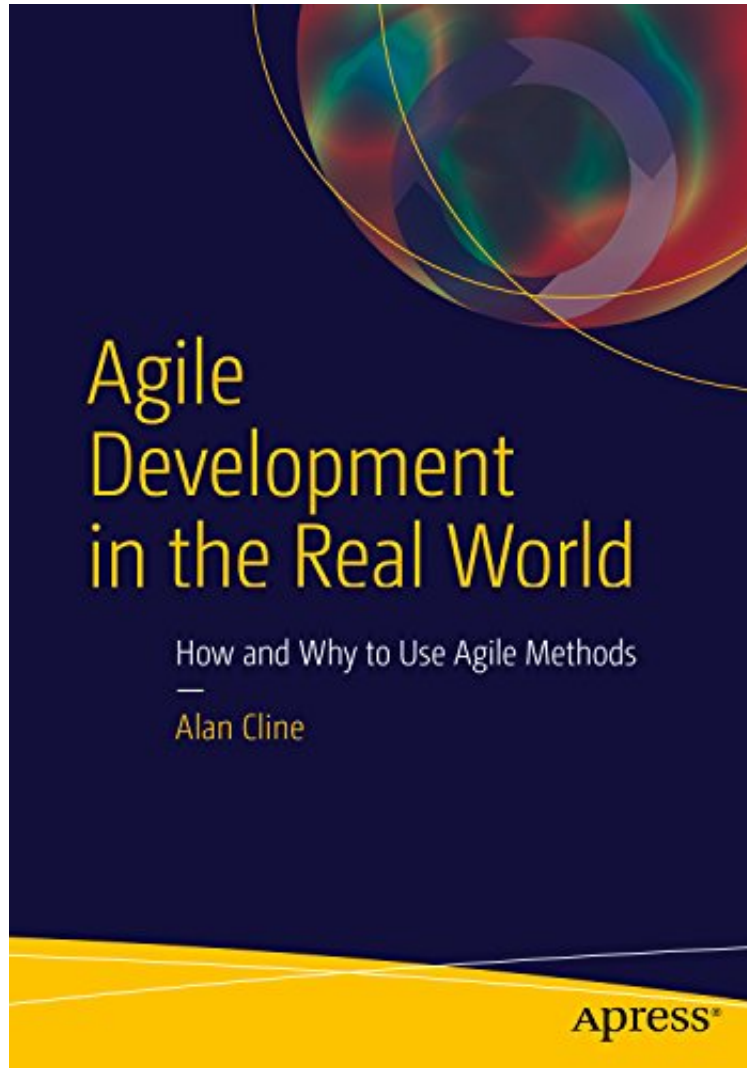


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Agile Development in the Real World

Alan Cline

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Alan Cline : Agile Development in the Real World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Agile Development in the Real World:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. If you want a detailed process for good Agile development, this book has it! By Martha Lindeman The author is an experienced (and certified) project manager of agile projects (p. xxi). He uses Morris and Giraldi's (2011) division of project work into two "regions"; Region 1 focuses on the core of the technical work and the primary focus of agile practices. It is covered primarily in Part 3 (the last half of the book). Region 2 focuses on what is necessary to get a project approved and out-the-door with a successful result. It is defined by the organizational culture, structure, politics, etc., and is covered in Parts 1 and 2 (the first half of the book). The author answers the question "Who should read this book?" in the Introduction (pp. xxv-

xxviii). by describing different reading/skimming paths through the book for three types of readers: (1) project managers, (2) upper management, and (3) technical team members. The book is information dense because it covers Agile project levels from the highest overview down to the deep details. The book includes icon-marked side notes containing key points and recommendations, examples, warnings, etc. The chapters are ordered in the activity sequence of a real project, from beginning to end. Consequently, the book could be skimmed in parts as an overview or read in detail as a 'hand-holding' guide while working through an agile project. The two Tables of Contents do not present a good view of what is in the book: the first is too shallow (lists only the chapter titles), and the second is too deep (lists almost every page). The following summary outline makes it easier to identify the contents of the chapters.

PART 1: Getting Started (Chapters 1 - 3)

1. Evolution of Project Management ndash; Puts agile project management in a historical context and compares agile with traditional approaches to software development.
2. The Birth of a Project: Portfolio Management ndash; Why and how to select a project and to get it sponsored and approved with a project manager assigned to the project.
3. Project Startup ndash; What you need to do to get a project started on track. Defines the documentation required to comply with the agile axiom 'barely sufficient documentation.' The focus is on what the business team (e.g., project manager, business stakeholders, and others as needed) are to do before the technical team is in place.

PART 2: Iteration 0 (Chapters 4 - 7)

4. Preparing the Project ndash; Creating the technical team and refining its agile practices, defining high-level architecture, infrastructure, support tools, the functionality process (e.g., validation and traceability), and enough system functionality for Iteration 0. Refine and manage expectations for scope, time, cost and quality.
5. Architecture: Product Foundation ndash; Provides a general architectural strategy with the goal of easy changes and minimal maintenance.
6. Infrastructure: Supporting the Project ndash; The four support environments (requirements, development, testing, and staging) are related in a process diagram for the project. He also discusses the external production environment and the project environment. Then he discusses the tools needed within the environments.
7. Initial Requirements: Defining the Product ndash; This is the next step of 'progressive elaboration' (achieving a greater level of detail as the project evolves). The focus is eliciting high-level requirements from subject-matter experts (SMEs), and then decomposing them by elaborating their details and prioritizing the results.

PART 3: Iteration 1 to N [This is the second half of the book, with Chapters 8 - 12.]

8. Overview of an Agile Iteration ndash; This chapter provides a description of the iteration process, tasks and what is produced for the team as a whole. It defines the four 'threads' of work as requirements, development, testing, and project management. These relate back to the environments identified in Chapter 6, and each is discussed in detail in one of the following chapters. **NOTE:** Chapter 8 also includes a list of 17 'boxes' that identify and describe a specific activity that happens during an agile iteration (e.g., Code and run integration tests). These box numbers are referred back to in each of the four role-oriented chapters that complete the book.
9. Requirements Thread ndash; Provides an in-depth look at what is done to elicit detailed requirements and convert them to input for the developers. In some teams this is the role of the Business Analyst. In other teams, the work is done by people who are working under other role names (such as Product Owner in projects using the Scrum process).
10. Development Thread ndash; The role of 'developer' in an agile project includes several different technical specializations. This chapter provides a heuristic or guidelines for a developer during an iteration.
11. Testing Thread ndash; There are different kinds of tests and testers for an agile team. This chapter provides a heuristic or guidelines for a developer during an iteration.
12. Project Management Thread ndash; This discusses the two roles of an agile project manager: one that is similar to traditional project management, and one that is specific to inside iterations. Each chapter contains a 'PMI Parallels' section that (a) compares agile to traditional practices, and (b) relates agile practices to the 10 Bodies of Knowledge in the PMBOK, 2013 (Project Management Book of Knowledge). In summary, this book is useful for a wide range of readers. On one hand, it provides a detailed step-by-step process for a project manager or members of the technical team. On the other hand, it is also a good source of information for business team members, ranging from someone deciding whether to sponsor a project to someone who is detailing requirements for input to the developers writing code.

Disclosure: I had input into the book before it was published, and I was provided a review copy.

This book is a practical guide for new agile practitioners and contains everything a new project manager needs to know to get up to speed with agile practices quickly and sort out the hype and dogma of pseudo-agile practices. The author lays out the general guidelines for running an agile project with the assumption that the project team may be working in a traditional environment (using the waterfall model, or something similar). *Agile Development in the Real World* conveys valuable insights to multiple audiences: For new-to-agile project managers, this book provides a distinctive approach that Alan Cline has used with great success, while showing the decision points and perspectives as the agile project moves forward from one step to the next. This allows new agile project managers or agile coaches to choose between the benefits of agile and the benefits of other methods. For the agile technical team member, this book contains templates and sample project artifacts to assist in learning agile techniques and to be used as exemplars for the new practitioners' own project. For the Project Management Office (PMO), the first three chapters focus on portfolio management. They explain, for the agilists' benefit, how projects are selected and approved, and

why projects have an inherent "shelf-life" that results in hard deadlines that may seem arbitrary to traditional technical teams. What you'll learn

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