03
NOV 2017

SQmag

THE VOICE OF SOFTWARE QUALITY

THE WHY AND HOW OF AGILE MARKETING

President and Lead Trainer of AgileSherpas Andrea Fryrear on How To Ride The Waves Of Change With Agile Marketing

THE CORNERSTONE OF AGILE

Keith Yorkston, Head of SQS UK Academy, on the importance of agile communication

A MODERN FAIRYTALE

Speaker and author Hans van Loenhoud on Requirements @ Agile


iSQI
Certification
Days
IT‘S
TIME TO
UPSKILL!
www.certdays.isqi.org
© Yuganov Konstantin_shutterstock.com

Stephan Goericke
CEO, International Software Quality Institute

AGILITY – CHANCE OR RISK?

“Agility” is still one of the most popular and important developments in companies and it is undisputed that – applied to the right projects and themes – it can enable amazing results. But implementing agile methodologies is not as easy in practice. Often Agile methods are implemented with the aspiration of highly effective results everywhere and for every project. But – are Agile methods the solution to all problems? What can organizations do to make ”Agile” a success?

In the first instance make sure that the internal structures for working agile are available! Agile teams must be able to make quick decisions with determined time slots only for the special projects.
Second, Agile teams need a network where colleagues have knowledge and understanding of each other’s strengths and competencies so they can decide who fits best for each project! Third, management must give the team the room for independent planning and working.

The path of becoming an Agile company can have its obstacles and challenges but also many worthwhile advantages.

The authors of this new issue of the SQ mag share their own experiences of working with Agile techniques and methods. They offer insight into their way of working “Agile” and explore the parameters that are important to be successful. I hope you will find their experiences food for thought and of benefit.

Have a good time while reading and I wish you a lot of great impulses.

Yours sincerely,

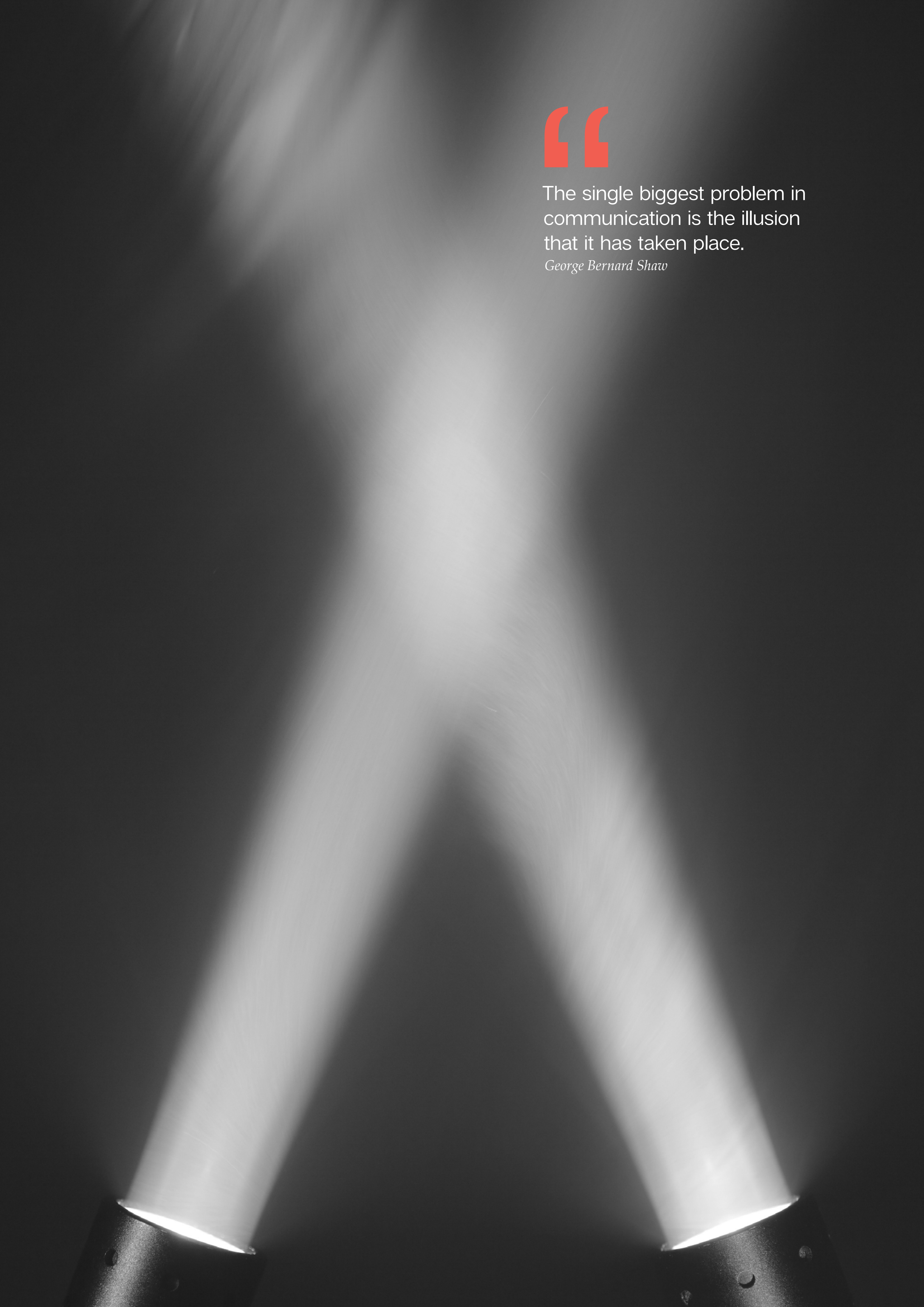
CONTENT

COMMUNICATION – THE CORNERSTONE OF AGILE...

A PROJECT MANAGER BURSTS THROUGH THE OFFICE DOOR, FACE RED, A SLIGHTLY CRAZED LOOK IN THE EYES.
“I JUST FOUND OUT THIS PROJECT HAS BAD COMMUNICATION – WHY DIDN’T ANYONE TELL ME!”

A

At SQS, the importance of agile communication cannot be stressed enough. Many people we work with engaged in projects highlight this problem, irrelevant of the organisation, the nature and scope of the project, even the methodology used. And, if you’re thinking it’s just your organisation, you’re not alone. The Project Management Institute attribute almost 30% of project failures to poor communication – the top reason for failure (the second, at 20% being project methodology failure). The Harvard Business Review identifies five key change trends in organisations today:



> "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
>
> *George Bernard Shaw*

COMMUNICATION – THE CORNERSTONE OF AGILE…

↗
Keith Yorkston,
With 20 years of IT experience, Keith has been involved with a wide range of project methodologies, industries and "levels of project quality". Keith currently works for SQS as the Head of the SQS UK Academy, specialised in test management, performance and security testing.

Economic Change – As service industries have become more economically significant than manufacturing industries, and as knowledge work has supplanted other kinds of labour, the need for sophisticated ways to process and share information has grown more acute.

Organisational Change – As companies have become flatter and less hierarchical, and frontline employees more pivotally involved in value creating work, lateral and bottom-up communication has achieved the importance of top-down communication.

Global Change – As workforces have become more diverse and more widely dispersed, navigating across cultural and geographic lines has required interactions that are fluid and complex.

Generational Change – As millennials and other younger workers have gained a foothold in organisations, they have expected peers and authority figures alike to communicate with them in a dynamic, two-way fashion.

Technological Change – As digital networks have made instant connectivity a norm of business life, and as social media platforms have grown more powerful and more ubiquitous, a reliance on older, less conversational channels of communication have ceased to be tenable.

[HBR 2012]

Proponents of the agile manifesto would recognise the following statements:

- *Individuals and interactions over process and tools*
- *Working software over comprehensive documentation*
- *Customer collaboration over contract negotiation*
- *Responding to change over following a plan*
- *That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.*

[AGILE ALLIANCE]

Each one of the manifesto points is linked to communication, whether it's on the left (individuals and interactions / customer collaboration) or the right (documentation / plans). This paper looks at the dependence between agile success and success in communication.

[AGILE ALLIANCE] The Agile Manifesto https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/the-agile-manifesto/
[HBR 2012] Boris Groysberg & Michael Slind; Leadership Is a Conversation; Harvard Business Review; June 2012 (https://hbr.org/product/leadership-is-a-conversation/R1206D-PDF-ENG)

..., BUT WE NEED TO KNOW "HOW TO DRIVE"

The Problem

The once a week email, the minutes of meetings, change requests, agendas, little bits of yellow paper stuck to a wall, etc.

Of course, process is important, as is strategy, business objectives and leveraging technology. SQS work with clients who organise retrospectives and daily stand-up meetings. They schedule calls with external third-parties in that time window between the start of the day in America and the end of the day in Asia (working lunch again, Europeans?) They blog, wiki and instant message. They share documents, track changes in Word, spell check (organise or organize?) They assemble folders of .pdfs and link to web pages.

We create, in effect, a process for communication. And yet:

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Imagine for a moment a formal communication process is defined for your home. Think about your relationships – you talk about the finances on Monday, the kids on Tuesday. Don't be angry on Sunday, as you only cover personal issues on Friday. Remember to use the feedback template when you email by close of business today.

Hope you like sleeping on the couch.

Communication isn't a one-size-fits-all process. You might spend time writing a 500-word email, but how many recipients read it? You set it high priority? That just means more people open it, and give up part way through.

Communication is a human process that influences and persuades people, that builds relationships, that lets the team and people work as an integrated cohesive unit both from within and externally. Communication is a humanistic and psychological necessity, binding us together since human time began. We are social animals, thriving on the interaction and trust between individuals. The agile manifesto and principles provide the vehicle, but we need to know "how to drive".

The Solution?

The first part of the solution is knowing who you communicate with. Do you want to know the answer?

Look in the mirror.

You communicate with others the way you like to be communicated with. By understanding your preferences, and how others prefer to communicate, you adjust your approach to increase the acceptance of your message. It comes down to four communication styles:

Analytical	*Visionary*
Reason/Rational	Future
Logic	New ideas
"Give me the facts"	"Give me the future"
Methodical	*Connected*
Process	Emotion
Sequential	Team Player
"Give me the plan"	"Give me the feelings"

COMMUNICATION – THE CORNERSTONE OF AGILE...

We all have a blend of each four styles. You might know someone who insists on details, or another always making everyone coffee as some prefer one style. It should be stressed no single style is better than another, only better situations in which to use a style. Recognising the preferred style of others, we can adapt our communication into a style the others in a team might prefer.

The second part is the four communication behaviours:

Competing	Collaborating
"My way"	"Our way"
Directive	Give-and-take
Commanding	Let's discuss now
Avoiding	Accomodating
"No way"	"Your way"
Let's discuss later	What do you want?
Not important	Supportive
Need more info	Agreeing

These are perhaps more recognised – everyone can name at least one Competing communicator! The behaviours of the team members are significant. Pair a Competing member with an Accommodating member, and the conversation only goes one way!

Again, we are all a blend of each of the four behaviours. If individuals can recognise their own and the team's behaviours, people can communicate (and work) better.

Returning to Groysberg & Slind [HBR 2012], we now consider communication in the wider context. They referred to communication with the following:

Physical proximity between leaders and employees isn't always feasible. But mental or emotional proximity is essential.

[HBR 2012]

By considering the styles and behaviours mentioned earlier, we can look closer at the points from Groysberg & Slind listed earlier:

Economic Change – Sharing that commodity called information in the right way is more significant than the fact we share information. Balancing the use of styles and behaviours at a micro level within agile teams can improve communication from bottom up, leading to more fulfilled team members and, in effect, better communication at an organisation level.

Organisational Change – Agile directly addresses this point due to the higher value of people "at the bottom". And, improving bottom-up communication, perhaps the 30% of projects failing because of communication can be reduced, and team members can see the real effect of their work to the organisation.

Global Change – The "tyranny of distance" can cripple communication within agile organisations, due to the necessity of formalised communication. People automatically equate formal with a defined process (e.g. global update call each Tuesday, with a published agenda).

... WE NEED, ONCE AGAIN
TO REMEMBER THE INDIVIDUALS.

Communication can still be scheduled, but we need, once again to remember the individuals. The behaviours and styles stay largely true across cultural boundaries (true for a global consultancy like SQS), meaning more effective communication overall.

Generational Change – More frequent and personal communication has become the expectation. Rather than more long messages, though, millennials desire short, frequent, two-way communication, always with the "right of response".

Technological Change – Technology itself isn't the answer. Organisations spend money implementing instant messaging platforms, with the dream of improved communication. Remember, it's the way the message is constructed rather than the platform that delivers it.

Conclusion

Bad communication causes 30% of projects to fail based on a failure to exchange information in a relevant form. People become disenfranchised and the business objectives are not achieved. Adopting the agile manifesto within organisations is the start, but we need to consider the greater impact of inefficient, impersonal communication.

For further information, consider creating a profile on *www.2interact.com.*

iSQI AND CGI ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

The International Software Quality Institute (iSQI) and CGI, a globally active independent provider of IT and business processes, announce that they have entered into a partnership that will improve training and certification of IT specialists. In addition to the training for employees, CGI also offers customized training courses with iSQI certification for customers. Through the combined expertise and the international presence of both companies, employees and customers benefit from the advantages of high-quality education and training worldwide. ▌

WHAT'S HAPPENING

With over 30,000 certifications per year, iSQI paves the way for successful career development. Join an exklusive insight into iSQI´s world.

iSQI AND LUXOFT ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION

The International Software Quality Institute (iSQI) and Luxoft, a leading provider of software development services and innovative IT solutions to a global client base, are pleased to announce that they signed new Examination Agreements during this summer: iSQI offers exams for the ISTQB® Certified Tester Scheme for continuous internal education of the Luxoft employees in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Russia.

The new contracts also include new exams of the ISTQB® Certified Tester scheme, for example, the ISTQB® Certified Tester – Advanced Level, Test Automation Engineer (TAE). With Luxoft, iSQI realised the first TAE exam worldwide. ▌

iSQI AND GIIM LAUNCH EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATION COLLABORATION

The International Software Quality Institute (iSQI) and the Global Institute for IT Management (GIIM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a new cooperation. iSQI, as leading provider of certification and examination all over the world, and GIIM, as a specialist for global executive education focused on leading and managing information technology initiatives, will jointly offer IT Management courses with certification from iSQI. ▌

iSQI AND BNTQB EXTEND THEIR COOPERATION

iSQI is happy and proud to announce the extending of the mutual cooperation with the *Belgium and The Netherlands Testing Qualification Board* (BNTQB) for the coming years. iSQI is a proud partner of the BNTQB and in that capacity is appointed to deliver ISTQB® qualifications to IT professionals throughout Belgium and The Netherlands. Through the cooperation with the BNTQB, iSQI has certified many Software Testing and IT professionals over the years, and will continue to do so for years to come. The BNTQB and iSQI have an extensive network of ISTQB® Accredited Training Providers in Belgium and The Netherlands, ensuring high quality delivery of ISTQB® training and certification. ▮

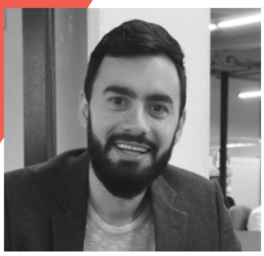
iSQI START COOPERATION WITH DESOFT IN CUBA

iSQI and the Cuban IT company Desoft signed a cooperation agreement. iSQI offers exams for the internal education of trainer and helps to accredit new training partners. iSQI CEO Stephan Goericke and Desoft General Director Luis Fernandez decided to offer training and examinations to train trainers. The participants will be trained for the certification schemes ISTQB® Certified Tester – Foundation Level (CT-FL), IREB® Certified Professional for Requirements Engineering – Foundation Level (CPRE-FL) and UXQB® Certified Professional for Usability and User Experience – Foundation Level (CPUX-F). ▮

ROADSHOW IN SOUTH AMERICA

iSQI and HASTQB joined forces for another Roadshow in Latin America. iSQI discussed with experts about new trends in Testing, as well as the importance of certifications and the new products from ISTQB®, IREB®, TMMi® and the Agile Teaming portfolio. iSQI visited the following cities: Mexico D.F., San José, Costa Rica, Santiago, Chile, Montevideo, Uruguay, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. ▮

THE AGILE "ÉTAT D'ESPRIT" CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE AGILE SPIRIT TO ENABLE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL AND SELF-MOTIVATED TEAMS.

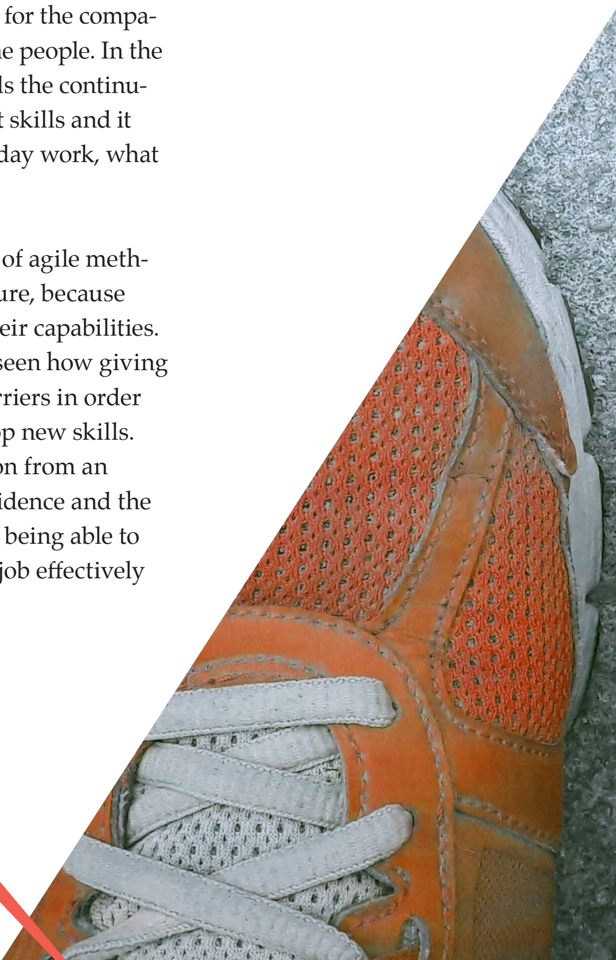


↗
Felipe Posada Restrepo
is an engineer from the University of Antioquia, Colombia, with a master's degree in Industrial Systems Engineering, quality mention from the Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs de Metz, France. He is passionate about training, agile methods and sports, and performs as a trainer and consultant in Choucair Testing, the pioneer company in software testing in Hispanic America.
He is a trainer of ISTQB® Foundation Level courses, ISTQB® Agile Tester Extension, and iSQI's CAT Certified Agile Tester® by iSQI Agile Teaming. Occasionally he complements this work with university cathedra about Testing, Quality and Agile Methods.

EACH TEAM IS DIFFERENT, EACH PROJECT IS DIFFERENT AND EACH PERSON'S ABILITIES ARE DIFFERENT.

All of us, who have worked in agile teams, know that it is a challenge to adopt agile methods for the companies, for the teams and especially for the people. In the particular case of the testers, it demands the continuous development of both: hard and soft skills and it must occur in parallel with the day-to-day work, what makes it even more difficult.

For many team members the adoption of agile methodologies implies a high level of pressure, because someone could think that it exceeds their capabilities. But the contrary is the case – we have seen how giving their best, people overcome mental barriers in order to connect with knowledge and develop new skills. Skills that allow them to see the horizon from an improved perspective, with more confidence and the security of having what is required, or being able to acquire it in order to performing their job effectively within the team.



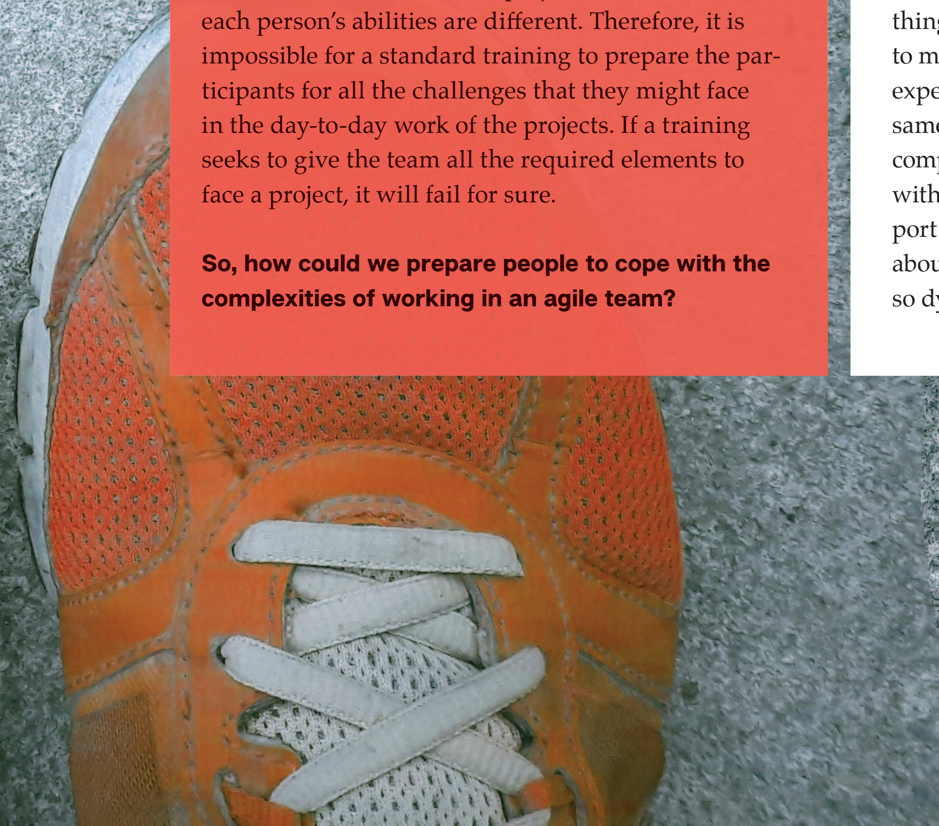
The evolution of skills in agile teams is comparable to almost any other profession, but I like to compare it with those of an athlete or hiker.
I am in love with mountains; I was privileged to be born in a city located in Los Andes Range, 1,500 meters above sea level. Almost every weekend it is easy for me to run and hike a mountain.
Hiking is always a challenge: taking the body to the limit, feeling the pain increasing in the legs, hearing how all the noise of the city disappears and only the heart rhythm remains to form chords with your breathing. Seeing how the buildings disappear and only the majestic nature remains. Well, and some barriers, which are usually in the mind and that try to immobilize the legs.

I have been lucky to dedicate the last years of my career as a trainer, specifically in software testing, software quality and agile methodologies – something I really enjoy. I have worked in different scenarios such as universities, company teams, open courses focused on certification schemes, and specific courses for Choucair Testing employees – the company I work for. It is very interesting to experience the different attitude of the persons who participate in the training courses. It is easy to notice who is seeking for answers and is hungry for knowledge. It is also easy to see who does not and arrives by obligation or chance. Each team is different, each project is different and each person's abilities are different. Therefore, it is impossible for a standard training to prepare the participants for all the challenges that they might face in the day-to-day work of the projects. If a training seeks to give the team all the required elements to face a project, it will fail for sure.

So, how could we prepare people to cope with the complexities of working in an agile team?

Coming back to the comparison to hiking a mountain it is a similar feeling when I look at an imposing mountain, it is inevitable that thoughts come to me of not having what it takes to crest the mountain, of not being physically prepared to achieve it. However, something inside motivates me to go out every day to prepare myself to achieve it. I usually have workout plans, but without the motivation that arises exclusively from me, plans become information on a paper. What really makes the difference is what is inside me and moves me to get up even earlier on weekends to go hike a mountain. Similar to this experience I like to see how the attitude of the people who participate in my courses flows on and connects with the feeling that I am trying to convey. For me, that is what French people call "état d'esprit". Therefore, I believe that all the training courses are different, especially in agile approach, where I have the possibility to use different ways to connect people, like gamification techniques, and through simple activities allowing them to discover how to overcome the barriers, to move the legs, or better, in this case, the spirit.

A successful agile training is the one that moves the inner self of the participants to continue a process of personal development, because those who are in the "état d'esprit" of agile will find the time and the way to continuously develop their skills and contribute to the maturity of his or her team. Besides, the best thing about that: it is contagious. When people listen to my mountain stories and see pictures, they always expect to join one day and live the experience. The same happens when you have one person in your company or in your team, that is really connected with the "état d'esprit" agile. This person will transport this spirit so the others will want to find out about the "agile" way of working that seems so cool, so dynamic and so effective. ▌



THE WHY AND HOW OF AGILE MARKETING...

… OR HOW TO RIDE THE WAVES OF CHANGE WITH AGILE MARKETING

The tide of marketing is turning. In an always-on world where customers expect real-time, personalized messaging, the bulky annual marketing plans and inefficient processes of decades past are fast becoming obsolete, if not downright harmful.

Riding in on these waves of change is Agile marketing, a revolutionary approach that calls for shorter iterations that can be adapted immediately based on audience feedback. Rather than spend weeks or months meticulously planning, only to have those plans decimated by an unforeseen news event, Agile teams execute dozens of small plans, fine tuning their tactics as they learn what works and what doesn't.

There are dozens of reasons why Agile is taking the marketing world by storm, and just as many ways that it can be applied in an organization. Here are a few of the most common and compelling reasons for going Agile, as well as five simple ways to get started.

Why Marketing Needs To Become Agile

We will always have more work than time. Even in the best marketing organizations there's always an untapped opportunity, an unaddressed threat, or an ignored executive project lurking somewhere. There are new channels, audience segments, and social networks that pop up constantly. In short, there's always something else marketers could be doing with our time.

Mercifully, Agile marketing helps us focus on doing the right work at the right time. For instance, in a qualitative series of interviews, eighty percent of CMOs who had transitioned their teams to Agile said they now see an enhanced prioritization of the things that matter.[1] Whether it's through Sprint timeboxes or work in progress (WIP) limits, Agile processes allow marketers to decline non-essential interruptions and prioritize incoming work effectively.

The world we are marketing in changes from day to day. Traditional waterfall planning forces us to stick to an elaborate, costly, long-term plan, which often fails to deliver results. The iterative power of Agile, on the other hand, allows us to rapidly adjust to incoming data Ninety-three percent of Agile CMOs found that adopting Agile helped them switch gears more quickly and effectively.[1]

In an ever-changing environment where news cycles are measured in seconds and a single tweet can derail an entire quarter of planning, the ability to pivot is a must-have item for marketing teams.

Marketing needs to prove its worth. Historically executives haven't trusted marketing to deliver results, much less contribute to the development of organizational objectives. And when so many marketing teams exist from one crisis to the next, it's no wonder that we haven't been given a seat at the strategic table. But Agile marketing stabilizes marketing performance by keeping us on deadline and on budget, as well as helping us deliver better outcomes that can be tracked via traditional metrics and KPIs.[2]

Agile also values slack and maintaining a sustainable pace, creating invaluable moments of calm in which marketing leadership can strategize and optimize. When it comes time to look at the big picture of where the organization is heading, they can come to the table with concrete plans for what's next and how marketing can help make it happen.

1. https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferrooney/2014/04/15/applying-agile-methodology-to-marketing-can-pay-dividends-survey/#7fb6b1756acd
2. http://resources.aprimo.com/white-papers-research/forbes-insights-research-report-on-the-future-of-marketing-2

Agility empowers marketers to be creative and efficient. The same sustainable pace and slack that let marketing leadership think strategically allow creative marketers time to create.

Whether it's written content, interactive experiences, or viral videos, stressed out marketers deliver subpar work. Furthermore, the reduction in context switching means that individual contributors can produce more work in less time.

Knowledge workers are most efficient when they can focus on a single project. The more things they're juggling simultaneously, the more time they lose switching back and forth among them. If you have just five things happening at once, you have only five percent of your work week available for each one. A mind-blowing seventy-five percent is lost to context switching. Agile marketing helps keep marketers focused on one task at a time, so we get more done with less waste.

5 Ways You Can Be More Agile This Week

Having investigated the reasoning behind Agile marketing, it's time to consider how to put it into practice. Some organizations undertake a large-scale Agile transformation, moving their entire department over all at once. Others will take a more piecemeal approach, testing out Agile marketing within functional teams, or creating a single cross-functional group to run a pilot program.

Whatever form your implementation ultimately takes, you can take small steps now to set your teams up for success. After all, iterative improvement is at the heart of Agile marketing.

1. Turn Your To-Do List Into a Backlog

Put simply, the backlog acts as an Agile team's sophisticated to-do list. It's maintained by marketing leadership, who work closely with external customers and internal stakeholders to ensure that it reflects current business goals and serves the audience simultaneously.

When the backlog is functioning correctly, any member of the Agile marketing team should be able to pull a piece of work from the top and start working on it immediately. The item should include all the necessary information for a qualified resource to complete it, and once done it should deliver tangible value to customers and/or the business.

Vague projects like "Improve the website home page" do not belong at the top of the backlog. Small, specific pieces of work, such as "Split test three new images in the home page header" do.

The backlog is the engine that keeps an Agile team running. Without it, they will stall out. It sounds like a simple component, but keeping it well-groomed and up to date demands constant attention from marketing leadership.

2. Limit Your Work In Progress

As we saw earlier, team members jumping from one thing to another drastically reduces their effectiveness. By placing clear limits on the number of projects each person is working on, you can start to eliminate this issue.

Work in progress (WIP) limits can be firm: "No one on our team may have more than two projects in their queue at any time," or they can be slightly more flexible: "We prefer to complete one project before beginning the next, but if a project is delayed or in review a team member may begin one new project while they wait."

This is a simple application of the WIP limit principle, and as your Agile implementation expands WIP limits should become more central to your processes. But by introducing them early on you'll get team members comfortable with limiting their focus, making it far easier to incorporate WIP limits more extensively in the future.

3. Set Up Some Experiments

Many marketing teams don't feel that they have permission to experiment because they don't believe they're allowed to fail. They prefer to stick with safe tactics, and as a result they never see anything but safe results. Only audacious experiments can deliver amazing outcomes.

Agile teams experiment constantly, and they see any data as useful, even if that data shows that something didn't work. And, because they work in short iterations, the risk associated with each experiment is quite small. A two-week project that definitively proves video isn't a good fit for your audience is far less risky than including tens of thousands of dollars of investment in video in your annual plan, only to find out at the end of the year that you got no engagement with that content.

Start embracing this fail fast mentality. Empower teams to try short, low-risk experiments. Just make sure they can measure the results so you empirical evidence to inform your next round of experimentation.

4. Iterate On Your Results

As you start experimenting, remember that it's not iteration if you only do it once. If you don't change your tactics based on the results of an experiment, it was not a useful way to spend the team's time and resources.

Agile teams run experiments to collect feedback from their audiences about what resonates and what doesn't so they can apply that information to future work. They don't experiment for the sake of experimentation.

So, as you build experiments consider how the outcomes will impact what you do next.

5. Think Outside The Timebox

As you may have noticed, none of the previous four recommendations included mention of Sprints or the Scrum methodology. I omit these references because in the early days of your Agile journey it's important not to get locked into a particular approach. Scrum is a very well-known way to do Agile, but it doesn't apply in every situation. In fact, in some marketing contexts it can be far more detrimental than even the most traditional waterfall practices.

Instead of fixating on getting a particular methodology right, start by understanding what it means to be Agile. Get comfortable with using a backlog, iterating on successful experiments, and limiting your WIP, and then you can start thinking about which Agile system can best support your teams. At that point everyone will be far better equipped to evaluate their options critically, and your chances of a successful transformation will be far greater.

Agile Marketing: The Wave Of The Future

Marketing has never been a boring profession, and the coming years promise to be unusually eventful and disruptive. Clinging to outmoded means of managing our work won't help us weather the storm. It's time to make the switch to Agile marketing.

The five tools outlined here are great places to start, but they are just the first steps on a very long journey. Continuous improvement and ongoing iteration are core tenets of any great Agile team, which means Agile marketing has to be a long term commitment. Fortunately, the benefits get bigger and better with time, so your Agile team will be prepared to ride even the biggest waves that come their way. ▌

↗

Andrea Fryrear

Andrea is the President and Lead Trainer of AgileSherpas, an Agile marketing training and consulting firm whose mission is to transform the way marketers get work done. She is a sought-after international speaker who explores the intersections between marketing and Agility who has appeared at SXSW, Content Marketing World, MarketingProfs B2B Marketing Forum, MarTech San Francisco, and The Business Agility Conference to name a few. Her most recent book, Death of a Marketer, chronicles marketing's troubled path and the steps it must take to claim a more Agile future.

You can find her tweeting @andreafryrear.

TMMi CONQUER THE WORLD

TMMi® (Test Maturity Model Integration) is a model for test process improvement. The popularity of the TMMi Model is spreading at a rapid pace. In October 2017, it entered China and the TMMi scheme is available in Chinese – besides English, French and Spanish.
The internationally recognized software testing expert Erik van Veenendaal is the CEO of the TMMi Foundation. Debbie Archer, Managing Director iSQI LTD, spoke with him about the new developments of TMMi.

↗
Erik van Veenendaal *(www.erikvanveenendaal.nl) is a leading international consultant and trainer. He is one of the core developers of the TMap testing methodology and the TMMi improvement model. Since its foundation in 2002, Erik has been strongly involved in the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB). From 2005 till 2009 he was the vice-president of the ISTQB organization. Today, he is the president of the Curaçao Testing Qualifications Board(CTQB).*
Erik is a frequent keynote and tutorial speaker at international testing and quality conferences. For his major contribution to the field of testing, Erik received the European Testing Excellence Award (2007) and the ISTQB International Testing Excellence Award (2015).

You can follow Erik on twitter via @ErikvVeenendaal.

Debbie Archer: Erik, how is the TMMi model maturing globally?
Erik van Veenendaal: TMMi has become a leading model for test process improvement around the world. The uptake and interest is growing rapidly. As an IT industry, we are still far away from zero defects; this is even true with Agile. Don't get me wrong, Agile provides much added value and delivers many benefits, but of course doing Agile doesn't mean testing and testers are no longer needed. Good testing…. solid testing…. is and will remain indispensable in my view. Many organizations pushing towards a higher level of testing maturity have reported significant improvement, not just testing efficiency and effectiveness, but also the delivery of projects and business value.

TMMi is:

1. *an independent model, which includes not being linked to any commercial organization (the TMMi Foundation is non-profit)*

2. *freely available in several languages; currently (English, French, Spanish and Chinese)*

3. *life cycle and domain independent – so it fits both traditional and Agile approaches.*

One interesting aspect is that the content from TMMi is aligned to ISTQB® terminology.[1]

1. https://www.istqb.org/downloads/glossary.html

> In Q3 2017 we have seen the number of exams taken double compared to the same quarter 2016.

You mentioned ISTQB®; I understand that TMMi are seeking collaboration with ISTQB® National and Regional Member Boards.

Indeed, a number of ISTQB® Boards have already established themselves as local TMMi Local Chapters – it makes sense that we collaborate in support of the local testing communities. I am thrilled that the ISTQB® Boards for China, Finland, India, Italy, South Eastern Europe, Hungary, UK and France have now signed Chapter agreements.

Why is TMMi so relevant to the Chinese market?

China is making rapid developments in various fields – also in the software industry with an increasing impetus to guarantee software quality. CMMI is still very strong and well-known in China so the TMMi concept, and its benefit, is easily understood by enterprise organizations in China. We now have several accredited (lead) assessors in China, three organizations are TMMi accredited Assessment Service Providers and there are two recognized TMMi Professional training providers. But even more important there are already three organizations that are officially TMMi certified including one at Level 5 "Optimization". More are expected in the very near future.

You mentioned that the TMMi Professional exam is available in Chinese....

Yes, this was imperative; we saw increasing numbers of people seeking TMMi Professional certification in China and translating into Chinese showed commitment to the market, as well as making it more accessible. iSQI has made the exam available in paper format and it will also be available on Pearson VUE. The reference book "The Little TMMi"[2] will also be very shortly available in Chinese to offer practical support.

You mentioned that the banking sector is especially interested in TMMi assessment? Is there a specific reason why?

Increasing compliance and regulatory, not only in China but across the world, are necessitating levels of governance that need a different approach. The integrity, management and security of information, including quality of the software by which they are produced and managed, is under even closer scrutiny. TMMi assessment can be a useful tool for assessing processes and reducing risk. If an organization can state we are already level at TMMi level 3 "Defined", then it will be a very clear statement to both internal and external stakeholders.

Is TMMi Professional Certification in good demand?

We are seeing a growing number of very active training providers across the world with growing demand for certification courses and the exam from organizations. The collaboration with the ISTQB® local chapters now starting will most likely increase awareness. Any organization seeking to improve its test processes and level of maturity will benefit from more understanding on the TMMi model. This is where the TMMi Professional certification program comes in. In Q3 2017 we have seen the number of exams taken double compared to the same quarter 2016.

Are there any other future plans for TMMi that you can share with our readers?

I think first of all TMMi will become the "standard" for test improvement in the world. Furthermore, we have recently published a document how to apply TMMi in an Agile context and there is more to come on this topic. We have recognized SCAMPI as a TMMi assessment method; anyone accredited as a SCAMPI (lead) appraiser can also now, in principle, become a (lead) assessor with TMMi. I think in the future, this is not tomorrow, further cooperation with other certification and standards organizations such as ISTQB® or the ISO 29119 committee would be interesting.[3]

How will SCAMPI appraisers transition to become TMMi assessors?

SCAMPI appraisers can apply to the TMMi Foundation to become accredited to perform TMMi assessments. They will need to demonstrate that they have experience in testing (as an example by having the necessary ISTQB® certification) and demonstrate understanding of the TMMi method by passing the TMMi professional certification.

Erik, I think one of the things I'm hearing from you is that TMMi Foundation are looking to be very inclusive and collaborative?

Yes, I think we've been looking too much to the inside, but are changing this to an outgoing perspective currently. Today we are seeking to stay close to the market, seeing what's needed and to work together with the broader community.

With a global aspiration which is certainly coming to fruition now.

Very much so – and bringing real return on investment and benefit for users and customers.

Thank you for the Interview.

2. http://www.erikvanveenendaal.nl/en/the-little-tmmi-objective-driven-test-process-improvement/
3. https://www.tmmi.org/case-studies/

REQUIREMENTS @ AGILE

A MODERN FAIRYTALE

Once upon a time, IT systems were developed in a sequential way. Some called it by the nickname 'waterfall', because it seemed a natural way of working. Everything was planned in clear phases, in which specialists worked on some aspect of the system; the output of one phase was the input for the next. The first phase was the requirements phase, in which keen analysts decided what the users needed and wrote a blueprint for all next phases. At the end, some months or years after the original due date, the users got exactly the system they wanted – more or less …

And then came the Agile storm. Suddenly, everything was different! Nowadays, IT systems are developed according to an Agilelish approach. That means that a system evolves by iterations, based upon a mysterious, living thing, the backlog. This backlog is fed and tamed by a superman: The Product Owner. It contains all requirements as user stories, nicely arranged by business value.

So, when the project is stopped because time or money runs out, the users get exactly the system they wanted – more or less …

The funny thing about these fairytales is that both have the same happy ending: the system lived long and the helpdesk was happy (after the first hectic months).

And the users? They got used to it; that's why they're called users…

THE EVIL IS IN TRYING TO ADD TOO MUCH DETAIL TOO EARLY

So far for the fairytales, which, by the way, are surprisingly close to reality.
Most people agree that the Agile Manifesto has drastically improved the way in which we develop IT systems. However, implementation of Agile in actual projects was not always as successful as expected, often caused by an underestimation of Requirements Engineering.
Early 2017, IREB®, the International Requirements Engineering Board, introduced the RE@Agile Primer, a syllabus and study guide[1] that outlines the principles of proper Requirements Engineering in Agile projects, and announced an Advanced Level course for the end of 2017.

This Primer describes some common misconceptions about RE in Agile:

- Upfront is evil
- Documentation is waste
- User stories are enough
- Only working software counts

Because of these misconceptions, Agile teams often don't realize what RE means for their success. So, let's take a closer look at these misconceptions to refute them and show what benefits RE can bring for Agile projects.

Upfront is evil

Sequential development usually starts with a requirements phase. Improper implementation of Requirements Engineering suggests that this should be the (only) phase in which all requirements are elaborated in detail. This is a misconception, not only in Agile, but in waterfall as well.

In whatever approach, every project starts with some high-level requirements that are elaborated in the next steps, phases, iterations. In each step, requirements are updated and extended, based on new knowledge available, new constraints considered and new choices made.
Upfront work will always be required, also in Agile projects. How else would an initial product backlog be filled, a release theme chosen, a minimal viable product defined? The evil is in trying to add too much detail too early without sufficient knowledge. Making the right choice on elaborating the right level of detail at the right moment is a key success factor for every project.

Documentation is waste

Agile teams heavily rely on oral communication. In an ideal situation, the whole team sits together on a day-to-day basis. Any issue about the system is discussed at the project table without putting a single letter on paper. That saves a lot of trees! But projects rarely meet ideal situations. And there is more communication than within the team itself.
Documentation is a way to transfer concepts over time and space and a thinking tool to sharpen ideas. In any project, it is a good practice to produce only documentation for a defined target group that actually needs it at a different time or a different location.
In sequential projects, where different specialists at different times work on development, there is inherently more need for documentation than in a closely cooperating Agile team. But also in Agile, there will be communication outside the team, and the need to preserve information over a longer period. That is exactly where documentation is indispensable.

1. Baumann, L. et al. (2017). IREB Certified Professional for Requirements Engineering - RE@Agile Primer - Syllabus and Study Guide. IREB, Karlsruhe. Download it for free at https://www.ireb.org/en/cpre/re-agile-primer/

User stories are enough

"We don't need requirements, we have user stories!"

Right! User stories ARE requirements, written according to a standard template. The problem is their focus on functionality. Non-functional requirements are at risk of being neglected. A story like "As a web shop visitor, I want to see the catalogue within 200 milliseconds, so that I don't get bored" or "As a smartphone owner, I want the app to be less than 50 MB, so that I have room for other apps" is rarely seen. Such requirements are often hidden in acceptance criteria. Being connected to individual stories, it is hard to get an overall picture and to ensure consistency.

User stories concentrate on functionality that stakeholders explicitly ask for: conscious requirements according to the Kano classification. Subconscious requirements, mentioned by stakeholders only by chance, are easily overlooked. And in a two-week Agile iteration, there is no room for creative techniques to discover unconscious requirements that might become delighters.

Only working software counts

Agile propagates working software as the ultimate means to validate stakeholder's requirements and to show developer's progress. Therefore, each iteration focusses on delivering 'potentially shippable software components'.

But not every step forward delivers a working component within the constraints of a single iteration. There is no reason why stakeholders cannot validate intermediate products like a wireframe prototype. Only don't force them to give their approval to models documented in unfamiliar techniques, as may wrongly have been done in sequential approaches. Their approval of a prototype shows progress just as well as delivering a working component.

At the end, stakeholders need solving their problems and realizing their goals. Working software plays an important role in it, but other things like new knowledge and better procedures are just as valuable.

Continuous Requirements Engineering and the Agile iteration

Figure 1 shows the Continuous RE process with the main points of involvement in an iteration.

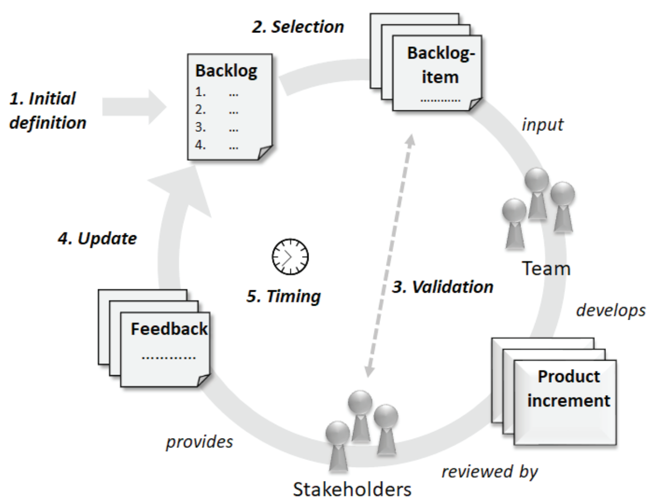


Figure 1. The Continuous RE process (source: IREB RE@Agile Primer).

1. Initial definition

Before development starts, an initial product backlog must be created. It may contain a product vision, themes and features, definitions of Minimal Viable Products or Minimal Marketable Features, some epics. Right from the beginning, requirements engineering and management techniques are involved in creating this backlog and in keeping it consistent. While recognizing that much information is still missing, validation techniques can be used to ensure that the backlog contains 'just enough' knowledge to start the first iteration.

2. Selection

For each iteration, the team selects the items to develop. Validation techniques can verify if an item fulfils the Definition of Ready; management techniques are useful to prioritize them. Usually, some details about items will be missing. While too much detail restricts the creativity of the team, not enough detail endangers the consistency of the system. Determining the right level of detail is context dependent: an experienced team can better deal with uncertainty than an unexperienced one.

3. Validation

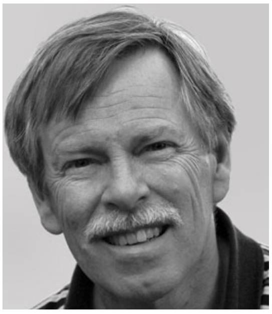
The validity of backlog items can be determined before and after implementation in working software. Items with high risk, high testing costs, or risk of substantial rework are best validated prior to their implementation, but early validation is only possible if the level of detail is sufficient.

4. Update

Small scale updates are usually based on reviews, often in the demo of the working software; this is feasible if the analysis is easily and the impact is low. Large scale updates need more time, analysis and preparation. This may grow beyond a single iteration and may exceed the authority of the team. Requirements management techniques support impact analysis and prioritization.

5. Timing

Iteration length determines the frequency of feedback: shorter lengths put more workload on the stakeholders, longer lengths diminish the capability to influence the backlog, risking substantial refactoring. Length should be a deliberate choice: the larger the size and complexity of backlog items, the longer the iteration length.



Hans van Loenhoud

For more than 35 years of IT-development, Hans has always been committed to software quality. Started as a COBOL programmer, he focused on software testing over the last 20 years. In recent years, Hans has been building bridges between software testing and requirements engineering, as both disciplines cannot deliver value without each other. Hans is a regular writer and speaker on these topics.

You can contact him at hans.vanloenhoud@taraxacum.nl

The benefits of Requirements Engineering for Agile approaches

Professional Requirements Engineering, as present in the IREB Body of Knowledge, is a process-agnostic collection of methods and techniques, from which you can choose in a tradeoff between effort and yield.

RE starts with elicitation: collecting requirements from all relevant stakeholders, requirements are documented, validated for quality, conflicts solved, abstraction levels harmonized, until they are consolidated into a consistent, unambiguous set capturing the essence of the system. But the methods and techniques for this are just means. What really counts is empathy, a true understanding of what the stakeholders really need.

Stakeholders don't need a perfect insight into their requirements, they need solutions for their problems and goals.[2] They rarely draw the whole picture; they come up with something that currently troubles them, a future that they want to achieve, or a system that supposedly solves their issues. Through elicitation, RE composes a holistic view on the complete landscape of problems and goals. Only from there, valuable solutions can be created, preferably as alternatives with expected benefits, costs and risks, where the stakeholders can choose from. RE provides the right ground and mindset for this creativity.

As stated before, RE is not an exclusively upfront activity. After establishing some high-level requirements upfront, more detail will be added during subsequent iterations. Requirements management techniques help to get the right information available at the right time.

RE emphasizes the communication with all relevant stakeholders. Open, fair, two-way communication turns victims of change into collaborators for improvement. RE offers a wide range of communication types, far beyond documentation: natural language, conceptual models, selective reporting, presentations, workshops, brainstorm sessions. This all serves to create a shared understanding among the team, the users and the other stakeholders.

The RE Manifesto

Over the years, we have developed requirements as a cornerstone for the delivery of successful IT-systems. Through this work we have come to value:

Genuine empathy *over* techniques, models and templates
Creative solution design *over* comprehensive elicitation
In-time elaboration *over* upfront specification
Shared understanding *over* proper documentation

While there is much value in the basic factors on the right, we recognize that the success factors are on the left.

The fairytale of the marriage between RE and Agile finally gets a happy end: the smooth development of long living, healthy systems for satisfied users! ▮

2. Loenhoud, H. van, K. Lauenroth and P. Steiger (2017). The goal is to solve the problem – Some thoughts on problems and goals in the context of requirements engineering. http://re-magazine.ireb.org/issues/2017-02-staying-on-the-right-path/the-goal-is-to-solve-the-problem/

iSQI IN NUMBERS

More than

30,000

IT professionals are certified by iSQI per year.

iSQI has a global network of

250

accredited Training Providers.

More than

500

invigilators proctor iSQI examinations worldwide.

Examinees can choose any one of

4 exam channels: paper based, SMEX (tablet or computer-based exams), FLEX (remote proctor exam available anyplace at anytime) and Pearson VUE Test Centers.

iSQI certifies IT professionals in more than

100

countries.

The iSQI portfolio includes more than

50

internationally recognized certifications.

Constantly changing job requirements generates a demand for lifelong learning. To stay competitive in today's job market, professionals need to possess comprehensive and comparable skills and knowledge. For more than 10 years, iSQI has been certifiying the skills of IT professionals worldwide. Employers can be confident that an iSQI exam has been delivered to the highest standards (ISO 17024) ensuring validity and integrity of a certification.

TEST OUTSOURCING IN EASTERN EUROPE

What is Outsourcing?

“PROCESS OF CONTRACTING THE COMPANY’S BUSINESS PROCESS AND OPERATIONS TO AN EXTERNAL COMPANY. IT IS EXPECTED TO BE DONE WITH A BETTER QUALITY.”

To understand the concept of the outsourcing in the best way, it is very important that everyone is aware of its meaning and history. Outsourcing could be described as delegating the company's day to day business processes and operations to an external company. Usually, it is done to achieve better quality at lower costs. Though, it has become highly popular with the boom of the BPO (Business Processes Outsourcing) and the development of the IT Sector in the early 00's, outsourcing is definitely not new and not discovered in the last twenty years (more or less).

It goes back to the Romans who are known to have outsourced their tax collection. Then, in the 18th century in England, it regained popularity with the industrial revolution. In 1970's the big manufacturing companies started to underperform. That continued in the 80's when a change of direction in the business strategy was witnessed – the companies started focusing on fewer, but core business activities.

Offshoring as we know it today started with Y2K mainly with Indian companies. Many companies were in a search of new ways to organize work and processes to improve the cost, the performance, the quality and the speed.

With the rapid development of the IT sector in the 90's, offshoring has become a very controversial part of the outsourcing revolution. Deals worth over a billion euros actually produced lower than the expected results. In the early 00's whether or not to outsource became very debatable between practitioners and academics. Do not forget that almost anything can be outsourced. It does not happen in fact due to security risks – imagine if NATO outsources the development of its software and there is a risk? So, the debate still goes on and outsourcing still gains even more popularity. We see new trends that are also to change the face of the well-known outsourcing model.

TEST OUTSOURCING IN EASTERN EUROPE

The Face Of Typical Outsourcing Has Changed

In the fast-paced world, where every part is somehow connected to IT we are witnessing that for the last decade, the face of typical outsourcing has changed. More and more companies are now inclined to invest in nearshoring, in the geographically closer countries of Eastern Europe than in India the preferred and dominant partner in the past. The reasons for outsourcing in Eastern Europe are quite many, one of the most commonly mentioned is the lack of the "Yes, sir" culture. But as there are many benefits of outsourcing in Eastern Europe, there are also many risks of doing so, some of them connected to the security and the loss of management on behalf of the client. Are there reasonable constraints to stop nearshoring or are the benefits more than initially imagined? Is Eastern Europe the next India for outsourcing and why is it better than any other location? These questions and a lot more will be arising in the next few years due to the fact that the well-developed countries do lack the resources needed to fulfill their needs.

So, it's quite important that clear definitions are made for the mostly commonly met terms in the outsourcing industry – offshoring, onshoring and nearshoring.

Offshoring – quite popular in the past: outsourcing business processes from outside the home country to a third party or company that is set up as an offshore development center. This model is connected with risks due to language barriers, cultural differences and different time zones. It is usually used because of the cheaper labour costs.
Onshoring: outsourcing business processes to any location in the same country as the buyer. It involves less risks but does not allow for saving much. And still, you do lack the opportunity to choose from a wide range of IT professionals, you are being restricted by the country's labour force which is not relevant for offshoring and nearshoring.

Nearshoring: outsourcing business processes to companies located in nearby countries. It is especially common for West European businesses who prefer the East European destinations. Nowadays, nearshoring is considered to be a good alternative to the offshoring and onshoring and is really gaining in great popularity.

The Outsourcing Market – Facts & Figures I

Typical sectors for Outsourcing:

1. *Banks, Insurance and Financial Sector – 35% of the activities are being outsourced;*
2. *Telecommunication and Information Technology (IT)* – 25%.*
3. *Manufacturing Industry – 15%.*
4. *Retail industry – 7%;*
5. *Transport and Sport – 5%;*
6. *Miscellaneous – 13%;*

*Please, note that in 2013 the global software testing market was around 30 billion US dollars and is expected to grow to 50 billion US dollars till 2020.

Why Companies Choose To Outsource?

By outsourcing your day-to-day activities, you can achieve:

- *Fast delivery of high control – trusted outsourcing providers bring to customers deep industry and functional experience, with supporting infrastructure and approaches, enabling faster speed and higher quality.*
- *Team scalability – variety of outsourcing engagement models empower the customer with exceptional flexibility, supporting their requirements to scale the team up or down according to the always changing staff demand.*
- *Access to global skills – tapping into the global talent pool ensures a flow of fresh innovative ideas and insights for business.*
- *Cost savings – lower cost geographies driven by highly skilled employees are a good choice for reducing operating expenses. Any business can benefit from global services today.*
- *Time efficiency – internal staff can focus on the other mission – critical business needs while, not being concerned about routine tasks.*
- *Increased revenue – all in all, outsourcing helps companies worldwide to increase revenue and gain competitive advantage of the above mentioned.*
- *Fast delivery of high quality, Team Scalability, Access to global skills Cost savings, and Time efficiency.*

"... OUTSOURCING WILL CONTINUE TO GAIN POPULARITY"

Of course, each company makes the decision to outsource based on its objectives and due to different reasons. Sometimes, the factors that influence the decision to outsource the most are just cost savings and nothing more. Other times, it is the desire of the company to gain additional knowledge and make sure that the product it delivers is of great quality. Also it may be due to lack of internal resources etc.

Risks Associated With Outsourcing

Whatever the reasons to outsource are, this is not a decision to be made easily. When you outsource, you also share your confidential information and your expertise with the vendor. Of course, the vendor will need some of this business critical information to complete the project and, at least in the beginning, you might always be concerned if the vendor will use this critical information for its purposes and handle it with good care. That means, a mutual trust must be built. There are some risks that are quite common and which every company considering outsourcing should be aware of:

1. *Sensitive data exposure – to mitigate the risks of accidental or intended data exposure, companies sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) through which the parties agree not to reveal confidential information predefined in the document.*
2. *The hidden costs – the threat of hidden costs can be easily prevented by a clear and transparent outsourcing contract. Both parties should thoroughly cross-check the document since it is a prerequisite for successful cooperation.*
3. *Management control loss – while selecting an outsourcing engagement model, companies decide whether to leave management control of outsourced processes inhouse or pass it to the vendor.*

The Outsourcing Market – Facts & Figures II

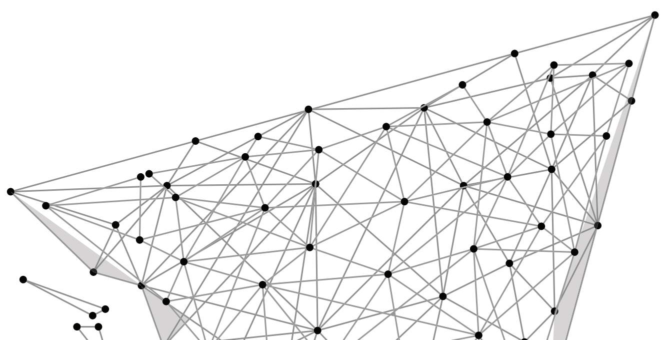
Things to Consider When you Outsource

Before making the decision to outsource or not, you must consider the obstacles that you might face. What quickly comes to mind is:

- *Language and time zone differences. As close time zones and good language skills definitely contribute to the productivity and the communication, this obstacle should be carefully considered.*
- *Do your homework and learn more about the outsourcing services provided by the vendor – just to be sure you receive the best service.*
- *Check customers' reviews and feedbacks.*
- *Check what the infrastructure of the vendor is and what kind of devices the vendor possesses.*
- *Make sure the vendor is experienced in managing outsourced projects if you have decided not to monitor the process.*

Reasons Why The East European Countries Are Outsourcing Preferred Destinations

Often seen as bad, we also have to admit that the legacy of the Soviet Union has a plus – the educational system then and still now is focused on the engineering specialties. After all, the salaries are quite competitive and there is a low cost of living, especially when not outsourcing to the capitals, compared to Western Europe. At the same time the work force is quite skilled and eager to prove itself as professionals. As a rule, a lot of attention in Eastern Europe is paid to learning English and other languages like French, German, Spanish, and Italian. There are very small differences in the time zone – may be one or two hour. And what is maybe the biggest advantage – companies in Eastern Europe really tend to engage with the business model of their client. These companies are seeking good references and definitely want to keep their clients and through them find new ones. In Eastern Europe companies want to keep their reputation clean and they want the recommendations from their clients to be always positive. As compared, India is pretty good when you need to have things done quickly, in a cost-effective manner – just like the factory model while, in Eastern Europe people are more proactive and prefer more experimental tasks.



Also, what we can see in India is a high employee turnover, lack of dedicated teams and what is a real pain for the managers – the "Yes, sir" culture where they agree with everything, no matter if it could be done, if it is possible to meet the deadlines or useless at all. Whereas, in Eastern Europe there is no such phenomena and you can have the independent opinion of the vendor's employees.

Do not forget that East European countries are nearshore providers and that is definitely a preferred model of outsourcing nowadays. And, for the countries in EU advantage is the VAT system that is pretty synchronized and the clear rules and regulations of EU that apply to all members.

Main Reasons That Lead Your Outsourced Projects To Failure

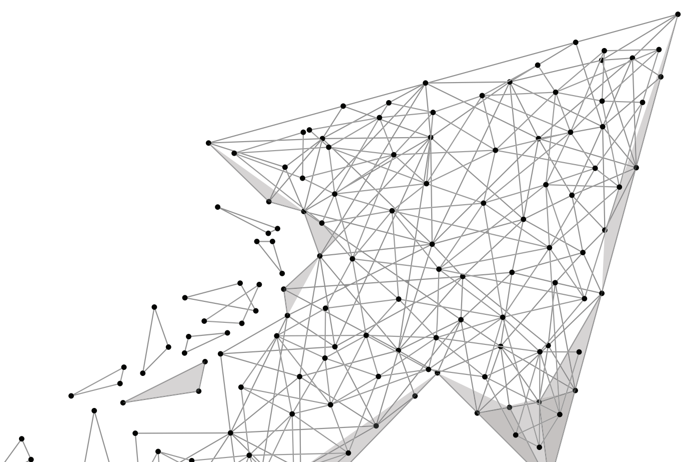
The dark statistics show that 50% of the outsourced projects either fail outright or just fail to meet the expectations. 76% of the companies reported issues with the management effort on behalf of the vendor and hidden costs. 30% reported communication problems within the vendor and 51% were unhappy with the performance. All in all, the cost savings amount to 26% – only 26%.

On the other hand, there are many success stories and some of the most popular applications have been developed while being outsourced. Have you ever heard or somewhere read that Slack, Fab, Skype, Klout, Github, AppSumo and Branchout started as outsourced projects? To the list we can add the MYSQL, AlertBoot, SeatGeek and Squawker. Cannot forget to mention also JPay.com, Splunk, Opera and Pingar, as well as, Axeda, Solix, Cloudmunch, Gliffy, Net2Text and Proximate Global Inc., Mailburn and Mindspark. These are only 25 examples of the many successful outsourced projects.

It should be mentioned one more time that every company should be very careful when choosing the outsourcing vendor. If you are a start-up or a small company, it is not good for you to go to the corporations in the outsourcing.

How To Succeed In The Outsourcing Industry?

To succeed in the outsourcing industry, it is very important indeed to be always ahead with the trends and be ready to meet the changes and cope with the challenges you face every single day. What should you pay attention to in the next few years when it comes to outsourcing, especially in the IT field?



1 Going vertical – what does this mean? That clients are expecting from their vendors to be able to complete tasks connected with the vertical integration among infrastructure, applications and operations.

2 This, done well, will ensure efficiency, accountability and alignment between business strategies and enabling services as stated by Anirban Dutta, Director of Global Strategic Business Development at CSC.

3 Looking for outcome – as new technologies come to use as cloud computing, the service providers are enabled to offer more outcome – based prices rather than simply equating more full-time equivalents (FTEs) with more work.

4 Putting procurement in play – the procurement organizations are expected to begin taking a more active role in purchasing decisions, vendor selection and other activities.

5 Shifting to managed services – the right application of this model shows multiple benefits and the challenges are connected with the setup complexity, volume uncertainty, impact on different IT functions and organizational change requirements.

6 Beyond labour arbitrage – we are talking about steps to experiment with new models including risk-based partnerships and industry-specific solutions.

7 Looking at life of contract – considering techniques to ensure competitive pricing over the life of the agreements.

8 Asking for help with answers – except being responsible for efficiency and cost reduction, the vendors are often asked by their clients to identify inefficiencies within the client's organization's internal environment.

9 Redoing the contract – revising, negotiating always on the go. ITO (IT outsourcing) trumping the BPO – more and more.

10 Developing Best-of-breed strategies – variety of vendors based on their expertise.

What is for sure – outsourcing, no matter controversial or not, will continue to gain popularity and the main focus will continue to shift giving the vendor the possibility not only to perform the day-to-day tasks but also provide the client with ideas for the business development.

↗
Mitko Mitev
is Managing Director of Quality House Ldt. With more than 25 years of experience in the software quality assurance and more than 20 years experience as Project and Test Manager, Mitko Mitev is one of the leading software test experts in South East Europe. He dedicated his professional life to the promotion of QA and Test professions, particularly in South East Europe. Being a part of the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB) and President of the South East European Testing board (SEETB) Mitko has been actively participating in their efforts for setting and improving international standards in the Software Quality.
His commitment to the promotion of the Software Quality is also demonstrated by taking the role of the Chair of the SEETEST Conferences and participation in other software quality assurance conferences.
In the past few years he has been focused mainly on writing course materials, books and articles that will enable everybody to learn more about the field of the software testing. Along with that, he is the owner of an outsourcing and consultancy company in Bulgaria – Quality House – market leader in offering highly professional testing services.

ANY QUESTIONS?

PUBLISHER

International Software
Quality Institute (iSQI)
Friedrich-Engels-Str. 24
14473 Potsdam (Germany)
T: +49 331 231810-18
www.isqi.org

EDITOR

Responsible for Editorial Content:
Stephan Goericke
Editorial team: Anja Schreinert,
Debbie Archer, Isabel von Gustedt,
Julia Schirmer
contact@sq-mag.com
Friedrich-Engels-Str. 24
14473 Potsdam
(Germany)

PHOTO CREDITS

Titel: Foto Andrea Fryrear:
Bruce Partain BrucePartain.com
p. 3 Stephan Goericke_©Karoline Wolf
p. 5 shutterstock_ ©nikkytok
p. 9 shutterstock_©Africa St.
p.13 shutterstock_©iiinuthiii

ADVERTISEMENTS

Detailed metrics for the online
advertising formats are available.
Please send your request to:
contact@sq-mag.com

LAYOUT

Frenkelson Advertising Agency
www.frenkelson.de

METRICS

21 cm × 29,7 cm
(DIN A4, 4-color (euro scale))
Live area: 170 mm (B) × 242 mm (H)
E-Paper and PDF-Download on
www.sq-mag.com

SQ_mag
#04
COMING APRIL 2018