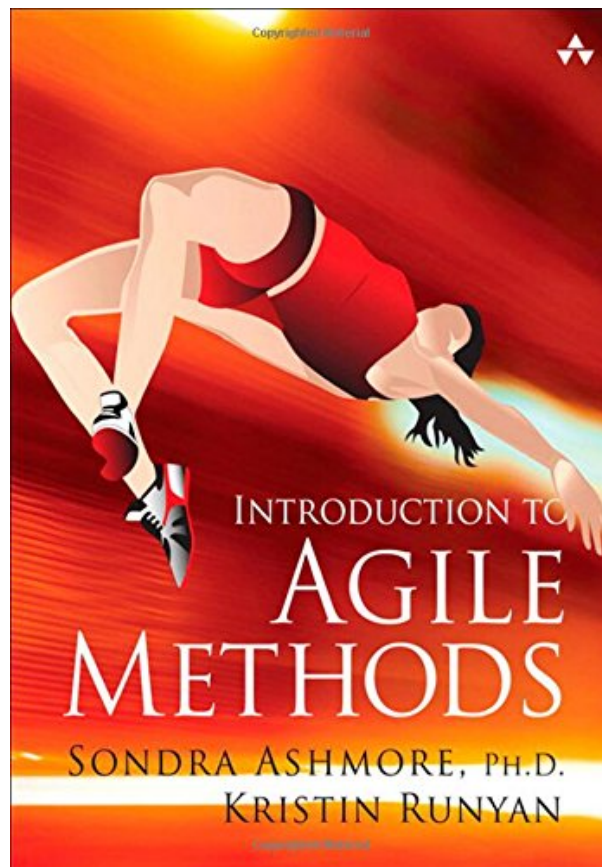
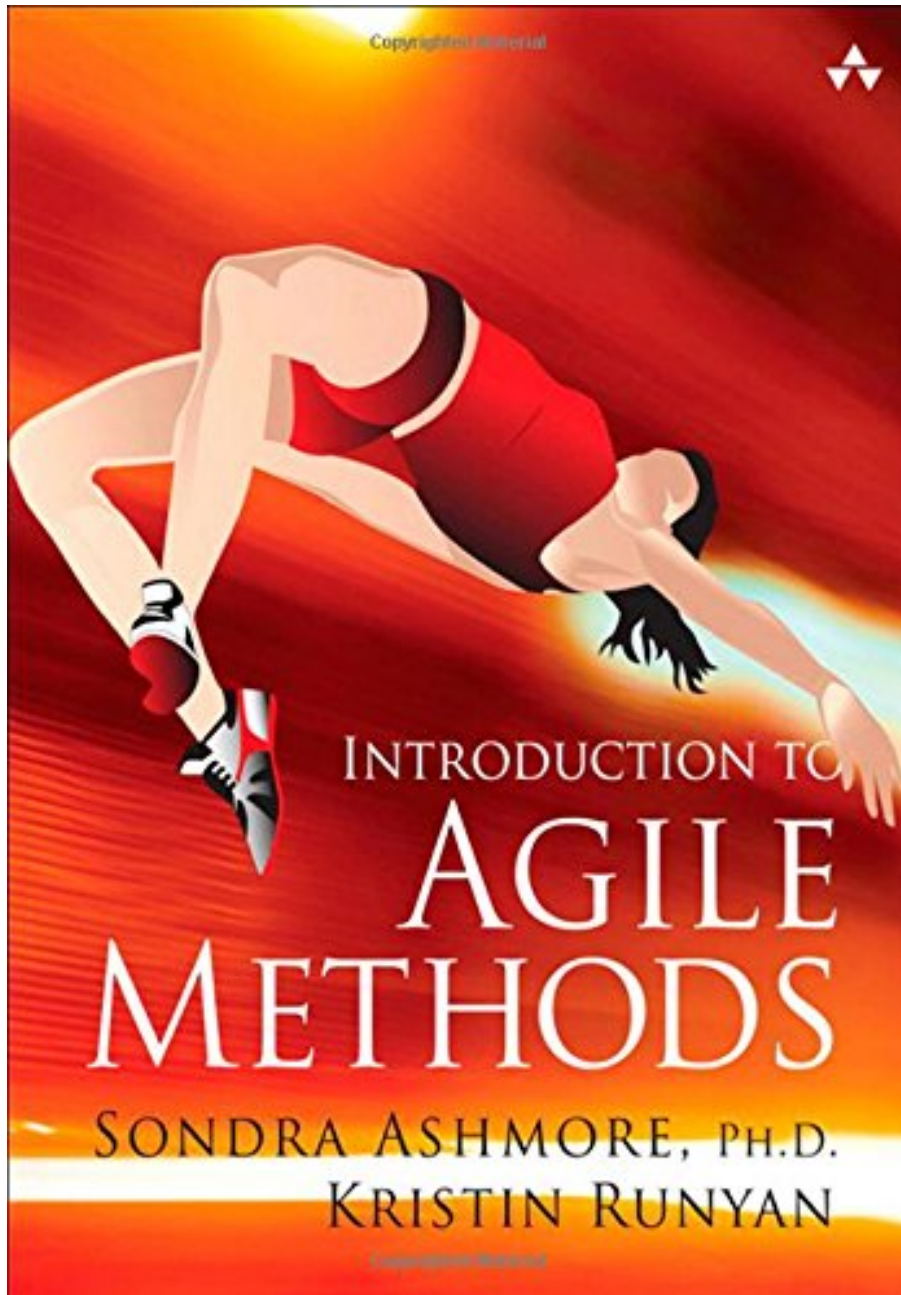


INTRODUCTION TO AGILE METHODS BY SONDRA ASHMORE PH.D., KRISTIN RUNYAN



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Sondra Ashmore, Ph.D., is an IT leader who specializes in large Fortune 500 corporations. Her areas of expertise include product management, project management, and new product development for IT offerings. She received her graduate education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in technical communication and management, and at Iowa State in human computer interaction. Her research focuses on the software development process, both Waterfall and Agile, and explores strategies to optimize the user experience. In 2012, she was recognized as a "Forty under 40" business leader by the Business Record, and won the Iowa Technology Association's Women of Innovation award for business innovation and leadership for her work at IBM. Sondra is certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP), Project Management Institute Agile Certified Professional (PMI-ACP), and Stanford Certified Project Manager (SCPM).

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INTRODUCTION TO AGILE METHODS BY SONDRA ASHMORE PH.D., KRISTIN RUNYAN PDF

A Thorough Introduction to the Agile Framework and Methodologies That Are Used Worldwide

Organizations of all shapes and sizes are embracing Agile methodologies as a way to transform their products, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. Many people with varying levels of work experience are interested in understanding the architecture and nuances of Agile, but it is difficult to know where to start. Numerous practitioner books are available, but there has never been a single source for unbiased information about Agile methodologies—until now. Introduction to Agile Methods is the place to start for students and professionals who want to understand Agile and become conversant with Agile values, principles, framework, and processes.

Authors Sondra Ashmore and Kristin Runyan use academic research and their own experiences with numerous Agile implementations to present a clear description of the essential concepts. They address all key roles and the entire development life cycle, including common roadblocks that must be overcome to be successful. Through the authors' realistic use cases, practical examples, and thought-provoking interviews with pioneering practitioners, complex concepts are made relatable. No matter what your role or level of experience, this book provides a foundational understanding that can be used to start or enhance any Agile effort.

Coverage includes

- How Agile compares with the Waterfall method and when to use each
- Why Agile demands a cultural transformation—and how that looks to each participant
- Comparing various Agile methodologies, including Scrum, Kanban, Extreme Programming (XP), Crystal, Feature Driven Development (FDD), Lean, and DSDM
- Understanding the roles within Agile and how they work together to create superior results
- Agile approaches to requirements gathering, planning, estimating, tracking, reporting, testing, quality, and integration
- Extending Agile beyond IT

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Start Here!!!

By T Anderson

At the beginning of the book the authors say they created this book to be used in a classroom setting. I agree that it is a great book for the classroom, but I would also recommend it to anyone who wants to learn about the current Agile methodologies. It does what the title of the book says it does, and it introduces the reader to Agile methods.

It starts with a nice introduction to the Agile movement's history and then covers all the traditional topics that fall within the Agile purview. I have listed the chapters below to give you a high level view of the topics covered.

Chapter 1. The History and Value of Agile Software Development

Chapter 2. Organizational Culture Considerations with Agile

Chapter 3. Understanding the Different Types of Agile

Chapter 4. Describing the Different Roles

Chapter 5. The New Way to Collect and Document Requirements

Chapter 6. Grooming and Planning

Chapter 7. Testing, Quality, and Integration

Chapter 8. Tracking and Reporting

Chapter 9. Agile beyond IT

Appendix. John Deere Case Study

I was initially worried about this book because the very first sentence has a typo, but that wasn't a problem throughout the rest of the book. Just really bad luck.

This book is a snapshot of Agile processes and practices as they are taught in the software development world at this time. The Agile processes and practices in this book address small team development. They don't go into large distributed or enterprise level projects that would use Disciplined Agile Delivery (DAD) or Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe).

They do hit a very broad range of subjects and cover them in enough detail that you walk away with a level of understanding that would allow you to work with an Agile team.

They introduce Extreme Programming (XP), Scrum, Feature-Driven Development, Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM), Lean Software Development, Kanban Method, and Crystal Family in one chapter. In the chapters that follow, they use different parts of the methodologies to explain how to accomplish tasks in an agile way, that are part of a normal software development lifecycle. Some examples are defining roles, eliciting requirements, planning, tracking assets, reporting, and developing.

Throughout the book the authors have interviews with leading Agilists. This is a nice touch because this introduces real world experiences.

The author's use a fictitious company named Cayman Design to show how some of the topics they cover would be executed. Cayman Design is moving in the Agile direction.

For those starting to learn Agile processes and practices this book is the perfect place to start. It is necessary to learn how things should work, before learning how they really work. Meaning being agile is not easy, and there are a lot of books out now based on that fact. They include experienced based on the projects that fail, the few that succeed, and the many that are sold as successes. I would start here though if you are just starting with Agile. Let's make it three times in one paragraph, start here!!

In real world development projects processes should be tailored for a given project. Allowing you to account for your team's skills and availability, your business's needs, the tools you have available, the environment you are working in, the difficulty of the solution, the working environment - team member locations, greenfield vs. brownfield development, and many more things that are usually not taken into consideration when a project is started.

People leave, laws change, hurricanes happen, people get sick, and so on. The point is your process must be as agile and resilient as the software you create. That means the process must be changeable, extensible, as simple as it can be while still getting the job done, understandable, and the people involved must have the skill level to execute the required tasks.

Always being low ceremony does not work. Low ceremony projects are smaller lightweight projects. They produce less documentation and artifacts in general. Low ceremony does not have anything to do with being agile, although many times experienced teams will run projects at the lower ceremony than a less experienced team would be able to. Agile is an enabled state that is only accomplished through experience. It can be learned, but absolutely not by doing less.

This book helps the reader understand all the tasks in typical projects so that when you come across a tailored process you will have an understanding of the roles and activities being performed.

Bill Gates said, "The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

The same can be said about Agile and Lean practices:

The first rule of any software process used in development is that Agile and Lean practices applied to an efficient development team will magnify the efficiency. The second is that Agile and Lean practices applied

to an inefficient development team will magnify the inefficiency.

There are two primary things you need to be part of an environment that uses Agile processes. The first is enough experience to execute your role's activities in a way that enables agility, and the second is an understanding of the Agile processes. This book can give you the later of the two. I highly recommend this book to teachers and to those who want to start learning about the Agile methods.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

I Was Looking For a Good Textbook on Agile and Found It!

By Randy Rice

First, as a disclaimer, I am a software testing consultant and also a project life cycle consultant. Although I train teams in agile testing methods, I do not consider myself an agile evangelist. There are many things about agile methods I like, but there are also things that trouble me about some agile methods. I work with organizations that use a wide variety of project life cycle approaches and believe that one approach is not appropriate in all situations. In this review, I want to avoid getting into the weeds of sequential life cycles versus agile, the pros and cons of agile, and instead focus on the merits of the book itself.

Since the birth of agile, I have observed that agile methods keep evolving and it is hard to find in one place a good comparison of the various agile methodologies. I have been looking for a good book that I could use in a learning context and I think this book is the one.

One of the issues that people experience in learning agile is that the early works on the topic are from the early experiences in agile. We are now almost fifteen years into the agile movement and many lessons have been learned. While this book references many of the early works, the authors present the ideas in a more recent context.

This is a very easy to read book and very thorough in it's coverage of agile methods. I also appreciate that the authors are up-front about some of the pitfalls of certain methods in some situations.

The book is organized as a learning resource, with learning objectives, case studies, review questions and exercises, so one could easily apply this book "as-is" as the basis for training agile teams. An individual could also use this book as a self-study course on agile methods. There is also a complete glossary which helps in getting the terms down and a good index, which helps in using the book as a reference.

The chapter on testing provided an excellent treatment of automating agile tests, and manual testing was also discussed. In my opinion, there could have been more detail about how to test functionality from an external perspective, such as the role of functional test case design in an agile context. Too many people only test the assertions and acceptance-level tests without testing the negative conditions. The authors do, however, emphasize that software attributes such as performance, usability, and others should be tested. The "hows" of those forms of testing are not really discussed in detail. You would need a book that dives deeper into those testing topics.

I also question how validation is defined and described, relying more on surveys than actual real-world tests. Surveys are fine, but they don't validate specific use of the product and features. If you want true validation, you need real users performing tests based on how they intend to use a product.

There is significant discussion on the importance of having a quality-minded culture, which is foundational for any of the methods to deliver high-quality software. This includes the ability to be open about discussing defects.

To me, the interviews were interesting, but some of the comments were a little concerning. However, I realize they are the opinions of agile practitioners and I see quite a bit of disagreement between experts at the conferences, so I really didn't put a lot of weight in the interviews.

One nitpick I have is that on the topic of retrospectives, the foundational book, "Project Retrospectives" by Norm Kerth was not referenced. That was the book that changed the industry term "post-mortem" to what we now know as "retrospectives" and also laid the basis for the retrospective practice as we know it today.

My final thought is that the magic is not in the method. Whether using agile methods or sequential life cycles, like waterfall, it takes more than simply following a method correctly. If there are issues such team strife, stakeholder disengagement and other organizational maladies, then agile or any other methodology will not fix that. A healthy software development culture is needed, along with a healthy enterprise culture and understanding of what it takes to build and deliver great software.

I can highly recommend this book for people who want to know the distinctions between agile methods, those that want to improve their practices and for management that may feel a disconnect in their understanding of how agile is being performed in their organization. This book is also a great standalone learning resource!

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

In true Agile fashion, clear concepts just in time!

By Loveland Customer

I am a fan of text books that make the subject matter clear to self-study and for classroom use. This book is structured to accommodate both learning styles. The content moves the student from no understanding of Agile Methodology through all of the topics that make agile different from other methodologies. The content is easy to understand, reinforced with case studies & interviews and review questions.

I am a consultant who works in software development with agile teams. As I move from client to client, I oftentimes work with teams over varying agile experience. I believe this book will be relevant for both new teams and experienced teams because the authors explained the concepts clearly, reinforced them with interviews and case studies, then offer the reader reviews that further help the reader commit the concepts to memory.

In fact, I am meeting with a new team member today that has no exposure to agile. I plan to provide this text to him for preparation to join our agile team.

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