CALL FOR PROPPOSALS
PROJECT MANAGEMENT JOURNAL® SPECIAL ISSUE

Exploring the Role of Agile Approaches for the Management of Projects

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORS:
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DEADLINES FOR PAPER SUBMISSION:
1 July 2016 ..................... Submit proposal of 2,000 words, including a tentative title, aim, and nature of the submission (conceptual or empirical).
1 September 2016 .......... Authors informed of decision.
1 February 2017 .......... Submit full paper of up to 10,000 words.

We advise submitting a proposal—but it is also possible to submit a full paper without having submitted a proposal.

BACKGROUND:
The Agile Manifesto was authored by practitioners who defined, out of their own experience, four values and twelve principles to improve software development processes (Fowler et al., 2001). Many practitioners and scholars have come to believe that applying agile rules to software development processes has provided higher levels of productivity (Cardozo et al., 2010) and improved efficiency (Li et al., 2010; Lindvall et al., 2002) than traditional approaches in at least some cases. Since its introduction, several varieties of agile-based process models have been introduced, such as extreme programming (XP), Scrum, lean software development, feature-driven development, and crystal methodologies (Dingsøyr et al., 2012), raising questions about their relative value and whether there are conditions that advise the use of one rather than another. Additional questions focus on handling traditional project management issues, such as dealing with stakeholders, managing risk and contingencies, and motivating and measuring worker productivity when agile development methods are used for producing software products.

Although agile-related topics are discussed in computer science and information management literature primarily regarding software development (see Cardozo et al., 2010), the concept has also been applied to non-IT related projects, notably new product development (Ries, 2013; Blank, 2010). Application of the agile concept has been suggested for other types of projects (Conforto et al., 2014; Ktata & Lévesque, 2009). It is not clear how the agile concept translates in domains outside of software development. Does it replace or negate traditional project management concerns with risk, scheduling, metrics, and execution, or does it shift how we think about these and necessitate new techniques and approaches? Does it translate differently into different domains, for example, construction versus new product development?
This special issue of *Project Management Journal* seeks a wide range of papers that draw on diverse institutional settings, theories, and approaches to understand the different aspects of agile-based process models and methods as applied to project management both within and outside the domain of software development. The following questions are of interest for the special issue:

- Are there contextual conditions, such as the size of the project or nature of the task, that signal a better fit for agile versus traditional project management approaches?
- How are agile principles being applied in large projects and multi-site projects?
- How is the agility concept developed in the context of software projects related to agility concepts developed in other contexts, such as manufacturing agility (Jacobs et al., 2011) or agility in portfolio management of new product development projects (Kester et al., 2011)?
- From an organizational perspective, what are the trade-offs involved in shifting all project management to an agile approach, versus maintaining a mixed portfolio of agile and traditional development?
- To what extent are agile and traditional project management techniques mutually exclusive? Assuming that hybrid methods can aim to extract “the best of both” approaches, what would these methods consist of, when would they be appropriate to use, and what results can be expected from them?
- Are there metrics and standards that can be used for control of agile project progress during execution? Can these be adapted from traditional project management or is there a need for creation of new metrics and standards?
- Are there project management practices that remain constant across traditional, hybrid, and agile approaches (e.g., risk management, stakeholder management, team building)? If not, how do best practices compare across approaches?
- Are there process theory explanations for differentiating better from less successful ways to implement agile techniques?
- Are there variance theory explanations for suggesting circumstances when practitioners are likely to choose agile approaches and for when such approaches are likely to be more successful?
- Are there implications for the observed success of agile to date that reflects on our larger understanding of organizations and their fundamental nature?

These questions are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather they are intended to stimulate thinking about the role of agile practices in project management across levels of analysis—from participants in individual projects through projects, programs, portfolios, organizations, and society at large. We welcome submissions that address questions pertaining to all aspects of the intersection of project management and agile practices.

We are interested in studies using any of the full range of investigative methodologies qualitative and quantitative, laboratory or field settings, with data collected by survey, experiment, interview, observation, analytic analysis, and the like. We welcome the spectrum of philosophical approaches, from interpretivist to positivist. We appreciate theory testing, but because we see this as an emerging area of inquiry, we are particularly interested in theory-building studies.
SUBMISSIONS

Papers accepted for publication but not included in the special issue will be published later, in a regular issue of the journal.

If you have any further questions, please consult any of the following editors:

- Professor Thomas Lechler, Business School at Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, New Jersey, USA, at tlechler@stevens.edu
- Professor Fred Niederman, Cook School of Business, Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, at niederfa@slu.edu
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SPECIFIC PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Proposals should be no longer than five pages, double-spaced with standard 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font. This page limit does not include references, tables, or figures. The proposal should address the following issues:

**Justification**: What are your research questions and how do you motivate them? In the case of a meta-analysis or a narrative research interview: What specific relationship, or set of relationships, is under investigation in the meta-analysis? Why is it important to synthesize the evidence regarding this/these relationship(s), or what theoretical and/or empirical problems do you hope to solve?

**The contribution of the study**: What specific theoretical insights do you hope to add to relevant literature? What specific new knowledge will your empirical analysis yield?

**Theory**: What is the relationship of your study to theory? Do you use one or several theories to explain the nature of the phenomenon, its drivers, barriers and impacts, and moderating and mediating forces? Do you want to design an algorithm, a heuristic, a decision support system, or new practices to improve current project management? In these cases, please explain the choice of your theories. If you want to challenge existing paradigms and develop new theories that you believe are superior, what are your criteria for a better theory, and what are your expectations regarding the performance of your new theory or paradigm?

**How are you going to analyze your research question(s)**? Describe the body of the theoretical arguments and the empirical evidence that your article will analyze. What is your planned analytical approach for research synthesis, and why does it make sense in this context?

**What are the intended implications of your research**? Who will care about your findings? Please describe the domain in the literature or practice that the study aims to further. How might researchers in those areas be presented with new questions or adjust the way they think about and perform their research?
REFERENCES


