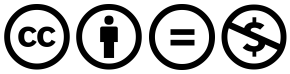
Agile Project and Delivery Management Learning Outcomes

Version 2.0



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International Consortium for Agile

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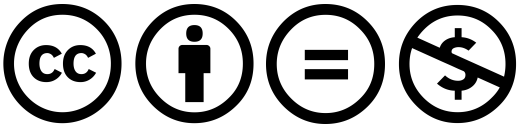

SPECIAL THANKS

ICAgile would like to thank the contributors to the Agile Project and Delivery Management Learning Outcomes:
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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that must be addressed by accredited training organizations intending to offer ICAgile's Agile Project and Delivery Management certification.

Each LO follows a particular pattern, described below.

0.0.0. Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The Learning Outcome purpose, further describing what is expected to be imparted on the learner (e.g. a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

CONTENTS

2 LICENSING INFORMATION

3 SPECIAL THANKS

4 HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

5 TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 FOREWORD

8 LEARNING OUTCOMES

8 1. AGILITY AND MANAGEMENT

8 1.1. Delivery Agility

8 1.2. Impact on Management

9 2. MANAGE THE SYSTEM, EMPOWER THE TEAM

9 2.1. Optimizing the System

9 2.2. Navigating Governance & Contracts

10 2.3. Empowering High-Performance

10 2.4. Structuring for Rapid Feedback

11 3. DELIVER VALUE CONTINUOUSLY

11 3.1. Identifying and Communicating Value

12 3.2. Defining Successful Delivery

12 3.3. Leveraging Constraints

13 4. PLANNING AND MONITORING

13 4.1. Adaptive Planning

13 4.2. Monitoring & Communicating Progress

FOREWORD

THE DISCIPLINE OF DELIVERY MANAGEMENT

Delivery Management is the discipline of ensuring that the development and implementation of products and projects is conducted both effectively and efficiently. Delivery Management provides the frameworks within which product development takes place. People responsible for delivery management are often coordinating and supporting the work of others, creating safe environments for learning and experimentation and being good stewards of corporate funds.

This certification introduces core agile concepts such as servant leadership, adaptive planning, frequent feedback for learning, and a focus on value-driven versus plan-driven delivery. Courses compare and contrast agile delivery management with traditional management approaches and give participants principles and tools to apply in their teams and organizations. Learning outcomes focus on delivering the right products through empowering people, aligning on value, managing the system to enable high performance and adaptive planning at all levels the portfolio.

There are many different frameworks and approaches to delivery management. ICAgile does not endorse one over another, instead we encourage you to learn about the various approaches and apply them in the appropriate way for the context you are in. There is no “one size fits all” approach and true agility comes from being able to adapt the approach to the environment, create opportunities for rapid delivery of value and get feedback from real customers quickly.

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR AGILE PROJECT & DELIVERY MANAGEMENT

The skills and techniques of effective delivery management are useful for people in many different roles in today’s organizations. If you are in any way responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of working products into the hands of real customers then this certification is for you. If you are responsible for balancing competing demands across a portfolio of products or projects then this track provides tools and techniques to help achieve the best outcomes for your organization.

These roles were explicitly called out when we wrote the track:

- Delivery leads / Delivery Managers or people moving into these roles
- Project or Program Manager or people moving into these roles
- Portfolio Managers or people moving into these roles
- Release Train Engineers
- Business Architects
- Enterprise Architects

- Managers at any level in the organization

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. DELIVERY AGILITY

1.1. DELIVERY MODES

1.1.1. Delivery in Complex Environments

The modern product delivery environment is complex and rapidly changing, impacting the way organizations deliver products and services at every level.

Introduce participants to the driving forces behind the changes that are happening in this turbulent environment and why new ways of thinking about delivering products and services are needed. Discuss ideas such as anti-fragility, complexity models and ways to deal with challenges. The Delivery Management discipline is charged with improving communication, sparking creativity and navigating conflict.

1.1.2. Identification and Articulation of Different Delivery Modes

Rapid technology change is having an impact on the way organizations deliver value. Modern organizations must consider different delivery modes that enable the rapid delivery of value to customers.

Explain the three main delivery modes: project, product and no project (continuous flow based around value streams). This should include discussions, examples or exercises that clearly outline how different delivery modes deliver value.

1.1.3. Applying Different Delivery Modes

No single delivery mode will be appropriate for all situations and all organizations; rather, organizations need to be adept at matching and implementing the best delivery mode for a given set of circumstances.

Explain the pros and cons of the three main delivery modes and provide examples where the use of each type is appropriate. This can include exercises that highlight and help reinforce differences among delivery modes and the pros and cons of each.

1.2. IMPACT ON MANAGEMENT

1.2.1. Manager Role Change

The role of the manager changes in agile contexts. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that a traditional management mindset can often inhibit key value drivers. Individuals in management roles (both project and functional) need to recognize their impact on the systems, processes and people they are managing.

Explain the key shifts in management style and approach that are required to transition to a more agile workplace. This could include ideas such as servant leadership, liberating structures and approaches such as Management 3.0.

Include discussions, examples or exercises that clearly outline the difference between traditional and modern management approaches.

1.2.2. Management Process Adaptation

Adopting agile delivery modes impacts management processes at every level.

Describe how management processes need to adapt to enable agile delivery. Include discussions, examples or exercises that help learners identify existing management processes that hinder agile delivery and how they can adapt effectively to changes.

2. MANAGE THE SYSTEM, EMPOWER THE TEAM

2.1. OPTIMIZING THE SYSTEM

2.1.1. Manage Delivery and the System, not People

Organizations are complex, adaptive systems made up of many interactive parts. To help foster self-organization for team within a complex system, the system itself must be managed.

Explain how managing the system can support agile delivery. Establishing shared cultural values, removing unnecessary red-tape and educating senior leadership on lean and agile principles are examples of managing the system. Explain the significant shift from managing labor utilization to managing flow.

2.1.2. Metrics that Matter for System Optimization

Actionable metrics are needed to enable learning and adaptation. Objective measurements of progress and value can provide context for decision making.

Explain how actionable metrics can support agile delivery. As organizations start prioritizing delivery by value, they need to adopt metrics that matter, as opposed to easy to obtain "vanity metrics." System metrics include factors such as team health, throughput, cycle time and others. Provide examples of both types of metrics and ways to identify metrics that will be useful in different contexts. The emphasis should be on measuring up one level above the span of control to encourage global/systemic optimization over local optimization.

2.1.3. Identifying Dependencies and Blockers at the Team/Initiative Level

Due to the fast-paced nature of agile delivery, identifying dependencies and blockers at the team level is key to success.

Explain the types of dependencies and blockers that participants may encounter, give them tools to identify and remove those within their scope of control.

2.2. NAVIGATING GOVERNANCE & CONTRACTS

2.2.1. Working with Governance, Audit and Compliance in Agile Environments

Agile governance is an enabling constraint rather than a bureaucratic burden. Managing by transparency and iterative audit practices enables fast, clear deliveries and adaptive business management practices.

Explain the audit, compliance and governance approaches that are necessary to support timely delivery of valuable products or services.

2.2.2. Agile Contracting, Procurement and Outsourcing

Organizations must shift the way contracts are defined to harness value of partner relationships (as opposed to vendor, contract-driven relationships). Remember that when dealing with contracts, the need to integrate with procurement is important and could be a significant area for potential improvement.

Explain the basics of several agile contracting approaches and provide examples of contracting structures which may be applicable.

2.3. EMPOWERING HIGH-PERFORMANCE

2.3.1. Create a Safe Team Environment

Psychological safety and a blame-free culture are critical for high performance.

Discuss the need to create an environment where people feel safe to explore and learn, and the importance of a blame-free environment. Explain why blame is toxic and why it is beneficial to instead focus on experimentation, learning and improvement. Provide ideas around ways to create a blame-free environment.

2.3.2. Moving from Individual Accountability to Team Accountability

Delivery managers fuel creation of a culture where the team holds itself accountable for the work.

Describe the importance of team accountability over individual accountability in agile environments. Discuss ways to foster team accountability.

2.3.3. Leading by Example

The Delivery Manager should role model the behaviors they want to see in the team.

Explain the importance of courage, compassion, vulnerability, curiosity, and the need for managers to demonstrate the behaviors the want to see in the teams.

2.4. STRUCTURING FOR RAPID FEEDBACK

2.4.1. Models of Team Formation

There is a wide spectrum of team formation approaches from manager assigned to full self-selection. Other dimensions of structure include skill, assignment and location.

Explain the various teaming approaches and why optimal flow of value requires skill diversity / cross-functional membership. Discuss the spectrum of team formation approaches from manager-assigned to full self-selection. For team

member location, there is a spectrum from collocated to distributed (squads in different locations) to dispersed (people in different locations).

Explain the pros and cons of the various approaches.

2.4.2. Effective Communication Within, Across and Outside the Team

Communicating openly and honestly is a foundation for trust and safety in teams.

Introduce effective communication and facilitation practices. Introduce ideas such as active listening, understanding emotional cues, understanding body language, bias management and refraining from judgement.

2.4.3. Enabling and Supporting Rapid Feedback and Learning

Agile teams are learning entities and they need to deliberately build in feedback processes and events. Agile management is constantly learning from this feedback and improving the system in response to it.

Provide examples of the different types and levels of feedback that can be obtained by agile teams and how they impact value delivery.

3. DELIVER VALUE CONTINUOUSLY

3.1. IDENTIFYING AND COMMUNICATING VALUE

3.1.1. Relating Value and Scope

One of the most substantive shifts in agile delivery is from measuring time/cost/scope to measuring value delivered as the primary indicator of success.

Elaborate on the focus on value and explain the various components of value and how they differ across stakeholders (users, customers, sponsors, development teams and other influential actors).

3.1.2. Creating a Workable Value Definition

In order to make value visible, the aspects of value must be articulated in a usable format to help decision makers prioritize work.

Explain the characteristics that define value as a context-specific construct. Factors include the aspects of a good product (desirable, feasible, usable) as well as stakeholder happiness. Introduce value models and discuss how customer satisfaction leads to successful business outcomes.

3.1.3. Validating Value Delivered

There needs to be a clear definition of done that is communicated across the community involved in a given initiative. Value is only delivered when "done" is achieved.

Introduce the definition of done at multiple levels and describe how teams use this definition to ensure they focus on delivering the right product. "Done" should include validation within the live customer environment.

3.2. DEFINING SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY

3.2.1. Outcomes Over Outputs

Success is measured by the degree to which desired outcomes are achieved, not in the overall quantity of work done.

Explain the shift from on-time/on-budget/on-scope to on-value/on-quality/within-constraints. Describe the role of customer satisfaction in successful delivery and how the whole team owns success.

3.2.2. Incremental Value Delivery

Success does not require delivering "everything" that stakeholders mention; the backlog needs to be prioritized and ranked.

Explain the shape of a healthy backlog using MMP/MVP/MLP or similar approaches. Continue to distinguish between output and delivery of valuable outcomes.

3.2.3. Optimizing the Whole

A common pitfall of focusing on single projects or the single department budgets is implementation of locally optimized solutions that do not achieve success for the whole organization.

Explain why and how to pursue value delivery in terms of the whole system as opposed to local optimization. This includes taking a value-stream perspective, managing the flow and supporting the self-organization of teams.

3.3. LEVERAGING CONSTRAINTS

3.3.1. Embracing Risk — Both Positive and Negative

Risks need to be identified and actively managed as part of the backlog. Risks generally have high priority on the list of work items.

Explain how using small, focused risk registers and actively addressing risks improves flow and lowers risk in the overall initiative. Indicate that risk can be positive or negative and, as such, so can lead to trade-off decisions in backlog prioritization.

3.3.2. The Role of Constraints in an Agile Context

Constraints are important but they come second to value.

Explain how to express constraints and show how they can impact value delivery. Unrealistic constraints represent potentially catastrophic risk. Introduce ideas such as cost of delay and explain that the backlog needs to be ordered, not just prioritized.

3.3.3. Using Risks and Constraints Creatively

Risks and constraints can heighten innovation and creativity.

Explain the process of active de-risking and tracking risk exposure. Frame constraints as a means to accelerate delivery.

4. PLANNING AND MONITORING

4.1. ADAPTIVE PLANNING

4.1.1. Defining Adaptive Planning

Adaptive planning requires a different mindset and approach than predictive planning. The Delivery Manager is the steward of adaptive planning, not the owner of the plan.

Explain the what and why of adaptive planning and introduce its key aspects. Address the viewpoint that learning and adapting is where value is identified rather than during a protracted predictive planning approach.

4.1.2. Chartering as a Way of Aligning

Effective charters start with ""why."" In agile organizations, chartering is a process rather than a document.

Chartering aligns teams on the overall initiative purpose and supports ownership and team accountability.

Describe ways to charter a team and/or an initiative. Discuss the key elements of agile chartering ceremonies as well as examples of chartering outputs. The Delivery Manager is a participant in chartering and the team owns the content.

4.1.3. Doing Adaptive Planning

Adaptive planning is undertaken at multiple levels and is recursive.

Explain common techniques for adaptive planning. Introduce the many levels of planning (e.g., planning onion, scenario-based planning).

4.1.4. Updating Plans Based on Feedback

Value is a concept that is in perpetual motion, so plans and value models must be updated to reflect ongoing learning.

Explain techniques to validate value and identify shifts in value. Discuss ways to adapt based on what has been learned.

4.2. MONITORING & COMMUNICATING PROGRESS

4.2.1. Transparency About Progress

Communicate state and progress openly and transparently.

Explain how to foster smooth information flow through transparency and openness. Also discuss how delivery managers can encourage information flow by getting out of the way. When it comes to progress, delivery managers should also be courageous about communicating the truth, even when it is uncomfortable.

4.2.2. Visualization and Feedback Loops

Visualization is extremely valuable for understanding progress in projects or initiatives.

Provide examples of effective information radiators and explain their use.

4.2.3. Engaging with Stakeholders

In agile environments, stakeholder engagement is deeply rooted in people and relationships, and is both ongoing and multi-directional.

Explain the value of close stakeholder engagement to establish shared understanding. Introduce stakeholder analysis techniques and discuss effective methods of stakeholder communication.