

How “Agile” are you?

Peter Stevens, August 31, 2016

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We are uncovering better ways of [doing what we do], by doing it and helping others to do the same. Through this work, we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools

[Customer visible value] over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration over contract negotiation

Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

– The Agile Manifesto, www.agilemanifesto.org, as paraphrased by Peter Stevens

What does it mean to have an “Agile Mindset?” This assessment is intended to help you reflect on your level of agility. If your values are aligned with the Manifesto, then you can claim to have the Agile mindset. You can also use this questionnaire to assess an organization or a leadership team.

What is the Agile Mindset?

At the very least, someone who has the mindset is in alignment with the first sentence of the Agile Manifesto: The Agile Mindset is a learning mindset.

Someone with an Agile mindset knows what they do, besides making money! What value do you bring value to those whom you value? Someone with an Agile mindset is uncovering better ways to do what they do, both by doing it, and by helping others to do the same. This is about advancing the state of your art, having time to improve your skills and technology, and learning and sharing beyond your own four walls.

Finally someone with an Agile mindset knows what they value. They have reflected on the Values and Principles of the Agile Manifesto and found their own beliefs to be largely in harmony with those expressed in the Manifesto. Values are a guide to decision making, so their decisions will be aligned with the Agile Manifesto as well. Perhaps they have additional values. Perhaps they have reason to disagree with one or more of the values in their context. The less relevant you consider the Agile values, the more you should question yourself on whether you really have the mindset!

Finally someone with an Agile mindset knows why they value what they value. Values are not to be blindly followed. You may value other things beyond the 4 values expressed in the Agile Manifesto.

Peter's 5 Questions

1. What do you do for those whom you value? The answer must contain a verb and is not “making money.”
2. Are you uncovering better ways of doing what you do, by doing it?
3. Are you uncovering better ways of doing what you do, by helping others to do the same?
4. Have you reflected on the values and principles of the Agile Manifesto and what they mean for you?
5. Can you concisely explain your values and why you value them?

Use of this Assessment

Peter's 5 Question Agile Assessment should inspire you to reflect on your level of Agility. It is not about any particular practice nor does not give you a score. It is intended to help you reflect on your values and principles, and to give you something to think about on the road to becoming Agile.

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Peter's 5 Question Agile Assessment

Your Name: _____

Your Company: _____

Who are you answering for?

- Myself My Team Someone else: _____
 My company My company's leadership

1. What do you/they do, besides make money-? (must include a verb)

	The way things are	The way they should be
How well do these statements describe you/them?		
2. We are uncovering better ways of doing what we do by doing it (ourselves)	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
3. We are uncovering better ways of doing what we do by helping others to do the same (beyond our borders)	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
4. We have examined our own values in the context of the Agile Manifesto	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
5. We can explain why we believe what we believe	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10

Help for question 4: How important are the Agile values in your/their daily decision making?

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
[Customer visible value] over comprehensive documentation	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
Responding to change over following a plan	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of customer visible value.	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10
Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. We harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10	0 – 2 – 4 – 6 – 8 – 10

Bonus question:

How likely do you think it is, that a customer or potential customer would describe you/them as being “Agile”?

Very unlikely			Possible				Likely			Very likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What reason would they give?

