PRINCE2® Agile

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What is PRINCE2 Agile?

PRINCE2 Agile represents an evolution of PRINCE2. The PRINCE2 Agile guidance provides examples of how PRINCE2 can be tailored to suit the needs of an organization which seeks to manage projects in an agile way.

With the continuing growth of agile ways of working, PRINCE2 Agile provides a robust solution to the needs of organizations seeking to use PRINCE2 in agile ways.

History

PRINCE2 Agile was first released in 2015 in response to demand from project professionals wanting to use PRINCE2 in agile ways.

Based upon PRINCE2

PRINCE2 Agile, like PRINCE2 is for managing projects. Many agile methods, such as Scrum and Kanban, are used to manage ongoing work to existing software solutions. This is what PRINCE2 calls business-as-usual. Both PRINCE2 and PRINCE2 Agile are not suitable for managing business as usual work. For that, many of the commonly used agile methods are sufficient.

The difference between PRINCE2 and PRINCE2 Agile

There is no fundamental difference between PRINCE2 and PRINCE2 Agile. However, each has its own guidance manual. The PRINCE2 manual is discussed elsewhere. The PRINCE2 Agile manual maintains the four core components of PRINCE2 – the principles, themes, processes, and tailoring – but provides additional guidance for how to apply PRINCE2 in an agile context.

Who created PRINCE2 Agile?

PRINCE2 Agile was created by AXELOS, the owners of PRINCE2. AXELOS hired Keith Richards, the founder of agileKRC to write PRINCE2 Agile. Keith had over 30 years of experience in project management and in 2011 was voted as the 'Most Valuable Agile Player' award at the UK Agile Awards. Considered as a leading agile thought leader in the UK, Keith brought has vast experience and knowledge of agile and PRINCE2 to help inform the PRINCE2 Agile guidance.

Rationale behind PRINCE2 Agile

PRINCE2 is the most used project management methodology in the world. Both PRINCE2 and agile methods each have their own strengths and weaknesses. When combined, the strengths of each are complemented to create a holistic approach to managing projects in agile ways.

PRINCE2 focuses on project direction and project management. It says very little about delivering products. Agile focuses strongly on product delivery, but very little on project direction and project management.

By combining PRINCE2 with agile, PRINCE2 Agile offers strengths in all three areas – project direction, project management, and product delivery.

What is covered by PRINCE2 Agile?

PRINCE2 Agile provides guidance on how to tailor PRINCE2 to agile environments in 4 specific ways:

1. How to tailor the PRINCE2 themes, processes, and management products.

2. How to map common agile roles to the project management team structure in PRINCE2.

3. How to incorporate common agile concepts, behaviours, and techniques into PRINCE2.

4. Which areas require a specific focus when using agile.

Tailoring PRINCE2 for an agile context

Principles

The seven principles of PRINCE2 can never be tailored because they are foundation aspects that must be applied to all types of projects, whether agile or not.

Themes

The seven themes in PRINCE2 can and should be tailored in an agile context. Because agile is focused primarily on product delivery, some of the themes in PRINCE2 Agile are more prominent than others. For example, the plans and progress themes are more prominent whereas the business case and risk themes are less prominent. However, all seven themes must still be used and tailored throughout a project.

Fixing and flexing

One of the key features of PRINCE2 is its definition of 6 performance aspects for time, cost, scope, quality, risk, and benefits. PRINCE2 recommends the setting of tolerances for each of these aspects. PRINCE2 Agile still uses these 6 tolerance areas but cost and time tolerance are always set to zero (i.e. fixed). The other tolerance areas can be flexed (made variable).

This is described in more detail in fixing and flexing in PRINCE2 Agile.

PRINCE2 Agile targets
PRINCE2 Agile also describes 5 targets which are crucial to the success of teams working in an agile project context. The PRINCE2 Agile targets form the rationale for how and why the 6 tolerance areas are 'fixed and flexing'.

Processes
The seven processes in PRINCE2 must also be used and tailored throughout a project. Some of the processes are often combined in PRINCE2 Agile, for example starting up a project and initiating a project are often combined.

PRINCE2 Agile behaviours
When tailoring the themes and processes, attention should be paid to specific behaviours of the project management team. These behaviours need to function smoothly for the agile to work in the most efficient way. The 5 PRINCE2 Agile behaviours are:

1. Transparency.

2. Collaboration.

3. Rich communication.

4. Self-organization.

5. Exploration.

PRINCE2 Agile focus areas
PRINCE2 Agile also gives guidance on specific areas that require prominence due to the nature of agile ways of working. These focus areas also include guidance on specific techniques that can support them. There are five focus areas in PRINCE2 Agile:

1. The Agilometer.

2. Requirements.

3. Rich communication.

4. Frequent releases.

5. Creating contracts when using agile.

Management products

The 26 management products which help the project management team plan, manage, and control a project are also utilised in PRINCE2 Agile, but these are also tailored. PRINCE2 describes many ways in which these management products can be represented, for example in the form of information radiators on a whiteboard in a shared working space.

Certification

PRINCE2 Agile certification is valuable for anyone working in an agile project context. The effort, time, and cost required to obtain a PRINCE2 Agile certificate can provide a good return on investment. PRINCE2 Agile certification can boost a candidate's career prospects and open new jobs opportunities.

PRINCE2 Agile certification is available at both Foundation and Practitioner levels. Which one is best for a candidate depends upon their individual circumstances and career goals.

Foundation

Candidates who gain the PRINCE2 Agile Foundation certification demonstrate sufficient recall and understanding of the PRINCE2 Agile project management method.

Most candidates gaining a PRINCE2 Agile Foundation certificate take either a classroom or self-paced online training course. Successful candidates must pass the 1-hour PRINCE2 Agile Foundation exam which is provided as part of accredited training.

Practitioner

Candidates gaining the PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner certification have demonstrated that they understand PRINCE2 governance requirements clearly and comprehensively and have a broad range of knowledge of agile concepts and techniques including Scrum, Kanban, and Lean Start-up.

Most candidates that gain PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner certification do so by taking either a classroom or self-paced online training course. A successful candidate must pass the 2.5-hour PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner exam which is provided as part of an accredited training course. A common path for many students to get their Practitioner qualification is to take the combined Foundation and Practitioner course.

Exams

Each level of PRINCE2 Agile certification has their own examination. Foundation is the shorter and the easier of the two. In the UK, over 99% of students pass the 1-hour Foundation exam first time. The Practitioner exam is 2.5 hours, and about 87% of students pass first time in the UK.

PRINCE2 Agile examinations are typically included as part of accredited PRINCE2 Agile training.

Training courses

Most people who become PRINCE2 Agile certified do so with accredited PRINCE2 Agile training courses. Accredited training is only available from PRINCE2 Agile Accredited Training Organisations (ATOs). ATO's go through a demanding accreditation process which assesses their ability to deliver training courses of the requisite standards.

A full list of all PRINCE2 Agile Accredited Training Organisations can be obtained from AXELOS.

Benefits

PRINCE2 Agile along with PRINCE2 offers at least 21 benefits for organisations adopting it. These benefits enable organisations to gain a competitive advantage in their industry or sector.

PRINCE2 Agile manual

The PRINCE2 Agile manual _PRINCE2 Agile_ is a comprehensive guide to applying PRINCE2 Agile. This book is the official text for accredited training and its content forms the basis of the questions on the examination papers.

Glossary

A comprehensive glossary exists for both PRINCE2 Agile and PRINCE2 terminology. It also includes many common agile terms.