

HSG CONSULTING, LLC

Providing Quality and Experienced Project Management Methods

Welcome to the January 2009 newsletter for HSG Consulting

Welcome to the January 2009 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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Agile Project Management



In defining what is Agile Project Management, perhaps it is best to look at the key concepts of Agile Project Management itself. The Agile PM brings to the team, through the use of the Agile process and their own skills:

1. **Visibility** - by keeping project materials and burn-down charts visible in a public location, the teams are continually aware of the status of the effort
2. **Collaboration** - through daily Scrums or Stand-Ups and the use of pairing, the team members interact far more than in traditional settings. The Sprint and Project Planning meetings are another setting for collaboration among team members and the client.
3. **Rhythm** - the daily Scrums or Stand-Ups, the end-of iteration demonstrations of working code, the retrospectives, and end-of iteration planning session, all establish a rhythm for the team. This builds a pattern, or beat for the team, that continues to reinforce team collaboration.
4. **Embracing change** - the act of planning and replanning across iterations enables the project to adjust to the changing needs of business.
5. **Simplicity** - the Agile PM reminds the team to focus on the simplest thing that can be done to provide value. This is to help them avoid the pitfalls of development rabbit-holes, overly-complex solutions, and waiting for one code section to complete before building another.

Managing Quality, Time, Scope, plan development and execution are key parts of the Agile process. Through the use of Continuous Integration, Test Driven Development, and pairing within development teams, Quality is built into the software from the beginning. Through iterative software development, and the subsequent collaborative planning with

the client; Scope, Time and plan management are managed in an Agile project.

Brought together by the Agile PM, these concepts build collective ownership among team members, dynamic adjustment of the project based on empirical data, stronger teams, and visible status updates to all participants.

Who is HSG Consulting?

HSG Consulting has been helping clients refocus their teams, regain direction of their projects, and put their Agile adoption back on track. If you're worried that you are slipping back into your old methods and experiencing missed Sprints, waste in unfinished work, and not getting the right things done for the right projects, [contact me for a free 1 hour review](#) of your project issues. We can get started on jump starting your Agile teams.



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Resources

Below are some of the books that I've found useful as an Agile PM. You'll note that not all are technical, many of the books I read address issues surrounding teams and working with people.

- [Planning Extreme Programming](#) by Kent Beck and Martin Fowler. PM basics of the XP Agile method.
- [Agile Software Development with Scrum](#) by Ken Schwaber and Mike Beedle. The seminal book on the Scrum process.
- [Lean Software Development, An Agile Toolkit](#) by Mary and Tom Poppendieck. Borrowing from lean manufacturing practices, this is a great book on the concepts of lean and Agile.
- [Death by Meeting](#) by Patrick Lencioni. Great book on team rhythms in terms of meetings. How to get the most from your teams.
- [Mastering the Rockefeller Habits](#) by Verne Harnish. A good supporting book that features company rhythms.
- [Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.](#) by Ron Chernow. This biography of one of the largest figures in American life provides insights and patterns for success that Rockefeller used throughout his stratospheric career.
- [The Five Dysfunctions of a Team](#) by Patrick Lencioni. A great read describing how trust, conflict, commitment, accountability and results all affect team functioning, and what you can do about it.
- [Leadership is an Art](#) by Max DePree. Leading is an art more than a science; this book shows not only why but shares ways in which to lead. Used at Herman Miller since 1923 when D.J. DePree developed and introduced this method, it provides examples and a description of the humanistic approach of leadership. Interestingly enough, this book serves as a great definition of a Level 5 leader mentioned in Jim Collins' [Good to Great](#) book.

Having trouble planning your Sprints? Register for my [Scrum Planning workshop](#). It is an energetic two-day workshop involving structured brainstorming and idea refinement in small groups. This workshop does not consist of artificial made-up exercises, but focuses on *your* existing projects and issues. Following completion of the workshop, your team will be united in its outlook and motivated to proceed; you will have a clear understanding of the benefits, success criteria, risks, obstacles and hidden assumptions associated with your project; and you will have a breakdown of the key tasks for launching it.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

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