Optimizing Agile for Maximum Innovation
Today’s fast-paced, demanding business climate has significantly heightened the expectations individuals have on the technology they use every day – and IT isn’t immune to the pressure. As a result, both internal and external customers expect innovative capabilities – and they want them faster than ever before.

For this reason, many development teams have made the Agile methodology a cornerstone of their development efforts. Since Agile enables organizations to deliver the right innovations to the right users at the right time, it’s rapidly gaining traction in organizations of all shapes and sizes.

In fact:

Agile Certified Practitioner (ACP) is the fastest-growing certification at the Project Management Institute – and has grown by over 300% in the last year.¹

53% of organizations have an Agile-certified project manager.²

Scrum Master certifications from the Agile Alliance are also growing.

The significant increase in Agile certifications clearly shows that Agile has been picking up momentum and is driving application development activities in even the most traditional organizations. So, what value does it really provide?

Quite a bit. Consider that Agile:

- **Enables the delivery of iterative, incremental innovations**: The ability to build new features and enhancements into products and services at a faster pace gives organizations a significant competitive advantage in a crowded marketplace.

- **Helps developers quickly react to changing business demands**: Shorter release cycles give developers more opportunities to incorporate user feedback, helping key applications closely reflect both internal and external expectations.

- **Reduces risk**: Faster development times mean better alignment with customer needs – and fewer chances for capabilities to miss the mark by the time they are delivered. Risk is further reduced because iterative development helps teams identify problems earlier, allowing decision makers to recommend ceasing work or “failing fast” to avoid investing in an unsuccessful project.

- **Improves communication between and among teams**: Keeping development teams in constant contact throughout a project ensures everyone stays on track and in sync from start to finish.
Agile Is Not Without Its Challenges

Despite its growing popularity – and the benefits it can deliver to both IT and the business – Agile can have drawbacks:

- Because Agile prescribes “co-location” and implies that team members should be in the same time zone, it often fails to take into account resources that are spread around the globe.

- By definition, Agile development doesn’t consider changing budgets and conflicting IT spending needs, which can leave organizations challenged to optimize oversight and governance functions.

- Organizations often struggle to reconcile an Agile initiative with more traditional project work because stakeholders expect integrated dashboards and don’t want to judge the success and status of a project on different criteria.

- Because most Agile planning happens at the developer level, such critical factors as business strategies and priorities are not always taken into consideration, leading senior leaders to question the authenticity of the initiative.
In order to maximize the effectiveness of Agile adoption – while minimizing obstacles along the way – organizations should work to achieve three distinct goals:

- **Give customers what they want:**
  Deliver the functionality internal and external users need – when they need it.

- **Empower Agile teams:**
  Accelerate time to market by enabling developers to communicate and collaborate from any location.

- **Communicate with business leaders:**
  Closely connect with decision makers and align Agile work with organizational strategies.
Aligning development efforts with customer expectations requires key individuals – including product owners, business analysts and project managers – to have full visibility and control over project, product or service needs.

What’s needed: A way to categorize and depict these requirements in graphical roadmaps and dashboards, so analysts can manage and optimize release plans and resource allocations.

As the project proceeds, it’s essential to ensure that development teams, organizational strategies, commitments from leadership and the requirements defined by product owners, stakeholders and customers remain tightly connected.

What’s needed: A way for both groups to track progress from idea, to review, to backlog, to roadmap and – ultimately – execution.

And throughout the project, organizations should take care to monitor changing requirements so they stay connected to the backlog and do not stray too far from established goals.

What’s needed: Comprehensive version, tracking and approval histories that enable development teams and their leaders to confirm that the original intent of the project has been maintained.
Empower Agile Teams

Despite any geographic separation, enabling groups of developers to work as if they were in the same building is essential to effective project execution.

What’s needed:
A single, online tool for backlog management, release planning and sprint planning and tracking that allows distributed teams to easily and seamlessly work together – even if they aren’t all in the same room.

To further enhance collaboration between and among Agile teams, they need an intuitive interface that simplifies the process of working with backlogs and planning sprints.

What’s needed:
The ability to virtually allocate tasks and track development status, so project owners can provide familiar Scrum and Kanban techniques to both novice and expert team members.

And since different developers often use an application lifecycle management system (ALM) specific to their area of expertise, Agile teams can benefit by making common artifacts, such as defects, user stories and tasks, available to all members.

What’s needed:
A solution that integrates with leading ALM systems, so team members, stakeholders and product owners can continue using their tool of choice to view and update epics, stories and tasks.
Communicate With Business Leaders

In order to encourage adoption – and maximize benefits along the way – organizations should be able to use Agile at a measured pace, while maintaining full governance over their project portfolio, regardless of methodology.

What’s needed:
The ability to clearly report on project status, cost and resource allocations provides the transparency organizational leaders need to understand what strategic work is being produced by Agile methods, and the amount of time and resources required to complete these projects.

A key step in helping business leaders build comfort and familiarity with Agile is the ability to gradually phase in the new methodology on some projects, while maintaining a traditional waterfall approach on others.

What’s needed:
A solution that enables teams to manage all project types from a single view – and facilitates an “Agile-fall” hybrid approach that combines the value of iterative development with the visibility stakeholders require.

And as the project proceeds, it’s critical for product owners to be able to easily track status and have quick access to all related information.

What’s needed:
Social-networking and communication tools that allow stakeholders to communicate and collaborate with development teams in real time.
Meeting customer demands, facilitating seamless development efforts and forging a tight alignment with business leaders requires a robust, comprehensive solution that delivers:

- Tools for Scrum and Kanban, so Agile teams can work how they want
- Collaboration capabilities that help to coordinate groups of developers across geographies
- Integrated views for streamlined resource management
- A centralized location to track all work and provide consistent reporting metrics to the business
- Intuitive dashboards and portfolio management capabilities that cover all projects
- Integrated idea and requirements management functionality
Delivering Value to Customers, Development Teams and the Business

When a single tool is able to orchestrate all development work, regardless of methodology, the organization will be able to:

- Deliver products and services that meet the needs of internal and external customers
- Improve the communication, collaboration and effectiveness of development teams
- Provide transparency into all project efforts

**CUSTOMERS**
- Innovations, Products, Applications

**BUSINESS**
- Resources, Projects, Alignment

**AGILE TEAMS**
- KANBAN OR SCRUM
  - Sprints
  - User Stories
  - Development Tasks

PMO → Ideas → KANBAN OR SCRUM → AGILE TEAMS

- Capabilities that meet client demands
- Faster delivery of innovations to customers

- Streamlined resource management
- Better communication with decision makers
- Agile work aligned with business strategy
CA Agile Planning enables application delivery teams to become more focused on customer needs and deliver projects with greater speed and effectiveness. It does so by providing better visibility into requirements, project deliverables, costs and resource allocations. When combined with CA Project & Portfolio Management (CA PPM), the solution provides visibility into both Agile and traditional projects, delivering the most complete project and portfolio management solution available.

CA Agile Planning can help your organization:

- Unite Agile project management with idea and requirements management to increase the value delivered in every release
- Shorten delivery cycles through an intuitive, natural interface that takes the hard work out of managing backlogs and dealing with sprint planning, whether using Scrum or Kanban
- Provide business leaders with visibility into Agile project status, resource utilization and progress, so they can make smarter decisions about product roadmaps and the organization’s overall project portfolio
For more information, visit ca.com/ppm.