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Succeeding With Agile: Software Development Using Scrum

The Addison-Wesley Signature Series

A MIKE COHN SIGNATURE BOOK

SUCCEEDING WITH AGILE

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT USING SCRUM

MIKE COHN

Foreword by Tim Lister

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Synopsis

Proven, 100% Practical Guidance for Making Scrum and Agile Work in Any Organization Ã Â This is the definitive, realistic, actionable guide to starting fast with Scrum and agileÃ¢â ¬â œand then succeeding over the long haul. Leading agile consultant and practitioner Mike Cohn presents detailed recommendations, powerful tips, and real-world case studies drawn from his unparalleled experience helping hundreds of software organizations make Scrum and agile work. Ã Â Succeeding with Agile is for pragmatic software professionals who want real answers to the most difficult challenges they face in implementing Scrum. Cohn covers every facet of the transition: getting started, helping individuals transition to new roles, structuring teams, scaling up, working with a distributed team, and finally, implementing effective metrics and continuous improvement. Ã Â Throughout, Cohn presents Ã¢â ¬Å"Things to Try NowÃ¢â ¬Â• sections based on his most successful advice. Complementary Ã¢â ¬Å"ObjectionÃ¢â ¬Â• sections reproduce typical conversations with those resisting change and offer practical guidance for addressing their concerns. Coverage includesÃ Â   Practical ways to get started immediatelyÃ¢â ¬â œand Ã¢â ¬Å"get goodÃ¢â ¬Â• fast   Overcoming individual resistance to the changes Scrum requires Staffing Scrum projects and building effective teams   Establishing Ã¢â ¬Å"improvement communitiesÃ¢â ¬Â• of people who are passionate about driving change   Choosing which agile technical practices to use or experiment with   Leading self-organizing teams   Making the most of Scrum sprints, planning, and quality techniques   Scaling Scrum to distributed, multiteam projects Using Scrum on projects with complex sequential processes or challenging compliance and governance requirements   Understanding ScrumÃ¢â ¬â„¢s impact on HR, facilities, and project management   Whether you've completed a few sprints or multiple agile projects and whatever your roleÃ¢â ¬â œmanager, developer, coach, ScrumMaster, product owner, analyst, team lead, or project leadÃ¢â ¬â œthis book will help you succeed with your very next project. Then, it will help you go much further: It will help you transform your entire development organization. Ã Â

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Succeeding with Agile Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Understanding the mechanics of an agile process is just not enough. Mike Cohn has compiled a superb and comprehensive collection of advice that will help individuals and teams with the intricate task of adopting and adapting agile processes to fit their specific challenges. This book will become the definitive handbook for agile teams.Ã¢â ¬Å•

Ã¢â ¬â œColin Bird, Global Head of Agile, EMC Consulting Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike CohnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s experience working with so many different organizations in the adoption of agile methods shines through with practical approaches and valuable insights. If you really want agile methods to stick, this is the book to read.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œJeff Honious, Vice President, Innovation, Reed Elsevier Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike Cohn has done it again. Succeeding with Agile is based on his experience, and all of our experience, with agile to date. He covers from the earliest days of the project up to maturity and offers advice for the individual, the team, and the enterprise. No matter where you are in the agile cycle, this book has something for you!Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œRon Jeffries, www.XProgramming.com Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"If you want to start or take the next step in agile software development, this book is for you. It discusses issues, great solutions, and helpful guidelines when scaling up in agile projects. We used the guidelines from this book extensively when we introduced agile in a large, FDA-regulated department.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œChrist Vriens, Department Head of MiPlaza, part of Philips Research Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"If making the move to agile has always baffled you, then this book will unlock its mysteries. Mike Cohn gives us all the definitive, no-nonsense guide to transforming your organization into a high-powered, innovative, and competitive success.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œSteve Greene, Senior Director, Program Management and Agile Development, www.salesforce.com Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike Cohn is a great advisor for transforming your software organization. This book is a distillation of everything Mike has learned over the years working with companies that are trying to become more agile. If you are thinking of going agile, pick up this book.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œChristopher Fry, Ph.D., Vice President Development, Platform, www.salesforce.com Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Whether youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re just starting out or have some Scrum

experience under your belt, in Succeeding with Agile, Mike Cohn provides a wealth of information to guide you in your quest toward continuous improvement. Throughout the book, concepts are reinforced with practical everyday advice, including how to handle objections and thought-provoking Ã¢â ¬Ëœethings to try now.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ An extensive list of recommended readings round this out to be a must have book.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œNikki Rohm, Studio Director Project and Resource Management, Electronic Arts Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"The first steps along the path of improving your software process with Scrum are hard, and every step reveals new challenges. In Succeeding with Agile, Mike Cohn shows how other organizations have followed this path, how you can learn from them to have a successful implementation of Scrum, and put your organization on the path of constant improvement and delivery of value.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œJohanes Brodwall, Chief Scientist, Steria Norway Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"I began to recommend Mike CohnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s new book as soon as I began to review it. It seems that as soon as someone asked me a question about some corner of agile development, I would realize that I had just read something excellent in one of MikeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s chapters. I am so glad the book is finally out so I can stop saying, Ã¢â ¬ËœeMike Cohn has a great new book coming out soon that will talk about this problem.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Now I can say, Ã¢â ¬ËœeMikeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book is out! Get it!Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œLinda Rising, Coauthor with Mary Lynn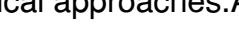 Manns of Fe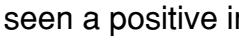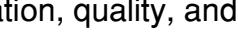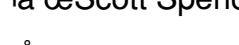arless Change: Patterns for Introducing New Ideas Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"The title says it all; this is an astonishingly insightful and pragmatic guide to succeeding with agile software development. If you only read one agile book, this is the one. I want to give it to all my clients now!Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œHenrik Kniberg, Agile Coach, Agile Alliance Board Member, Author of Scrum and XP from the Trenches Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike Cohn blends thorough theoretical knowledge with practical hands-on techniques. This is another great agile book from Mike. It will help your team, your department, or your whole organization Succeed with Agile.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œMatt Truxaw, Application Delivery Manager, Kaiser Permanente IT, Certified Scrum Master Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike CohnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s new book is the definitive guide for companies transitioning to Scrum. Its contents are practical and easily accessible. Get it, read it, and apply it!Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œRoman Pichler, Author of Agile Product Management with Scrum Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Succeeding with Agile is at once enormously practical, deeply insightful, and a pleasure to read. It combines great ideas with stories and examples from around the software industry and will appeal to a wide range of readers, from those looking to adopt a new company-wide agile process to developers who just need to improve the way a team is running a single project.Ã¢â ¬Å• Ã¢â ¬â œAndrew Stellman, Developer, Project Manager, and Author of Head First PMP, Beautiful Teams, Applied Software Project Management Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Adopting agile methods is hard

enough on a greenfield web app in a small company. Transforming an enterprise is another matter. This book captures challenges like the ones we faced and offers insight and, more importantly, practical approaches.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œMichael Wollin, Senior Development Manager, Broadcast Production Systems, CNN Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike Cohn has put together a fantastic book of guidelines to not only start the Scrum implementation, but to turn your entire corporation into an agile community. I have already implemented many of the recommendations included in this text and have seen a positive influence on the support for Scrum within our organization.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œJames Tischart, CSM, CSP, CTFL, Vice President, Product Delivery, Mx Logic, Inc Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"In Succeeding with Agile, Mike Cohn has scoured and sifted through the collective experience and lessons of not only scores of different projects, teams, and organizations from his own agile experience, but also from the experience of countless others. He provides real-world stories from the trenches, useful data and studies, and invaluable insights into what has and hasnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t worked well when adopting, adapting, and scaling Scrum. What I like best about the book is where Mike provides wisdom on several different alternatives and approaches and the circumstances in which each is most suitable.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBrad Appleton, Internal Agile Consultant at a Fortune 100 telecommunications company Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"I believe Mike CohnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book will answer many questions and issues that people and teams struggle with in terms of how to improve collaboration, communication, quality, and team productivity. I especially appreciate and agree with MikeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s statement that Ã¢â ¬Ëœthere can be no end state in a process that calls for continuous improvement.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ This is hard work and it requires persistence, teamwork, and good people. I plan to make Succeeding with Agile mandatory reading within my organization, just like we did with his book on Agile Estimating and Planning.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œScott Spencer, Vice President Engineering, First American CoreLogic, Inc. Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"Mike Cohn has done it again. This comprehensive study of agile software development provides numerous techniques and methodologies to achieve success. I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone who wants to start using agile or wants to improve their software development process.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBenoit Houle, Senior Development Manager, BioWare (a Division of Electronic Arts) Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å"ThereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s no doubt that Mike CohnÃ¢â ¬â„¢s new book will become the reference on how to run software projects with Scrum. The book is very carefully crafted and avoids the trap of giving you the one, simple recipe to all your problems. Though mainly centered on Scrum, Mike draws on various other techniques to produce a handbook that is thorough and complete. This is not a hasty mash-up supported by just an act of fa...

Proven, 100% Practical Guidance for Making Scrum and Agile Work in Any Organization This is the definitive, realistic, actionable guide to starting fast with Scrum and agile-and then succeeding over the long haul. Leading agile consultant and practitioner Mike Cohn presents detailed recommendations, powerful tips, and real-world case studies drawn from his unparalleled experience helping hundreds of software organizations make Scrum and agile work. "Succeeding with Agile" is for pragmatic software professionals who want real answers to the most difficult challenges they face in implementing Scrum. Cohn covers every facet of the transition: getting started, helping individuals transition to new roles, structuring teams, scaling up, working with a distributed team, and finally, implementing effective metrics and continuous improvement. Throughout, Cohn presents "Things to Try Now" sections based on his most successful advice. Complementary "Objection" sections reproduce typical conversations with those resisting change and offer practical guidance for addressing their concerns. Coverage includes Practical ways to get started immediately-and "get good" "fast"Overcoming individual resistance to the changes Scrum requiresStaffing Scrum projects and building effective teamsEstablishing "improvement communities" of people who are passionate about driving changeChoosing which agile technical practices to use or experiment withLeading self-organizing teamsMaking the most of Scrum sprints, planning, and quality techniquesScaling Scrum to distributed, multiteam projectsUsing Scrum on projects with complex sequential processes or challenging compliance and governance requirementsUnderstanding Scrum's impact on HR, facilities, and project managementWhether you've completed a few sprints or multiple agile projects and whatever your role-manager, developer, coach, ScrumMaster, product owner, analyst, team lead, or project lead-this book will help you succeed with your very next project. Then, it will help you go much further: "It will help you transform your entire development organization."

I bought this book because of the suprisingly large number of positive reviews, but I was disappointed. I've read multiple blogs, books, and sermons about Agile and the common theme I've seen is they deal in generalities rather than specifics. This book falls into the same trap. While it does cover some of the road blocks and objections you will encounter implementing an Agile approach, it fails to give real, practical advice. That is, because it is general enough for most people, it really isn't specific enough to help most real people make real changes in real situations. Understand, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but I was hoping there would be more in-depth ideas on how to deal with real world problems.For example, the author discusses requirements and estimating to some extent. But, he does not deep dive into any specifics about ideas for managing

complex projects and the real need to forecast. He acknowledges challenges exist and says "you can't really know", which is true - but there has to be a way to arrive at some order of magnitude (and then trim scope/etc later on). Instead there is a note at the end of the section labeled "What to try now". It then offers a basic idea like, "stop using project management software and put your stories on notebook sheets on a scrum board." Ok - that's great, but it's one idea in a larger project, we cannot just pull the plug on one aspect of the project without thinking of the impact along the rest of the way. If we were on a small project being created from scratch - some of those ideas might work, but that's not realistic in most companies. So maybe that is meant to come from another book and this should not have been called "Succeeding With Agile", but rather it should have been called "Getting Started with Agile" - which is really what this book is.Unfortunately for me, this book did not really shed much light on anything I had not heard or read in some other place. If you're looking for a primer to get you over the basic ideas, this is a solid book. But, if you're trying to execute anything but a small project from scratch with minimal dependencies, this is not going to help you "succeed with Agile".

Doing my part of testing and coaching in agile context I found this book the best in making it all work. I mean with this that you can get lots of theory on the iconic books but this one goes to the meat and grit of everyday life in an Agile team. While most Agile books are targeted at the manager who has to make the transition, this one is for the team, the people. Just wish the testing section would have been larger as I could have used this book's approach to fill in where the Crispin/Gregory otherwise wonderful book "Agile Testing" falls short: how do you do it in the end (but admitting here and now that the later "More Agile Testing" is even better on this regard).Long-time readers of Cohn's blog will see common themes raised but here they are expanded and integrated into a coherent package. Recommended to all who find the old "colors" book or similar to fall short in practical terms. You will find in this book the friendly, down-to-earth voice of Mike Cohn that one has met already in his blog.

I think this book is mostly a commercial for the author's services. It's littered with "case studies" that start "When I was the VP of engineering at..." or "Company X brought me in to consult..." and end with them being wildly successful because they embraced "Agile". No controlled experiments, I just have to take his word.I find the sports-related terminology of "Agile" he uses demeaning and insulting. A "Sprint" works if your goal is to go a short distance as quickly as possible, with no reserves left, when someone else plots the course. For an intellectual pursuit lasting more than 5

seconds, you need an approach that relies on brains, not muscles. Calling my work a "Sprint" is like calling Rembrandt's work an exercise for his arm.

Mike Cohn continues in his tradition of writing some of the most practical books available in the agile environment. His vast experience is evident in his approach to presenting the many questions practitioners and newcomers alike consider as they move ahead with agile practices. Without being dogmatic he provides the pros and cons of the issues at hand, helping to understand why one approach might be more desirable than another. As one example, in presenting the difference between feature teams and component teams, it would have been very easy (and overly simplistic) for Mike to indicate that feature teams are the way to go. Instead, he acknowledges that feature teams are strongly recommended, but that component team might be the right choice in some situations, and he explains what those situations might be.This book also makes a great reference. Have a question about the role Human Resources play in an agile environment? Look it up in the index and get some pertinent information without a lot of wading through other non-related material.The littering of "Objection" and "Things To Try Now" notes again add some very practical applications, both in dealing with common obstacles encountered while implementing agile practices, and also in recommending ways to move the cause forward without a lot of fuss.One very minor style critique: while I appreciate the extensive use of supporting reference material, the manner in which these are inserted into the book can be just a bit tiresome, almost giving a feeling of reading a research paper. I'm not sure that there's any way around this, and there's no contest between getting the supporting references vs. losing some of that to attain a style objective: the extra detail wins hands down.As an indication of the overall quality of "Succeeding With Agile" we have decided at Winnow Management to now use this book as our primary recommended reading to our clients. Great work, Mike!

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