Accessibility Business Strategy Development and Execution

The Agile Way

Dena Wainwright

Succeeding in Agile

- To work at the speed of agile, you must:
  - Break complex workflows into bite-sized pieces.
  - Never forget the needs of your customer.
  - Remain focused by limiting the amount of work-in-progress (WIP).
  - Deliver incremental value to your customer by releasing a few features at a time, instead of large batches of code all at once.

Succeeding in Agile – con't

- To work at the speed of agile, you must:
  - Have the resources you need to work quickly (e.g., people, tools, knowledge, processes, documentation, etc.).
  - Ensure these resources are easy to find and intuitive to use.
  - Evaluate your performance at regular intervals so "course-corrections" can be made as soon as possible.
  - Build a program model that is flexible and resilient enough to withstand abrupt and significant shifts in priorities and direction if needed.

Working in Agile

- All work focuses on delivering value to the customer by prioritizing their needs and limiting the amount of work in progress (WIP).
- You remain relevant to the customer by responding to their needs in real time, keeping them interested and engaged.
- Teams see their "quick-wins" accumulate, driving investment and motivation.
- Key principles are collaborating, obtaining feedback, and frequently evaluating performance.
- A "pace over perfection" mindset means "failure" is seen as experimentation and part of learning.

Choosing Your Agile Methodology

Before you can determine the methodology that's best for you:

- Define your program framework, including your scope of work, current and desired end-state, strategy and execution plan, risk and performance metrics, etc.
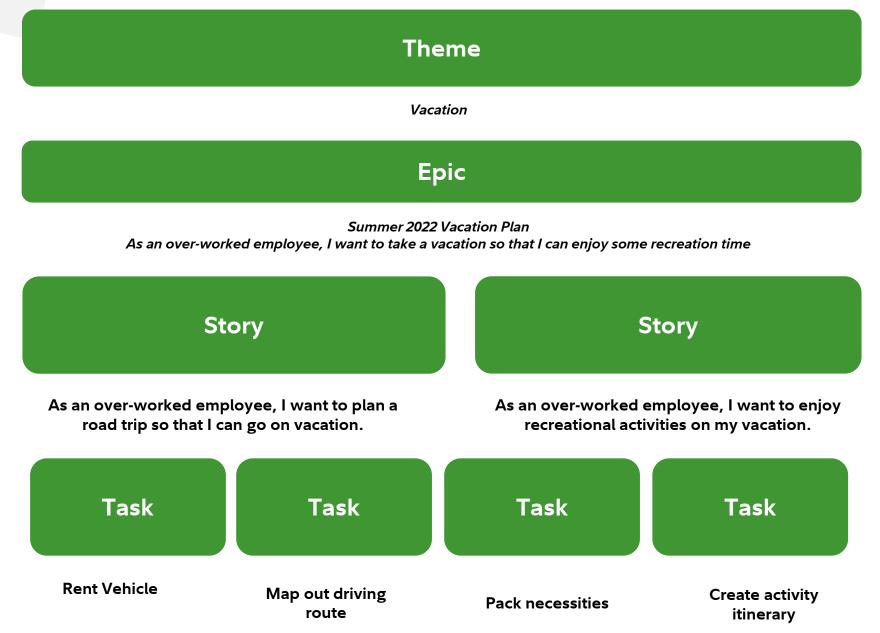- It helps to use a tool like Jira Align to formally map everything out.

Mapping Your Program Framework in Jira Align

1. Theme - connects your program to the broader organizational strategy (purpose statement).
2. Initiative - summarizes your strategy and mission.
3. Sub-initiatives - describe your strategic pillars.
4. Epics - identify bodies of work within your strategic pillars (strategic execution).
5. User stories – specify who your customer is, and the "job" they want to do.
6. Tasks – outline how you will complete your user stories.

Sample Kanban

Theme

Vacation

Epic

Summer 2022 Vacation Plan
As an over-worked employee, I want to take a vacation so that I can enjoy some recreation time

Story

Story

As an over-worked employee, I want to plan a road trip so that I can go on vacation.

As an over-worked employee, I want to enjoy recreational activities on my vacation.

Task

Task

Task

Task

Rent Vehicle

Map out driving route

Pack necessities

Create activity itinerary

Deciding on Kanban

- In Japanese, Kanban means "visual signal."
- It is a "pull" system Toyota created to track its manufacturing lifecycle.
- We chose a Kanban Board to track our user stories and tasks because:
  - No traditional agile roles are assigned.
  - The team decides how to manage/distribute the WIP.
  - Our types of workflows make rigid timelines impractical.
  - We can visualize:
    - The start and end of every workflow, its phases, and how it relates to other workflows.
    - Board-specific performance metrics, including blockers.

Describing the Kanban Board

Comprised of vertical columns with cards that move horizontally across those columns.

- Vertical columns - the ordered phases of a workflow.
- Horizontal cards –User Stories that are "pulled" across the board (from one workflow phase to another).
  - The user story's tasks are attached to its card as Post-it notes.

Color-coding and tags are used to distinguish the different parts of the board from one another.

Familiarizing Yourself with Some Kanban Board Rules

- The team must agree on (and adhere to) rules like WIP limits, how often to update the WIP, etc.
- User stories must indicate the customer, their need, and why the need is important to them.
- Tasks in a user story cannot be "pulled" across the board until a space in another column opens up.
- Tasks must:
  - Contribute value to the customer.
  - Be in your team's control to complete.
  - Indicate what, how, and when work must be done; and who is responsible for completing each item.

Describing Our Kanban Board

Our Columns (from left to right) –

1. Inputs - user stories with more immediate deadlines that have been pulled from the backlog.
2. Refine – more information is needed before priority can be assigned.
3. To-do –tasks are prioritized and pulled into the "WIP" accordingly.
4. WIP - team members have their own sub-column in the WIP to ensure work is equally distributed.
5. Blockers - tasks that cannot be pulled into other columns because of dependencies.
6. Done – the task has met the quantifiable definition of "done."

Kanban Tracking

Accessibility Practice Scenario

Kanban board

Board ⌄

QUICK FILTERS: Only My Issues   Recently Updated

INPUT - REFINE	TO DO	WORK IN PROGRESS	BLOCKERS	DONE	Release...

⌄ Expedite 6 issues

EPAPS-135 Ⓑ
Pack necessities
☑ ○

EPAPS-133 Ⓑ
As an over-worked employee, I want to take a road trip so that I can
🔖 ○

We're only showing recently modified issues.

🔍 Looking for an older issue?

EPAPS-137 Ⓑ
Create activity itinerary
🔖 ○

EPAPS-133 As an over-worked emp...

EPAPS-136 Ⓑ
Map out driving route
▣ ○

EPAPS-135 Pack necessities

EPAPS-138 Ⓑ
Packing requires knowledge of activities.
▣ ○

EPAPS-134 Ⓑ
Rent a vehicle
☑ ○

We're only showing recently modified issues.

🔍 Looking for an older issue?

Additional Things we Track

1. The backlog.
2. Reoccurring tasks.
3. Tasks with specific due dates.
4. Metrics inferred from information on the board.

Recommendations for Working in Agile

1. Get comfortable with shifting priorities and direction quickly.
2. Work with an agile coach.
3. Don't forget your internal customers.
4. Adopt a "pace over perfection" and "fail forward" mindset.
5. Limit the number of sub-initiatives, epics, user stories, and tasks you take on at any given time.
6. Review your accomplishments whenever you update the board.
7. Define quantifiable metrics to meet expectations.
8. Use pilots to gradually roll out new ideas.
9. Make sure your processes are simple, scalable, and sustainable.
10. Try tracking your individual tasks on your own personal Kanban Board.