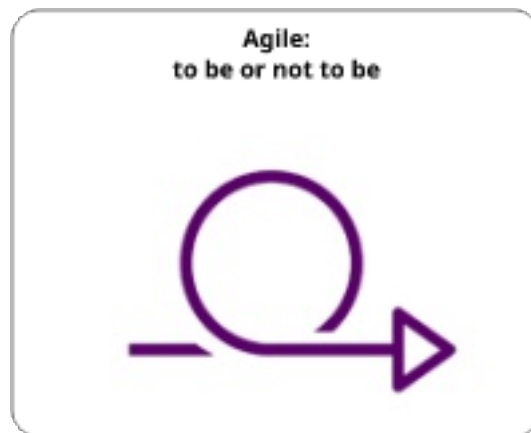


Title: **To be or not to be Agile**

**Abstract:** This whitepaper is a summary of a session from the BA Manager Forum which was conducted on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at Hamilton Place in London. The session was titled "To be or not to be Agile" and the session's aim was to provide an opportunity to discuss the factors that should be considered in deciding whether to adopt an Agile approach and how Business Analysis practice leads might influence the decision on its usage.



*"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one  
**most responsive to change."***

Charles Darwin

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## 1. Introduction

Within Business Analysis, the adoption of Agile methods has become prominent. Organisations are at three different states of adoption: first, some organisations are thinking of starting their journey from Waterfall to Agile delivery. Secondly, some have started this journey but have not completed their transition to Agile delivery. Lastly, others have tried a number of techniques and are inspecting and adapting their current processes in order to optimise them.

The word Agile is one of the biggest misrepresented words, meaning different things to different people, and for the purposes of this paper the word Agile will refer to the mindset, whereas Scrum (<https://www.scrumalliance.org/>) and Kanban (<https://www.atlassian.com/agile/kanban>) will be used to describe the methods adopted by organisations, and more importantly, the techniques (e.g. User Stories or Wireframes) within each method upon which this mindset is built.

Agile methods are predominantly focused on software development, with methods like Scrum not formally recognising the role of a Business Analyst (BA) and transposing some of the skillsets into multiple roles, such as Product Owner, Scrum Master and Team Member. The groups, at the BA Manager Forum in November 2016, concluded that the BA role is still vital, especially in larger organisations. For BA's to prove their worth whilst working with teams who are operating Scrum or Kanban, they need to augment their skillsets with techniques, such as Backlog creation and refinement, writing solid Epics and Users Stories, perhaps working on Wireframes and User Journeys. Through this adaption the BA role can stay current and innovative and in alignment with Scrum and Kanban teams.

Three key questions were asked of eight groups of BA leads from organisations in the UK (total number of people that participated was 72). There were varying levels of experience in the groups from BA leads with many years of experience working with Agile methods, to a few that had not used any Agile methods.

## 2. What is the difference between Waterfall and Agile Methods?

For Business Analysts, since the late 1980s technology and processes have become more complex, yet many organisations have still believed and trusted the Waterfall methodology. Its rigidity has afforded many Project Managers solace; however, this has come with high failure rates (40%) and low adoption of delivered products. The Agile Manifesto brought about a number of distinct changes, providing methodologies that were flexible and value-adding for stakeholders. (For further information about the Agile Manifesto refer to <http://agilemanifesto.org/>.)

Figure 1 depicts a generic Waterfall versus Agile framework. This is a high-level representation of the two frameworks and is not meant to illustrate the lower level detail of each framework.

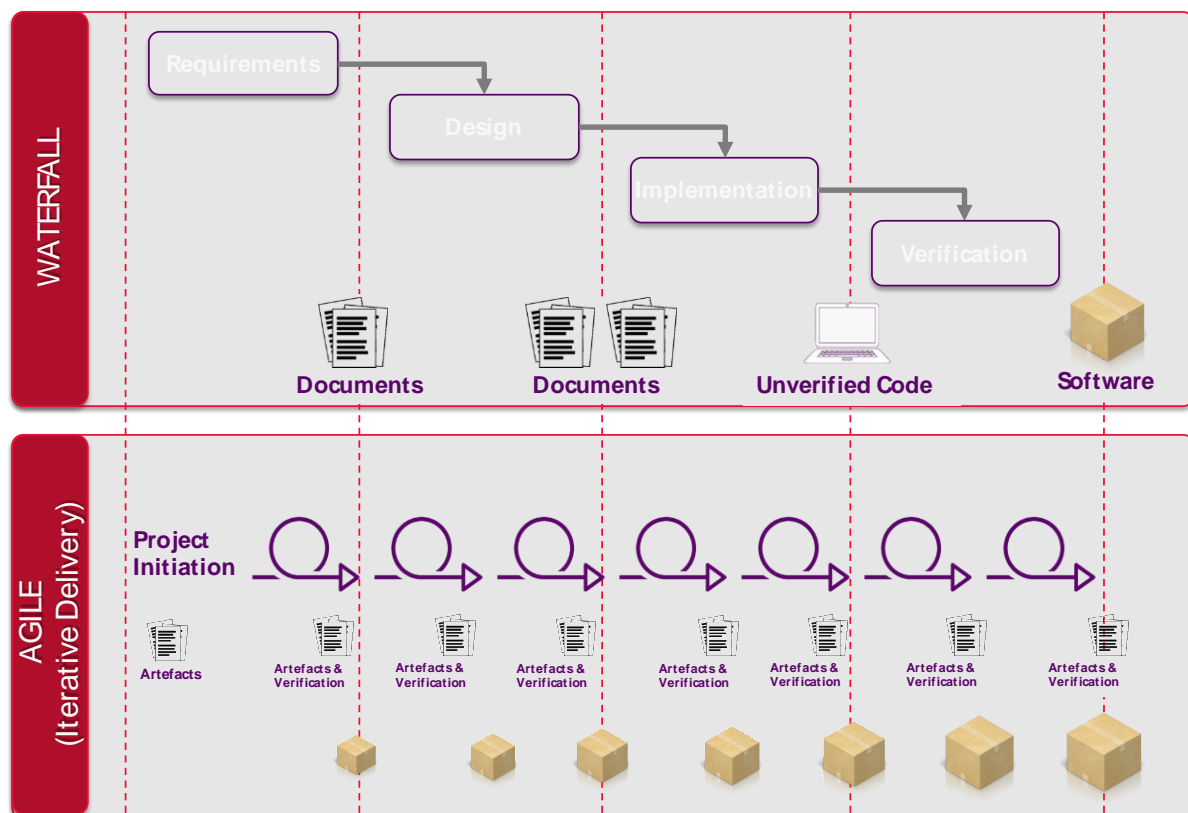


Figure 1: Waterfall versus Agile

Project Delivery Methodologies (PDMs) are used by organisations, small and large, to guide the deployment of business change (including software delivery). Many organisations, across the globe, have been attempting to craft the perfect methodology. Over the past decade organisations have noticed an increase in project failure, decline in delivery quality and the creation of excessive processes. This has been in an attempt to stabilise project success (Larman, 2003). There are two distinct frameworks that PDMs fall into, namely the Waterfall framework and Agile framework. Waterfall PDMs “advocate extensive planning” and “predictable activities” (Dyba & Dingsoyr, 2008) and follow a linear framework that has each of the lifecycle stages (planning, requirements, delivery, testing, deployment) all happening one after the other in series. In contrast, Agile (Iterative) frameworks deal with an unpredictable world by focusing on the feedback and interaction between team members and the reduction of heavyweight processes (Beck, 1999; Boehm, 2002).

## **2.1. The Birth of the Waterfall**

Agile Methods are not a new phenomenon. For some, their lineage is thought to stem back to 1939 when, in an attempt to boost quality, Stewart and Deming (1939) used a methodology called PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act). Unfortunately, at this time this novel way of delivering projects was deemed too abstract for what was deemed to be required. In 1970, structured PDMs came to life when Winston Royce posited that a simple and easy-to-adopt PDM, called Waterfall, could be applied to different scenarios to resolve issues (Royce, 1970). This article provided the foundation and cornerstone for applying Waterfall PDMs. Unexpectedly, the article stated:

“I believe in this concept, but the implementation ... is risky and invites failure.”

(Royce, 1970)

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Most practitioners ignored this statement and adopted what was seen as a structured and proficient PDM for decades to come (Vijayasarathy & Turk, 2008).

After lying dormant for over six decades, in the early 2000s, a different school of thought was developing; one that would challenge the very core of Waterfall PDMs by removing the focus on limited feedback, plan-driven, segmented methodologies (Birkinshaw, 2014).

## **2.2. The Rebirth and Redefinition of Agile Methods**

To combat the many deficiencies of the Waterfall PDMs, a group of seventeen experts met in 2001 and defined the Agile Manifesto (Fowler & Highsmith, 2001; Agile Manifesto, 2001).

The Manifesto has four key principles:

1. "Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
2. Working software over comprehensive documentation
3. Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
4. Responding to change over following a plan"

All principles were important, but the items on the left were recognised as being more important than those on the right. Under the Agile framework banner lie numerous different agile methods (called AM), namely: eXtreme Programming, SCRUM (Schwaber, 2004), Lean (Poppendieck & Poppendieck, 2010), Dynamic Systems Development Methodology (DSDM), Adaptive Software Development (ASD), Crystal, Feature-Driven Development (FDD), and Pragmatic Programming. The founders of each method had a hand in creating the Agile Manifesto.

AM are distinct in that they have frequent releases known as iterations or sprints, every few weeks or months (Ferreira & Cohen, 2008).

### **2.3. Agile Methods are not the Silver Bullet**

Agile Methods are not the “silver bullet” to solve all problems as they have a number of limitations (Persson, et al., 2012). Firstly, the adoption of Agile methods is difficult. Agile methods require an enormous amount of dedication from the entire team to achieve the same goal (Adzic, 2011). Secondly, Agile Methods may not be applicable to life-critical systems (e.g. heart monitors) that cannot be delivered in small workable versions (Ge, et al., 2010). Thirdly, Agile Methods may not be applicable for large programmes of work, where the scale of the programme, coupled with the limited amount of face-to-face interaction may render the Agile Methods a hindrance (Baker, 2005). Fourthly, different cadencies should be used to ensure the greatest amount of flexibility. Lastly, when adopting AM within an outsourced or distributed environment, research has concluded that care must be taken (Persson, et al., 2012). Moreover, Agile Methods’ fundamental elements of collaboration and feedback are often limited due to the challenges of distributed teams (time zones or geographical separation).

### 3. Questions and Discussion

This section provides a summary of the discussion which answered each of the questions given to the group.

#### Question 1: Identify the factors that should be considered when deciding on the Project Delivery approach.

Based upon the data gathered from the Forum, we grouped the factors into *fifteen categories* (depicted in [Figure 2](#)). Each of the categories will be described further, including the factors that Business Analysts should take into consideration when recommending a Project Delivery approach. Large organisations have different ways of working and often the Business Analyst can only advise and inform the teams making decisions about the Project Delivery approach. It is essential that Business Analysts must learn to influence using research and practice.

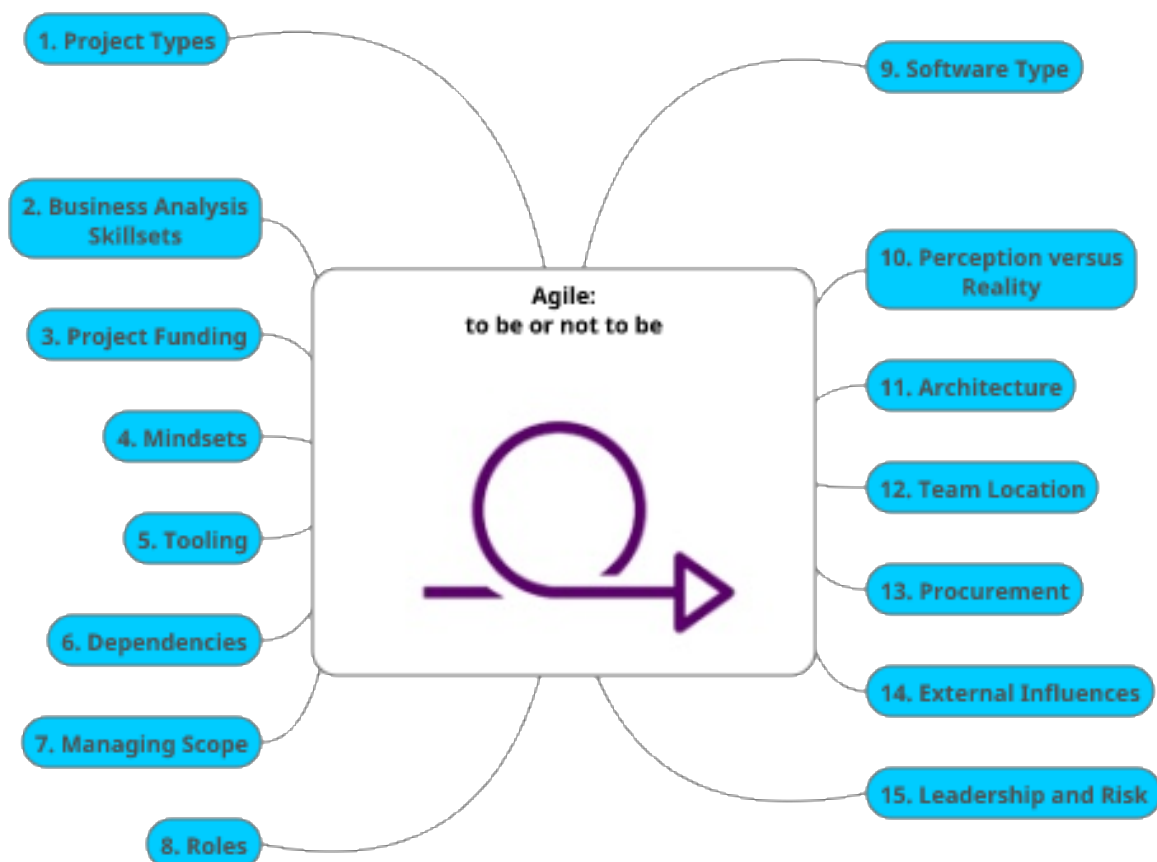


Figure 2: 15 Categories



### 3.1.1. Project Types

The first category that the groups identified was *project types*. Project types included factors such as **size**, **scope** and **focus**. The groups believed that when deciding on which Project Delivery approach to take that different project types were a big factor. Some teams believed that in times of uncertainty, more Agile approaches should be used as they focus on learning by doing. This ability to inspect and adapt is pivotal when ensuring that the right product is delivered. Other groups focused on the size of programmes, stating that larger programmes were often less Agile as they typically practiced the definition of all requirements upfront.

Customer led enhancements were a leading contributor for analysts when deciding the approach to delivery. Customers often require feedback to confirm that they are getting the right product and the agile approach provides for regular 'show and tells' where customer feedback is actively sought.

Business Analysts need to be able to make sense of the environment and options for delivery approach to help facilitate discussion. Factors to consider include time-to-market, business impact, assumptions, safety considerations and other external factors (e.g. political).

Project types also covers the proportion of scope that is the MVP (Minimum Viable Product). If the MVP is close to 100% of scope, then Agile is less effective. There is also a consideration regarding the ability to test the product safely. If there is no safe way to test the product, then an Agile approach can be risky (e.g. while not specific to software, pharmaceutical drugs is an example where Agile might be challenging).

### **3.1.2. Business Analysis Skillsets**

The second category was *Business Analysis skillsets* within an Agile environment. This was broken into four things to consider. Firstly, whether the skills were available within the existing team to enable them to make quicker decisions. Secondly, if the skills were available but the level of experience was not adequate within the BA team's skillsets. Thirdly, whether Agile skills could be acquired if they didn't exist. Lastly, whether Agile skills could be brought into the organisation within required time-frame if they didn't exist or could not be acquired through training.

The skillsets of a Business Analyst to understand and interpret requirements in a more iterative manner are a fundamental factor when deciding the Project Delivery approach. The aptitude to define Epics at a high-level, then decompose these into User Stories or Features as the solution evolves is essential. The importance of these artefacts can't be underestimated in relation to business buy-in. Too often the focus can be on detail which is difficult for business stakeholders to follow and digest. Additionally, the ability to understand other Agile techniques, such as: Wireframes; GHERKIN (Given, When, Then) test scenarios; or User Journey mapping. Skillsets and the knowledge and competence to articulate and document artefacts in more Agile ways is essential in selecting the right approach for the project. This extends also to other business stakeholders, suppliers and people involved in projects.

The addition of business analysis into an Agile delivery approach helps maintain a supply of actionable backlog items with defined acceptance criteria. Business Analysts are often able to identify and manage dependencies which improves the team's focus and increases the quality of outputs. Having backlog items ready in a just-in-time manner improves the team's velocity by ensuring that the team always have a supply of backlog items that are ready for planning or development.

### **3.1.3. Project Funding**

The third category for deciding on the project delivery approach is *project funding* and the way in which project funds are requested and provided to the project team. Two factors were highlighted by the groups. First, risk appetite that would allow teams to learn through trying and potentially spending money on projects that might fail fast. Secondly, the leadership team, who make decisions on releasing funds, need to have an iterative mindset and be ready for phased funding. Many larger organisations require a completed business case to release funding for the project. The ability to provide funding in phases is fundamental to enabling project delivery in an iterative manner. It is important that that the senior executives in the organisation are bought into this way of working for it to be successful.

BA Leads also identified that an organisation's appetite for risk is a key factor in deciding the project delivery approach. Organisations that are willing to take more risks are often more likely to adopt an Agile approach for projects, which are often perceived to be riskier.

A number of groups also highlighted that in certain organisations, where there is a large budget available, then the organisations are often more likely to be willing to entertain funding of projects in a phased manner.

The ability for the BA to articulate the benefits of a project or initiative are imperative skillsets when deciding on the project funding type. With traditional 'Waterfall' projects, the benefits are achieved at the end of the projects, by which time the BAs are preparing to move onto the next project. In contrast, with Agile delivery approaches, benefits are delivered at the end of each Release. Some groups stated that their organisations utilise the skillsets of the BA to measure and communicate benefits when delivering in an Agile way. These benefits then feed into the documentation of further business cases to support future phases of the projects.

### **3.1.4. Mindset**

The fourth category was the Organisational *mindset* towards Agile delivery. As mentioned in the introduction, the word Agile is often misunderstood. Three key factors were identified. First, organisational culture plays a big part in deciding the delivery approach. Secondly, organisation readiness to adopt and utilise Agile techniques. Lastly, the political climate within the organisation that affects the risk appetite.

All groups stated that team members within their organisation often asked the question: *What does 'Agile' mean?* This question is fundamental in interpreting the organisation's ability to use Iterative and Agile delivery. If the organisation doesn't understand what Agile means to them, they will not be able to deliver value. Agile delivery cannot be imposed on the Business; it needs the whole organisation to buy into a changed approach and culture.

A number of groups mentioned that their organisation's ability to cope with desires for an Agile way of working was important in helping the organisation, team and stakeholders understand the correct mindset to enable continuous improvement and feedback.

A lack of process, with ill-defined roles and responsibilities, was another key factor contributing to an organisational mindset that was not willing to adopt Agile approaches.

### **3.1.5. Tooling**

The fifth category was *tooling* within the organisation, and specifically Agile tools. Groups mentioned that they had tools such as JIRA, VersionOne and Team Foundation Server. Having the correct tools to enable an Agile way of working is essential in deciding the approach. Tools can help teams deliver in an Agile way and measure some of the key information, for example: Burndown and Velocity. They are also useful for capturing User Stories, Wireframes and Test Scenarios although paper and pencil and cards can be just as good.

Key questions the groups raised, including:

1. How are teams set up within the tools?
2. Do the teams have the right tools?
3. Are the teams trained so that they can use the tools effectively?

Tooling is an important factor, however, it was mentioned that teams should not always focus on tools. At times starting with the process and doing things in a manual way could be a good start to delivering in an Agile way. When computerised tools are to be preferred is when teams are not co-located; sharing a virtual Kanban Board over the web allows multiple country based teams to collaborate effectively.

### **3.1.6. Dependencies**

The sixth category is the identification of *dependencies* and the ability for the team to highlight how these could be resolved and delivered. It was acknowledged by all groups that dependencies may have a business or technical impact and that it is the role of the Business Analyst to help identify and resolve these dependencies. The Business Analyst's ability to identify dependencies is a key factor in deciding which approach to adopt. As Business Analysts, it is essential to identify integration requirements that would allow the team to surface up dependencies on other systems or projects that may have conflicting priorities.

### **3.1.7. Managing Scope**

The seventh category identified by the groups was the ability to *manage scope* throughout the lifecycle. This was decomposed into three parts. First, the ability to be flexible with scope, allowing the addition and removal of scope. Secondly, the ability to govern the flexibility without too much overhead. Lastly, the understanding of how outcomes and value are linked to managing scope.

The groups all identified that Business Analysts had to understand the concepts of high level and Minimum Viable Product at the beginning of the projects with the ability to add and remove scope throughout the delivery. Furthermore, Business Analysts need to have a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ) due to the fluidity linking with Agile delivery.

One group highlighted that they believed that the responsibility for managing scope actually shifts from the Project Manager in Waterfall to the Business Analyst in Agile. The Business Analyst has to ensure there is a clear vision at the outset and challenge any backlog items that do not contribute to achieving agreed outcomes. They also have a role to play in supporting the Product Owner prioritising backlog items by ensuring the value of the items are assessed effectively. Other groups believed that the responsibilities of the clear vision and challenging should be the Product Owner. This highlights the differences in implementation of Agile in larger organisations.

### **3.1.8. Roles (Internal Teams and Suppliers)**

The eighth category identified by the BA leads during the Forum was *roles*. The groups felt that the organisation needed to have a commitment to provide the required “correct” roles (e.g. Product Owners) and resources to deliver in an Agile way. The organisation needs to ensure that there is an ongoing business participation possible throughout the delivery. Additionally, collaboration is key to

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achieving goals. Most importantly, authority needs to be passed to the right people (e.g. Product Owners) who are decision makers.

### **3.1.9. Software Type**

The ninth category was the *software type* (e.g. Web vs Back Office). It was mentioned that the majority of focus that teams have is on delivering Web (online or ecommerce) projects in an Agile way. Groups also mentioned that back office teams would usually use a Waterfall way of working. It is crucial that front-end and back office delivery is aligned. If teams are working on different timescales, they need to align deliverables.

### **3.1.10. Perception vs. Reality**

The tenth category was titled *perception versus reality*. This category was broken into three factors. First, the ability for the team to define and understand the MVP (Minimum Viable Product). Secondly, time availability to deliver the MVP with the resources available. Lastly, the environment that the teams work within that allows the teams to understand the market focus and requirements.

The definition of the MVP is essential and the groups identified that the consequence of not doing this properly had led to failure in delivering in an Agile way. For example, the group mentioned that there was a big difference between building an Aircraft versus an external widget on a website or app.

Teams need to be realistic with the delivery timescales and speed of change. Delivering in an Agile way requires determination and hard work. Teams need to commit to delivering through the high cadence with a reduction in the number of formal sign offs.

### **3.1.11. Architecture**

The eleventh category identified was *architecture*. As with Business Analysis being forgotten within Agile Development, a number of groups at the forum mentioned that development teams often forget about architecture. The groups felt that three architectural factors contributed most when Business Analysts were deciding if Agile was the right vehicle for delivering a project. First, legacy architecture versus Service Oriented Architecture (SOA). Secondly, do environments support one or more architectural approaches. Lastly, third party constraints including infrastructure.

The groups at the forum mentioned that Business Analysts need to understand architecture at a high-level so that they are able to document requirements and scope that takes into account the facets that are important to the strategy and architecture of the organisation. There was much debate about vertical versus horizontal alignment. Most larger organisations are currently horizontally aligned, which lends itself more to legacy architecture. To achieve true agility, groups mentioned that their organisations have spent a lot of money, time and resource in converting to a SOA which allowed thin, vertical slices of the architecture to be delivered at a regular cadence. Without the switch to a SOA, the group believed that it would be difficult to deliver value effectively, at a regular cadence.

In addition to the alignment, the groups highlighted that their environments needed to support more than one architecture as they transitioned to a SOA. This means that when looking at a certain project or system, they need to understand how it is architected before they are able to decide on the appropriate approach for delivery.

Lastly, groups mentioned that they have found that the infrastructure teams often caused a number of bottlenecks as they often stated "infrastructure is not agile". This is a key factor when teams move from a Waterfall way of delivering projects to an Agile way of delivery. DevOps is becoming a commonplace in a number of organisations.



### **3.1.12. Team Location**

The twelfth category highlighted when deciding on the approach to adopt was *team location*. While this discussion seemed to cause some controversy between offshoring and re-shoring, it was evident that this is a key factor when teams try to adopt Agile ways of working. Business Analysts are often at the coal-face of the delivery, trying to establish the scope and requirements. The location of the teams often impacts the methods used by the Business Analyst to gather requirements. Two factors were elicited by the groups during the Forum workshops. First, in-house versus offshored teams. Secondly, location constraints and benefits.

The first factor that groups focused on when assessing whether or not Agile was appropriate provided much debate and insight into the way organisations were structured and how that affected the way in which value could be added. It was the opinion of the groups that if teams were in-house and co-located that is was the most efficient way of delivering value quickly as it reduced the feedback loops (or boomerangs) created by teams that were located in different building, counties or countries. Teams that were offshored were perceived to have issues around time differences, languages and cultures. This meant that it was more difficult to collaborate in the same way as in-house, face-to-face and co-located.

The second factor was directly linked to constraints and benefits of locations. Some locations provided benefits around cost, which meant that when defining requirements Business Analysts needed to have an appreciation for the different locations cost of living and general wage costs. However, there were also a number of constraints as certain locations do not allow certain data to be stored or transferred without specific clearance or guidance.

### **3.1.13. Procurement**

The thirteenth category was *procurement*. Three factors were acknowledged by the groups. First, procurement options which are made available to Business Analysts during Request for Proposals. Secondly, suppliers versus partners. Lastly, contractual constraints linked to which suppliers the organisation are allowed to engage with for fulfilment of services.

The groups highlighted that a number of procurement teams focused on trying to get fixed price and fixed term contracts from suppliers, as they believed it was easier to agree on the final scope to be delivered. However, this caused a number of issues for analysts. First, they had to define all the requirements upfront. Meaning that any changes to scope would need to be dealt through a change process, which was often bureaucratic and expensive. This is the converse of an Agile way of working which is focused on adapting to change over time. Business Analyst leads mentioned that if the procurement process was going to be rigid, requiring all requirements to be defined upfront, then the methodology the organisation often followed was a Waterfall delivery method. One group stated that they had some success aligning procurement through outlining the organisation is 'buying' blocks of time from a team to deliver a specific outcome (or group of outcomes).

The second key factor related to the difference between suppliers and partners. Where organisations worked with suppliers, they tended to have less trust and the supplier would want to have a fixed term contract, with defined scope. Whereas, some of the groups posited that when they worked with partners that there was more flexibility and trust. There is a real challenge from a procurement perspective to understand what good Agile delivery looks like.

The third factor related to the contractual constraints that some organisations had in place with certain suppliers, meaning that they could not use other suppliers for certain systems, products or services. Some of the groups mentioned that this

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constraint had a massive impact on the ability to utilise more Agile approaches when the supplier was a Waterfall driven organisation. Conversely, if the supplier was more Agile focused, then these constraints became a positive attribute.

### **3.1.14. External Influences**

The fourteenth category was *external influences*. Three factors were acknowledged by the groups. First, regulatory considerations. Secondly, safety and security considerations. Lastly, market changes which influence the projects.

A number of larger organisations are governed by regulatory bodies, for example the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) or the FSA (Financial Services Authority), and this tends to lead these organisations to require specific documents or artefacts when they deploy a specific application. Some groups saw this as an opportunity, by knowing which specific artefacts are required meant that they were able to add these to specific Sprints so that they could guarantee delivery at a certain time.

Many groups spoke about the importance of safety and security considerations when selecting on the Project Delivery approach. The biggest impact to selecting the Project Delivery approach was the influence of market changes. A number of the groups highlighted that in environments where the market is frequently changing an Agile approach was the only way to keep competitive. Organisations that didn't follow an Agile approach felt that they were lagging behind their competitors.

### **3.1.15. Leadership and Risk**

The fifteenth and last category was *leadership and risk*. Three factors were acknowledged by the groups. First, team leadership. Secondly, business type. Lastly, the leadership team's risk appetite.

The last category mentioned has the biggest impact on the teams that are trying to deliver value. The groups mentioned that strong team leadership would enable the team to delivery, whereas weak leaders tend to select easier options for delivery and are not open to new ways of working. Democratic permission was the leadership style that most groups said enabled them to select more Agile ways of working.

### Question 1 Summary

The summary of question 1 is depicted in [Figure 3](#).

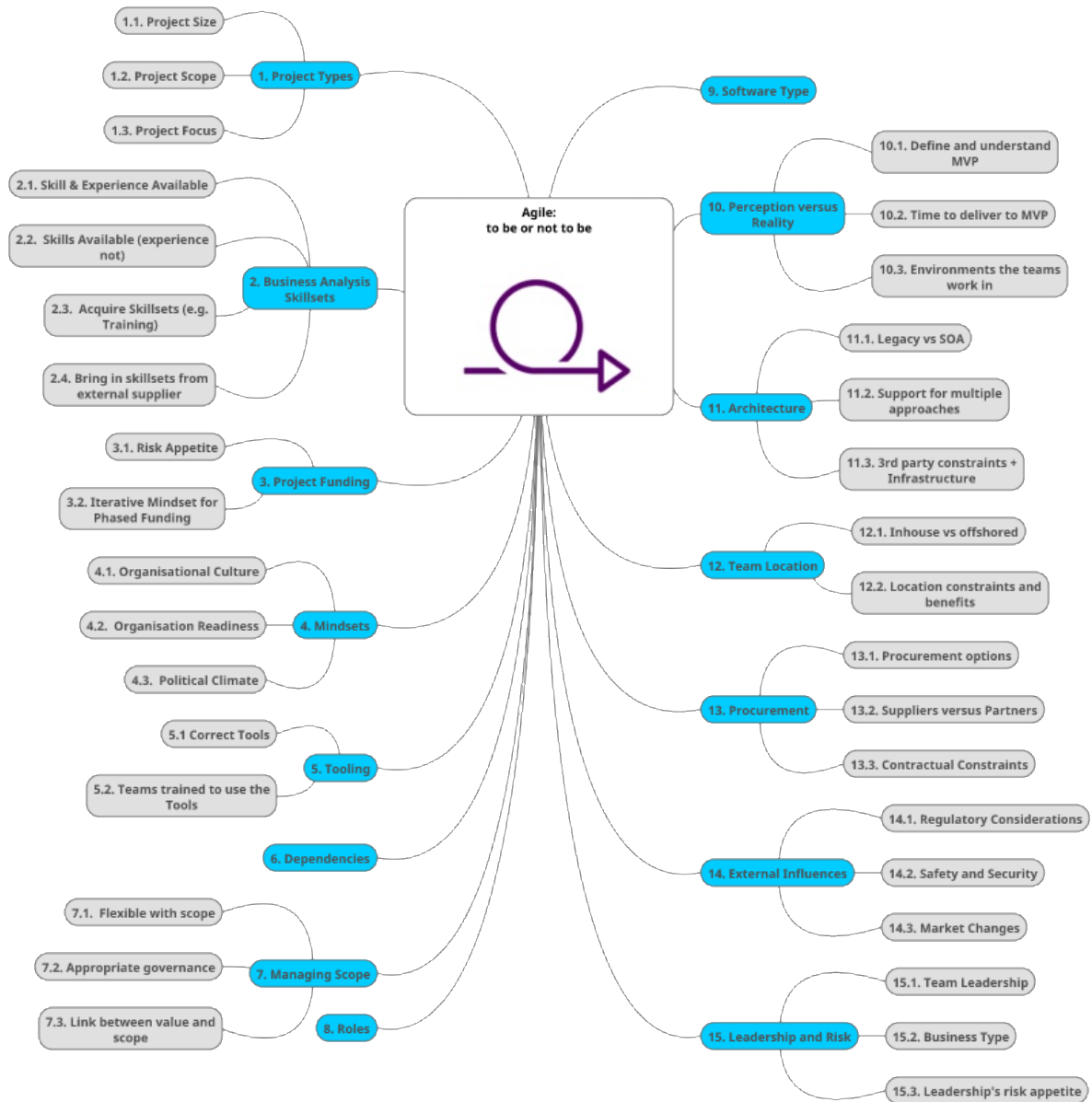


Figure 3: Summary of Categories and Factors

**Question 2: Using the factors from Question 1, rank each factor by relative importance when deciding on the Project Delivery approach.**

From the fifteen categories unearthed from discussions of Question 1. The groups then ranked the factors, and ultimately, the categories from most relevant to least relevant when deciding on the Project Delivery approach. It must be noted that different organisations found that their environments meant that certain factors were more relevant; these included sector within the industry, competitors, organisation size and skill set within the organisation.

The top five categories that the groups deemed to be most relevant when deciding on the Project Delivery approach were:

- 1) Mindset
- 2) Skillsets
- 3) Perception versus reality
- 4) External Influences and Procurement
- 5) Project types (and software types)



Figure 4: Top 5 Relevant Categories

[Figure 4](#) depicts the order of categories. Four groups highlighted that [Mindset](#) was the most important category that Business Analysts should consider when deciding on the Project Delivery approach. The second was [Skillsets](#). Three groups stated that the third category that they would use as a deciding factor was the organisations ability to differentiate between [Perception versus Reality](#). [External influences](#) and [Procurement](#) were the joint fourth category that the groups believed should be taken into consideration. Both [Project](#) and [Software types](#) was deemed as the fifth category that should be considered.

**Question 3: How can Business Analyst practice leads influence the approach decision process?**

The last question asked to the groups related to the actions that Business Analyst leads should undertake to influence the decision on which Project Delivery approach should be adopted for the delivery of products, projects, programmes or portfolios.

Group 1 stated that the BA leads need to provide an **informed approach** which includes pros and cons clearly identified. There also needs to be an appreciation that one size doesn't fit all. Furthermore, BA leads need to focus on outcomes (and not about solutions only) so that they can understand the capability and capacity of the current team and what additional training might be required.

Group 3 focused on **stakeholder analysis** and ensuring that, as BA leads, we fully understand our stakeholders as well as existing development (project delivery) approaches so that we are able to sell the benefits of an Agile approach.

Group 2 and 4 reiterated a number of points mentioned above, but extending this to highlighting key techniques and building a **common language** across the organisation. Starting with a clear definition of the framework, through to being able to sell the benefits of delivering analysis in an Agile way. This requires the BA leads to take the team through the change through roadshows, communication and the enablement of the team. These groups also highlighted that **continuous improvement** was essential once the teams had adopted an Agile way of working.

Group 5 took a different stance as they believed that starting with "Agile by stealth" would allow the BA leads to demonstrate value through the successful delivery. Having Senior BA representation on the delivery approach decision is essential as they can then negotiate and set expectations with customers and stakeholders. This helps the teams build new capabilities and provide support and coaching as Agile by stealth becomes the realised delivery approach.

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Group 6 reiterated a number of points mentioned by the other groups, but extending it further by mentioning the resource availability and capacity. This focused on the cost of in-house versus contractors and the aspirations that the teams might have for developing skillsets within the team. This group believed that BA leads needed to showcase good practice by picking the appropriate projects (with the right level of risk and stakeholder interest) to demonstrate value and successful delivery. In addition, they believed that by lobbying and finding allies within the business and development team, they would be able to set expectations and influence the decision criteria.

The remaining groups all highlighted failure and learning from failure. BA leads need to be able to get senior management buy in, early in the process, by starting small and building confidence. Senior management buy in must include the education and application of the word Agile. It is also important to change buzz words into words that make sense for the organisation. For example, one organisation was struggling with using the word Story as some of the business stakeholders had a different meaning for that. Therefore, this team used the word Feature to describe something that would be delivered as a feature of the system.

BA leads need to always assess the projects (or deliverables) against clearly set criteria so that they are able to provide examples by relating back to business benefits and value. Collaboration and feedback are essential and some groups mentioned that having social discussions or going "to the pub" would assist in building a team ethos, which would help influence the decisions on approaches. Lastly, all groups believed that career development is at the centre of the knowledge gained over time.



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