AGILE APPROACH IN
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
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In today’s day and age, project management is widely discussed theme, especially in the construction industry. While the project management practices in the construction industry have not changed significantly over the past few decades, the construction market, the roles of the different actors and the procurement processes have evolved over time. This has created a gap between the managerial view on how construction projects should be executed and the way they actually are executed. This gap had led many to explore the different approaches of managing construction projects.

Why Choose Agile Approach?

The Agile project management approach is well-suited to large-scale projects where it is difficult to specify the product in advance and the customer detects their needs through means of repeated tests and improvements to a prototype. The approach was developed in the software industry but many other industries, including the construction industry, have also adopted the Agile approach. While the iterative style of Agile certainly makes it best suited to software development, there are several other aspects of the methodology that make it a good candidate for projects in other industries.

The collaboration, quality, visibility and teamwork that happens with Agile methodology is relevant to any type of project. Using the Agile approach in the design phase of construction projects leads to greater client involvement, as compared to other approaches of construction project management. It also decreases uncertainty and improves risk management.

The use of time management and specific meetings allows the management to keep track of the project’s progression and status.
**Agile Approach and Large-Scale Projects**

Large-scale projects manage different program environments - drilling, infrastructure, multiple contractors, and competing stakeholder interests. Therefore, the companies need to effective governance and compliance processes, key performance metrics around risk and stakeholder communication.

When it comes to the Agile approach, access to real-time data is important, but it needs to be supplemented by a system to communicate that information. With different project assets and participants in mind, large-scale projects need an effective way to communicate documented information to all stakeholders. The result of this communication has a profound impact on the cost, quality and schedule of the project.

Sandeep Khurana of Noble Energy’s Major Project Development Group refers to project agility as a “balance between people and process.” While work is done by people, technology exists to enable timely information exchange between them. In order to meet regulatory, contractual, and legal requirements, various organizations are now turning towards automated, streamlined workflows and document control functions.

**Heathrow Terminal 5**

The timely and cost-effective construction of Heathrow Terminal 5 shows how the Agile approach can contribute to success of construction projects. The project was not without its fair share of problems during deployment, primarily because of the staff’s unfamiliarity with the building and the processes, which caused significant delays in baggage drop and reclaim. However, the building was completed on time and to budget with one of the best safety records ever achieved for such a large-scale project. The key to success of the project was the way construction teams from different companies collaborated with one another and solved problems together.

Heathrow Terminal 5 was constructed using the Agile approach.

*Source: sfuheathrowcase.wordpress.com*
INTEGRATED APPROACH AND INTERFACE MANAGEMENT

However, project agility cannot fully exist without an integrated approach and without the aligned of project milestones and goals. Integration between project parties results in reduction in contracts and interfaces, simplification of communication, and reduction in Non-Productive Time (NPT), which in turn generates time and saves costs. According to Dennys de Campos of Schlumberger, contractors and service companies tend to focus on their individual goals, therefore, “the traditional relationship between an operator and multiple service companies results in fragmented services interfaces, inefficiencies, and non-optimal service quality.” For minimizing technical and delivery risk, large-scale projects adopt the contracting strategy of awarding multiple scope packages to multiple contractors.

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