

: *What should an Agile practitioner know and do?*

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Knowing agile principles and developing an agile mindset are the starting point of becoming agile. An agile practitioner should have explored, embraced, and applied agile principles in the context of a project team and organization. A person should model and demonstrate agile principles and have the knowledge to discuss agile values with others. An agile practitioner helps ensure colleagues and customers have a shared understanding of agile terminology and principles. An agile person should practice servant leadership, encourage emergent leadership within the team, experiment with new techniques and process ideas, contribute to a safe and trustful team environment where people experiment and make mistakes, and finally, support changes intended to make an organization more effective and efficient.

Value-driven delivery is a key goal of agile. Identify value then deliver the highest value outcomes to a customer iteratively so that the return on investment (ROI) is rapid. Agile practitioners and agile teams must strive to deliver valuable results by producing high-value incremental deliverables for review, early in a project and often, based on stakeholder priorities. The team should maximize the value of their work to stakeholders while minimizing non-value added work. Stakeholders should provide feedback on these increments, and the team should use this feedback to prioritize and improve future increments. An agile practitioner should be familiar with value-based prioritization technique like ranking, analytical hierarchy, and multi-criteria scoring. Often a team should deliver a valuable, minimally viable artifact or product to get feedback.

Engaging with stakeholders is an important activity prior to and during a project. Engaging means attempting to understand a person's needs and wants. A project team should work to create a trusting environment that aligns with the expectations of all project stakeholders. The project team should balance stakeholder requests with an understanding of the cost and effort involved and maintain transparency. The two overriding goals of stakeholder engagement are 1) to promote participation and collaboration throughout the project life cycle and 2) to provide the situational knowledge needed for effective and informed decision making.

Team performance on a project depends upon developing an environment of trust, learning, collaboration, and conflict resolution within the team. Such a work environment promotes team self-organization, enhances relationships among team members, and cultivates a culture of high performance. Striving for excellence must be a primary goal of agile culture.

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Adaptive planning is a useful skill in an agile environment. Agile teams should produce and maintain an evolving plan, from initiation to closure, based upon goals, values, risks, constraints, stakeholder feedback, and a review of outcomes.

Agile processes require proactive problem detection and resolution. Team members and stakeholders should continuously identify problems, impediments, and risks; prioritize and resolve them in a timely manner; monitor and communicate the problem resolution status; and finally, team members should implement process improvements to prevent problems from occurring again.

Borrowing from the operations and the quality literature, it is important in an agile organization to have continuous improvement of products, processes, and people. Agile leaders and teams should work to improve the quality, effectiveness, and value of the team product, the team processes, and perhaps most importantly the skills of team members. In general, organization members should strive to develop and explore agile attitudes and beliefs as part of the process of developing an agile mindset. An agile practitioner should think in terms of agile ideas and values.

Note

This column explores the prescribed content used to measure and evaluate the specific knowledge and skills required for a person to function effectively as an agile practitioner. This analysis is based upon Project Management Institute (December 2014) revised content for the PMI Agile Certified Practitioner exam. Check

<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/agile-certified-exam-outline.pdf>
also see <https://www.techagilist.com/practice-exams/pmi-acp-practice-test/value-driven-delivery/>

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