



3 Ways to Smart Manufacturing

Implementing MES/MOM – Why Speed Is Everything

Agile is not a methodology deployed on a project

Well at least not only, but it is a mindset, it is a culture voiced from the Top Floor to the Shop Floor

No matter how detailed and solid your Agile Methodology or Process is, if the people executing it don't nurture the appropriate culture, your projects will fail.

Culture Eats Strategy For Breakfast!
Said the great Peter Drucker

Many companies have switched their old approach of Software delivery from a traditional waterfall approach towards an agile methodology. Why is this transformation happening?

Here are a couple of reasons why agile has an edge over the traditional methods of software development.

PETER DRUCKER

American Businessman
(1909-2005)

Smart Manufacturing - Allowing for mistakes & learnings

Using traditional methods, there is hardly any room for errors and even less room to take advantage of any opportunities.

Agile utilizes short term sprints and iterations, space for mistakes and the ability to capture opportunities for quality development and updates is engineered into the methodology. Software development is characterized with: short development life cycles, and constantly changing demands from the end users, the ability to be flexible is the greatest benefit to any software development team.

Real time progress monitoring through system demos ensures a system that can continuously update with changing requirements and demands.

Smart Manufacturing Collaboration

The days where people worked in functional silos are over.

Collaboration is one of the most essential components of all modern project management strategies. It has become the means to an end in every stage and industry. Agile is one of the most effective ways for an organization to foster collaboration.

Between stand-up meetings, sprint planning, and closing sprint meetings, Agile encourages collaboration at every level. This teamwork creates an efficient and enjoyable workplace and generates value through leveraging individual strengths and ideas.

Communication

Consistent feedback from stakeholders is critical to the Agile methodology throughout the entire development lifecycle. This ability allows user stories to be leveraged to the software developers' advantage.





Tasks can change throughout the process, eliminating useless features and capitalizing on the most favored ones.

Explicit stakeholder feedback and feedback within teams benefit collaborative software approaches and allows teams to avoid silos.

Outcome focused

The goal of any development team is to be results-oriented and value-driven.

Utilization of Agile tracks and records each achievement, and determines what was effective in each sprint and what was not, rather than solely the end result.

These inspect and adapt sessions are not only an effective software approach for delivering projects but also encourages continuous improvement and adjustments for future projects in a results-oriented way.

But why do so many Agile projects fail?

But, why do so many struggle with this approach?

Because it's treated as an abdicated Tylenol rather than investing in your Wellness! Handing it to a big software vendor and at times an even bigger Systems Integrator may look good in front of the senior management and allow you to feel safe for a while in assigning the problem to an outside party.

But they're all protecting their margin downside!

It starts and it ends with people taking responsibility and an attitude of "not on my watch" It's a culture embedded in the program and so too is an Agile approach. It's a culture, it's a mindset. Never just a methodology!

So what makes Agile not work?

It starts by recognizing the potential people pitfalls:

More haste, less speed - putting unnecessary urgency on something creates too many shortcuts to both the detriment of the organizational goals and customer-centric fundamentals

Stop blaming, stop judging and start solving - it's easy to criticize, it's easy to remain in cyclical, non-change mode. when venturing to the "promised land" that's much more that can go wrong than there is right. So yes it's safe to stay where you are, but standing still while the world moves forward will sooner or later mean your demise

Do you really know where you want to end up? - Most start out with some vague outcome in terms of end results and outcomes. How will your people be at the end and what results will be delivered?

Ensure everyone understands what it takes to deliver - times I see projects meandering, wasting time without a regard for how much each minute, each hour costs the company. A focus on return on that time & cost spent is essential to keep team members astute to productivity



So What Makes Agile Work?

1. Knowing where you want to be

It has to start with knowing where you want to end up and communicating this clearly to everyone involved.

People confuse process with the purpose.

They confuse output with outcome.

It's like saying: "I want to see a doctor to get a prescription"

That's not your aim!

You are going to the doctor to be healed and to feel better. That's your goal getting medication is just part of the process!

A project goal should be tied to a higher purpose, such as:

- increasing sales
- cutting costs
- increasing safety
- helping your people

2. Knowing what it costs, minute by minute

Look at the cost of the project, across hardware, software and people time. Ensure everyone understands that each minute adds up and you're looking for output and before too long, outcomes. Keep everyone focused on urgency, not panic nor just speed to the detriment of all else.

3. Culture

As the great Peter Drucker said "Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast". Agile is a mindset, a culture, not just a methodology. For us there are 5 words we'd associate with an Agile culture to drive a MES/MOM success:

Empathy - understanding each individual involved in and affected by the program has a viewpoint and motivation. Each one needs consideration to varying degrees in order to see that goal is achieved





So what makes Agile work cont'd!

Imperfection - many of us have been through cultures of meticulous planning in order to achieve perfection and everything must be perfect before it “hits the streets”. Agile revolves around an approach of continuous improvement.

Haste - a constant cause for dispute is the statement “speed is everything” because at times it can be misinterpreted. Agile increases urgency, but should not be taken to the extreme of shortcutting. The needs of the business and of the customer (the users and customers) should never be ignored.

Collaboration - “no man is an island”. It comes down to empathy across your organization and understanding the breadth of impact to those touched by the program. Dismiss silos and dedicate a team that can speak for all.

Failure - it’s easy to judge and to see imperfections in others, but understanding to FAIL is a “First Attempt In Learning” is the culture of a positive, forward looking organization. Agile Retrospectives are all too often overlooked, because they can be times for finger pointing, but are in fact an essential part of advancement - a chance to review what worked and what didn’t for ongoing continuous improvement.

An agile methodology is focusing on building product rather than spending significant efforts just on creating detailed documentation.

When will you go agile?

When will you bring rapid improvements to your Smart Manufacturing process and team?