Five Criteria for Choosing
Enterprise Agile Development Software

Agile software development is a requirement for any modern and adaptive development organization that wants to employ a dynamic product-lifecycle strategy. According to recent research, the percentage of companies embracing agile methodologies for digital product production has now surpassed those using waterfall and other methodologies. The ability to design, test, and deliver a digital product on time and on budget is a top reason why organizations have embraced Agile. Agile methodology also allows project managers to build their product while remaining flexible to react to change.

The popularity of Agile has led to the creation of a number of different Agile project management tools. This makes it extremely difficult for organizations to select the correct tool for their requirements. With so many offerings available, the issue is not whether there is a tool that can enhance your organizational performance, but how to select the right Agile tool for your needs.

If your team is considering an Agile software development platform—such as Atlassian Jira, Atlassian Jira Align (formerly Agilecraft), Rally from Broadcom, Microsoft Azure DevOps, or VersionOne ALM—you should consider these five criteria before making a decision regarding your vendor:

1. Is the platform intuitive and ease to use by both technical and non-technical users?
2. Does the platform empower agile teams to meet their current and emerging needs?
3. Does the platform support cross-functional contextual communication and collaboration?
4. Does the platform support robust visibility into the entire project lifecycle, from planning to project delivery?
5. Does the platform support the ability to connect your work to business strategies and goals?

1. **Does the vendor have an intuitive user interface that enables widespread adoption and fast time-to-value for all users?** *Is the platform easy to deploy and configure and free of extensive customization requirements? Does the platform require ongoing administrative support and management?*

   As modern work extends across multiple teams within an organization, the agile management tool must also easily be used and adopted by both technical and non-technical users. A lack of intuitive navigation limits the wide-spread adoption of a platform and often indirectly causes teams to adopt multiple tools while trying to satisfy the original project and work management need. The use of multiple tools can often create disparate data, fragmented workflows, and prevent a single view into development environments for peers and leadership. Additionally, with increasing demands on modern businesses to quickly deploy applications, you will want an agile management solution that can be configured and maintained without extensive customizations or costly administrative overhead.

2. **Does the vendor's platform empower agile teams to meet their current and emerging needs?** *Does the vendor's platform support multiple different work methodologies, including hybrid work, and best support how the customer company operates? Or, does the vendor force customers into specific agile methodologies? Does the vendor have robust agile functionality to support the full planning, resourcing, and delivery of a project?*

   In today's application economy, it is important to identify vendors that can support flexibility and work in ways that best meet your goals and needs. Many times, vendors force you into a specific agile methodology, which may not work well for where your company is at in the agile-adoption process. Enterprise-scale ALM platforms should also support the way that organizations work, whether it's Scrum, Kanban, or SAFe®. Hybrid processes allow companies to incorporate best practices and allow them to work and conform methodologies to specific needs and custom processes.

   The platform you choose should also facilitate a collaborative and coordinated approach to team and release planning at the iteration, program, and portfolio levels. The platform should support collaborative, in-platform capacity and scenario-planning capabilities—allowing users to create "what-if" scenarios—

and provide the ability to model backlogs, teams, capacity, and portfolio items to team allocation for a given release.

3. **Does the solution support cross-functional contextual communication and collaboration?** *Does the platform enable teams to communicate and collaborate in context of the project and portfolio?*

   Agile project management requires teams to be able to communicate and collaborate on specific tasks, projects, and portfolios in the context of the work items across the entire organization, not just the agile team. Modern agile management platforms need to support hybrid teams that are a mix of remote workers, a single office, or multiple offices. The platform must also support teams working with other teams asynchronously without requiring a live meeting to discuss work dependencies, project status, goals, project changes, deadlines, and project blockers. Communication outside the context of a task or project can result in the need for real-time meetings to resolve uncertainties, or worse, unforeseen roadblocks in completing a task item.

4. **Can the platform support robust visibility into the entire project lifecycle from planning to delivery?** *Does it facilitate realistic and collaborative planning with visibility into works in progress and portfolio allocations by peers, project managers, and leadership?*

   Teams need to have visibility into work across the entire organization to avoid the duplication of work and to manage work items and cross-team dependencies. Team members need to understand how dependencies might impact the individual, team, or project work plan, so being able to visualize dependency scheduling errors and monitor the resolution of dependencies throughout the entire process is a critical capability that must be supported.

   At the same time, the platform should highlight and track risks associated with dependencies, individual work items, and other blockers.

   Development teams also need to see the business reasons behind their work in order to correctly prioritize and scope it, and portfolio managers need to see the real-time status and scope of work in order to make realistic budget and resource allocations. At the same time, PMOs and business leaders need visibility into project status to better assess the need for redirecting development resources to address challenges and blockers. Agile platforms that provide proactive visibility into work status can also reduce the frequency of requests by eager business leaders into project completion status.

5. **Does the vendor support the customer's ability to align project worth to business strategy and company goals?** *Does the vendor link the work of agile teams to the company's enterprise portfolio and overall strategy to ensure broader alignment?*

   Effective agile management is more than just managing projects effectively. Effective agile platforms link the work of agile teams to the enterprise portfolio and business strategy to deliver projects that contribute to the company's bottom line. Agile management solutions that do not align projects to business strategies are only providing part of the needed functionality to be an effective, modern agile management platform.

Conclusion and Findings

To better identify how five agile software development management solutions—Atlassian Jira, Atlassian Jira Align, Rally from Broadcom, Microsoft Azure DevOps and VersionOne ALM—Apprize 360 interviewed current and former users of each solution and rated solutions according to the above criteria. The interviews and our internal assessment focused on each of the solutions' abilities to meet the five selection factors outlined above.

In our assessment, we found that Rally from Broadcom meets all the criteria and provides one of the strongest agile development management solutions.*

> * A detailed pricing analysis was not included in this analysis due to the variability and availability of vendor pricing.

1. ***Ease of use***: Rally features a drag-and-drop user interface with an intuitive and agile-centric UI, allowing users to get started quickly without extensive training. Unlike other solutions, Rally supports a wide range of agile processes without extensive customizations, a complication that can inhibit use and create ongoing management problems.

2. ***Empower agile teams to meet their current and emerging needs:*** Rally supports traditional project methodology—such as SAFe®, Kanban, and Scrum—and provides flexibility to work the way your company works. Rally is one of the few vendors that allows you to utilize a hybrid work approach, taking best practices of multiple methodologies to create a framework that works best for your company. Other platforms require you to fully adopt a single proprietary agile methodology, locking you into a framework and process that may not be best for your team and company. Rally meets both the current and emerging needs of agile teams with robust features like capacity planning, team planning, and release tracking that bring the right work to the right teams at the right time. Rally's Team Board and quick detail enable teams to access the right level and complexity of work in order to deliver the most important features to customers and end users.

3. ***Contextual collaboration***: Rally supports agile teams' need for contextual collaboration at the work item, task, project, and portfolio levels. Rally minimizes task switching and communication breakdowns with threaded chat and a team inbox that aggregates email, feeds, and tool notifications all in one place. Rally provides several ways for a team to communicate and collaborate on shared work. Depending on working agreements, a team may choose to collaborate using fields inside work items, apps, shared page views, shared pages and apps, or a combination of these options.

4. ***Robust visibility of the entire project lifecycle from planning to delivery:*** One of Rally's top differentiators is its ability to flow data from multiple levels in an organization. From the portfolio, program, and team levels and back up to the PMO and business leaders, Rally provides complete visibility & traceability across tasks, work items, projects, and portfolios. Rally supports business cases and provides visualization of strategic plans in a timeline view, including roadmap visibility. The Rally Capacity Planning page allows users to envision the completion of the right work, and the Team Planning page helps project managers to map work to teams. Other agile management platforms were reported by interviewees as lacking project visibility, prohibiting team members from accurately planning across multiple teams, projects, and portfolios.

   Rally also supports real-time, reliable progress status reporting so that business leaders can track initiative progress by team, work, time, and funding, a to requested capability by interviewees. Rally manages risks alongside all your other work items as well as link risks to portfolio items, add risks to a release or add tasks to address actions related to the risk. The platform displays cross-team dependencies visually on the Team Planning page and provides the ability to view both predecessor and successor dependencies associated with work items as well as the number of dependencies.

5. ***Alignment to Business Strategy:*** Rally was one of the few platforms that linked projects to business objectives. Modern agile platforms need the ability to support the accurate roll-up of data across teams and projects, from user stories up to investment themes, and to allow data to be used to drive effective decision making. Other vendors lack the ability to provide visibility across all work within their respective platforms and easily report on project status, progress, budget status, and alignment to business strategy.

For organizations seeking an enterprise-scale agile platform, Rally from Broadcom fulfills all the recommended criteria and provides a complete solution for supporting agile software development. A comparative table can be found on the next page to better illustrate some of the benefits Rally from Broadcom offers.

Legend

Symbol	Meaning
🟢 Green (Fully Present)	Fully Present
🔵 Blue ~75%	Partial Functionality (~75%)
🔵🟡 Half (~50%)	Partial Functionality (~50%)
🔴 Red ~25%	Minor Functionality (~25%)
⚪ Empty	Feature Absent (0%)

	Rally from Broadcom	Atlassian Jira	Atlassian Jira Align	VersionOne ALM	Microsoft Azure DevOps
Ease of Configuration Supports out-of-the-box configuration over costly customization	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~50%)
Ease of Use and Management Intuitive navigation with drag-and-drop user interface	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)
Breadth and Scalability of Agile Development Management End-to-end capabilities to plan, track, adjust, and manage agile projects, which includes: ▪ Program-level planning ▪ Real-time progress status ▪ Release planning and management ▪ Test-case management ▪ Capacity planning ▪ Cross-Team Dependencies ▪ Kanban Planning ▪ Roadmap creation ▪ Data availability to support decision making	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~50%)
Advanced Analytics and Reporting ▪ Easy-to-build custom reports without a need for specialized report-development skills ▪ Dynamic agile performance metrics, dashboards, and reports ▪ Configurable dashboards to use and share	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Minor (~25%)
Issue Tracking and Traceability Traceability on all activities and changes throughout projects and portfolios	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~50%)	Minor (~25%)
Project Visibility and Status Visibility by peers, project managers, and business leaders to track initiative progress by team, work, time, and funding	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Minor (~25%)
Portfolio Management Portfolio planning capabilities with cross-enterprise visibility	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Minor (~25%)
Integrated Code Management Automated code management and testing	Partial (~75%)	Fully Present	Feature Absent (0%)	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~75%)
Third-Party Integrations Out-of-the-box integrations with third-party platforms and other internally used development platforms	Partial (~75%)	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)
Contextual Collaboration In-application communication, collaboration, and document/asset sharing	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~50%)
Alignment of Work to Strategy Ability to align projects and portfolio to business strategy and corporate goals	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Minor (~25%)
Deployment Flexibility Choice of on-premises or SaaS deployments	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Fully Present	Partial (~50%)	Partial (~50%)
Enterprise Performance Proven security, up-time, and speed	Fully Present	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~75%)	Partial (~50%)