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Agile Portfolio Management (Developer Best Practices)



Synopsis

Agile development processes foster better collaboration, innovation, and results. So why limit their use to software projectsâwhen you can transform your entire business? Written by agile-mentoring expert Jochen Krebs, this book illuminates the opportunitiesâand rewardsâof applying agile processes to your overall IT portfolio. Whether project manager, business analyst, or executiveâyouâwill understand the business drivers behind agile portfolio management. And learn best practices for optimizing results. Use agile processes to align IT and business strategy Adapt and extend core agile processes Orchestrate the collaboration between IT and business vision Eliminate wish-list driven requirements, and manage expectations instead Optimize the balance of projects, resources, and assets in your portfolio Use metrics to communicate project status, quality, even team morale Create a portfolio strategy consistent with the goals of the organization Achieve organizational and process transparency Manage your business with agilityâand help maximize the returns!

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Customer Reviews

I was looking forward to this book! An important hole in the current agile literature and a book only on this subject. Finally... but ... I'm extremely disappointed. Jochen Krebs' Agile Portfolio Management consists of 3 parts. Part one is called "Agile for Managers", part two is the things about portfolio management and part three is *other* called organization and environment. The first part consists of three chapters. The first chapter consists a general motivation for agile development and responding to change. The second chapter is a short introduction to Agile development and the last chapter an introduction to project management. This takes up 1/4th of the book. The explanations are poorly written and full with misunderstandings. To give a concrete example, on page 27 Jochen is suggesting that in Scrum you can not have any other meetings except for the daily Scrum. A recommendation which I've never heard before and I'm pretty sure he didn't actually mean that! Part two consists of about 125 pages and is the main subject of the book, though it starts with three somewhat introduction chapters called Foundation, Metrics and Return of Investment. These chapters don't show too much experience from the author. The suggestion that TDD and Continuous Integration finds defects early so that one of the main quality metrics is open defect count is absurd and goes directly against advise of great agile literature like "Art of Agile development" or "Sustainable Software Development". It gives the feeling the author simply forgot to learn about agile development before he wrote the book. The explanation of story points was vague, the explanation of Use Case points unnecessary. The talk about return of investment forgot to give actual tools for doing so.

While the basic description of agile portfolio management is useful, I found many of the claims about current software project practices to be based on exaggerated weaknesses of these conventional practices. I believe the author exaggerates the differences between customer expectations and customer requirements. While they can be different, competent systems analysts can capture and document expectations, as well as requirement. The author's view is that traditional requirements analysis, for various reasons cannot be expected to capture customer requirements in a timely and "agile"/adaptable manner. My experience is different. The author also claims that traditional project management practices contribute to a lack of agility. WBSs, GANT charts and other techniques are inherently inflexible, rigid and labor intensive, in his view. My experience with tools like Microsoft Project is that what-if scenarios and other hypothetical and actual adjustments are easy to create and provide the kind of decision support a project manager needs when requirements change, resources come and go, or schedules tighten unexpectedly. Having worked on a number of rapid

prototyping and quick reaction environments I realize that keeping up with customers that have a fast ops tempo and shifting focus can be a challenge. For that reason, I strongly agree with the author on the value of constant interaction with the customer and stakeholders, continuous builds, on-going testing and integration, teams being given wide latitude to focus on developing solutions and managers focusing on removing impediments. However, the author claims that these and other practices he discusses are unique to an agile development environment.

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