What is Agile Project Management?

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What Is Agile Project Management?

Take a quick look around LinkedIn and other professional communities and you will see one thing on the rise; Agile Project Management qualifications are everywhere and spreading fast.

And it isn't only in traditional project management fields that we are seeing more people getting certified. Agile development tools like Scrum have long dominated the software industry. But more and more we are seeing other industries make the most of the agile principles and techniques.

As more businesses wake up to the benefits of agile and adopt these practices as their own, the need for skilled workers has increased. It makes sense that those with agile project management skills and qualifications will stand out above those without.

If you're curious to learn why Agile Project Management, in particular, has grown in popularity in recent years, this article will look at some of the prevailing reasons. We will also look at who can benefit from this type of training and how it might impact your career.

What is Agile Project Management?

AgilePM is a leading agile qualification that is showing increasing demand from professionals looking to increase their earning potential. The AgilePM qualifications scheme was first introduced in 2010 by the APM Group (APMG). In this short time, it has gone from strength to strength.

The qualification was developed with the Agile Business Consortium which used to be known as the DSDM Consortium. Since its launch, it has been established as the gold standard in agile training. For those looking to get a solid foundation or specialise their training, the AgilePM framework offers a challenging and engaging route.

By the end of 2018, the APMG announced that the total number of AgilePM examinations had exceeded 100,000. Fast forward just two years to 2020 and this number is now in excess of 150,000. With more businesses expecting Agile experience and qualifications, these numbers are set to rise.

The UK is currently leading the way in Agile qualifications with over one-third of all AgilePM Foundation exams taking place in the UK. You might also be surprised to learn that the global pass rate is very strong. With 98.5% of students passing the Foundation exam and 94.7% passing the Practitioner exam, it's clear there is a real appetite for this knowledge and experience.
Why is Agile Project Management so popular?

The primary reason that agile is so popular is that businesses like the framework and structure. When businesses demand these skills, the market follows and people adjust their training and experience accordingly. But what makes AgilePM in particular so popular? We believe there are six main reasons it is growing in popularity.

It brings order to complex systems

Agile Project Management is based entirely on the Agile Project Framework which aims to bring order to chaos. Agile is all about combining corporate governance with key agile concepts which make everything easier to manage. When put in the right hands – project managers – it can make projects more streamlined and more profitable.

Quality is always at the core

Agile is not about churning things out before they are ready. The principles of Agile state that you should never compromise on quality. By implementing high-level acceptance criteria throughout the life cycle of a project, you can guarantee quality is never neglected.
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Respects risk management
Project managers appreciate risk management. It’s a key part of the role and they wouldn’t be able to function in a framework which doesn’t include elements of risk management. By placing it front and centre, projects remain accountable.

Goes beyond product development
Methods such as Scrum focus too heavily on product development, whereas Agile can be applied to a number of different scenarios. Agile offers opportunities to apply the principles to more than just product development and can be used in project management in a more general sense.

Assigns responsibilities
By assigning clear roles and responsibilities to people in your organisation, everyone knows what is expected. This is one of the biggest challenges of stakeholder collaboration and management. Agile solves this by ensuring everyone is assigned roles.

Includes other popular agile practices
Agile Project Management also looks at things like MoSCoW, iterative development and timeboxing to provide a complete and varied approach to product development and project management.

Who needs an Agile Project Management certification?
The qualification is aimed at those working within agile environments or those who wish to push for a switch to agile. If your workplace lacks structure and discipline, agile could help to bring order to the chaos. It can also help those under pressure to deliver projects faster, cheaper or with fewer resources.

How does Agile Project Management differ to traditional project management?
When deciding if you should upskill and train in Agile, you first need to think about what it can bring to your career. By looking at where traditional project management is at the moment, you can see how AgilePM can help bring a new perspective.
Define your scope

When starting a new project, traditional project management assumes that you already know the requirements. With Agile, you don't need to know the requirements. This allows you to discard the commonly used project triangle of time, cost and scope. When the scope is unknown, time and cost will nearly always creep out of control.

With Agile, changing requirements are expected. Agile embraces changing requirements which might otherwise cause projects in a more traditional setting. By focussing on time and cost, it's easier to bring the project in on time and under budget.

The project moves forward in increments, which allows for a more practical understanding of how the project will progress. Issues are caught in the early incremental releases which prevents problematic foundations causing problems further down the line.

Flat management structure

The traditional project management structure favours a top-down approach, with a command and control outlook. This requires one person, or a team of people, to have complete oversight while those laying the groundwork only understand how their small cog fits into the machine.

With Agile, bureaucracy is reduced to a minimum. By taking a flat management structure, everyone understands the requirements and responsibilities. This allows for a more collaborative and intuitive way of working. Essentially, you get to utilise a lot more of your workforce.

More than just software

Many assume that Agile wouldn't be suitable because it is only for software development. In reality, agile is branching out and finding its feet across industries. Digital media and marketing and increasingly finding a use for agile working methods to keep projects on budget and on time.
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How does an Agile Project Management certification work?

There are two exams which will enable you to become Agile Project Management certified: Foundation and Practitioner. As the names suggest, foundation course offers an introduction to Agile while the practitioner course offers more depth of understanding.

Most students will study for the exam in a taught classroom setting or in independent online study. The classroom foundation course lasts 3 days while the practitioner part lasts a further two days. The online course for the foundation course can be completed in around 10 hours and the practitioner takes an additional 15 hours to complete.
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What are the prerequisites?

There are no prerequisites for the foundation course, however, you should have some understanding of project management within a business setting. This could be in the form of work experience or prior training.

For example, a university leaver with no work experience might struggle to make the most of a foundation course. However, if they have studied project management at university level or if they have completed any work experience in project management, this could be sufficient.

In order to take the practitioner exam, you will have to either pass the foundation exam or the DSDM Atern Foundation or Practitioner certificate.

What format does the exam take?

The exam for both qualifications is a multiple-choice exam. The pass mark is 50%. For the foundation exam, you will be required to answer 60 questions in one hour. The exam is closed book, so you will need to study in advance of the exam. The foundation course is aimed at those with some work experience within agile project management who wish to prove their knowledge and allow them to move up the ranks.

The practitioner paper contains 4 questions with 15 marks available for each. It is an open book exam which tests your ability to apply Agile Project Management principles to different scenarios. By the end of the course and exam, you should be sufficient in applying AgilePM principles and best practice to a simple or non-complex project.

Conclusion

If you are already working in project management and are looking for a way to upgrade your skills and bring something new to the table, AgilePM could be the way forward. While AgilePM still falls behind the number of people with PRINCE2 certification, it is a fast-growing certification. This means that it is a great way to make your CV stand out from the crowd and get your foot in the door of the world’s most forward-thinking companies.

Getting certified in Agile doesn't mean that you have to leave your other training behind. Instead, it's all about bringing something new and innovative to the table.
What Is Agile Project Management?

Studying for your Agile Project Management certification with Training ByteSize

At Training ByteSize we offer an excellent standard of training and a variety of options in which to learn, however our online course is by far the most popular. This option is flexible so you can fit your learning around your busy schedule, with minimal disruption to your day job.

For just £249+vat you can get access to our interactive and engaging online learning management system for three months, featuring films, activities and an extensive mock exam simulator, plus the online exam. Discover more about our training options here.

Try before you buy

Knowing what the course looks like before you buy anything is a service we’re really proud to offer. Click here to see our AgilePM online course demo.

Look out for offers

We’re always supporting our customers with fantastic offers to help ensure you can afford to train, so make sure you check out our offers page before you buy. At the moment we are offering AgilePM Foundation online learning plus the online Foundation exam for incredible value at just £249+vat.

Talk to us

We’re here for you at every stage of your project management career, so please take the opportunity to talk to us. You can use the chat function in the bottom right of your screen, email us at learning@trainingbytesize.com, or call us on +44 (0)1270 626330.

If you are looking to train a team of people in AgilePM, you’ll find that our onsite training is a viable and cost-effective option for you. If you would like to find out more about this option or any other aspect of the course, please do get in touch.