

Business Analysis in an Agile Environment

Introduction

This is a 3 day course for business analysts looking to make the transition into agile. The course aims to provide business analysts with the skills to work effectively on agile projects – we cover the activities they perform, the artefacts they produce, and how they work collaboratively with business and technical stakeholders towards a shared objective. The course explains agile principles, introduces terminology and, most importantly, teaches how to adopt an agile mindset.

Target Audience

This course is aimed at business analysts with 12 months or more experience who are now planning to, or want to understand, working in an agile environment. It assumes some general knowledge and experience in standard business analysis techniques such as defining project scope and writing requirements documentation.

Approach

The best, if not only way to learn agile, is on the job, hence the course is run very much as a real-life case study, with participants acting out roles, producing deliverables and the trainer acting as an agile coach/ facilitator. Learning points are explained after each activity. By the end of the course you will have participated in the end-to-end lifecycle of an agile project.

Instructors

The course instructor is an experienced agile BA practitioner and agile coach.

All of our instructors are experienced business change professionals rather than 'trained trainers'. They can therefore quote real-life examples as well as being able to confidently field questions that might relate to projects or scenarios outside the scope of the course.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course the attendee will understand:

- Agile background and principles
- How to create a vision
- How to create a product backlog to define project scope
- How to write user stories and epics
- How to estimate and prioritise stories
- How to plan releases and sprints
- How to support development through delivery
- How to manage (and embrace) change
- How to report progress using burn-up charts
- How to adopt an agile mindset

Course Duration

The course is split into a number of modules and the full course runs for three days. On-site clients can choose to run the course over a shorter duration.

Course Content

The course is split into a number of different modules. Each module represents a day in the life of an agile business analyst. It always starts with a daily stand-up to discuss the day ahead and then includes role-play workshops to illustrate the various activities undertaken by an agile BA.

“Week Zero, Friday”: Project Briefing

- Introducing the case study
- The Agile Manifesto
- Agile principles
- Agile methods (Scrum, XP, Kanban, BADM)
- The agile mindset

“Week One, Monday”: Project Vision

- Introducing the daily scrum
- Understanding the project vision and objectives
- Different ways of expressing the project vision

“Week One, Tuesday”: Project Scoping

- Identifying product features (epics)
- Writing user stories
- Creating the product backlog
- Setting up an agile document repository

“Week One, Wednesday”: Initial Backlog Grooming

- Estimating features using planning poker
- Prioritising features - based on business value, architectural risk and other factors

“Week One, Thursday”: Project Planning

- Estimating the project size
- Defining the release and sprint schedule
- Drawing a burn-up chart

“Week Two, Monday”: Sprint Planning

- Identifying architectural spikes
- Getting the development team started on something

“Week Two, Tuesday”: Defining Feature Scope

- Understanding feature objectives
- Options engineering
- Feature splitting (splitting epics into stories)
- Lightweight documentation that fosters collaboration
- Getting agreement

“Week Two, Friday”: More Grooming

- Re-prioritizing split features

“Week Three, Monday”: Functional Design

- Writing acceptance criteria and tests using BDD scenarios
- Data definitions
- Mock-ups
- Getting agreement

“Week Four, Monday”: Sprint Planning

- Working out what features to deliver in the sprint

“Week Four, Tuesday”: Supporting Development and Keeping Busy

- Fielding questions and updating feature specifications
- Working on features just in time

“Week Five, Tuesday”: Acceptance Testing

- Did we deliver what was asked for?
- Definition of done
- Dealing with feedback

“Week Five, Thursday”: Managing Change

- Embracing change
- Re-prioritization

“Week Five, Friday”: End of Sprint Activities

- Sprint review
- Sprint retrospective
- Progress report

“Week Six, Monday”: Sprint Planning Again

- Re-estimating velocity

“Week Six, Tuesday”: Dealing with Technical Debt

- Understanding technical debt and how to deal with it

“Week Seven, Wednesday”: Swarming

- Understanding how agile team members help one another out

“Week Seven, Friday”: Course Retrospective

- Looking back at what we have done
- Agile as a mindset
- Evolution – there is no right answer
- Further reading