accounts Director





**Thank you all for
attending!**



€42

John Lewis Partnership, 8th June 2017

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