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As customers and end-users increasingly demand rapid delivery of software that works well, development teams must find a way to release high-quality products fast and frequently. Traditional methodologies can't keep pace with today's marketplace, so many organizations are turning to agile practices to keep the work flowing.

Whether you are taking the first step down the road to agile or you want to make sure you're heading in the right direction, this eGuide provides resources to help guide you through your agile implementation.

## In This Implementing Agile eGuide

### **Are You Agile? An Assessment Can Tell You**

Plenty of companies want to be agile and go through the motions but are not really agile. An agile assessment allows you to evaluate how teams or even organizations are doing in their agile journey. But like any useful tool, there is no shortage of assessment options available. Here are the acceptance criteria to look for and a framework for using an agile assessment.

### **10 Things You Must Do to Become Truly Agile**

Agile is not a state of doing; it's a state of being. Adopting business models on value and learning how to make teams autonomous are both necessary steps to reap the benefit of agility.

### **Growing Generalized Specialists on an Agile Team**

A generalized specialist is not a jack of all trades. It is an individual with deep knowledge in a particular specialization who also has learned to be productive in other team roles. Here are some tips on how to grow generalized specialists on your team in order to maximize your team's productivity potential.

### **3 Common Collaboration Problems for Teams Transitioning to Agile**

A shift toward working in smaller teams on tighter releases forces organizations adopting agile to rethink what successful delivery looks like. It can be a big change for those used to silos. Here are three key symptoms of agile teams that don't have close collaboration—and some solutions you can implement to fix them.

### **Don't Let Too Little Planning Tank Your Agile Adoption**

Many organizations turning to agile believe it means you don't have to do any planning. This couldn't be further from the truth. A healthy agile team does just as much (if not more) planning than a team using a waterfall methodology. Preparing and setting goals sets up the team for a more successful agile adoption.

### **Insight from Around the Industry**

Find out what experienced agile practitioners have to say about implementing agile.

### **Additional Agile Implementation Resources**

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# Are You Agile? An Assessment Can Tell You

By Joel Bancroft-Connors

Tell me if you've heard this before: "Oh, we're agile. We do standups and have a product backlog." I've heard this exact statement from an engineering manager and dozens of similar statements from others, all claiming agility and tossing out a couple of buzzwords.

In this example, the reality was that their standups were an hour long, the team had more than twenty people, and the backlog was just a filter on enhancement requests in their bug tracking system. Few agilists would argue that what this team was doing could be considered agile, even if it may have been an improvement over what they were doing before.

So you know the organization isn't really agile. That's the easy part. The challenge comes when you talk to such an organization. Even if you're a highly regarded consultant, you'll be hard-pressed to change their minds based on your opinion alone.

Enter the agile assessment. This tool allows you to estimate, judge the value of, or evaluate how teams or even organizations are doing in their agile journey.

And like anything useful, there is no shortage of assessment options available. How do you choose the right one to use for your organization?

## An Agile Assessment Tool Versus Model

The first thing to understand is the difference between a tool and a model or strategy. A Google search will uncover dozens of agile, Scrum, or lean assessment tools. While many of these tools are ex-



cellent, they aren't useful unless you know what you should be assessing. If you hand me a hammer and don't give me plans for building something, then all I can do is pound in nails all day with no real results.

When I first used agile assessments, all I had was a poorly documented tool. Without a strategy for how to use it, I fumbled about a lot and was pretty much ineffective with it—not unlike collecting metrics and not doing anything with them.

So while tools get all the fanfare, it's the end-to-end assessment model that is critical. You may end up using more than one tool in your model, so by opening up to looking at the overall approach, you don't get locked into a single-tool mindset.