

Course Syllabus

Leading and Coaching Agile Teams

I. DESCRIPTION

As Agile methods and tools continue to grow in popularity, people are interested in how to leverage Agile to improve the way their technical and business teams work together. Organizations are interested in business agility which gives them the opportunity to respond to opportunities and threats in the marketplace and to be more competitive.

To be effective in moving to Agile, organizations need people to understand Agile methods and practices, and have the skills to coach and lead individuals, agile teams and leaders. Agile teams are the basic building block of agility so the main focus will be on supporting Agile teams. This requires the understanding of Agile frameworks, coaching skills, and overall leadership skills.

This course starts with a brief overview of Agile methods including Agile Values and Principles as well as some of the underlying concepts that Agile is based on like Lean and the Toyota Production System. Popular Agile methods are reviewed and videos and in class exercises help to reinforce important concepts. The topic of Leading Agile Teams is reviewed in detail and participants will assess their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, participants learn what it means to coach Agile teams and gauge their abilities in this area.

This course will be helpful to individuals who are responsible directly or indirectly for leading, supporting, or coaching Agile teams. This includes Scrum Masters, functional and line managers, project managers and senior leaders as well.

This course qualifies as education contact hours for the Project Management Institute's Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP®) exam. Note that in order to qualify to sit for the PMI-ACP® exam, students must meet additional requirements set forth by PMI that can be found on the Project Management Institute website.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is:

- To provide participants with a broad understanding of Agile approaches
- To help participants make connections between the various Agile methods
- To help participants see the underlying Agile principles in use with the most popular methods
- To give participants an understanding of the role of the Agile coach
- To help participants learn coaching techniques that will help teams mature and use Agile effectively
- To help participants understand what leadership looks like with an Agile team
- To help participants apply Agile techniques to effectively lead Agile teams

III. COURSE OUTLINE

Note: Participants will be given access to softcopies of the course materials. Printed course books will be provided at the start of the day.

Unit 1: Understanding Agile

- Agile Introduction, Values & Principles
- Lean Principles
- Common Agile Practices
- Agile vs Traditional Approaches
- Common Agile Methods & Frameworks
- Misconceptions about Agile

Unit 2: Leading Agile Teams

- The Agile Leaders Role
- Empower and Trust People
- Implement Agile-friendly Measurements and Reporting
- Address Organizational Impediments
- An Agile Leaders Toolkit

Unit 3: Coaching Agile Teams

- Establish Coaching Goals
- Learning to Coach
- Coaching for Self-Organization
- A Coaching Toolkit
- Conflict Resolution and Impediment Removal
- Competencies Needed to be an Effective Coach
- Coaching Conversations
- Assessing Team Health
- Growing as An Agile Coach

Unit 4: Advanced Topics

- Agile as a Vehicle for Culture & Mindset Change
- More Misconceptions about Agile
- Agile Adoption Patterns
- Advanced Agile Approaches - Agile at Spotify

IV. PRE-WORK AND HOMEWORK

Students will be asked to complete the following work prior to the first day of class:

1. Watch Video – Yow! 2015 – Craig Smith - 40 Agile Methods in 40 Minutes (<https://youtu.be/abshdqwqz5Q>)
2. Review the VersionOne Annual State of Agile Report, focusing on why organizations adopt Agile and what gets in the way of Agile adoption. (<http://www.agile247.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/VersionOne-10th-Annual-State-of-Agile-Report.pdf>).
3. Answer Pre-Course Questions (see last page of Syllabus)

Students will be assigned homework following the first day of class and before the second.

V. IN CLASS EXERCISES and DISCUSSION TOPICS

Note: Exercises will be tailored, added or omitted based on participant learning goals.

- Exercise: Course Goals
- Exercise: Agile Simulation
- Discussion: Differences between Traditional and Agile Approaches
- Exercise: Lean Wastes
- Discussion: Misconceptions about Agile
- Discussion: What is the role of the Leader?
- Exercise: What could possibly go wrong?
- Discussion: Helping Teams Use Data
- Exercise: What Metrics Should Managers Use?
- Discussion: Organizational Impediments
- Exercise: Organization Culture
- Exercise: Powerful Questions
- Exercise: Coaching Conversations
- Discussion: Team Health Surveys
- Exercise: Coaching Self-Evaluation
- Exercise: Leader Self-Evaluation
- Exercise: Spotting Agile at Spotify

VI. GRADING POLICY

Participation is the key to learning in this class. To facilitate your learning, there will be numerous team and class discussion topics, and one or more exercises. You will be graded on your participation in the team and class discussions, Q&A throughout the day, and exercises. It is important that you show up to every class session to get the most out of your learning experience.

Grading for this class is based on in-class participation and engagement with your group. You will receive 1 point for every day that you come to class (2). You will receive an additional point for showing leadership in terms of participating in activities, discussion and Q&A. To pass the course, you need to come to every class and earn 1 leadership point (3 or more). If you need a letter grade for reimbursement, speak to the instructor at the start of the first class. To earn an "A" you will need 4 points. To earn a "B" you will need 3 points; a C will be 2 points and anything less is an F.

VII. RESOURCES – Printed Materials & Websites

- VersionOne, **10th Annual State of Agile Report**: <http://www.agile247.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/VersionOne-10th-Annual-State-of-Agile-Report.pdf>
- Valve, **Handbook for New Employees**: http://www.valvesoftware.com/company/Valve_Handbook_LowRes.pdf
- Sutherland & Schwaber, **The Scrum Guide (2016)**: <http://www.scrumguides.org/docs/scrumguide/v2016/2016-Scrum-Guide-US.pdf>
- Poppendieck, **Lean Software Development: An Agile Toolkit**: <https://www.amazon.com/Lean-Software-Development-Agile-Toolkit/dp/0321150783/>
- Larman and Vodde, **Scaling Lean and Agile Development**: https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=larman+scaling+agile
- Liker, **The Toyota Way**: <https://www.amazon.com/Toyota-Way-Management-Principles-Manufacturer/dp/0071392319>
- Beck, **Extreme Programming Explained**: <https://www.amazon.com/Extreme-Programming-Explained-Embrace-Change/dp/0321278658>
- Dinwiddie, DiFabio, Nissen, Valde and Neumann, **Patterns of Agile Journeys**: <https://leanpub.com/agilejourneys>
- Manns & Rising, **Fearless Change: Patterns for Introducing New Ideas**: <https://www.amazon.com/Fearless-Change-Patterns-Introducing-Ideas/dp/0201741571/>
- Adkins, **Coaching Agile Teams**: <https://www.amazon.com/Coaching-Agile-Teams-ScrumMasters-Addison-Wesley/dp/0321637704/>
- Derby & Larsen, **Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great**: <https://www.amazon.com/Agile-Retrospectives-Making-Teams-Great/dp/0977616649/>

- Tabaka, **Collaboration Explained**: <https://www.amazon.com/Collaboration-Explained-Facilitation-Software-Project/dp/0321268776/>
- IC Agile Coach Learning Roadmap: <https://icagile.com/Learning-Roadmap/Agile-Coaching>
- Sahota, **Create Places People Love to Work (website)**: <http://agilitrix.com/>
- Laloux, **Reinventing Organizations**: <https://www.amazon.com/Reinventing-Organizations-Frederic-Laloux/dp/2960133501/>
- Appelo, **Managing for Happiness: Games, Tools and Practices to Motivate any Team**: <https://www.amazon.com/Managing-Happiness-Games-Practices-Motivate/dp/1119268680/>

VIII. RESOURCES - Videos

- Yow! 2015 – Craig Smith - 40 Agile Methods in 40 Minutes: <https://youtu.be/abshdgwqz5Q>
- Per Beining – Scrum by the Book: <https://youtu.be/TYCeGy69mLE>
- Spotify Engineering Culture Part 1: https://youtu.be/Mpsn3Wal_4k
- Spotify Engineering Culture Part 2: <https://youtu.be/X3rGdmoTjDc>

IX. Pre-Course Questionnaire

- 1. What is the main driver for you to take this course? What do you hope to learn or gain?**
- 2. How would you rate your current understanding of Agile on a scale of 0 (none) to 10 (very high)? Did watching the 40 Agile Methods video change your view?**
- 3. What was your biggest takeaway from the 40 Agile Methods Video?**
- 4. Why do organizations seek Agile? What gets in the way of Agile Adoption in organizations?**