

Tailoring Agile Methods

One or Two Day Seminar^{*}

Seminar Description

Scrum, Extreme Programming, and agile methods have become well known and widely used in the software engineering community. The practices that comprise the agile methods have been stated for some years, and a variety of case studies have been published discussing the implementation of the more popular methods. Although the core set of agile “practices” is well known, particularly for Scrum and XP, they have evolved over time, and many new practices have been suggested as additions. The XP practices have been practiced in some form for decades – the “extreme” modifier is Beck’s indication that XP is a set of good practices carried to an extreme implementation. One objective of this seminar is to discuss the antecedents of the various agile practices and the alternatives that have been developed in other contexts. When implementing an agile method, most organizations tailor the practices to the needs of their business environment and customers. In some cases, tailorings are reasonable and aligned with the vision of what agility is all about; in some, the tailoring violates fundamental principles underlying the agile method. This seminar will discuss possible tailorings, improper tailorings, and reasons an agile method might be either poorly implemented or not implemented at all.

Who Should Attend

- Project managers who will be piloting or adopting agile methods
- Process experts adapting an agile method for organizational deployment
- Software professionals who desire to use the best software engineering practices available

Course Prerequisites

There are no pre-requisites for this seminar. “Agile Methods and Process Discipline,” “An Introduction to Extreme Programming,” and “An Introduction to Scrum” are recommended.

Course Objectives

After completing this seminar, participants should be able to:

- Understand the basics of agile methods and where they are most appropriate
- Describe the core set of XP practices and variants
- Describe the core set of Scrum practices and variants

^{*} This seminar can be delivered over either one or two days. Longer seminars involve more case studies, exercises, and role plays, as well as a more in-depth study of the material. Shorter forms of this material can be presented also.

- Evaluate the tradeoffs and relationships for various agile practices
- Discuss issues in tailoring and interpreting the agile methods
- Discuss issues in standardizing, tailoring, and deploying software processes

Module Description

Module 1 – The Agile Alliance

- The Agile Manifesto
- Principles of agile software development
- Success factors for agile projects

Module 2 – An Overview of Extreme Programming

- The core XP practices and variants
- XP practice relationships
- Tradeoffs in implementing the XP practices
- XP practices that are rarely implemented
- Common XP tailorings
- Case studies of XP

Module 3 – An Overview of Scrum

- The core Scrum practices and variants
- Common Scrum tailorings
- Combining Scrum and XP
- Case studies of Scrum

Module 4 – Tailoring Agile Methods

- Retaining the agile philosophy
- Improper tailorings
- Standardizing and tailoring organizational assets
- Deploying standard software processes
- Negotiating with the customer

Module 5 – Agile Methods and Process Discipline

- Using agile methods in a CMMI context
- Using agile methods in an ISO 9001 context
- Cultural misfits with agility

Activities and Exercises

Activities and exercises include case studies, situational analyses, role playing, and interactive lecturing.