

PRINCE2 Agile[®] Book Review

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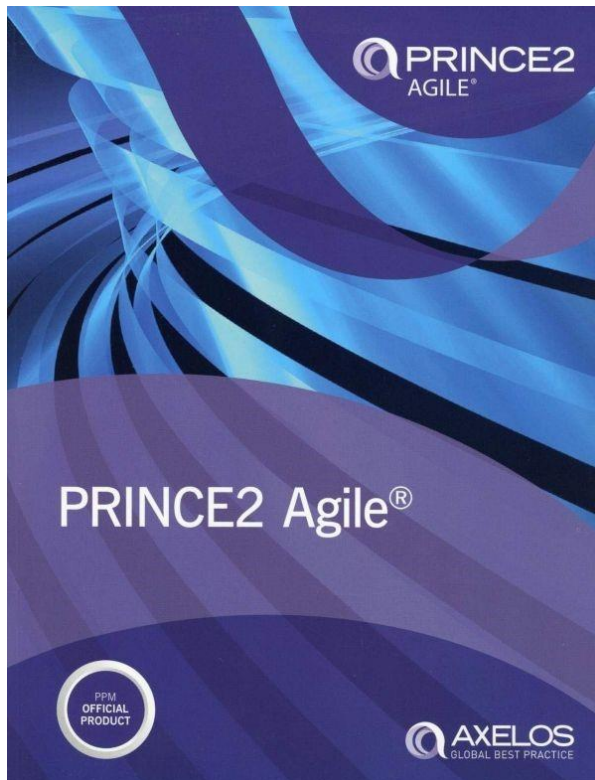
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Introduction

In 2015, AXELOS introduced [PRINCE2 Agile](#), the comprehensive PRINCE2 tailoring guidance for project professionals working in an agile environment. This book review looks at the official guidance manual of PRINCE2 Agile, *PRINCE2 Agile*® (2018 3rd impression; UK: The Stationery Office; ISBN: 9780113314676).

The PRINCE2 Agile guidance manual, with its 338 pages, is an indispensable resource for any learner wishing to understand how the robust structure and governance of PRINCE2 can be combined with the adaptability and responsiveness of agile methodologies.

The manual serves as perfect study material for those aiming to gain [PRINCE2 Agile certification](#) whether they are participating in a training course or not.

Keith Richards, the agile thought leader from the UK, was the author of the PRINCE2 Agile manual. Keith is known for his contribution to the development of DSDM, one of the earliest agile methodologies, and a precursor to the [Agile Project Management \(AgilePM\)](#) method.

Book structure

The book is neatly organized and reader-friendly, comprising of 28 chapters, 8 appendices, and a glossary. Its diagrams are both intelligible and stylish, presented in a unique hand-drawn style.

The content of the book is sectioned into three main parts.

1. The initial 6 chapters provide foundational knowledge about Agile and the role of PRINCE2 Agile within an agile context.
2. The central portion of the manual, encompassing chapters 7 through 23, adapts the themes and processes of PRINCE2 to be effectively utilized in an agile setting.
3. The third section, chapters 24 to 28, covers areas of focus for which PRINCE2 only provides cursory information. These chapters offer more comprehensive details to cater to the needs of professionals working in an agile environment.

The rest of this review will explore each of these three sections in greater detail.

Part I (chapters 1-6)

This section is particularly beneficial for those with limited knowledge of either PRINCE2 or Agile, as it delivers succinct overviews of both concepts.

Chapter 1 provides some clarification about the difference between projects and business-as-usual (BAU), and how PRINCE2 (and PRINCE2 Agile) are only suitable for project environments, and how agile is suitable for both project and BAU environments.

Chapter 2 introduces many basic agile concepts, such as iterative development, stand ups, sprints, and user stories. It also contrasts the iterative and incremental approaches common in agile with the more traditional waterfall approach.

Chapter 3 explains the rationale for blending PRINCE2 with agile. That's to bring together the strengths of PRINCE2 (its focus on project direction and project management) with the strengths of agile (its focus on project delivery).

Chapter 4 provides an overview of a PRINCE2 journey using agile. This describes how PRINCE2 Agile can be applied throughout the PRINCE2 process model on a project, from its pre-project process, to when the project is closed.

Chapter 5 provides a very brief overview of a PRINCE2 which is suitable for anyone who isn't already certified in PRINCE2 or hasn't attended a PRINCE2 training course.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of PRINCE2 Agile's hexagon which shows the 6 performance aspects (time, cost, scope, quality, risk, benefits) and how time and cost must be fixed (i.e. they have zero tolerance). This concept of [fixing and flexing](#) within PRINCE2 goes to the heart of how PRINCE2 can be successfully blended with agile to deliver products which are responsive to changing users' needs.

Overall, this part of the book provides a useful introduction to the remainder of the guidance.

Part II (chapters 7-23)

This part outlines strategies needed to customize PRINCE2's themes, processes, management products, and roles. The author illustrates the considerations required while implementing Agile, along with the specific behaviours and techniques to apply.

The chapters in this section comprise one chapter for each theme and process. For students undertaking a [PRINCE2 Agile course](#), this section will be particularly important as a substantial amount of the course content is derived from this part of the book.

Chapter 7 provides a general view of agile and the PRINCE2 principles and offers guidance on how to apply them in an agile context. This chapter also provides clarity about the five [PRINCE2 Agile behaviours](#) and why these behaviours need to work smoothly for agile to work in an effective way.

Chapter 8 provides a very brief overview of the PRINCE2 themes before chapters 9-15 covering each of the [PRINCE2 themes](#). For each theme, the author provides guidance for how the themes should be applied in an agile context. He also describes the agile concepts and techniques that are applicable. Concepts such as value, Scrum Master, Product Owner, servant leadership, agile estimation, prioritisation of requirements, burn charts, and feedback loops.

Chapter 16 provides a brief overview of the [PRINCE2 processes](#) before describing how each process can be applied in an agile project context in chapters 17-22. For the first two processes (starting up a project and initiating a project), these are described together in chapter 17.

For each process, the author provides specific guidance for how the process can be applied in an agile context. Again, like the theme chapters, detailed descriptions of relevant agile concepts and techniques are given.

The biggest chapter in this part is the one about the managing product delivery process. In the PRINCE2 manual, this process chapter is the thinnest because PRINCE2 does not really go into the detail of product delivery. In PRINCE2 Agile, this is at the heart of merging PRINCE2 with the product delivery aspects of agile.

This chapter covers concepts such as Kanban and Kanban boards, work in progress, experiments, cumulative flow diagrams, Lean Startup and minimum viable product.

The final chapter in this part provides a summary of how the 26 [PRINCE2 management products](#) can be tailored for an agile context.

Part III (chapters 24-28)

This part describes the five [focus areas](#) in PRINCE2 Agile – the Agilometer, requirements, rich communication, frequent releases, and creating contracts when using agile.

Just like earlier chapters, the author provides clarifications for related concepts and techniques such as user stories, MoSCoW prioritisation technique, information radiators, facilitated workshops, and releases.

Appendices

Appendices are often skipped by readers, but that would be a mistake for anyone studying PRINCE2 Agile because the appendices provide useful information valuable for anyone wanting to apply PRINCE2 Agile.

Appendix A provides a list of product descriptions for the PRINCE2 management products. Appendix B provides a description of the responsibilities for the [PRINCE2 project management team roles](#) alongside PRINCE2 Agile delivery roles.

Appendix C provides a health check in the form of a checklist which can be used at any point during a project to assess how well the project is progressing from an agile perspective.

Appendix D is the same as that found in the [PRINCE2 manual](#) and provides an example of the PRINCE2 product-based planning technique.

Appendix E provides a summary of the agile principles from the Agile Manifesto, and the principles and core values of the major agile methods.

Appendix F is for organizations transitioning to using agile and considers what defines success and how success can be measured.

Appendix G offers advice for project managers using agile, and appendix H provides a definite guide to Scrum. The final chapter is a comprehensive glossary of terms related to agile and PRINCE2.

Recommendation

All in all, the PRINCE2 Agile guidance manual offers a broad and deep perspective on how to use PRINCE2 in an agile context.

Overall, this book is highly recommended to project professionals and agile practitioners.

For people studying for [PRINCE2 Agile Foundation](#) or [PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner](#) will find the book an invaluable study guide when preparing to take a [PRINCE2 Agile exam](#).

For agile practitioners at work, the book forms an essential guide to tailoring PRINCE2 in agile project contexts. As such practitioners can achieve the real benefits of combining the strengths of both PRINCE2 and agile on their projects.