Agile Project Management Insights
Quotes
Posted by:
Posted on : 2009/12/16 0:48:50

I am currently reading the book “Agile Project Management” from Jim Highsmith. I will publish a review later on this blog, but in the meantime I would like to share some of the interesting quotes that I have found in the book. I am sure they will make sense to software project managers… and developers ;o)

About adding value “When Ward asked Toyota’s American engineering and managers how much time they spend adding value (i.e., actually doing engineering work), their response averages 80%. The same question asked of engineers and managers at American automobile companies averages 20%. How can you compete with companies that are getting four times as much value-adding work from their development engineers.” (referenced from “Product Development for the Lean Enterprise”, Michael Kennedy, the Oaklea Press, 2003) **About technical knowledge** “As a software development consultant, I’ve never encountered a successful software company (although my sample size is limited) in which the team and project leaders were not technically savvy. [...] Championing technical excellence requires that the project leader, and team members in general, understand what technical excellence means – in the product, the technology, and in the skills of the people doing the work.” **About leading or managing** “Agile leaders lead teams, non-agile ones manage tasks. How many project managers spend hours detailing tasks into Microsoft Project and then spend more hours ticking off task completions? Unfortunately, many project managers like this task oriented-approach because it is concrete, definable, and completion seems finite. Leading teams, on the other hand, seems fuzzy, messy, un-definable, and never complete. So naturally some people gravitate to the easier – managing tasks.” **About self-organization and anarchy** “Self-organizing teams are at the core of the agile management, but the concepts have become corrupted – and counterproductive – in parts of the agile community. Although self-organizing is a good term, it has, unfortunately, contingent within the agile community who encourage an anarchistic management style and have latched onto the term self-organizing because it sounds better than anarchy. As larger and larger organizations are implementing agile methods and practices, the core of what it means to be agile – an empowering organizational culture – may be lost because large organizations will reject the cultural piece of agile.” **About the value of a plan** “When we “plan”, we expect the actual project result to conform to that plan, and then deviations become team mistakes or sign of the team’s failure to work enough. When we “speculate”, we take the opposite perspective – it’s the plan we suspect was wrong. The plan, or speculation, is a piece of information, but it is only one piece that we will examine to determine our course of action in the next iteration.” **About software malleability** “Software is the most malleable product. Companies need to use this characteristics to their competitive advantage, and sticking to traditional waterfall development negates this advantage.” Reference: “Agile Project Management”, Jim Highsmith, Addison-Wesley, Second Edition