

Being Agile or Doing Agile?

Quotes

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We were coaching in Europe and met with a manager who had been assigned the agile transformation responsibility; he wanted to show us his plan and ask for feedback. He presented a Gantt chart of his planned transformation: many stages of precise duration all in sequence, milestones, specific managers assigned to tasks along the way, cost estimates, and more. According to the plan, in twenty-seven months the group would have transformed to "agile". The detail was impressive - it was also the wrong approach.

Our colleague had confused doing agile and being agile. And he was applying command-and-control management thinking combined with predictive planning - in essence, traditional management "agile" adoption. Fortunately, within a few minutes of chatting, the plan was jettisoned and his view shifted to serving the teams, using a backlog, and adaptive planning.

This misunderstanding to agile or lean adoption is common in corporations that (1) mandate a top-down "transformation", (2) think this is another change project with an end ("we have now finished changing to lean - you get the bonus") or (3) have a centralized group responsible for pushing processes. Adopt lean and agile principles the same way as applying them: with experiments, adaptation, self-organization, and a focus on the value-add work by applying Go See.

Source: Practices for Scaling Lean & Agile Development - Large, Multisite, and Offshore Product Development with Large-Scale Scrum, Craig Larman and Bas Vodde, Addison Wesley, ISBN 978-0-321-63640-9 [Get more details on this book or buy it on amazon.com](#)
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