



Finding the Right Agile Software for Your Organization

The Four Main Considerations

Executive Summary

“Software is eating the world”—once a provocative phrase, this idea of software’s dominant place in the economy is now widely accepted. But for today’s companies that want to rise above their competitors, it’s not enough to simply acknowledge the pivotal role that software plays. They must now move with greater confidence and speed. Agility is critical, and the companies that can respond swiftly to changes, deliver value quickly and roll out high-quality products will thrive—those that can’t, may not survive.

This guide will help IT decision makers by:

- Exploring some of the trends that are affecting companies of all types today
- Offering a set of considerations to guide purchasing decisions
- Examining the positive outcomes resulting from agile development methods

Introduction

Regardless of the industry, there are several common trends that are reshaping the business landscape. Each one has had a profound effect on the ways companies develop products, bring them to market and compete against their rivals.

Digital disruption

For decades, companies that achieved a superior marketplace position had relatively little to fear from competitors. Innovative products and services were always a threat, but the long lead time it took for these to reach the market offered ample opportunity to roll out an effective response.

However, this is no longer the case. Digital disruption is now widespread, and the rate of change is accelerating. For example, it took 8 years for the PC to reach 10% market penetration and begin to displace mainframes and mini-computers. Compare this to the time it took tablets to have the same effect on PCs: 18 months. At today’s lightning pace, any business can be disrupted virtually overnight.

Executive Summary

Evolving markets

Digital disruption—along with competitive and regulatory shifts—is having a profound effect on global markets. These factors mean that companies must now sense and respond confidently to the way today's markets shift and evolve. Innovation is rewarded, while simply relying on legacy systems or traditional methods of handling data and customer demands will put companies further behind their competitors.

Customer transformation

Customers have been going through their own evolution. Today's buyers are informed, tech-savvy and won't hesitate to abandon a solution if they perceive a lack of quality. Companies must satisfy skyrocketing expectations when it comes to convenience and functionality or risk losing altogether. To stand head and shoulders above the crowd, organizations must introduce products and services that are immediately relevant and offer real value to buyers. And the window of opportunity grows narrower quarter to quarter—companies need to innovate, develop and roll out high-quality products faster than ever before.

Moving ahead with agile

Navigating these changes calls for companies to adopt a more agile stance, one that balances speed with precision. The right solution will:

- Accelerate
- Connect strategy to delivery
- Produce a coordinated, predictable delivery engine

Using a three-part structure, this guide will examine several important factors to consider when selecting an agile software development solution.

Consideration #1:

Expands Business Visibility



Challenge

In today's application economy, speed is essential. While most organizations are fully cognizant of these pressures, many still fall into a trap, prioritizing speed without linking it to business strategy.

Without this important connection, organizations end up prioritizing the “squeakiest wheel,” which offers the initial impression of accomplishing more tasks or moving more quickly. But the squeaky wheels don't represent the organization's larger objectives, and this slows the work down. Without real-time insight into what various teams are doing, decision makers can't foster true alignment, and the company's ability to bring the right products to market diminishes.

Capabilities required

To overcome these challenges, companies need:

Real-time information

Decision makers need access to up-to-the-minute data on development progress. Release tracking, portfolio timeline, release metrics and other critical information should be shared among all collaborators.

Insight into business priorities

Guided by this deeper insight, teams can direct their focus, working on the aspect of product or service that aligns with the priorities of the business.

Predictable releases

Fast feedback allows companies to make adjustments more quickly—both at the business and development level. A regular release cadence makes it easier to develop faster cycles.

Outcomes

When companies can harness these capabilities, they can expect positive outcomes, including:

- Continual improvement in the quality of products and services, along with rising customer satisfaction
- Confidence that teams are working on initiatives that match business priorities
- The ability to quickly adjust scope and funding levers that directly impact business value

Consideration #2:

Improves Capacity Planning



Challenge

With ample opportunity in a variety of markets—and competitors in pursuit—today’s organizations are continually exploring ways to produce more products and services.

But there’s an important balance here, and one difficult to achieve. Taking on too much work can ultimately sacrifice quality for speed. On the other hand, taking on too little means relinquishing market position to competitors that have found a way to better optimize and deliver business value.

Capabilities required

To overcome these challenges, companies need:

Dashboards

Real-time information is crucial here. To truly understand capacity, decision makers need live data presented in a way that’s configurable depending on the preference of the reader.

Leadership collaboration

Companies need the ability to foster collaboration among leaders and create scenarios that don’t require changing artifacts and execution data for teams and initiatives.

A common platform

With development teams pushed to work more quickly, business leaders need a way to keep them focused on shared goals. By deploying a common platform, key metrics—such as burndown, velocity and throughput—can be applied to all teams for effective

measurement that aids in more accurate capacity planning and greater product predictability and delivery.

Outcomes

When companies can harness these capabilities, they can expect positive outcomes, including:

- Capacity planning driven by realistic, empirical assessments—not the squeakiest wheel
- Greater predictability and reliability in terms of delivering the highest-value features
- Higher rates of efficiency across the entire development lifecycle

Consideration #3:

Enhances Team Productivity



Challenge

In the development world, all work is not created equal. As development teams ramp up the volume of work they produce, it's important that this work meets a certain standard of quality and serves the needs of the business.

But IT complexity, market demands and other pressures mean many development organizations struggle to balance speed and quality. Working under immense stress, they miss deadlines and milestones and often end up focusing on clearing blockers rather than working on innovative features that will help achieve customer value.

Capabilities required

To overcome these challenges, companies need:

Improved coordination

The ability to plan and coordinate agile development work across multiple teams and programs is essential. The right agile platform should also be extensible and handle a large number of users and artifacts.

Support for multiple agile frameworks

Whether you're practicing SAFe, Scrum, Kanban or something entirely different – your teams should be able to visualize their work in the form of lists, boards or timeline views, and understand how their day-to-day work aligns to the greater goals of the business.

Better team-level collaboration

A natural result of deploying these tools is improved collaboration at the team level. Companies should seek

out an agile platform that erases boundaries across tools, teams and time zones, providing all workers with real-time information that can help them excel.

Outcomes

When companies can harness these capabilities, they can expect positive outcomes, including:

- Reduced levels of stress and more effective workers across all teams
- Better visibility into the ways that work positively affects business goals
- The ability for teams to deliver the most important features to customers
- More collaborative efforts that yield better business results

Consideration #4:

Helps Meet Customer Demands



Challenge

Of all the changes spurred on by the digital revolution, rising customer expectations may be the most profound. An intuitive interface and smooth functionality are now simply table stakes, and today's consumers are looking for products and services that make it easier to work and play—this is the real value.

For companies competing in the market, this presents a host of challenges. Accelerating is a constant struggle. And once on the market, if a given application or product doesn't work properly or provide value to the buyer, the customer will seek out a rival solution.

Capabilities required

To overcome these challenges, companies need:

A purpose-built platform

To maximize effectiveness, companies should explore a platform created specifically for the needs of agile teams and built for scaling agile methodology across many teams. These teams, along with the business decision makers, should work from a shared platform that offers insight into ongoing work and how it aligns with the needs and strategic goals of the company.

A predictable software delivery engine

The right delivery engine should be coordinated and predictable. Companies should have real-time visibility into team capacity, velocity, productivity and other metrics to develop a regular release cadence.

Insight into bottlenecks

Bringing high-value products and services to market requires the ability to expose blocks, defects and

dependencies before they adversely affect your software. The right agile development solution should provide the ability not only to spot these problems quickly but also drill down to the right layer so decision makers can guide efforts to complete the work successfully and on time.

Outcomes

When companies can harness these capabilities, they can expect positive outcomes, including:

- The ability to support the full development lifecycle
- Improved reaction time to accommodate shifting market conditions
- Iterative development processes that bring more value to the customer

Conclusions

Once considered a cutting-edge methodology, agile development is now a must for companies across a wide array of verticals.

To compete in the market, companies need to better align work to business priorities, improve team productivity across their entire enterprise as well as roll out products and services that drive revenue and delight customers.

With the right partner and platform, organizations can achieve greater visibility, predictability and efficiency, allowing them to more quickly sense and respond to the dynamic needs of the market.



Purchasing Worksheet

Use the questions below to create a chart that compares potential agile partners and their solutions.

Recommended Questions	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3
Does the solution accommodate multiple teams and programs?			
Does the solution support Scrum, Kanban, SAFe and other agile methodologies and frameworks?			
Does the solution give teams the ability to understand the business rationale behind various initiatives?			
Does the solution provide decision makers a way to see real-time status and scope of work across multiple teams?			
Does the solution offer scenario and what-if planning capabilities?			
Does the solution provide a way to easily roll up user stories to high-level portfolio initiatives?			
Does the solution offer out-of-the-box performance metrics, dashboards and reporting capabilities?			
Are these metrics presented in unified view across the entire portfolio?			
Does the solution provide capabilities for end-to-end planning and management?			
Does the solution include ideation, roadmap development, tracking and other features that support the development lifecycle?			

About Rally Software

Rally Software® is purpose-built for scaling agile development practices. Provide a hub for teams to collaboratively plan, prioritize and track work on a synchronized cadence. Connect your development work to your company's most important business initiatives. Measure productivity, predictability, quality and responsiveness with real-time performance metrics. With [Rally Software](#), you'll have the tools to transform your organization and make the transformation stick.

Rally Software empowers enterprises to change and deliver value fast by providing real-time, enterprise-scale visibility into projects and performance metrics that help teams continuously improve.

84% of surveyed IT organizations have experienced increased visibility across projects and teams.

88% of surveyed organizations have experienced better coordination across delivery groups, teams, and departments.

79% of surveyed IT organizations saw a return on their investment with Rally within the first year

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