

Has Agile Lost its Soul?

Focus

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VersionOne has published raw results for the 3rd Annual State of the Agile Survey that was conducted in June and July 2008. Answers were received from 3061 participants in 80 countries. Participants working in agile projects are satisfied: they think that agile achieves a very good overall project success rate.

They see improvements in productivity, quality and maintainability. Scrum or a Scrum+XP hybrid solution are the main approaches used. The objectives are to achieve shorter iterations and accelerate time-to-market. The mostly used practices are continuous integration and iteration planning. In the least used practices, you find on-site customer and pair programming

These results seems to tell us is that agile could be applied by organisations more like a new version of the RAD method of the 90s: a project management approach with short iteration that relies on smart people and increased automation to deliver software faster. We should not forget however that the second sentence of the Agile Manifesto starts with "Through this work we have come to value: Individuals and interactions over processes and tools". Collaboration inside and outside the software development team is one of the main idea behind the Agile manifesto.

Does the fact that the practices linked to collaboration are the least implemented tells us that Agile has lost its soul to achieve a higher adoption rate? Change is always difficult, especially if it deals with organisational culture or personal behaviour. Agile adoption has to face the reality that developers are mostly introverted people. End-users often don't think that developing software is a high priority or they cannot take more time for software projects, because they have a business to run. Is this bad? No. All approaches aims for a "perfect" execution context, whether it means to be 100% agile or that you can freeze requirements ;o) What we have to keep in mind is that creating this ideal context is difficult. It is therefore more important to cleverly adapt than blindly adopt. If developers (and users) think that project is successful, then a discussion about the "purity" of the approach used is meaningless. [Full data of the VersionOne survey](#)