

PROJECT LIFECYCLES

*How to Reduce Risks,
Release Successful Products,
and Increase Agility*



JOHANNA ROTHMAN

Author of Create Your Successful Agile Project

Project Lifecycles

How to Reduce Risks, Release
Successful Products, and Increase
Agility

Johanna Rothman

Project Lifecycles

How to Reduce Risks, Release
Successful Products, and Increase
Agility

Johanna Rothman



Practical ink

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

Every precaution was taken in the preparation of this book. However, the author and publisher assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages that may result from the use of information contained in this book.

Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and Practical Ink was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in initial capital letters or in all capitals.

© Johanna Rothman. This book is available in these formats:
Ebook: 978-1-943487-31-8; Paper: 978-1-943487-32-5; Hardcover:
978-1-943487-33-2

Preface

A colleague called me and asked, “Is it reasonable to take agile training all online?”

I said, “As long as your team is taking the training with you, sure. Especially if you’re part of a distributed team. You don’t need to be all in one place to have a successful agile team.”

“No,” he said. “You don’t get it. I’m taking ‘training’ by watching videos. Myself. Just me and my computer. There’s no training. I’m just watching. And I’ll get a certificate at the end!”

I’m sure I swore or something equally useful as a response. But this guy’s a character, so I thought I’d check. “You’re not teasing me, are you?”

“No, I’m not. I’m totally for real.”

I asked several questions about the principles behind his training and learned that the trainers had dressed up a waterfall approach to look like a well-known agile approach. There was no idea about cross-functional teams. No learning about the product and the process. And not enough emphasis on defining and delivering value to a customer on a regular basis.

Worse, there was little to no emphasis on the customer’s experience once they received an increment of value. That meant they had little to no useful feedback about the product as they developed it.

This is fake agility, agile-in-name-only. And that’s what my colleague was being “taught.” (I hesitate to say he learned anything at all useful.)

Fake agility is why people rant about agility and demand to return to a waterfall. (They haven’t really left the waterfall.) It’s also why people want to work alone, so they can manage their careers.

Agile approaches don't have to be like that. Worse, we shouldn't call these ideas agile anything. We can call them by the names they deserve, which is the lifecycle name.

If you suspect you have fake agility where you work, consider the ideas in this book to learn what you're doing and make it better. You can create a more agile culture in your project and for your product that will work better than anything dressed in fake agile clothing.

And if you persist, you might be able to influence your manager to start creating a better product development culture, regardless of whether it's real or fake agility.

Use this book to see and experiment with more ideas about how to manage your projects, create products your customers enjoy using, and create a better culture for success. Regardless of your lifecycle.

Johanna Rothman

Arlington, Massachusetts