

**Question:** Why not use a traditional project management tool for agile development?

**Answer:** Inherent complexity, lack of agility, and orthogonal values!

### 1. Unnecessary Complexity/Cost

Traditional PM tools facilitate complex, task-based development projects. Their focus is on detailed, up-front planning, applying sophisticated dependency models, identifying critical paths, and allocating granular resource workloads. Projects are then constantly evaluated along discrete dimensions of task, resource, and time, monitoring progress and any variance to plan. Agile methodologies, however, focus on frequent delivery and feedback at fixed intervals to enable predictability and visibility, identify and manage risks and dependencies, and monitor team productivity and progress. A combination of on going, high-level planning and just-in-time detailed planning is practiced to effectively deal with evolving scope. The sophisticated functionality of traditional tools results in unnecessary complexity and effort when applied to the refocused processes of agile development management.

### 2. Absence of Integrated, Iterative Requirements Planning

The focus of agile development is on delivering business value, with business features serving as primary planning and delivery assets. As opposed to the traditional WBS approach of managing fine-grained tasks across multiple phases, agile development uses more of a Feature Breakdown Structure (FBS), which is performed iteration by iteration as business features are delivered. Managing development schedules that are based on ever-evolving requirements is difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish without managing requirements as an integrated aspect of the development process.

### 3. Lack of Multi-level Planning

Traditional project management tools require planning and tracking at one level – the task level – often requiring weeks or even months of up-front effort. Agile methods enable planning at two levels – business value/features are quickly estimated at a high level, and tasks are incrementally estimated at a detailed level. Both levels are tracked in order to evaluate both business value progress and detail work progress. By relying upon the value of both levels, initial execution plans can be created in a day or so, with detailed execution plans emerging over time as more information becomes available.

### 4. Inability to Easily Revise Plans

Revising plans in traditional PM tools can be a nightmare – small changes can drastically affect critical path items and push project end dates out months. Agile development methods identify, estimate, and prioritize business value and then let that value drive the detailed plans. As requirements, priorities, and

business opportunity evolves, the ability to easily update plans and determine impact is simplified. While traditional tools may work with static scope, managing more fluid projects with traditional tools can be time-consuming, as plans must constantly be reconciled to a new reality.

#### **5. Fundamentally Different Metrics and Values**

Traditional project management tools provide a host of granular metrics to maintain tight control of projects: utilization, baselines, variance, critical path, etc. Agile projects attempt to simplify measurements by relying on historical team-based and value-driven metrics like velocity and burndown. The differences go beyond the terminology to fundamentally different philosophies on what's important. By requiring fine-grained data to support reporting, traditional PM tools actually prevent team agility.

VersionOne provides software and services to companies transitioning to or scaling iterative and agile development efforts. VersionOne's application, *V1: Agile Enterprise* is available as a hosted or locally installed solution and simplifies iterative project planning, tracking, collaboration, and reporting. Lightweight requirements management, release planning, iteration planning, project tracking, and task management integrate to provide visibility into today's rapidly changing development projects.