

# Application Development Trends

## Early mainstream: Agile develops in the enterprise

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From all accounts Agile software development is making inroads in the enterprise, moving beyond high-tech companies to become part of the arsenal of corporate development teams in industries such as insurance, telecom and financial services.

An iterative process that allows small development teams to build software functionality in a collaborative environment that is responsive to business change, Agile development is not new. Development is done in chunks of time—typically weeks to months—with working increments of software at the end of each iteration. Reasons cited for Agile's growing popularity in enterprise environments include faster time to market, lower development costs, and better quality.

Although Agile clearly is not mainstream, preliminary results of a Web-based global "State of Agile Development" survey sponsored by the Agile Alliance and Agile software provider VersionOne indicate that 75 percent of the companies surveyed deploy Agile development processes. So far, roughly 1,000 people from small companies to large global corporations have participated in the [survey](#). Average development team size, according to those surveyed, is less than 15 people, with 10 cited as ideal. The internal champion of Agile is moving up in the organization to the VP of application development, compared to a team leader two years ago. Agile development, which is most often based on eXtreme Programming (XP), Scrum, a hybrid of the two, or Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM)—widely used in the U.K.—is typically deployed along side other software development methodologies in large enterprises.

For resources, people turn to books, Web sites and on-the-job training. A lack of internal resources is cited as a major barrier to Agile adoption.

A summary of the survey results will be released on July 24th at the [Agile Alliance's Agile 2006 International Conference](#) in Minneapolis.

"There are still some well-embedded myths that keep adoption from increasing," says Michael Leeds, VersionOne co-founder and VP of sales and marketing. "There is a perceived lack of planning, and a perceived lack of documentation, which is the reason that many people don't look at Agile. A lot of managers think Agile means that 'we've got a bunch of people running around not documenting anything and not doing any planning.' The reality is, if anything, Agile is more disciplined because the planning is ongoing on a weekly or daily basis, and there is a lot more communication within the team about what people are working on."

Leeds says however, Agile has moved beyond early adopters to early mainstream. "In the last five years, industries whether it is automotive or consumer electronics, are moving from a heavyweight long delivery cycle to a lighter faster process that is, generally speaking, much more closely linked to customer demand." This is the result of global competition and more collaborative, distributed software development teams.

"In 2004 is when we started seeing much broader adoption of Agile practices with larger enterprises," he says. "In 2002, 2003, we saw a lot more small- and mid-size teams, really the grass roots people that were out looking at the individual projects, individual teams, maybe up to 50 people. In 2004, we started to see a lot more adoption by large corporations, global IT."

He adds, "If there is common thread usually things around Agile adoption will start at a business unit or division level and really start to move up the chain." VersionOne counts more than 20 members of the Fortune 100 among its paying customers.

Forrester Research backs up this trend. A November 2005 survey of North American and European enterprises indicated that 14 percent are using Agile processes while 19 percent were either interested or planning to deploy Agile in the next 12 months. The survey also showed that Agile adoption increases with company size; one-fifth of companies with more than 20,000 employees reported using Agile development processes.

VersionOne offers an Agile development lifecycle management platform called V1: Agile Enterprise, which is available on-demand or as an on-site app. It features customizable methodology templates for Scrum, XP, DSDM, AgileUp, and hybrid processes. The planning and tracking functionality includes requirement, iteration, release and program management.

Release 6, available now, adds an open API for integration with other software development tools and project data. The Agile API enables users to automate the flow of external application data or integrate testing applications through out the development cycle. Other new features include an RSS-based notification system that allows users to subscribe to notifications such as owner changes or defect assignments, a member dashboard and support for attachments. The subscription cost is \$30 per user per month. The license cost is \$500 per user. [VersionOne](#) updates V1: Agile Enterprise every quarter.

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