# HSG CONSULTING, LLC
*Providing Quality and Experienced Project Management Methods*

## Welcome to the Fall newsletter for HSG Consulting

Welcome to the Fall newsletter. Occasionally I run across some great project management tools or ideas that I'd like to share with you. Somewhere between a blog and formal article, this is meant to be conversational, helpful, and inspire feedback. I hope you enjoy it.

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## 3 Tips for Adopting Agile Methods in a Traditional Environment



If you feel like I do this time of year, this image rings true! This may explain why this newsletter intended for October is going out in early November!

So you want to adopt some of the Agile methods in your traditional environment and you're wondering if you're nuts. If you've read enough to understand the basics, and you are interested in trying some of the methods, you can be spared the asylum. Try these three steps to introduce the benefits of Agile techniques in your environment.

- **Tip 1: Daily stand-up meetings.**

  Begin implementing more frequent communication among the team members by instituting the daily stand-up (in Scrum, this is your daily Sprint meeting). This meeting should take no more than 10-12 minutes regardless of team size. The team meets at a specified time and location each day - preferably in an open location where everyone can stand in a circle. Use a speaking token, something as simple as a pen, paper weight or even a stapler, where only the person holding the token can speak, everyone reports on three things:
  a) what they worked on since the last stand-up meeting;

b) what they will be working on today;
c) what obstacles are in their way to completing their work
No problem solving during the stand-up. This is used to surface issues only, and increase the communication among the team members. I've found this to be a very useful technique in traditional teams as this gives every member the opportunity to ask their questions without waiting for the usual 1 week status meeting. To address the concerns about holding yet another meeting, try canceling the weekly status meetings in lieu of the daily stand-ups. Almost immediately communication among all members increases and problems get addressed and resolved quickly.

- **Tip 2: Bi-Weekly Delivery Iterations**

  I have been successful in coaching teams to focus on delivering working code, prototypes, and/or designs, on a bi-weekly time period, and you can too. While this is at the heart of Agile techniques and goes in concert with creating user stories and tasks that are small enough to be completed in shorter time periods than traditional methods, you can work with your team members to scale down their work into pieces that can be delivered in two weeks. Since value is being demonstrated in a regular fashion, this quick delivery turn around will increase the communication with your client, increase their satisfaction with the development team, and increase overall trust within the team at large.

- **Tip 3: Demonstrations and Re-Planning**

  Every two weeks schedule a formal meeting time with your client and your project team to demonstrate the deliverable during the two-week delivery iteration. This will drive your team to create something that can be demonstrated to the client. Use this time to review the items planned for completion with the client, allowing them to alter the schedule to fit changing business needs. Their participation will require hard decisions, as they are asked to help balance the time/scope/resources triangle of project management. Something they may have not participated in before. Regular deliverables and drawing your client into the planning cycle supports the benefits mentioned in Tip 2: increased communication with your client; increased satisfaction with the project team; and increased overall trust within the team at large.

The overall goal is to increase communication and visibility not only within your project team but also between your project team and the client. As cited by the Standish Group's Chaos reports directly involving clients and executive management support along with clear business needs are the three top factors in predicting IT project success.  Involving your clients regularly addresses each of these project success factors, through the improved communication and participation in the planning and delivery of the product.

### Click here for an online copy of the 2004 Standish Chaos Report

## Who is HSG Consulting?

My clients come to me when they're worried that they are slipping back into their old methods and experiencing missed Sprints, waste in unfinished work, and not getting the right things done for the right projects. They say I help them refocus their teams and regain direction of their projects, and put Agile back on track. For a free 1 hour review of your project issues, call or email me and we can get started on putting your Agile adoption back on track, or jump starting your Agile teams.

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# Further reading on Stand Up Meetings

While adopting something that sounds as simple as a stand up meeting sounds easy, there are a few points worth reviewing. The following article from martinfowler.com shares the concept and patterns of a good stand up meeting. Good points on what to watch out for and you'll find details on running these meetings every day. Check it out here.

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