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Research Article

The Transitioning Experiences from Traditional to Agile Project Management: A Case of an Information Technology Department of a Private-Owned Financial Institution in Cebu City

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ABSTRACT

Incorporating the Agile Project Management (APM) approach was the institution's initiative to accelerate project delivery and be more flexible in changing requirements, and client demands while producing quality software. The research intends to explore the lived experiences of the institution's project managers to uncover the challenges and demonstrated benefits during Agile Project Management (APM) implementation. This research utilized the qualitative approach through interviews with key informants who are project managers of the institution. The data gathered were from the responses of the five (5) private-owned financial institution project managers. The responses were thoroughly reviewed and tabulated to reveal the commonalities in the data gathered. The study showed that implementing APM significantly changed how the project management team handled and delivered the projects. The project management team moved the project with agility by simplifying the scope and adapting to changes in requirements to increase customer satisfaction and value; the teams were more collaborative, flexible, and able to cope with the risks. However, the study revealed that the main challenges that the project management team experienced were the uncontrollable growth of changes in project scope, underestimated timelines, and inefficient allocation and delegation of workloads, which resulted in the delayed delivery of projects. Also, it revealed that the current coping strategies were deprioritizing other projects to accommodate new requirements, extending project deadlines, and rendering overtime, which could have been more sustainable when appropriately handled. Furthermore, the study provided recommendations and action plans to improve the implementation of Agile Project Management.

Keywords: *Agile Project Management, Change Requests or Change Management, Minimum Viable Product or MVP, Project Scope or Requirements, Qualitative Single Case Study, Traditional Project Management*

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Introduction

Businesses have been talking about advancement and adaptability since the early industrial age. Those companies that fail to adapt will eventually lose their businesses (Lauenroth, 2023). Agile increases software quality and team productivity (Harvard Business Review, 2016) while reducing costs and improving speed to market and ROI (Sacolick, 2022). In an article (Forbes, 2021), 90% of European CEOs consider agility critical to their company's success. Relatively, the ability to adapt to change quickly and meet the customer's needs has the highest chance of success (Thompson, 2021). Three primary reasons for adopting Agile are team member motivation, maintaining competition, and following senior management directives (Altuwaijri, F. S., & Ferrario, M. A. (2022). A survey conducted by Ambysoft's 2018 IT Project Success Rates Survey Results showed a perceived success rate for the Agile approach with 55% Successful, 36% Challenged, and 3% Failed. Compared to the Traditional/Ad Hoc approach, 29% Successful, 67% Challenged, and 5 % Failed.

Moreover, in a recent study by Jack Flynn (Zippia Research, 2022), at least "71% of U.S. companies are now using Agile". Projects under the competing approach known as waterfall only have a 49% success rate, while projects under the agile methodology have a success rate of 64%. Considering this, agile initiatives are about 1.5 times as successful as waterfall projects.

There was a directive to improve the performance of project delivery. Given that situation, this study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of project managers with an end-view of providing recommendations to improve the implementation of Agile Project Management.

Domain of Inquiry

The research examined the experiences of the project managers when the company transitioned from Traditional to Agile Project Management with the end view of generating recommendations to improve the further implementation of Agile Project Management.

Specifically, the research sought to explore the following domain:

1. The experiences of the project managers during the transition from Traditional to Agile Project Management.
2. The mechanism to manage the project outcomes.
3. The recommendations can be proposed to improve the transition from Traditional Project Management and for further implementation of Agile Project Management.

Methods

This research used the qualitative method to generate the data using an interview guide prepared by the researcher, who is the main instrument of the study. The researcher conducted the face-to-face interview for about 30-45 minutes with the key informants, the five (5) project managers with at least three years in the institution. The data gathered was summarized and tabulated. The common themes were identified from the key informants' answers to summarize the similarities and differences in their experiences. Qualitative research is a method to gather non-numerical data to produce insights. It is focused on the participants' thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Multiple techniques, such as grounded theory, ethnography, action research, phenomenological research, or narrative research, might be used to conduct this research method. (Ugwu, Chinyere & Eze, Val., 2023)

The research was conducted on one of the top private non-bank financial institutions in Cebu City. This institution offered various services, including logistics, money transfers from domestic & international remittances, payments, electronics loading, and more. The institution has its own systems administration and application/ services management Information Technology (IT) department. The institution was founded in 1992, and its headquarters is in Cebu City.

Consent was asked from the key informants that the researcher would interview about their experiences in both Traditional and Agile Project approaches during their tenure in the company. The researcher sets an expectation to the participants that the primary purpose of this research is to gather and understand the current implementation of the Agile management approach. Also, it was agreed that the

profile of the participants should not be disclosed in this paper to abide by the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The researcher recorded the information gathered from the participants according to how they shared their experiences about the Traditional and Agile Project Management Approach in the company (refer to Appendix A). The collected data were evaluated and

organized by comparing the experiences of each project manager, consolidating the commonalities, and tabulating the data to present the results.

Result and Discussion

This section shows and explains the study’s results together with the discussion and related literature.

Table 1. Summary of Benefits of the Five Project Manager’s Experiences in Agile Project Management Implementation

PM1	PM2	PM3	PM4	PM5	Interpretations
Accept changes in requirements	The scope can be changed, or new requirements can be added during development.	-	Can adjust easily and quickly to changes.	Quick deployment of innovations, including minor or significant feature enhancements	The project managers are adaptable to changes in project scope or requirements.
- More collaboration - Constant communication - Real-time status updates	- Became more collaborative, flexible, and constantly communicating with the team and stakeholders. - Implemented product grooming, sprint planning, and daily stand-up meeting	The team is guided and well-monitored.	-	It improved team collaboration with the stakeholders.	The project team became more collaborative and had constant communication.
Identifying minimum viable product, or MVP.	The project scope is simplified.	Iterative, bigger scope divided into small chunks to release a shippable product.		-	The project managers learned to simplify the bigger scope to deliver the project within a shorter period.
Directly discuss the challenges and unknowns in between to resolve the issues in every iteration.	-	Possible risks were anticipated and resolved earlier.	-	-	The team can easily cope-up with the challenges and delays.

PM1	PM2	PM3	PM4	PM5	Interpretations
-	A new sprint will be created for requirements that will not fit into two weeks timeline.	Resources were shared and flexible.	- Teams are flexible and can be assigned to different projects. - Development and testing are done in parallel.	-	Each member of the team is flexible to perform different tasks.
-	- Can deliver the project within a 2 weeks as the standard timeline - The testing period is shorter, and we can proceed to deployment with agility.	Timelines are short, and deliver the project within a short period.	-	Quick deployment of innovations, including minor or major feature enhancements	The team can deliver the projects with agility.

Table 1 shows that 4 out of five project managers said that the benefits they experienced in using the Agile approach were adaptability to project scope or requirements changes, they became more collaboration, and constant communication. The project managers were able to adjust to the changes in project requirements to meet the customer needs and improved their collaboration with the team, including the stakeholders. They conducted product grooming, sprint planning, and daily stand-up, which were beneficial to monitor the project's progress efficiently, providing a real-time update to the entire project team. The frequent communication with the stakeholders helped the team easily cope with the challenges, risks, and unknown requirements while implementing the project. The primary goals of applying an Agile approach in IT software development are to boost productivity, manage priorities more effectively, and deliver projects faster (Danijela Ciric et al., 2019). Moreover, the practice of Agile taught the team to be more flexible and cross-functional to achieve a common goal of delivering the project with agility

and quality. Agility is typically a pivotal enabler to keeping up and embracing the speed of delivery and customer-centricity. Making the project implementation process adaptable to changes in the project's conditions is the objective of the Agile approach (Masood, 2017). According to the KPMG Global Agile Survey from 2019, the main forces behind shifting agility were the need for a digital agenda (26%) and the need for faster product delivery that is tailored to changing customer needs (68%), increased flexibility (45%), the elimination of silos between business and IT, and fast & continuous customer satisfaction improvement (42%). While 3 out of 5 project managers narrated that with Agile, they learned to simplify the bigger scope to deliver the project within a shorter period and can easily cope with the challenges and delays, each member of the team is flexible to perform different tasks and can deliver the projects with agility. The project managers adapted to Agile by simplifying the scope into smaller chunks by identifying the minimum viable products to deliver the project quickly.

Table 2. Summary of Challenges of Five Project Manager’s Experiences in Agile Project Management Implementation

PM1	PM2	PM3	PM4	PM5	Interpretations
Lost control of changes and new requirements	- Extended timeline due to changes in requirements - Version histories were not formally recorded due to frequent changes in requirements	Scope creep or changes in project requirements within the current sprint	-	Uncontrollable changes in project scope	A high frequency of changes in project scope would lead to project delay.
The development team should have considered the effort timeline.	The development team provides an imprecise sizing of requirements.	-	-	A tight timeline was given to the team to finish the project	Appropriate estimation of efforts is necessary to mitigate the delay in the release plan.
Have difficulty handling overlapping projects.	- Ineffective allocation and delegation of workloads - Learning curve during development turnover	-	Struggling in prioritization of multiple projects.	-	The inefficient distribution and prioritization of projects directly affect the business value of the delivery.

Table 2 showed that the three challenges of the project managers were the high frequency of changes in project scope would lead to project delay, appropriate estimation of efforts is necessary to mitigate the uncertainty in the release plan, and inefficient distribution and prioritization of projects directly affect the business value of the delivery. In the presented summary of Agile challenges, four out of five project managers experienced an uncontrollable growth of project scope or requirement changes, resulting in the extended deployment timeline and causing a delay in project delivery. The scope of a project describes the features or needs that must be completed and the resources required to achieve them effectively and within schedule (Tamilchelvan, 2019). One of the tenets of the Agile Manifesto is to "welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage." (Agile Alliance, 2002) This philosophy implies accepting changes in requirements. However, dealing with people and organizations, user requirement prioritization, over-scope

requirements, and communication and coordination presented the most significant difficulties in managing change and scope. Due to their potential to cause project delays and overspending, those areas posed the most critical concern (Primadhika Maranda et al., 2022). Agile project managers must act as gatekeepers for the rest of the team (Hunsberger, 2022). They should be knowledgeable in handling risks and responsible for effective communication with the team members and stakeholders to ensure the project gets back on track (AIPM, 2021).

Nevertheless, not all change is bad. Structured, regulated, and approved project change is needed to avoid scope creep (Haughey, 2022). How the project team leaders manage the work with the stakeholders to negotiate the project constraints' trade-offs unveils the problem. (Aguanno K, 2008). Three major obstacles to a successful Agile adoption in a business are culture, leadership, and consistency, according to the current 16th Annual State of Agile Report (2022) published by Digital.ai. The biggest concerns on the business side were not enough

leadership participation (42%), not enough knowledge about Agile (40%), general organizational resistance to change (40%), and inadequate management support or sponsorship (39%). While 3 out of 5 project managers said that the top challenges in transitioning to the Agile approach are effort estimations and inefficient project allocation & prioritization. The main concerns they experienced with effort estimations were imprecise estimation of

requirements, under-estimated project timelines, and tight deadlines. According to Agile Alliance (2021), an estimate is a quantifiable and assessed effort to complete the development activities in time. One of the most essential project management requirements is accurate time estimation. With it, the team can secure a commitment from stakeholders. (Mind Tools Ltd, 2023).

Table 3. Summary of Coping Strategies

Summary of Coping Strategies	
Overtime work	PM 1, PM 2
Add new resources	PM 1
Extend the timeline	PM2, PM4, PM5
Deprioritizing the other projects	PM 5

The project managers experienced challenges using the Agile approach, as shown in Table 2. To temporarily resolve the challenges, the project managers extended the timeline to finish the project, as mentioned in the three projects shown in Table 3. The second strategy that the two project managers did was to render overtime work to meet the needs and deadlines of the project. Lastly, the project managers experienced adding new resources and deprioritizing other projects to cope with deployment delays. Agile teams may maintain a steady pace and afford to go beyond the original timeframe projections without having a significant negative impact (Stumbles, T., 2022); however, developers cannot fully estimate the amount of work needed (Fridman, A. 2016). Even if development and testing go well, there are instances that issues were identified during deployment that need urgent correction, which requires the team to work late at night. Working until late at night causes stress and affects the daily performance of the team members (Reichert, A. 2021).

Conclusion

The agile approach benefits the project management team and the company. The most beneficial experiences of the project managers are the capability to adapt to changes in project requirements, become more collaborative with the constant communication, easily cope with

challenges and delays, and learn to simplify the bigger scope to deliver the project within a shorter period. Other favorable experiences are the competency of the resources to work on different tasks and becoming more flexible in delivering the projects with agility. However, there are processes that the project managers need help to resolve, such as the high frequency of changes in project scope would lead to project delay, appropriate estimation of efforts is necessary to mitigate the uncertainty in the release plan, and inefficient distribution of projects which directly affect to the business value of the delivery. Though the project management team was able to cope with the delays by rendering overtime, adding new resources, adjusting the timeline, and deprioritizing other projects, these might not be long-term sustainable. To overcome these challenges, the researcher created two recommendations that may be helpful to the project managers.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the study provided the following recommendations:

1. The study recommends that the best course of action for these challenges is an Agile Project Management boot camp and immersion with an Agile expert/ professional. The goal is to refresh and validate further if the current implementation of Agile processes is according to the Agile best

- practices, help the project managers handle the uncontrollable growth of changes, and get trained in efficient prioritization and allocation of multiple and overlapping projects. According to the PMI Pulse of the Profession 2017, the growing focus on talent is critical to gain a competitive edge and adapting to changes.
2. The study formulated the set of skills that project managers must have to improve efficiency and performance in implementing Agile Project Management.
 3. The study formulated a plan that project managers can use to minimize the impediments that they are experiencing in handling.

Table 4. Recommendations on the Experienced Benefits of Implementing Agile Project Management

Benefits	Objectives	Recommendations
The project managers are adaptable to changes in project scope or requirements.	To identify the essential skills of a project manager to adapt to changes effectively.	A project manager should have good problem-solving skills, critical thinking, excellent decision-making ability, and proficiency with Project Management tools, planning, and project scoping (Landau, 2023; Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).
The project team became more collaborative and had constant communication.	Understand the critical competencies of the individual project team regarding collaboration and communication.	A project manager should possess leadership and interpersonal communication skills, strong negotiation skills, and project tracking and reporting skills (Landau, 2023).
The project managers learned to simplify the bigger scope to deliver the project within a shorter period.	Determine the project manager's skills to efficiently streamline the broad scope to complete the project rapidly and with quality.	A project manager should have a keen eye for detail, critical thinking, and excellent planning, project scoping, forecasting, and decision-making ability (Landau, 2023).
The team can easily cope-up with the challenges and delays.	Describe the project manager's qualities to determine project outcomes, find solutions, and resolve problems.	A project manager should be skilled in project forecasting, risk management, and team management skills (Landau, 2023).
Each member of the team is flexible to perform different tasks.	To distinguish the project management team's fundamental skills to work and finish the assigned projects simultaneously and as cross-functional members.	Each project management team member should have expertise in the field and experience in delegation, workload management, and task management (Landau, 2023; Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Table 5. Recommendations on the Experienced Challenges in Implementing Agile Project Management

Challenges	Objectives	Recommendations
1. High frequency of changes in project scope would lead to project delay.	To improve the handling and prioritization of changes in requirements and prevent the uncontrollable growth of changes in project scope.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a change control board team. The change control board will assess the changes based on business value, needs, and decision-making. 2. Evaluate the priority of the change requests to High, Medium, and Low.

Challenges	Objectives	Recommendations
		<p>2.1 High - massive impact on business needs and no workaround.</p> <p>2.2 Medium - required, but there is a workaround, such as an alternative manual process, which has a very mild impact on the business.</p> <p>2.3 Low - these are nice-to-have requirements.</p> <p>3. If the change request priority is High, review the possible impact on the current development. Assess whether the changes require additional resources to keep or extend the timeline.</p> <p>4. Opt for Hybrid Approach in Change Management.</p> <p>4.1 After assessing the change requirements, document the priorities and the impact on the current development.</p> <p>4.2 Meet with the stakeholders and the change control board to present the requests.</p> <p>4.3 Discuss the content of the change request document and gather possible advantages and constraints.</p> <p>4.4 Get their decision and have the change requests approved.</p> <p>4.5 Implement the changes.</p>
<p>2. Appropriate estimation of efforts is necessary to mitigate the delay in the release plan.</p>	<p>To effectively analyze the complexity of the requirements and provide accurate work estimates.</p>	<p>1. Determine an effort estimation approach that fits each scenario:</p> <p>1.1 New project</p> <p>1.2 Major or minor enhancements</p> <p>1.3 Bug fixing</p> <p>2. Ensure that the scope and requirements are clear and simplified.</p> <p>3. Review the requirements with the project management team.</p> <p>4. Allow the development team to provide the estimation.</p> <p>5. Make sure to consider the capacity and expertise of each member.</p> <p>6. Let the technical lead review the estimated effort.</p> <p>1. Make a Project Resource Management Plan</p>

Challenges	Objectives	Recommendations
3. The inefficient distribution of resources directly affects the business value of the delivery.	To establish a process to monitor the allocation of resources to deliver the projects effectively and efficiently.	<p>1.1 Review and assess the current resource distribution of resources across all projects.</p> <p>2. Must have an active monitoring sheet or use tools to track resource allocation better.</p> <p>3. Set a schedule to review the resources, whether daily or weekly.</p> <p>4. Coordinate with the other project managers or teams to collect data holistically.</p>

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Appendix A

Project Manager 1

In my experience in project management, using a traditional method is like the FIFO method. FIFO means First In projects will be the First Out or first to develop and deploy. We will start working on the next-in-line projects once done deploying the first version. Whenever there are additional requirements or changes in the scope that are not part of the agreed specifications, they will be worked out on the next version of the project. These requirements are queued and should wait for the ongoing tasks to finish. We do not insert the new requirements in the project's current version. The first agreed projects should be deployed in production to close the current project version. There are instances where the current trends were no longer covered due to a longer development timeline, which resulted in delays or a loss of business opportunities. During project turnover, stakeholders sometimes hesitate to accept the project turnover because of the additional requirements they are asking for. But since it was the agreed flow, scope, and expected output during the requirements gathering, the stakeholder should accept the project turnover. The stakeholders will use the available features while waiting for the next version, which contains the new requirements they are asking for. During these days, the stakeholders participate less in the project during the implementation since they expect the result to be based on the agreed requirements during specification gathering. They will only wait for the progress status to be shared with them until the project is ready. The stakeholders during this time are only involved in project gathering and turnover. The project deadlines are met because there are no changes in requirements.

Additional requirements can be included in the ongoing project when transitioning to the Agile method. The projects are divided into smaller pieces, and the scope and timeline are shortened by getting the specifics and high-priority requirements. Our traditional approach gathers the entire project scope and provides a fixed timeline. In Agile, we identify the minimum viable product and provide the timeline for the first iteration. So, instead of a one-monthly timeline, it can be broken down into a 2-week project.

Moreover, our set-up became more collaborative, constantly communicating with stakeholders and the team. The stakeholders are directly involved in the project and can give feedback in every iteration. Also, we will conduct a demonstration to the stakeholder to present every product iteration. If new requirements are deemed necessary, we will accept the changes and add them before deployment. We provide real-time updates about the project and directly discuss the challenges and unknowns in between to resolve the issues. Some of the reasons why we got delayed in our project deployment are the volume of requirements, the level of priorities, and the overlapping requests from the stakeholders that we lost control of priorities. To cope with the delays, we usually extend our working hours by rendering overtime or adding new resources that we need. Also, we need an Agile practitioner to validate whether our current Agile practices are the Agile best practices or if current Agile processes need improvement.

Project Manager 2

In our traditional project management approach, we are used to having a more extensive scope with a monthly timeline, while we have a 2-week standard timeline in an agile approach. With a more extensive project scope, there are times when there are unnecessary features in the project scope. Since those nice-to-have features are part of the signed specifications, we must work on them. It would be beneficial to remove or deprioritize it to save time. In Agile, we adjust the scope to fit the two weeks timeline. The scope requirements were groomed and identified finely for the minimum viable product. A new iteration will be created if scope requirements are not included in the first sprint. In short, we deliver projects more quickly and with agility. Before, in the traditional approach, we will work and finish the agreed scope requirements with no insertion of new requirements. Once the specifications are approved, then our development will focus on it. Unlike

Agile, the scope can be changed, or new requirements are added even if we have already started the development work. We accept changes in project requirements whenever the business requires them.

I found the traditional approach more controlled and straightforward. The timeline is longer. However, it gave us ample time to test the system thoroughly. In conventional, we are given three days maximum to validate and test the system, while in agile, the testing timeline is shortened to move the project as quickly as possible. Since we accept changes in Agile, we need to extend the timeline, resulting in delayed deployment. We are implementing waterfall/ step-by-step processes in traditional ways, and the requirements are well-documented, recorded, and easy to trace. While Agile is more flexible, we had trouble handling the changes in project requirements. Sometimes we can no longer track the history due to frequent changes in scope requirements. Even if the project requirements are vague, we must start the development once the vision is realized. Traditionally, we must ensure the stakeholders' demands are precise and signed before we start working, including the change requests.

In terms of coordination, agile is more collaborative. We have product grooming, sprint planning, and daily stand-up meetings with the team, and the stakeholders are well-informed about our progress. A back-and-forth discussion with the stakeholders is present during the implementation period. Unlike the traditional, once we collect all the requirements, there will be no more changes. We will only update them on where we are in the development stage.

We do not entirely know all the aspects of agile. It was said that changes can be handled easily in Agile since it is iterative. Still, we need to work on controlling the multiple and continuous growths of changes that the stakeholders are asking for. We also need an agile coach/ professional to guide us in handling complex scenarios in agile project management. Our agile coach left the company earlier than expected. Right now, we are learning internally and through virtual training. Also, we need to improve the allocation of projects handled by the project managers because some have overloaded projects while the rest have lighter loads. With our developers, traditionally, each team or individual has a dedicated project and expertise. Unlike now, in agile, the development team is cross-functional. The developers are adjusting occasionally to understand the system flows and requirements. Imprecise estimation of development scope is the downside that we are experiencing in implementing the cross-functional teams. The team working on the new project is unfamiliar with the flows and needs to be made aware of the project requirements. Misconceptions about the project requirements surface. This misconception resulted in an extended development timeline since the scope was underestimated. Also, the learning curve will affect the development and deployment timelines.

Project Manager 3

In traditional project management, the team works on high-level requirements and might not accurately weigh and size the complexity and the criteria. Inaccurate sizing has possible risks that may occur in the future, like over-commitment of the timeline. Before the team starts the development, we make sure that the stakeholders sign the specifications. If there are changes in requirements, an approved change request is a must. The development will start after product gathering and grooming since the requirements are already available. Daily project monitoring is rarely applied in a team, and the units are not in sync with the progress and challenges they experience daily. Critical risks were not escalated when we were not in sync, resulting in delayed deployment. The developers are not flexible because they mainly focus on the project assigned to them. If we only have one developer for a specific project, we can pull additional developers from other teams to help since they are allocated to particular projects. Since we do not have available developers, we need to deprioritize it and finish the current tasks. The project team must be adequately monitored since monitoring was done manually by the project manager. The timelines are mostly long and might be extended due to the issues and concerns found at the development's end.

Agile project management mainly focuses on the customer's feedback. It is an iterative, more extensive scope divided into small chunks to release a shippable product. The timeline is short, and can deliver the project quickly. Resources can be shared with other project teams and more flexible & effective collaboration with the team. The scrum team is guided and well-monitored. We have a Scrum Master who guides our development team and can log the progress in real-time using our project management tool, JIRA. During product grooming and sprint planning, complex tasks are simplified into more specific requirements. With Agile, the possible risks are identified earlier, and we can verify the unknown requirements with the stakeholder throughout the development.

Moreover, the project team and sponsor are updated on the progress. As a project manager, I can start creating the new sprint requirements while the first sprint is in progress. One of the challenges I experienced was the scope creep in the ongoing projects. Scope creep, for me, is the changes or additional requirements that the sponsors request in the current sprint. Adding or removing the existing project conditions may affect the development and the timeline. We must add extra time and work beyond our regular hours to finish the required changes to get on track with the timeline. Sometimes, the scope of change is huge to fit in the current sprint but must be added since the sponsor mandates it.

Project Manager 4

In my experience in traditional project management, before a project/task must start, a detailed project specification should already have been approved by the stakeholders. A project also must be documented and completed before moving on to the next project version. Each team member has roles and responsibilities which allow them to focus and make it easier for them to fix errors because they are the ones who originally developed the project. When there are system modifications, it takes a long time for me as a project manager to request a change approval, especially if the change is significant.

When transitioning to Agile, the stakeholders should approve a detailed project specification before we start the development, as in Traditional project management. However, Agile is more flexible and quicker regarding the testing and deployment phase because tasks that have already been completed in the development phase of a sprint can move on to the testing phase even if others are still in progress. It enables the team to adjust to changes throughout the project, making it easier and faster for us to make changes. Most of my challenges are project requirements that need to be quickly adjusted and changed. Since I managed three projects, I am still working on how and what to prioritize since each project has deadlines that must be met. Sometimes, one of my projects has new requirements that keep changing, and the other has issues that need fixing. Since both are urgent and vital, it was challenging because I only had one person working on that project. If that person goes on vacation, I must wait for them to return before fixing it.

Project Manager 5

The project management department implemented the waterfall approach when I started working there. We followed the sequential process in handling a project from planning, developing, testing, deploying, and maintaining the system. Back then, the data gathering was done by our Project Management Head. Our PM head coordinates and meets with project stakeholders to understand their pain points and identify the requirements. After gathering the information from the stakeholders, our PM head will call for a meeting with us and delegates the tasks. As PM associates, we note the project requirements and create a specification. The specification document contains the detailed requirements, the system design, the allocated workforce, and the estimated timeline.

The document must be reviewed by our PM Head and be approved by the stakeholders before we start the development. Most of the time, multiple planning was done because the stakeholders had questions about the specifications before we got approval. Usually, the review and approval

of specifications took longer than expected. We will start the development and focus on hitting the timeline when we obtain the consent. We seldom meet with the stakeholder during the development phase since we already have the specification as our blueprint. After the development phase, our system will undergo a series of testing before deploying it. Alpha and beta testing were also done with the stakeholder before they accepted the project. During the stakeholder testing, there were requirements that they were expecting to be included in the current version but were not part of the project specification. If they insist on adding the new requirements, a change request must be made and approved. Another back-and-forth discussion before implementing the changes. For me, traditional project management was effective during those years. When business in information technology booms, our company needs to adapt and transition to rapid innovation and deployment. Since, during our traditional times, the turnaround time for planning was long and the scope was gathered as a whole, the deployment timeline took longer and caused possible loss of opportunities. This is why the management decided to switch to Agile. Our first to second years of transitioning to Agile was very challenging, given that the teams were used to the sequential process. Agile effectively improves our collaboration with the teams and stakeholders and quick deployment of innovations and system feature enhancements. We were able to stabilize the system as quickly as possible. Right now, the most challenging experiences are inserting new requirements, changes in scope in an existing development cycle, and the tight, committed timeline by our managers to our stakeholders. As a project manager, I tried to put on hold those nice-to-have requirements. However, unknown conditions were only recognized during the project turnover to the stakeholder. Since we need to insert and work on those high-impact requirements, the deployment is put on hold, and extend the timeline to cater to the business needs. In short, we could not deploy the project within the agreed schedule due to changes in scope and tight timelines.