

9 of the Most Popular Project Management Methodologies Made Simple

Ben Aston, dpm Blog 15/01/2021

An important fact for you about project management methodologies: according to the PMI's Pulse of the Profession,

89% of the project professionals surveyed in 2019 said that their organization implemented hybrid project management practices.

In today's project management world, forward-thinking managers and leaders don't adhere to a single methodology—they become well-versed in many of them, and they learn how to mesh together various practices in order to accommodate whatever the project calls for.

That said, my goal here is to help you identify methodologies—and particular aspects of methodologies—that you can bring to your practice and deliver projects effectively in the world of digital agencies. You'll find an overview of PM methodology, descriptions of popular project management methodologies, examples from real companies, and steps to help you choose the right methodology.

[List of Popular Project Management Methodologies:](#)

9 Popular Project Management Methodologies

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Read on to get smart about project management methodologies.

How Do You Define Project Methodology?

Let's take a stab at understanding what a project management methodology is. The PMI project management methodology definition is helpful:

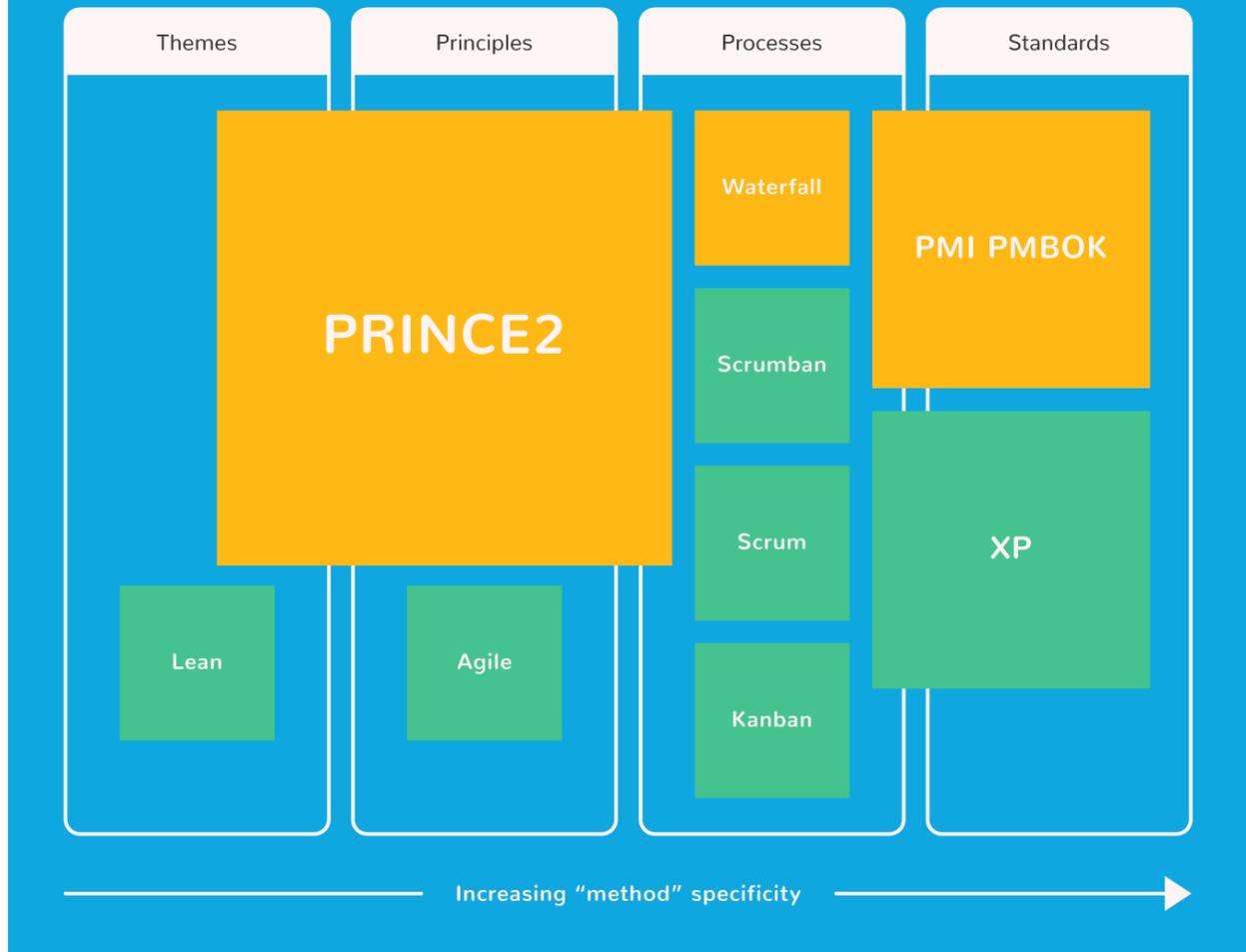
A methodology is a system of practices, techniques, procedures and rules used by those who work in a discipline.

But!

A methodology has to be rooted in something more fundamental that dictates why we choose to do things a certain way, so I'd suggest it should also include themes.

As project managers, there are many different ways to deliver projects. Broadly speaking, these ways are our project management models—applying different principles, themes, frameworks, processes and standards to help provide structure to the way we deliver projects.

Project Management Methodologies



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A schema showing the types of project management methodologies—some are based on themes, some on principles, processes, standards, or a combination.

Types Of Project Management Methodologies

Looking at project methodology types, we can see differences in the mechanisms that various methodologies use; how they give definition to a way of working.

Some project management methodologies simply define principles, like Agile. Others define a “full-stack” methodology framework of themes, principles, and processes, such as Prince2. Some are an extensive list of standards with some process, like the PMI methodology PMBOK, and some are very light and simply define process, like Scrum.

Maybe controversially, rather than debate what’s a methodology and what’s not, I use the broad (yes, mis)understanding of PM methodologies to mean simply the best practice frameworks we mash together to get projects done.

In other words, I don’t think a methodology has to be a complete full-stack implementation “system” to be considered a methodology.

It’s a good and helpful definition because in reality, as project managers we use a hodgepodge of principles, themes and processes tailored for our clients and projects.

And let’s get one thing straight before we start, while there are many project management approaches, there is no “right” methodology.

Ultimately, the best methodology is what makes sense and is most suitable for the project, team and client.

Let’s first take a look at some of the more popular project management methodologies and understand some of the valuable takeaways for delivering projects in the world of digital.

How To Choose The Right Project Management Methodology

Choosing the right methodology is important because it defines how we work. It provides the structures that can guide us toward [project success or failure](#). And since you already know there is no one-size-fits-all method that works for all business types, sizes or industries, it’s important that you put some time and effort into choosing the right project management methodology for your context.

Here are a few steps to deciding which project management methodology to use in your project:

1. Consider your project factors by their simplicity or complexity.

This includes the project itself, as well as the client, our available resources and the [project constraints](#) (including the appetite for change and risk), timeline, tools, and people. List these factors and label them according to their simplicity or complexity.

2. Determine the rigidity or flexibility of your work environment.

If you're working in a dynamic environment where there's appetite for evolution and change, an Agile methodology can work well for you. If you're working within very fixed requirements, timeline, and budget, you might be better off with a Waterfall approach. Along with this consideration of your flexibility, take a look at your constraints and risks. How can you enact processes that [minimize your key risks](#) and help your teams fit their projects neatly within your organizational constraints?

Regardless of whether you're more on the flexible side (think nimble design studio where most team members wear multiple hats) or more on the rigid side (think in-house agency where activities need to comply with lots of internal regulations) now is also a good time to ask yourself whether your organization should remain as rigid or flexible as it is. You can choose a methodology or hybrid methodology that pushes your organization in the direction you want to go—just be careful to choose methods that are actually realistic for your teams to implement as they currently are.

3. Consider what delivers the most value.

Ask what delivers the most value to the client (or the stakeholder, or the end user). Make a list of their needs and use it to pick a way of working that best meets those needs.

For example, if your clients generally make ongoing requests and expect constant updates and changes, then an iterative methodology with short cycles will help the client feel like they are getting more value. Using this methodology will help you deliver value and maintain positive relationships with clients.

4. Leverage your organizational goals.

Use the goals or project objectives you've already created as a team or organization in order to guide your selection of a project methodology. Clearly, your methods should be a means to achieve your goals—the best method is the one that guides you towards your strategic objectives most directly with the greatest gains and least negative impact.

5. List your organizational and team values.

Lastly and importantly, do a deep dive into your values. Methodologies, at the end of the day, are carried out by people—people with habits, opinions, and values. [Instead of taking a trending](#)

[methodology and throwing it at your people](#), use the ways your people think, relate, and work to build out a methodology that's a natural fit.

Your organization's and team's values can give shape to a truly sustainable methodology that is less a theoretical standard (that you never really meet) and more a way of systematically acting out living, breathing processes that are easier to sustain long-term.

Remember, no methodology is better than the others. It all depends on how well it meets organizational goals and values, the constraints the project team has to deal with, the needs of stakeholders, the risks involved, as well as the project size, cost, and complexity.

What's the Best Methodology For Digital Agencies?

The short answer?

It depends. There's no right or wrong. It depends on your client, your team and the project. Here's a deep dive into some common methodologies and what benefits and challenges they bring to the table.

I've got an [entire post dedicated to the Agile vs. Waterfall debate](#), but below I summarize a few main points to factor in when thinking about the best approach for digital agencies.

The pros and cons of Waterfall in digital agencies

Almost universally, at an agency, putting your head above the parapet and suggesting that Waterfall might be a good approach for a project is tantamount to painting a large target on yourself. Waterfall is something no client or team wants to hear—we all want to be seen as cutting edge, and Waterfall is definitely not cool.

Not only is it not cool, but Waterfall is challenging because it requires heavy upfront [project planning](#) before any value-generating work is done. Planning is sometimes necessary because clients need to approve a cost, timeline and scope. But clients are usually reluctant to pay for planning, and even in cases where [agencies have successfully transitioned clients from Waterfall to more agile contracts](#), what happens if your planning isn't up to scratch?

In truth, in the digital world, we regularly struggle with making accurate estimates. We're usually working with new technologies, on vague projects. Often, as soon as you start your project, your plan is already out of date. So while clients like the predictability of the deliverables, budget, and timeline, a Waterfall approach is inherently inflexible.

So what about some flavor of Agile?

The pros and cons of Agile in digital agencies

Between agencies and clients, there tends to be a pretty fluid understanding of Agile.

Agile is largely lauded for “not being Waterfall” and is widely misunderstood to mean “doing more, with less, faster and cheaper than ever before”.

Why wouldn't you want that?

Clients tend to love the idea of Agile because of its apparent flexibility to pivot a project, granting them more opportunities to change their mind continually throughout the project.

They often think that it means that they'll get more work done for less—or that they don't ever have to make a final decision on anything because they can change their mind right up until the last minute.

That's sort of true, but not really the whole story. Truth is, Agile might be better, but Agile doesn't come cheap or easy.

The catch and the rest of the story is that that level of flexibility is expensive. Yes, you can change your mind—but it eats up time, and time costs money.

Another challenge is that in order to be successful and truly Agile, clients have to make themselves available and be empowered to make decisions (which is rare in hierarchical and board orientated organizations). They need to provide ongoing feedback and prioritization on the fly to keep the project moving, which is often very tricky.

Fundamental facts about the best agency methodology

Fundamentally, agencies want to get paid for the work they do, and clients want agencies to do their best work, right, first time. There needs to be some happy medium.

In many ways, it comes down to trust. Do clients really trust the agency to deliver value, and are they willing to pay for failure on the path to success?

Doing more for less and eliminating waste is a great Lean principle, but the challenge with the approach is often with the [agencies have successfully transitioned clients from Waterfall to more agile contracts](#). Clients can cause a lot of waste, and without a truly embedded, trusting client who yields real decision-making power, no amount of Agile project methodology can fix that flaw in the relationship.

But where [agencies have successfully transitioned clients from Waterfall to more agile contracts](#) and willingness to experiment, magic happens. It requires maturity from our clients to understand that we can't define exactly what they'll get, or when, but with some healthy trust, we'll work together to deliver the best we can.

Overviews Of The 9 Most Popular Project Management Methodologies

Below, I've put together a project management methodologies list describing the most popular PM approaches. There are links in each section to learn more about each approach.



1. Agile – collaborating to iteratively deliver whatever works

Let's start with everyone's favorite buzzword: Agile. The truth is, Agile isn't actually a methodology at all, but a set of principles for developing software. The principles are outlined in the [Agile manifesto](#) outlines four values:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools;
- Working software over comprehensive documentation;
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation;
- Responding to change over following a plan.

Being Agile is more of a philosophy and set of values to follow, rather than a process you can directly apply to a project.

So, in short (and to make things confusing) Agile isn't a methodology or process. Even if you're on board with the principles, you still need to define the processes for delivering projects.

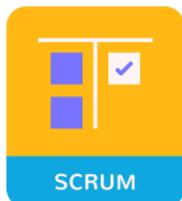
When people talk about an Agile [project management methodology](#), what they're usually describing is a flexible, iterative design and build process. Agile projects are characterized by a

series of tasks that are conceived, executed and adapted as the situation demands, rather than a pre-planned process. Being Agile helps teams respond to unpredictability through incremental, iterative work processes.

In much the same way that a good cook tastes the food as they cook it, adding missing ingredients as they go along, an Agile project management process requires project teams to cycle through a process of planning, executing, and evaluating as they go along. For another way to look at it, PM Column offers an interesting description of Agile in their article on [explaining Agile to kids](#).

Agile is different from other project management methods which usually assume that things affecting the project are predictable, and so it emphasizes adaptability to changing situations, adequate and ongoing communication among the project team and between them and the client. Agile methodologies are great to use in dynamic environments where there's potential for [agencies have successfully transitioned clients from Waterfall to more agile contracts](#) such as software and game development.

As a set of principles, Agile is the Big Daddy. Agile tends to be used as an umbrella term used for flavors of Agile including Scrum, eXtreme Programming (XP), Kanban, and Scrumban. In Agile project management, you might use any of these versions of Agile (Scrum, eXtreme Programming, Kanban, Scrumban).



2. Scrum – enabling a small, cross-functional, self-managing team to deliver fast

Scrum is a project management methodology which proposes principles and process to improve delivery. Within software development, Scrum methodology is one of the most popular and simple frameworks to put the principles of Agile in practice.

The goal of Scrum is to improve communication, teamwork and speed of development. If you hear people talking about aspects such as sprints, scrums, backlogs and burndowns, they're probably talking about Scrum, or some derivative of it.

Scrum isn't really a project management methodology but a framework for the ongoing development and maintenance of complex products. Scrum is a light approach and defines a simple set of roles, meetings called [Scrum ceremonies](#), and tools to efficiently, iteratively and incrementally deliver valuable, shippable functionality.

Fundamentally, Scrum is about empowering a self-managing team to deliver and defines roles and responsibilities to create a healthy tension between delivering the right thing, the right way, as fast as possible.

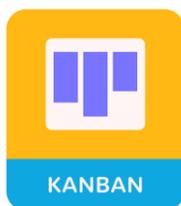
Scrum advocates using a small, cross-functional team of up to 9 people who work on items in a backlog (a collection of user stories or requirements) that have been defined and prioritized by a Product Owner.

Work is divided into “sprints”, a development cycle of usually 2-4 weeks, during which, daily “Scrums” take place where the team report on progress and impediments. At the end of each sprint, work is then reviewed in a sprint review meeting to determine together with the Product Owner if it passes the Definition of Done (DoD).

Scrum is facilitated and served by a Scrum Master. They lead the Scrums, sprints, demo’s and reviews, and a “[sprint retrospective](#)” after each sprint, to ensure the team is continually optimizing and improving.

Scrum was originally designed for software development. Therefore, while there are Agile artifacts from Scrum though that can be leveraged, Scrum doesn’t fit neatly into the typically more strategic and creative agency world. Even on agency web projects, fixed budgets, timelines and scope provide a lack of flexibility for a Scrum self-managing team, on a project with a defined beginning and end.

That’s not to say it can’t work, on development projects – agency project managers can act as Scrum Masters, and clients as product owners in one big happy hybrid team. But it’s normally more complicated than that, with fixed budgets and scope providing heavy constraints. That’s why many agencies take some of the concepts of Scrum—small, self-organizing, cross functional teams, daily stand-ups, progress demo’s and retrospectives and use them in some kind of hybrid approach.



3. Kanban – improving speed and quality of delivery by increasing visibility of work in progress and limiting multi-tasking

Kanban is a project management methodology focused on Lean principles and a strict process to increase efficiency. It’s similar in many ways to Scrum – it’s all about releasing early and often with a collaborative and self-managing team. But compared to Scrum, Kanban is a more evolutionary change, a softer landing into the world of Agile as it’s less prescriptive.

Kanban methodology is light on process, flexible, doesn't have prescribed roles, and simply tries to improve throughput by increasing the focus of the team on the things that really matter. The core practices are visualizing the workflow, limiting work in progress, measuring the lead time, making process policies explicit and continually evaluating improvement opportunities.

Kanban's focus is on work that is continually released, faster, and with better quality. It's great for operational or maintenance environments where priorities can change frequently. Kanban focuses on measuring Lead Time – how long it takes, after being briefed, to deliver.

With Kanban, project managers typically use sticky notes on a Kanban whiteboard or [online tool like Trello](#), to represent the team's workflow, with categories as simple as "To-do", "Doing" and "Done".

This visualizes what you want to do and limits work in progress (WIP) so that the flow of work is improved as you measure and optimize the average time to complete items.

It also gives the team a visual display of what is coming up next, which makes it easy to reprioritize, uncover process problems and prevent tasks from stalling. It also helps them to see how any new task may affect the ongoing work.

Kanban is well-suited to work that requires steady output, like production or support and maintenance. Within the world of agencies, it can also be a helpful tool as it's more accommodating to changes, and clients like to change their minds constantly. If Scrum seems too rigid an approach, but you want to "do Agile", Kanban is a simpler alternative.



4. Scrumban – limiting work in progress like Kanban, with a daily stand up like Scrum

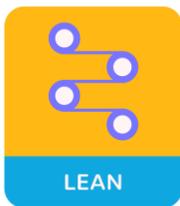
Scrumban methodology is a relatively new hybrid project management methodology that combines a mixed scrum and Kanban approach to project management. It takes the flexibility of Kanban and adds some of the structure of scrum to create a new way to manage projects.

Rather than working in potentially restrictive, timeboxed sprints, Scrumban uses a planning on demand principle to fill the backlog and tasks are assigned by the team pulling in tasks as they can accommodate them, as in Kanban. This means that work in progress is limited and the development team stays focused on the task at hand rather than worrying about the sprint review meeting and what the team committed to delivering in the sprint.

It's not all Kanban, though. Scrumban retains the daily Scrum with reviews and [retrospectives](#) to improve the process only used when needed. Furthermore, without the constriction of sprints, planning is done on an as-needed basis rather than around a sprint, which potentially saves time.

Scrumban really just adds some flexibility to Scrum by removing sprints and allowing an adaptive approach to planning. Or you could see it as adding some much-needed structure to Kanban with meetings that can help with collaboration and optimizing the process.

Scrumban can be good for product development where there is an unclear vision, where there are evolving requirements or no clear roadmap and if the process needs to include support and maintenance work in the process.



5. Lean – streamlining and eliminating waste to deliver more with less

Lean methodology is a project management methodology focused around the theme of efficiency. Arguably the Godfather of Agile, Lean is all about doing more with less. It starts by identifying value and then maximizes it through continuous improvement by optimizing the flow of value and eliminating wastage.

It's a theme with principles, rather than a methodology dictating process and things to do. It suggests you can do more with less by addressing the three dysfunctions that create waste; Muda, Mura and Muri, also known as the 3Ms.

Muda is about eradicating waste—removing process or anything that's not ultimately adding value to the customer. In the world of digital, this could be eliminating rounds of revisions.

Mura is about eliminating variations—removing the overhead that variances to the standard process create. For us, this could mean standardizing briefs and approval processes.

Muri is about removing overload—the optimal capacity is working at 60-70%. Any more than that, and everything slows down. We could apply this to be minimizing the number of projects we're trying to run through the agency.

Lean is focused on changing the way we operate to be laser focused on delivering value. It's about shifting the focus from optimizing separate technologies, assets, and vertical departments

to optimizing the flow projects through entire value streams that flow horizontally across technologies, assets, and departments to customers.

Lean can be a helpful mindset to adopt when reviewing your project delivery process. Think about how you can strip your project process back to the bare essentials that deliver value and cut out the things that are just fluff, or the way you've always done it, and you'll be thinking Lean.



6. eXtreme Programming methodology (XP) – doing development robustly to ensure quality

eXtreme programming (XP) is a software development project management methodology which defines values and processes to improve software quality and ensure responsiveness to evolving customer requirements. The **values**, or principles are very similar to Scrum, around simplicity, communication, feedback, respect, and courage.

Where it really deviates from Scrum is in defining **rules** or prescriptive processes. Some of these are similar to Scrum but there are rules around technical practices around designing coding and testing that make it specific for development projects. These rules include making mandatory; Including user stories, Test-driven development (TDD), Pair programming, and Continuous integration among many others.



7. Waterfall – planning projects fully, then executing through phases

Waterfall methodology, often referred to as SDLC (Software Development Life Cycle) is a project management methodology theme with a very simple approach that values solid planning, doing it once and doing it right, rather than the Agile approach of incremental and iterative delivery. It's simple to understand because you simply make a good plan, and execute on it.

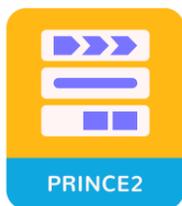
The project manager tends to be large and in charge, and work is planned extensively up front and then executed, in strict sequence, adhering to requirements, to deliver the project in a single, and usually very long cycle.

Requirements are defined in full at the beginning, at the top of the Waterfall, before any work starts. Work then cascades, like water down a Waterfall through phases of the project. In a Waterfall model, each phase must be completed before the next phase can begin and there is no overlapping in the phases. Typically, in a Waterfall approach, the outcome of one phase acts as the input for the next phase sequentially.

After the plan is approved, there's little scope to adapt the plan unless absolutely necessary, and changes that are needed usually require change requests. The project then flows through the process from [agencies have successfully transitioned clients from Waterfall to more agile contracts](#), through design, implementation, testing and into maintenance.

Because of the single cycle approach, in a Waterfall project, there's little scope to reflect, revise and adapt once you've completed something. Once you're in the testing stage, it is very difficult to go back and change something that was not well designed in the concept stage. There's also nothing to show and tell the client as you go along. You complete the project with a big fanfare and pray the client likes it. That's potentially very risky.

Waterfall is generally regarded with some disdain within agencies as an inefficient and passé traditional project management approach. But Waterfall can be a useful and predictable approach if requirements are fixed, well documented and clear, the technology is understood and mature, the project is short, and there's no additional value gained from 'going Agile'. A Waterfall approach can actually provide more predictable end result for budget, timeline and scope.



8. PRINCE2 – controlled project management that leaves nothing to chance

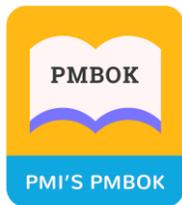
PRINCE2 methodology is a “full stack” Waterfall project management methodology that includes principles, themes and processes, created by the UK government in 1996 for IT projects. The acronym PRINCE2 stands for PROjects INControlled ENvironments. It is a process-oriented methodology, dividing projects into multiple stages, each with their own plans and processes to follow. The methodology defines inputs and outputs for every stage of a project so that nothing is left to chance.

The system emphasizes justification of the course taken by a business, and so the first step is identifying a clear need for the project, who the target customer is, whether there are realistic benefits, and a thorough cost assessment. A project board owns the project and is responsible for its success. They define the structures for the team, while a project manager oversees the lower level day-to-day activities. PRINCE2 methodology is based on eight high-level processes and gives teams greater control of resources and the ability to mitigate risk effectively.

As a methodology, it's incredibly thorough—it's a great framework for how to run large, predictable, enterprise projects. It clarifies, what will be delivered, ensures a focus on the viability of the project, clearly defines roles and responsibilities, endorses management by exception (arguably an Agile principle) and similarly to PMBOK, provides a common vocabulary

which we can apply to other methodologies. On the flipside, while the principles and themes are great, the process can make it laborious and onerous for small projects.

PRINCE2 is designed for large scale IT projects so would never work in an agency as a project management methodology. However, the emphasis on developing a good business case with KPI's and value earned, clear roles and responsibilities, managing change and risk are helpful when we consider managing projects for our clients.



9. PMI's PMBOK – applying universal standards to Waterfall project management

The Project Management Institute's PMBOK, or Project Management Body of Knowledge, is not really a methodology. Instead, the PMBOK “methodology” is a framework of standards, conventions, processes, best practices, terminologies, and guidelines that are accepted as project management industry standards. Even so, the PMBOK framework from the PMI is often thought of as a traditional project management methodology.

The PMBOK refers to the five process steps of project management: initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing. It contains many processes and techniques of project management by which to evaluate or complete the way you run your projects or the methodology you use.

The PMBOK best practices are useful as a foundation, but in order to implement it as a methodology, you need to determine which processes you'll apply, when, by whom, and to what extent. You also have to factor in your organization's structure, governance, and workflows, adapting the general foundations of the PMBOK to your specific circumstances.

It is, therefore, more theoretical, a reference guide, which you can be certified in which although popular in IT, doesn't really fly in the agency world. You can't actually run a PMI or PMBOK project, but you can leverage the standards to create a universal language and best practice around a project. In comparing PMBOK vs. PRINCE2, you could consider PMI's PMBOK and PRINCE2 as complementary to one another rather than two different or separate Waterfall approaches.

3 Project Management Methodology Examples from Real Teams

To see how some of these popular [project methodology types are applied in real orgs](#), [here are some project management](#) approach examples from companies you're probably familiar with.

1. Kanban Method at Vanguard

There's an assortment of Kanban, Lean, and Agile-based practices in place at Vanguard, one of the world's largest investment management companies managing about 5.2 trillion dollars in global assets. As of 2019, they've had some form of Agile practices in place for 12 years, including 5 years of DevOps. In a [case study on Vanguard's Lean Operating Model](#), we can look at the benefits and challenges that 24 of the organization's Agile teams experienced, along with a description of how the organization used the data to adapt their Kanban-based approach to better suit their unique goals and needs. Interestingly, the majority of their Kanban-based teams started with Scrum and eventually migrated towards Kanban. Many of them did so because of "Scrum stall"—what happens when a team of knowledge workers becomes chronically overburdened and bottlenecked.

Lessons learned from Vanguard? They reported in the study that they were able to accelerate their flow of work, feedback, and learning by adopting the Kanban Enterprise Service's Planning (ESP) approach. For them, this means monthly operations reviews with all teams, a replenishment meeting involving mid-level management, Kanban standup meetings for each team, enhanced collaboration among parallel teams, risk reviews with the project management office, and several other planning and review meetings. They found that the monthly operations reviews and the replenishment meetings were the most effective in speeding up their flow of work.

2. Agile at Cisco

Multinational technology company Cisco has been shifting away from running Waterfall digital IT projects, switching to an Agile approach. In a [case study on Cisco's Subscription Billing Platform and WebEx app development](#), they recorded the effects of adopting a [Scaled Agile Framework \(SAFe\)](#). They found a 40% decrease in critical and major defects, along with a 15% increase in defect removal efficiency. Their employees were also happier, as they eliminated the need to for after-hours work and reduced the number of meetings and calls to attend.

Lessons learned from Cisco? In their study, they note that it's best practice to adjust as needed. This means adapting your methodology to fit your objectives, teams, and processes. For them, adjusting as needed meant eliminating the Program level of SAFe on unintegrated or loosely integrated projects where it didn't make sense to use it.

3. eXtreme Programming (XP) in a U.S. Government system development project

We can find an example of eXtreme Programming in a development process pilot to add a new capability to the U.S. Strategic Command's knowledge management system called SKIWeb (Strategic Knowledge Integration website). The project involved two developers, a development lead, a government functional manager, and a human factors engineer. The case study on this project can help us understand how all of the eXtreme Programming practices (Incremental Planning, Small Releases, Simple Design, Test-first Development, etc) translate into real life, as

the participants recorded their observations about the extent to which each practice was actually implemented during the project.

Lessons learned from this U.S. Government eXtreme Programming example? The study found that most of the people involved were concerned with communication. Many of them made points about the importance of frequent, complete, and accurate communication among the XP development team. Due to the quickly evolving nature of XP projects, it was important to have emails responded to quickly and have everyone attend their required meetings in order to make appropriate decisions and keep everyone updated with accurate information about the project.

Other Project Methodologies

The list of project management methodologies above is by no means an exhaustive list—it simply a list of the most common methodologies in the agency PM world that we’re focused on. Here are a few brief definitions of additional project methodologies:

Crystal Method

Project processes are given a low priority, while team communication, team member skills, people, and interaction are emphasized.

Adaptive Framework methodology

Project scope is variable, but the time and the cost are constant, making it possible to adjust the project scope during execution in order to get the maximum business value from the project.

PRiSM

PRiSM (Projects Integrating Sustainable Methods) is a methodology often used in construction and real estate development. It’s based on 6 principles (Commitment & Accountability, Ethics & Decision Making, Integrated & Transparent, Principle & Values Based, Social & Ecological Equity, and Economic Prosperity) that guide practitioners to consider the value of the total asset lifestyle. It extends beyond the project lifecycle to encompass pre-project planning as well as benefits realization in the environment where the project is being realized.

Critical Path Method

Technique for modelling and scheduling project activities used in industries like construction, software development, and engineering. In this method, you determine the activities needed to complete a project, the time that each will take, the dependencies between them, and their deliverables or milestones. You use these to calculate the longest and shortest paths to completing your project, which helps you understand the key activities of the project—which activities can be delayed without affected your milestones, and which activities can’t.

PERT

PERT (Program Evaluation Review Technique) is a method for modelling, scheduling, and coordinating tasks within a projects. In PERT, project activities are represented as nodes on a network diagram, with their durations listed on the lines connecting the activities.

Rational Unified Process

Rational Unified Process (RUP) is a process used in software development to reduce waste and development costs. It involves 4 phases (Inception, Elaboration, Construction, Transition) with specific plans that lend structure to the software creation process.

In Conclusion

Selecting the most suitable project management methodology can be tricky. It depends on so many variables, many of which are outside of our control as project managers.

But here's the most important thing you can do:

Look beyond the methodology "turf war" in the industry.

Project management methodologies are just tools to help us deliver projects. It's really not worth arguing over the final details of a methodology—we should be focusing on the bigger picture.

Are you working to Kanban, Waterfall, or some other method?

Great! Because it doesn't really matter which methodology you're using.

What matters is to a commitment to doing quality work. Work that meets user needs and delivers great value to our clients.

The best methodology is one that improves organically, adapting and increasing the value of the output so the sum is much greater than the parts. It's a methodology that surprises and delights the client by delivering value frequently, and getting it right. And to do this you need to be pragmatic, rather than dogmatic, about the methodology you use.

What Do You Think?

How do you choose your [project management](#) methodology? Is there a methodology you prefer over others? If so, why? Please share in the comments below.

Ben Aston

I'm Ben Aston, a digital project manager and founder of thedigitalprojectmanager.com. I've been in the industry for more than 15 years working in the UK at London's top digital agencies including Dare, Wunderman, Lowe and DDB. I've delivered everything from film to CMS', games to advertising and eCRM to eCommerce sites. I've been fortunate enough to work across a wide range of great clients; automotive brands including Land Rover, Volkswagen and Honda; Utility brands including BT, British Gas and Exxon, FMCG brands such as Unilever, and consumer electronics brands including Sony.

Source: <https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/project-management-methodologies-made-simple/>