

**Louvain School of Management**

# **Study of the Agile methods efficiency to mitigate the risk of project failure: the case of consulting firms**

Author : Stainier Laura

Supervisor : de Jaegere Tanguy

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## Abstract

Despite the use of traditional engineering methodologies, projects development has not been systematically successful. It often resulted in rejected, failed, delayed or abandoned projects. In fact, due to digitalization and rapid changes in user needs, the Waterfall methodology is leading a growing projects number to failure through a lack of adaptation to these new trends (Avison & Fitzgerald, 2003). Agile methods have recently emerged as a new and different way of developing projects than traditional methods. However, their effectiveness is still anecdotal and there is scant research in this subject in academic communities (Cao & Chow, 2008; Gustavsson, 2016).

The introduction and analysis of macro-environmental factors that tend to favour the use of Agile methods in project management compared to old traditional methods such as the Waterfall methodology, help to identify an important actor in the economy: the consultants.

Therefore, since the Agile methods predecessor is the Waterfall methodology, it is interesting to see whether the Agile approach is more efficient than the Waterfall approach in client's projects of any kind carried out by consultants (Kerscher & Günzel, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016).

Through interviews with five expert consultants, this qualitative research will compare the opinions of the literature with these actors in the field, employed in four different consulting companies.

In conclusion, managerial implications of their use are identified and several answers regarding the efficiency of Agile methods for consultants compared to the Waterfall methodology are found.



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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The project management literature is increasingly addressing the limits of the traditional methods such as the Waterfall methodology, consulting companies are facing when working on projects in all areas for their clients (Laplante & Neill, 2004 ; Pasmore, 2010). In fact, due to digitalization and rapid changes in user needs, the Waterfall methodology is leading a growing projects number to failure through a lack of adaptation to these new trends (Avison & Fitzgerald, 2003). By looking at the Waterfall methodology incompatibilities, innovative insights are emerging filling the gaps that consulting project management strategy has been challenged with for the past few years. From this analysis, one set of methods has been of particular interest. Indeed, Agile methods have significant features promoting project success in the consulting field (Aghina, Handscomb, Ludolph, Rona & West, 2020).

Despite the use of traditional engineering methodologies, projects development has not been systematically successful. It often resulted in rejected, failed, delayed or abandoned projects. Even some projects already implemented sometimes need corrective releases or expensive on-going maintenance (Cao & Chow, 2008). According to Cockburn, in the field of software development projects, for example, the problem is that “deploying software to the Web has intensified software competition further than before” and “staying in business involves not only getting software out and reducing defects but tracking continually moving user and marketplace demands” (as cited in Cao & Chow, 2008, p. 22). Since traditional methods such as the Waterfall methodology have limited adaptability, they fail to satisfy these current market trends. The challenge is to improve the agility of project management in the consulting companies to avoid waste and inefficiency.

Agile methods have recently emerged as a new and different way of developing projects than traditional methods. However, their effectiveness is still anecdotal and there is scant research in this subject in academic communities (Cao & Chow, 2008; Gustavsson, 2016). For Anderson, the word “Agile” by itself means that something is flexible and responsive, so Agile methods imply its “[ability] to survive in an atmosphere of constant change and emerge with success” (as cited in Cao & Chow, 2008, p. 28).

Therefore, going on headfirst into the Waterfall method for all kinds of projects with clients (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016), is a way for consulting firms to shoot



themselves in the foot. It will undermine business strategy by creating discrepancies with the changing external corporate environment.

Robustness is one initial advantage of the Waterfall methodology as it can be applied uniformly to all projects. Regarding the studies of DeCarlo, Dvir & Shenhar and Wysocki, it aims above all at optimization and efficiency by following the prior detailed project plan to complete project within planned time, budget and scope (as cited in Špundak, 2014, p. 941). However, this former advantage is increasingly seen as one of the method crucial drawback. Indeed, many authors including Aguanno, Chin, Dvir & Shenhar, or Wysocki stress that “one size does not fit all” (as cited in Špundak, 2014, p. 941) as projects and business environment become more intricate, with higher number of tasks and complex iterations. Waterfall methodology cannot meet the complexity and dynamics of today’s projects since this approach is based on mostly hierarchical and linear task relations (Cicmil, Williams, Thomas & Hodgson, 2006; Cicmil, Cooke–Davies, Crawford & Richardson, 2009; Collyer, Warren, Hemsley & Stevens, 2010; Williams, 2005).

## 1.1 PURPOSE

In the last few years, descriptions of on one hand traditional methods such as Waterfall, and on the other hand Agile methods have become easily accessible in the scientific literature. Similarities and differences as well as advantages and disadvantages are compared between the methods in order to weigh the pros and cons of each alternative. The theoretical concepts behind the methods are explained in a comprehensive way, giving an idea of the application scope of each approach according to the type of organization, project, or context (Špundak, 2014).

The popularity of Agile project management methods is growing, and research shows an increasing number of successful projects, particularly in the consulting field (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016), due to the transition into Agile project management (Abdelschafi & Schatz, 2005; Adjei & Rwakatiwana, 2010).

However, in academic circles only a few authors risk themselves to assess the Agile methods effectiveness on the ground. Literature on the Agile methods influence on the success of projects in consulting companies remains scarce. Moreover, there is a need to compare the contributions of the scientific literature with the opinions of consultants who develop projects for clients on a real-world basis. What components or elements of Agile methods improve project development efficiency for consultants ?

Yet, there is a growing need to take stock of the usefulness of Agile project management methods in the consultants' daily life. It is essential to make changes to traditional methods, or even to abandon them for new ones in view of changing needs and digitalisation (Avison & Fitzgerald, 2003; Laplante & Neill, 2004; Pasmore, 2010). Therefore, assessing whether Agile methods really have an impact in mitigating project failures and reviewing which Agile components contribute to this, allows us to advance in project management research and to offer new solutions and improvements for consultants. In fact, traditional methods such as the Waterfall methodology are no longer adequate, since all requirements are gathered at the beginning of the project and are then frozen. This methodology has several phases that follow in strict linear order. A phase cannot start until the previous phase has been completed. The principle of collecting all the requirements from the very beginning allows each other phase to be planned without further customer involvement until the project completion. However, over the past few years both IT and business consultants recognized their need to adopt an Agile approach to compete (Aghina et al., 2018; Bersohn, Dudler, Jeruchhimowitz & McMillan, 2019; Lake & Jaramillo, 2018). Continuing to determine all objectives and requirements at the beginning of the project with the Waterfall methodology leads to continuous scope creep (Sidky and Smith, 2009).

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### **1.1.1 MACRO-ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

Today's environment is increasingly shifting. The world is changing faster and faster. Between the beginning and the end of a project, the world has already evolved, and therefore project requirements too (East, 2019; Lake & Jaramillo, 2018). As a result of these changes, macro environmental factors that influence everyone are identified. Through this thesis, we asked ourselves to what extent do these factors encourage towards the Agile methods application as

being more efficient for consultants in their missions for their clients. Macro-environmental factors influencing the use of Agile methods by consultants for their client projects can be studied using the PESTLE<sup>1</sup> analysis. This analysis revealed three major macro-environmental factors that proved to be critical to the rationale for this change in project management approach.

First, Boehm (2000) draws our attention to certain economic factors. According to him, rapid changes in competitive threats and time-to-market pressures strongly challenge project management based on pre-specified requirements, such as the Waterfall methodology (as cited in Baskerville, Cao & Ramesh, 2010, p. 449).

Second, the social aspect is also undergoing huge upheavals compared to before. Indeed, clients, especially generation Y and millennials are increasingly waiting for quick solutions. In the future, there is no doubt that following generations will be further connected to the internet in both personal and professional lives. Companies have to be able to leverage these changing needs to connect with their customers and prospects (Bakri et al., 2012).

Third, technological factors certainly have the greatest impact on project management methods. The advent of Agile methods is rooted in the field of software development, in particular due to the integration of more and more technological imperatives. Nowadays, design of software products like apps become simpler and simpler, in order to quickly deliver and facilitate regular updates (Bersohn, Dudler, Jeruchhimowitz & McMillan, 2019). However, their interrelation is even more complex due to the many other interconnected nodes (Baskerville, Cao & Ramesh, 2010). Users live in a technological ecosystem where everyone is always connected and has a smartphone in their pocket with a list of applications (Muegge, 2013). Therefore, these products require shorter development cycles (Boehm, 2000). Then, the increasing use of commercially available off-the-shelf (COTS)<sup>2</sup> products calls into question

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 1 for complete analysis.

<sup>2</sup> According to Beal, COTS products “describe software or hardware products that are ready-made and available for sale to the general public. For example, Microsoft Office is a COTS product that is a packaged software solution for businesses. COTS products are designed to be implemented easily into existing systems without the need for customization.”(Beal, n.d).

the Waterfall model as requirements are determined by the capabilities of COTS products. Boehm illustrates this with an example:

*“Suppose the client specifies a one-second response-time requirement for a large transaction-processing system, and the best available COTS database management system can only handle the workload with two-second response time. Client and consultants will collaborate and recognize that this requirement is not critical if not affordable, rather than developing a complete new version of Oracle by hoping to go twice as fast. Therefore, the best available COTS capabilities determine the requirements such as response time. It is the reverse of traditional requirements approach.” (Boehm, 2000).*

Boehm (2000) identifies another factor: the rapid change in Information Technology. With the Waterfall methodology, the specification of all requirements from the outset before starting the project takes a lot of time. Rapid changes in competitive threats, stakeholders needs, and price structures make these requirements already obsolete. Moreover, with cloud computing and virtualization “a user can write applications from scratch, using practically any operating systems” (Bakri et al., 2012). Indeed, consulting companies can provide and customize various sophisticated services layered on top of simple virtual machines for their clients (Bakri et al., 2012). Besides, for Bakri et al., (2012) “developers do not need to design and deploy their own supporting database or Web servers”. Therefore, a much more "user-centric" approach is required since users choose exactly the level of computing power and supporting services. Agile methods take precisely a more people-centric approach as they promote human interaction and collaboration with the client over tools, processes and contracts (Beck et al., 2001). Moreover, when customers are involved in projects, especially in the requirements phase, it is nearly impossible to gather all requirements at the beginning. Indeed, the development of IKIWISI (“I’ll know it when I see it”) trend generates an iterative and progressive emergence of requirements, as the customer clarifies his own expectations when he sees a prototype or a demo (Boehm, 2000). At that moment, clients begin operating the system and understand how it could support their missions (Boehm, 2000). Finally, new technologies do not only have an influence on the software development field, but on many other sectors. For example, even for a sector

such as construction, which pioneered the Waterfall method, digitisation is inevitable and shows promising results with Agile methods (Straçusser, 2015).

In view of the macro-environmental factors the thesis' purpose is to see whether Agile methods are the ideal substitute for the Waterfall methodology in software as well as non-software project management in order to mitigate the risk of failure in projects carried out by consultants (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016).

## 1.2 PROBLEMATIC AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS

The introduction and analysis of macro-environmental factors that tend to favour the use of Agile methods in project management compared to old traditional methods such as the Waterfall methodology, help to identify an important actor in the economy: the consultants. In fact, the consultants are working with a large number of clients who have different and pressing needs, allowing them to gain experience in a variety of contexts (Delavallée, 2012). In addition, there is a growing trend among consultants to use Agile methods to carry out their clients' projects (Brosseaux, Ebrahim, Handscomb & Thaker, 2019). Finally, the role of consultants is to bring change to their clients in order to create mid- or long-term value.

Therefore, a first question comes to mind : “Knowing that their core business is the change in the client for a survival imperative in the medium term, to what extent the Agile methods allow to moderate a whole series of problems that there were, on the one hand, to deliver the client and, on the other hand, to ensure that the integration takes place in a harmonious manner in the client's day-to-day activities?”

Furthermore, since the Agile methods predecessor is the Waterfall methodology, it is interesting to see whether the Agile approach is more efficient than the Waterfall approach in client's projects of any kind carried out by consultants (Kerscher & Günzel, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016).

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### 1.2.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In the light of these considerations, this thesis will navigate through the following research question :

*“To what extent do Agile methods provide significant efficiency gains to mitigate the risk of project failure carried out by consultants for their clients compared to the Waterfall methodology?”*

The research question is divided into two axes. First, it is positioned in the intrinsic context of Agile in order to assess the efficiency of the method in the absolute. Next, it is placed in the comparative analysis between Waterfall and Agile, in order to assess the relative efficiency of the method.

Furthermore, in the different projects they carry out, consultants using Agile methods work sometimes for clients whose business is Agile and sometimes for clients whose business is not. Therefore, we assume that the efficiency gains of Agile methods to mitigate project failure will be higher if the client company is Agile. Indeed, if the customer knows and has a better understanding of Agile, it will be easier for him to collaborate with consultants. Conversely, the customer could be a barrier to the effective application of the Agile approach. Dewar, Ebrahim and Lurie (2018) support this hypothesis.

Then, we made another hypothesis. We assume that the consulting firm needs to operate an organizational Agile transformation at the level of the five pillars process, structure, people, strategy and technology (Brosseau et al., 2019) so that the application of Agile methods by consultants in projects provides efficiency gains in mitigating project failure. In other words, it is not enough that an isolated team of consultants for a particular project uses Agile methods and adopts an Agile mindset to make them efficient in mitigating the project failure, but rather that the entire consulting firm has integrated the Agile mindset at all levels within it.

*Table 1. Research question and hypotheses summary*

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research question | “To what extent do Agile methods provide significant efficiency gains to mitigate the risk of project failure carried out by consultants for their clients compared to the Waterfall methodology?”                                                                                    |
| Hypothesis 1      | “If consultants apply Agile methods for a client whose company is also Agile, efficiency gets higher.”                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Hypothesis 2      | “The consulting company needs to be Agile at the level of the five pillars process, strategy, structure, people and technology (Brosseau et al., 2019), so that the application of Agile methods by consultants in projects provides efficiency gains in mitigating project failure.” |

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### 1.2.2 THE SCOPE

Throughout the thesis, the analysis will be focused on the general consulting firm which is using Agile methods in project management to deliver their clients. Therefore, in this case, the user of Agile methods is the consultant. The aim of this thesis is to test the theory that the consultant can also be a beneficiary of Agile methods, if these methods really bring efficiency gains in order to mitigate the risk of failures in projects. Indeed, what the consultant wants is both to deliver the project and at the same time to satisfy his client. Therefore, again, if Agile methods are efficient in mitigating the risk of project failure, the client himself is a beneficiary as well. Nevertheless, in our study the client is the "referee" who evaluates the quality of the final product, but our subject of interest is the consultant.

The projects studied are from all fields, with a particular focus on software development. Indeed, being the origin field of Agile, it is interesting to illustrate the functioning of these methods through examples in this area. In consulting projects, software development is an important component of the project, but it is not the only one. Indeed, this study focuses on consultants who pilot the project in Agile mode. In addition to the software development, resource management and project management practices will be carried out using the Agile approach.

Project management methodology is defined by Project Management Institute as set of methods, techniques, procedures, rules, templates, and best practices used on a project (as cited in Špundak, 2014, p. 940). In this thesis, the term "failure" is to be considered in a broad sense. "Project failure" covers both abandoned, uncompleted projects but also all projects that do not meet the success criteria expected by the client or final user. These criteria are classified in four categories: time, costs, quality and scope. The Standish Group International's study defined project failure as "either a project that has been cancelled or a project that does not meet its budget, delivery, and business objectives" (as cited in Linberg, 1999, p. 177). Conversely, project success, is defined as a project that meets its budget, delivery, and business objectives. With this definition, the average software project success rate in the Standish Group International's study (1994) was an abysmal 16.2% (as cited in Linberg, 1999, p. 177).

Furthermore, the four categories in which the success criteria fall are defined in the literature. Quality is about delivering a good working product. The term quality refers to the degree to which a product meets its users' needs. This may refer to functional content, error rates, performance, extendibility, usability, or any other product characteristics which are important to the users (Humphrey, 1988). The scope refers to the ability to meet all requirements by the customer. Timeliness consists in delivering on time. Cost category ensures projects are within estimated cost and effort (Cao and Chow, 2008).

Finally, in contrast to Agile methods, the Waterfall methodology is using a classical model applied in project management to create a project with a linear and sequential approach. The term "Waterfall" refers to the systematic development from one phase to another in a downward fashion. The model is divided into different phases and the output of the previous



phase is used as the input of the next one. Therefore, every phase has to be completed before the next phase starts. Besides, there is no overlapping of the phases (The Economic Times, 2016).

### 1.3 METHOD

After defining some key concepts and discussing the purpose of thesis, the research method used is described. Next, a structure overview of the next chapters will be given.

An explicative research method seemed to be the best way to study the Agile methods efficiency to mitigate the risk of project failure in consulting firms. Indeed, the researcher's purpose is to verify causal assumptions (Jacquemin, 2019). The aim is to check the effect of one (or more) variable (s) on one (or more) other (s) (Jacquemin, 2019). In this case, our explanatory variable is represented by Agile methods (and their components) to explain potential efficiency gains to mitigate the risk of project failure in consulting firms. The explicative method aims to test a theory, and to support or refute the explanation (Dufour, C., n.d.). This study constitutes the first fruit for further research on the subject.

The research was carried out by collecting qualitative data through semi-directive individual interviews. The researcher uses an opening sentence and then follows up with sentences from an interview guide. This interviewing method is adapted to find out positions, understandings, or attitudes in relation to a subject. It allows flexibility in the interviews. Indeed, it fosters comparative and cumulative analysis strategies between respondents. It also allows the interview guide to be enriched according to emerging themes as interviews take place. (Jacquemin, 2019).

In addition, one collective interview was conducted using the Focus Group interviewing research methods. The Focus Group method is close to the semi-directive interview since respondents talk about a targeted topic and the researcher uses a discussion guide focused on that topic (Jacquemin, 2019). This method is suitable for examining the group's perceptions,

attitudes, behaviours towards the subject and places great importance on the interactions between participants (Jacquemin, 2019; Krueger, 2014).

The following research question was asked along the interviews : “To what extent do the Agile methods provide significant efficiency gains to mitigate the risk of project failure carried out by consultants for their clients compared to the Waterfall methodology ?” To guide the research the three Agile components identified in the literature as the most critical success factors were approached in turn.

The interviews allow to build the bridge between scientific researchers’ studies and the respondent’s reality in consulting firms.

This thesis is divided into three main parts. First, the literature review synthesizes the theoretical inputs of the authors and explains the key concepts. Second, the field research section summarizes the contributions of the consultants interviewed. Finally, the third part compares the findings of the first two. It provides the conclusions of this thesis while mentioning the various limitations to be taken into account. Paths for future research are also given, in order to deepen the subject.

## **PART I. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **CHAPTER 2. WATERFALL METHODOLOGY**

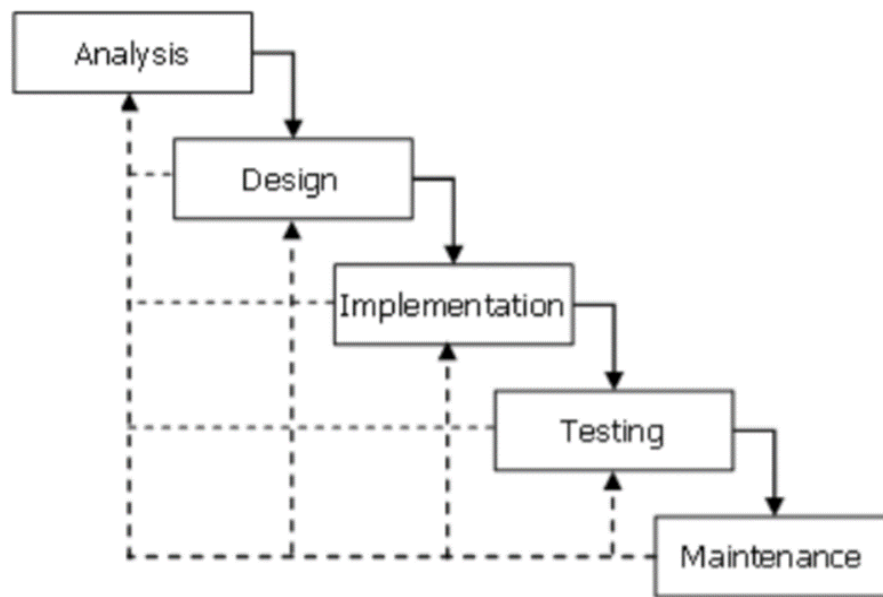
#### **2.1 BACKGROUND**

The Waterfall methodology for project management takes its roots in non-software industries like manufacturing and construction, where project phases must happen sequentially. An example to illustrate this constraint would be the fact that it is impossible to put up drywall if the house has not been framed. Likewise, there is no good way to undo a concrete foundation, meaning there is no way to revisit a phase with this linear methodology (McCormick, 2012).

Originally, the term software engineering comes from several historical conferences organised by NATO in the late 1960s, but it was not in general use, nor widely accepted (Van Casteren, 2017). At that time, software projects were costly and complex which led to them being considered in engineering. Since programmers were trained as engineers and since the cost of computing was high, they were used to practicing the hardware concepts as “measure twice, cut once” (Van Casteren, 2017). As a result, precautionary methods emerged, in which project teams created plans for software systems in a methodical and slow manner. In 1970, Dr Winston Royce wrote an article on managing large and complex software developments, where he described a series of phases which form a software development sequence. Finally, it is only later that Bell and Thayer referred to this sequence as the concept of “Waterfall model” and they were the originators of the designation for the first Software Development Model (SDM) (Van Casteren, 2017).

## 2.2 DESCRIPTION

The Waterfall methodology consists in applying a sequential development model, where requirements should be clear before going to next phase of design. For example, concerning software products, testing will be carried out only once the code has been fully developed. Even for all projects in general tester role will be involved in testing phase only, after the implementation phase. Moreover, each work-product or activity in any field is completed before moving on to the next one and there is no overlapping between phases. Each phase has a detailed schedule of tasks to be finished within a specified time period (Balaji and Murugaiyan, 2012). In addition, a special emphasize is placed on documentation at every project development stage. Indeed, information about the project requirements, planning and details of team member role has to be thoroughly documented (Bassil, 2012). Then, team members will be able to refer to the documentation provided and understand precisely what is expected. As a result, documentation is a priority in this traditional model. The Waterfall model consists of five main phases, as illustrated on figure [1]. These five phases are found in software projects as well as in non-software projects (Bassil, 2012; Van Casteren, 2017). They are often explained by taking the example of software development but are used more widely.



*Figure [1]: A simulation model for the Waterfall software development life cycle. (Bassil, 2012, p.2)*

First, the analysis phase, also known as Software Requirements Specification (SRS) when it comes to software projects, aims at describing in an exhaustive and comprehensive way the behaviour of the product to be developed. This phase involves both IT and business consultants to define functional as well as non-functional requirements. Functional requirements are usually defined through use cases which represent the users' interactions with the product. They encompass requirements as purpose, perspective, scope, product attributes and functions, user characteristics, functionalities specifications and requirements (Bassil, 2012; Govardhan, 2010). Non-functional requirements are defined as the various criteria, constraints, limitations and requirements enforced on the product design and operation rather than on particular behaviours. They include properties like reliability, availability, scalability, performance, testability, maintainability and quality standards (Bassil, 2012).

Second, the design phase refers to the process of planning and problem solving. For software projects it implies software developers and IT consultants to define the plan for a solution which includes algorithm design, software architecture design, database conceptual schema and logical diagram design, concept design, graphical user interface design and data structure definition (Bassil, 2012).

Furthermore, during the implementation phase the project moves from the realization of business requirements and design specifications to a concrete product. In the example of software products, business requirements are translated into executable program, website, database or software component through programming and deployment (Bassil, 2012; Govardhan, 2010). In this third phase, the code is written and compiled into an operational application. In addition, database and text files are also created. Basically, for any type of project whether software or non-software projects implementation is the process of converting the whole requirements and blueprints into a production environment (Bassil, 2012; Gustavsson, 2016).

Then comes the testing phase, also known as verification and validation. The process consists in checking that the product, for example a software solution meets the original requirements and specifications. It has also to achieve its intended purpose. The verification allows to assess the project to determine whether the outputs of a given development phase satisfy the conditions set at the start of that phase (Bassil, 2012; Govardhan & Munassar, 2010). Validation enables to evaluate the project during or at the end of the development process to figure out if it satisfies specified requirements. The testing phase is therefore the way to identify the elements that prevent the proper functioning of the product. For the example of software products, testing phase allows to perform debugging in which system glitches and bugs are identified, corrected and refined accordingly (Bassil, 2012).

Finally, the maintenance phase relates to the process of modifying the project after delivery and deployment (Bassil, 2012). During this last phase, it is possible to refine output, correct errors or improve quality and performance. Additional maintenance activities like adapting product or service to its environment, accommodating new user requirements, and increasing product reliability can be carried out in this phase too (Bassil, 2012; Govardhan & Munassar, 2010).

## 2.3 ADVANTAGES

Being one of the oldest, the methodology has demonstrated some advantages over time. As a linear model, it is easy for consultants to implement and understand it. In fact, resources for implementation are minimal (Balaji, 2012).

Besides, the document-driven approach ensures the development quality and makes requirement is clear before the development starts (Govardhan and Munassar, 2010). Traditional projects are more suitable to distributed work teams of specialists and junior members due to the detailed documentation (Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008).

Finally, the entire project is scheduled which offers a reassuring start for the team of consultants and for their clients. The resources are also completely calculated from the outset, allowing consultants to capture the scope of requirements directly (Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008).

## 2.4 DRAWBACKS

Although the Waterfall model has been used a lot for all consulting projects in the past, it faces several drawbacks. Indeed, as already mentioned in the introduction and in the purpose of this thesis, the method is becoming obsolete due to important changes in macro-environmental factors. Initially built on engineering methods especially in the construction or production sectors, the Waterfall model was then relevant. The sequential approach without backtracking was well suited and the requirements were known from the beginning of the projects as there were no unknowns. For example, how to build a bridge was known and there were no variations in the plans. The bridge example is considered by Gailly (2018) as a normal corporate project, where failure is the exception and uncertainties are minimized. But innovative projects cannot be managed in the same way. Managing innovative projects implies consultants are planning for changes in the plan and focusing on embedded flexibility (Gailly, 2018). Traditional project management methods like the Waterfall methodology are ill-suited to the ambiguity, high failure rate, pace and multifunctional aspects of innovation (Gailly,

2018). In 1970 through his paper, Winston Royce formally introduced the Waterfall model in software engineering as an idea. The peculiarity of this article is that Royce himself presented it as a flawed method due to its many shortcomings (McCormick, 2012).

First, it is utopian to expect accurate and exhaustive requirements at the start of the project. With the sequential approach of Waterfall model, development times are long before you get a glimpse of the final product. During this time, requirements have already changed, other technologies may already have emerged, and the product is obsolete or not adapted to the environment even before it is released. In case of requirement changes, consultants cannot return to the previous phases already completed. Therefore, they often have to run the project from the beginning (Govardhan & Munassar, 2010). Moreover, this sequential structure does not reflect iterative nature of exploratory development where it is efficient to focus on designing and implementing “cheap experiments” (Gailly, 2018; Govardhan & Munassar, 2010). It is the smartest way for consultants to test hypotheses and thus, decrease uncertainties quickly (Gailly, 2018).

Petersen et al., identify a second drawback of the Waterfall model as the fact that problems arise only in later phases (as cited in Van Casteren, 2017, p. 2). Consequently, the problems with one phase are never solved completely during that phase (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012). Due to the fact that customers are not involved in the process of project development, their current needs are not addressed. The client being the only person who assesses the quality of the final product and since his needs are changing, it is important for consultants to communicate regularly with him throughout the project. If the project team works independently, the final product may not meet his/her requirements. As a result, it leads to implemented but unused features, delays and high costs (Van Casteren, 2017).

The emphasis on documentation is another characteristic which is very costly and time consuming for the team of consultants. Indeed, the number of documents to be approved in every phase is not negligible and incurs significant administrative overhead (Govardhan & Munassar, 2010). In addition, it is expensive and difficult for consultants to make changes to documents.

These drawbacks demonstrate the need for change in project management methodology consultants were used to apply. Trends, needs and developments in today's world are too volatile to be managed by a rigid method that does not allow changes of direction and requires a lot of documentation.

## CHAPTER 3. AGILE METHODS

### 3.1 BACKGROUND

The birth of Agile methods for software development is often attributed to a meeting, that occurred in 2001. Although the term Agile Software Development was coined that year, people started working with an Agile approach before. Indeed, in the mid-nineties different practitioners, either those working inside organizations developing software products or consultants helping organizations build software products, began experimenting a mix of old and new ideas. Once they found the winning combination, they created a methodology for their team (The Agile Alliance, n.d.).

A central and innovative feature of these new methods was the emphasis on close collaboration between development team and business stakeholders. Some other characteristics are for example tight and self-organizing teams, frequent delivery of business value and smart ways to craft, confirm and deliver code (The Agile Alliance, n.d.).

Facing the efficiency of these methods in the software development, creators considered extending it to other organizations and contexts, like consulting companies (Kerscher & Günzel, 2019). They designed frameworks such as Scrum, Extreme Programming, Feature-driven Development (FDD), and Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM) (The Agile Alliance, n.d.).



The spread of ideas at this time was very organic. The different approaches started to grow in a grassroots manner. After that, people used the traditional frameworks after slightly modifying them with other practices to make them suitable for their own context. However, there was not a consistent pattern of describing these different approaches to develop software. It is at a meeting in Utah in 2001 that 17 practitioners decided to synthesize the similarities and differences. They agreed on a few elements that formed the values in the Agile Manifesto for Agile Software Development. It was also at this time that the term Agile Software Development was coined. A few months later, the 17 authors expanded on the ideas of the Agile Manifesto with 12 principles (The Agile Alliance, n.d.).

In late 2001 the Agile Alliance was officially formed with the aim of helping other people to explore software development and share experiences and ideas. More and more organizations, especially consulting companies, started to adopt Agile methods where developers took primarily the leadership in the teams. Increasingly, business consultants of those teams also began to learn and apply Agile approaches (The Agile Alliance, n.d.). While Agile was gaining popularity, an ecosystem was developing that included both IT side with the Agile software developers and Business side with consultants who helped developers through consulting, tools, training and frameworks (The Agile Alliance, n.d.).

The downside identified by the Agile Alliance in the evolution of Agile is the use that some professionals make of it. Now that Agile methods are widespread and this ecosystem has grown, some adopters have lost sight of Agile values and principles. The pitfall of misapplying Agile methods is to want to follow certain practices exactly, like a recipe for losing sight of the Agile mindset (Brosseau et al., 2019; The Agile Alliance, n.d.). Some users claim to be Agile but do not master it. Indeed, due to the growing success of these methods and their increasing visibility in scientific literature and press articles, many have wanted to apply Agile methods as quickly as possible, without adapting them to their environment, their business, their strategy and their values. Therefore, according to the Agile Alliance, the shortcomings do not lie in the Agile methods but rather in certain ways of applying them that are not in line with the values and principles of the manifesto (Beck et al., 2001; The Agile Alliance, n.d.).

### 3.2 DESCRIPTION

It is important to address all the values and principles of the manifesto before describing the functioning of Agile methods in more detail.

Therefore, Beck et al., (2001) wrote in the “Manifesto for Agile Software Development”:

*“We are uncovering better ways of developing  
software by doing it and helping others do it.  
Through this work we have come to value:*

*Individuals and interactions over processes and tools*

*Working software over comprehensive documentation*

*Customer collaboration over contract negotiation*

*Responding to change over following a plan*

*That is, while there is value in the items on  
the right, we value the items on the left more.”*

(Beck et al., 2001).

The last sentence makes it clear that documentation, contracts, tools and processes remain useful. Nevertheless, when it is necessary to deal with uncertainties and respond to changes quickly, these elements are not sufficient (Highsmith & Cockburn, 2001).

The interactions between individuals facilitates quick changes in process as well as the information sharing. Then, the use of working software enables to assess the efficiency in the production of results and feedbacks. If individuals frequently interact, it allows to minimize

documentation. Customer collaboration is about putting all players (customer, sponsor, developer and user) on the same team in order to merge their different experiences and expertise. The interactivity within this group of players promotes the production of more appropriate results and less expensive designs (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001). Finally, following a plan is appealing in theory, but does not work in practice. Indeed, this plan will go out of date within a few days. Although developing a plan drives the consultants team to think about project contingencies, the most important is the ability to deal with the changing realities (Beck et al., 2001; Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001).

Beyond these four values, Beck et al., (2001) identified twelve principles in the “*Manifesto for Agile Software Development*”:

*“Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.*

*Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.*

*Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.*

*Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need and trust them to get the job done.*

*The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.*

*Working software is the primary measure of progress.*

*Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.*

*Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.*

*Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.*

*The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.*

*At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.”*

(Beck et al., 2001).

The goal of Agile methods is to allow an organization, or at least part of it, to be Agile. According to Jim Highsmith being Agile means being able to “deliver quickly, change quickly, change often” (as cited in Cockburn, Highsmith & Orr, 2000, p. 5). To do so, the model, shown on Figure [2] is iterative allowing to review each release and learn from the necessary improvements. Cockburn and Highsmith (2001) introduce the concept of “Agile world view” meaning the novelty in Agile methods is not the practices they use, but their recognition of people as the main drivers of project success coupled with an important focus on effectiveness and manoeuvrability (Cockburn and Highsmith, 2001). Therefore, in Agile projects consultants can identify and respond to changes more easily and quickly than in projects using traditional approach.

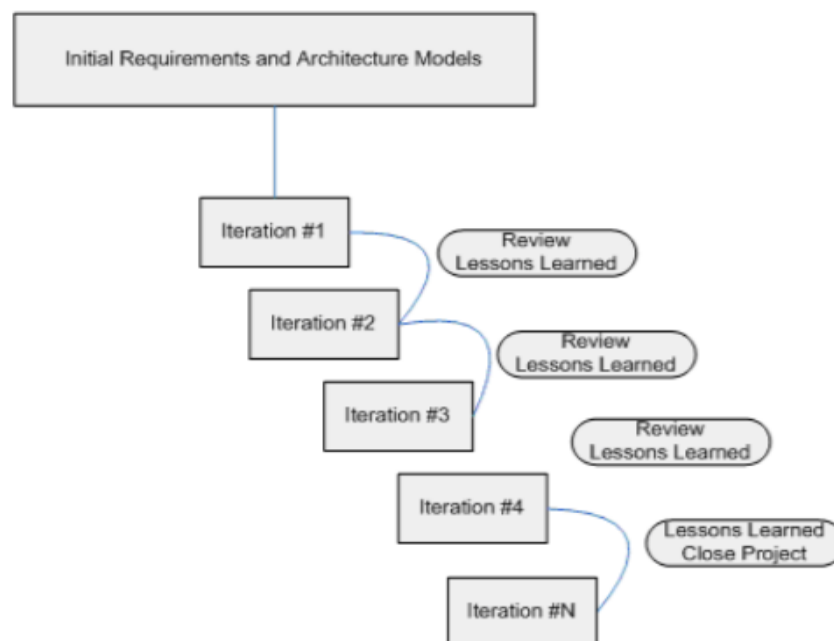


Figure [2]: Agile Model Life Cycle (Balaji and Murugaiyan, 2012, p. 29)

### 3.3 AGILE METHODS PLURALITY

While Agile techniques vary in practices and emphasis, they share common values and principles written in the Agile Manifesto. Besides, some characteristics like the iterative development, the focus on interaction and communication as well as the reduction of resource-intensive intermediate artifacts are found in the different types of Agile methods (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004). Iterative development allows team members to adapt quickly to changing requirements, which is essential in view of the evolving trends discussed in the introduction. Working in close location and focusing on communication is also often found in the literature. It allows teams to make decisions and act on them immediately, rather than wait on correspondence (Drury-Grogan, 2014). Nevertheless, in the “field research” part, two respondents give their view on telework and notably, the consequences the COVID-19 lockdown on this characteristic. However, a McKinsey & Company’s recent research states that companies using Agile practices in their operational models and activities have managed the COVID-19 impact better than their peers (Handscorn et al., 2020). Finally, reducing artifacts that do not add value to the final deliverable allows to allocate more resources to the development of the product itself. It also allows consultants to complete projects sooner.

The best-known Agile methods are Scrum, Extreme Programming, Crystal Methods, Feature Driven Development, Lean Development, and Dynamic Systems Development Methodology. Although they apply all the values, principles and characteristics cited above, they differ somewhat in their practices. The idea in this section is not to develop each of them in detail, but simply to show that there is not only the Scrum method. Scrum, along with XP, is one of the more widely used Agile Methods (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004). Nevertheless, the Scrum method is the one that will be developed because it is the most documented in the literature. It is also the method that Spotify and the consulting companies in which the practitioners I interviewed are working are mostly inspired by. In addition, the Scrum method has a wide scope of application, which is not limited only to software development. Indeed, although Extreme Programming (XP) is a widely used method as well, it has more restrictive features (Cockburn, Highsmith & Orr, 2000; DeCarlo, 2004; Dingsøyr & Moe, 2008). For example, a team is composed of between two and ten people because the whole team have to be in the same room to work. Concerning the iteration length, XP has the shortest recommended iteration length of the Agile Methods, namely two weeks. (Rumpe & Schröder,

2002). By contrast, the Scrum method is less restrictive and can be better adapted to different types of projects. Scrum method is thus better suited for consulting field, as there is great heterogeneity in the projects (Dingsøyr & Moe, 2008; Günzel & Kerscher, 2019).

### 3.4 SCRUM METHOD

Ken Schwaber first described Scrum in 1996 (as cited in Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004) as a process that “accepts that the development process is unpredictable”. The term “Scrum” comes from Rugby where a Scrum occurs when players from each team huddle closely together ... in an attempt to advance down the playing field” as explained by Highsmith (2002). Figure [3] depicts the Scrum lifecycle. Scrum projects are split into iterations (sprints) consisting of several phases.

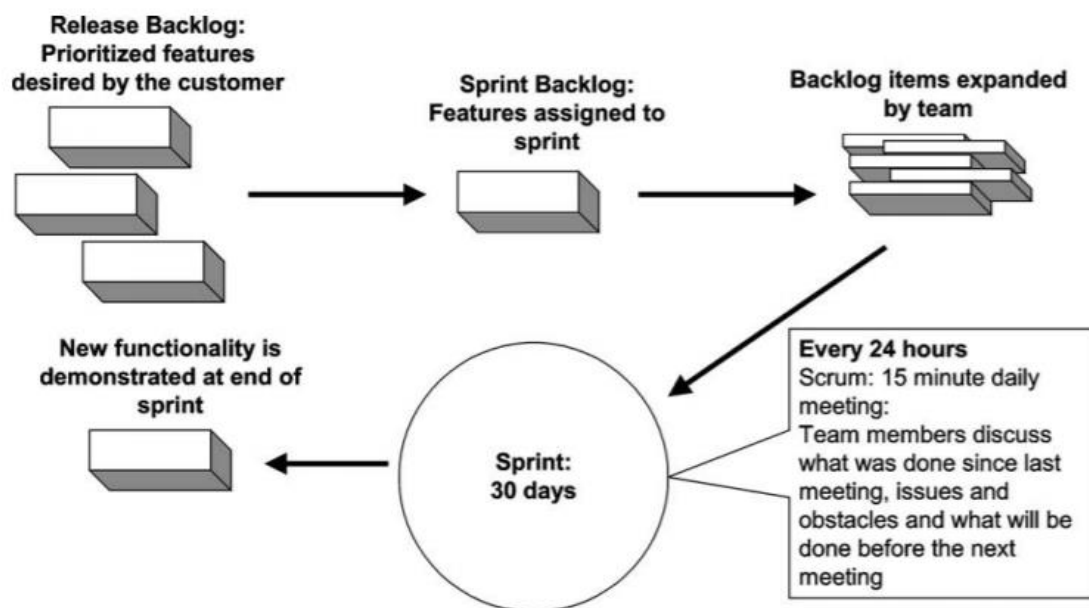


Figure [3]: Scrum lifecycle (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004, p. 15)

*Pre-sprint planning:* All work that need to be done for the project completion is kept on what is called the “release backlog”. During the pre-sprint planning, some features and functionality are prioritized. They are placed into the “sprint backlog” which is defined by Cohen, Costa & Lindvall (2004) as a collection of tasks to be completed during the next sprint. In addition,

a sprint goal is identified during pre-sprint planning to remind consultants the tasks' purpose and the level of detail needed during implementation (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004).

*Sprint:* Upon completion of the pre-sprint planning, consultants teams receive their sprint backlog and “told to sprint to achieve their objectives” state Beedle and Schwaber (2002). At this point, tasks in the sprint backlog are frozen meaning they remain unchangeable for the duration of the sprint. Their duration is from one to six weeks, usually four. Then, team members choose the tasks they want to work on and begin development (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004). Scrum meetings are held every morning to enhance communication and inform managers, developers, customers on the status of the project. Problems encountered will be discussed too. These short daily meetings are critical to the success of Scrum and to maintain the team focused on a common goal (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004).

*Post-sprint meeting:* After every sprint, a post-sprint meeting is organised to analyse project progress and demonstrate the current product, service or system. It is an opportunity for the team members to exchange among themselves, to learn from each other and to draw lessons from the project (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004).

Schwaber (2002) summarizes the key principles of Scrum. Scrum consists in small working teams where communication and sharing of tacit knowledge are maximized and overhead minimized. Assignments and work of team members are divided into low coupling partitions (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004). A complete team includes at least a developer, a quality assurance engineer and a documenter. In consulting, consultants will divide these roles according to their specialties (business, IT, engineering, legal). Moreover, the capability to adapt quickly to technical or marketplace changes is key as it allows to produce the best possible product. To do so, “builds”, prototypes or construction of executables are frequently released to be inspected, adjusted, tested, documented and built on (Cohen, Costa & Lindvall, 2004). This agility allows to declare a product “done” whenever required. Reasons to put on the market are various, for instance because the competition just shipped, because the company needs the cash or because the user or customer needs the functions.

### 3.5 AGILE METHODS IN CONSULTING

Although they are born in the software development industry, Agile methods are becoming more and more popular among consultants for their client's project management according to a recent Accenture Strategy research (Jaramillo & Lake, 2018). Indeed, for Hamilton & Paquette (2017), both partners at McKinsey & Company, due to digitalization, not only IT companies need to change their project management strategy, but also consultancy companies. In this context, client's requirements for the project management approach in management consulting are also evolving significantly (Hamilton & Paquette, 2017). Indeed for Risch, since client's expectations and market-driven requirements need a more flexible and adaptable project management approach from management consultants, Agile methods are particularly suited for management consultancies (as cited in Günzel & Kerscher, 2019, p. 2).

Accenture's consulting strategy combines navigation through complexity with competitive agility (Accenture, n.d.). The company keeps the core business running while simultaneously quickly identifying and investing in innovation to shape the future (Jaramillo & Lake, 2018). At McKinsey & Company, too, Agile consulting has become a priority. The leader in strategic consultancy, regarding the Vault ranking of 2020 (Vault, 2020), created the McKinsey Agile Tribe, which is a group of over 50 consultants sharing Agile expertise from the digital, operations, marketing, and organization disciplines (Aghina et al., 2018). Thus, it demonstrates that Agile methods are not only applied in software development projects. Moreover, McKinsey & Company, among its consulting services, supports the Agile transition of its clients' companies (Aghina et al., 2018). Furthermore, Bain & Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers or Deloitte provides Agile training internally for their consultants and support their clients in Agile transition. TCGen, a leading product development consulting company, embraces Agility by adopting large scale transformation that moves consultants teams into new ways of working, while building a management culture that fosters this new approach to product development (Carter, n.d.). TCGen works with companies to accelerate time to market and reduce costs. For example, by using Agile methods, TCGen consultants created the development process currently used by Apple, the Apple New Product Process (ANPP) (Carter, n.d.). According to TCGen's research on twenty Agile projects, Agile is not just for software anymore. Most of the values and principles in the Agile manifesto are non-software specific. Besides, the key for



Agile consulting is to adopt a flexible methodical approach by selecting only the Agile practices that suit the project on which consultants are working (Carter, n.d).

All these consulting firms have made it a point of honour to improve their organizational agility. As consultants are the actors of change in their clients through projects of all kinds, they seized the opportunity to change paradigms and moved on to the Agile approach (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019).

### 3.6 ADVANTAGES

Agile methods have many advantages. Agile organizations combine stability and speed. Agility helps role clarity among consultants team, promotes innovation and can generate positive outcomes for organizational health and performance (Aghina et al., 2020).

First of all, the methods are particularly well adapted to technological developments and societal changes. Indeed, one crucial advantage of Agile model is the ability to respond to the changing project requirements (Balaji and Murugayan, 2012). Dividing the project into several iterations allows to rectify what has been done or to change direction completely if it does not correspond to the client's expectations. The first delivery can be produced after one iteration, namely four weeks to achieve an early win (Balaji and Murugayan, 2012). Frequent testing applied to releases guarantees a certain level of quality and makes it possible to know precisely which phase the flaw or the element to be improved is at. In addition, defect detection becomes less expensive since errors are identified earlier, it will not be necessary to erase all the work done. It is therefore possible to correct more quickly while still meeting the targeted deadlines. Besides, Agile methods promote the invention of simple solutions that reduce waste. As a result, these Agile features boost operational performance measured for example by the time to market, issue-resolution speed, planning time, raw product output or predictability (Aghina et al., 2020).

Moreover, there is no guesswork between the IT and business consultants as well as with the customer, as there is face to face communication and continuous inputs from the client (Balaji and Murugayan, 2012). The emphasis is placed on the user which results in a rise in customer satisfaction.

Beyond increasing customer satisfaction and operational performance, organizations that operate Agile transformation companies are seeing a significant increase in employee engagement. According to McKinsey's research, organizations in the sample see a 20- to 30-point improvement in engagement in an Agile environment, compared with a non-Agile environment (Aghina et al., 2020). The increase was observed whether employee engagement was measured by employee willingness to recommend their workplaces or by internal employee-satisfaction surveys. Different factors can explain the enhancement in employee engagement. In non-hierarchical organizations with cross-functional teams employee develop their autonomy and mastery. In addition, they share clear purpose and make sense of their work. In Agile projects, cross-functional teams have full end-to-end accountability for specific missions and products that boosts their autonomy (Aghina et al., 2020; Drury-Grogan, 2014). Agile projects need team members with multidisciplinary skills while having some expertise in a particular field. Employees can therefore work in different areas, which gives them a variety of tasks, while deepening their mastery during specific tasks (Aghina et al., 2020). Therefore, Agile organizations attract better applicants and outperform competitors in the war for talent.

Finally, these three benefits commonly contribute to a fourth outcome: the improvement of financial performance (Aghina et al., 2020; Bailey & Wu, 2007). The four improvements are illustrated by Figure [4].

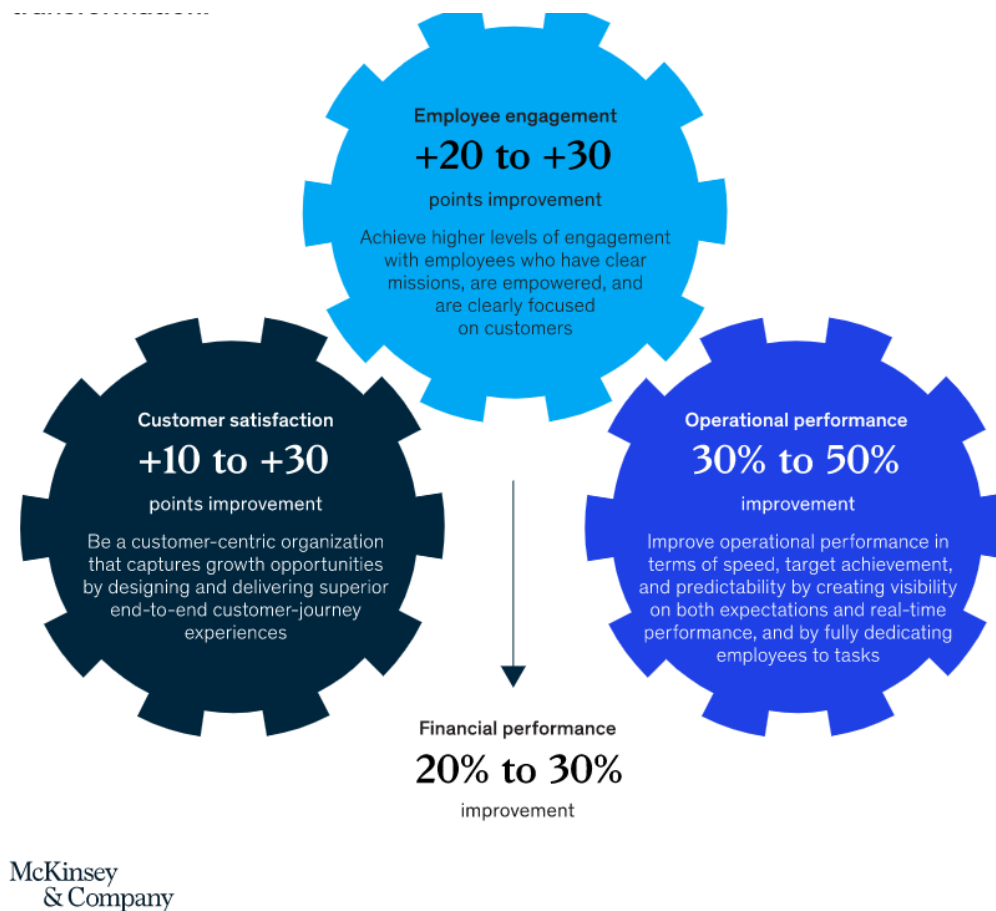


Figure [4]: “The Agile impact engine” (Aghina, Handscomb, Ludolph, Rona & West, 2020, p.3)

Through McKinsey’s research, there has been seen qualitative evidence of revenue-based improvement due to Agile transformation and therefore, use of Agile methods in the operational activities. The accuracy of the quantitative data is more mitigated as they focus on cost savings. Indeed, cost savings and productivity gains are easily identifiable. Conversely, the increase in margins and revenues is more difficult to capture due to complexities in baselining the pretransformation state. Although cost savings is seldom the first goal of Agile transformation, it remains a natural positive outcome of the improved operational performance (Aghina et al., 2020). Agile organizations are able to provide the same results with fewer people. In the research, internal and external cost savings ranged from 20 to 30 percent. Besides, some companies reinvested a part of these savings to capture new promising opportunities, meaning these savings have not been counted in profit and loss. For example, a Latin American bank operated an Agile transition in one of its discrete business units (Aghina et al., 2020). By reducing the number of layers to three from seven to remove the ‘middle

managers' and by destroying silos between IT and business, 30 percent of the internal full-time-equivalent employees was saved (Aghina et al., 2020). These employees were all identified as new capabilities and have been given new roles within the Agile company (Aghina et al., 2020).

However, while these results are impressive, there are some things to consider. First, the extent of the improvements depends on the starting level of enterprise agility. Organizations starting with lower baselines see more change. Second, the application of Agile methods must be consistent with the values and principles of the manifesto in order to claim these gains. Third, as Aghina et al., (2020) explain, the 20 to 30 percent increase in financial improvement should not be register as profit and loss. Indeed, organizations make strategic decisions about removing cost and reinvesting in growth and capabilities (Aghina et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, these results show that it is interesting for consultants to steer their projects using Agile methods (Aghina et al., 2020). Indeed, according to Aghina et al., (2020), consultants will be more engaged and more efficient. They will satisfy their clients more, which remains one of their primary goals. Finally, the consulting firm in which they work will see an improvement in its financial performance. In the consultancy sector, the study therefore suggests that the Agile methods provide intrinsic efficiencies in the management of projects (Aghina et al., 2020).

### **3.7 AGILE COMPONENTS TO SUCCESS**

Agile methods are full of advantages cited in the literature. Through quantitative and qualitative indicators, the authors proved Agile methods efficiency for project management on the whole (Adjei & Rwakatiwana, 2010; Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001; Conboy & Keaveney, 2006; Crowder & Friess, 2015; Drury-Grogan, 2014).

Therefore, a quantitative study by Cao and Chow (2008) attempted to identify the intrinsic components of Agile methods that are at the root of these advantages. In other words, they are trying to find out which Agile components are critical success factors in increasing efficiency

and reducing the risk of project failures in absolute terms. Unfortunately, since the literature focuses mainly on Agile software projects, this being also the case for Cao and Chow's study (2008). This is notably what motivated the writing of this thesis, which aims to fill the gap in research on Agile projects conducted by consultants for their clients.

Nevertheless, the Cao and Chow's study (2008) is useful for this thesis because software development plays an important role in consultancy projects. Furthermore, the Agile methods were originally conceived within the framework of software development, but as mentioned before in this research, they are easily adaptable and applicable to software and non-software consultancy projects (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019). The Scrum method, flexible and not restrictive, is the method generally used by consulting firms.

Therefore, according to the Agile components that emerge from this statistical study and their adaptability in the field of consultancy for both software and non-software projects, we will compare these findings with consultants' field experience interviewed in the second part of this thesis (Cao & Chow, 2008).

The study initially relied on existing literature to determine the potential critical success factors of Agile projects. Data were collected from 109 Agile projects from diverse organizations of various size, industries and geographic locations (Cao & Chow, 2008). Subsequently, through statistical analysis the list went down to three major critical success factors for each of the four project success categories that are quality, scope, time and cost. This top trio consists of the delivery strategy, the Agile software engineering techniques and the team capability. The results are in line with the Agile Manifesto principles as the three top critical success factors consist of many attributes laid down in the Manifesto (Cao & Chow, 2008).

The first component is the delivery strategy which is defined as the set of project delivery methods that the owner may adopt for delivering its projects. Any changes to this strategy may involve a broadening or a lessening of delivery options (Gibson, Migliaccio, & O'Connor, 2008). In this Agile context, the delivery strategy corresponds to the first and the third Manifesto principles, that are continuous delivery of valuable and working software in short

time scales (Beck et al., 2001). According to Cao and Chow's study (2008), the Agile delivery strategy improves deadline management, as many Agile projects are completed on time compared to Waterfall projects. Scope overrun is getting rarer too since customer feedback is received frequently. Consequently, additional costs are avoided, and the project is completed on budget (Crowder & Friess, 2015; Conboy & Keaveney, 2006; Bailey & Wu, 2007).

The second component refers to Agile Software Engineering Techniques. It is the total set of Agile practices or activities needed to transform a user's requirements into software, in this case (Humphrey, 1988). These techniques may include, as appropriate, iterative requirements specification, face-to-face communication over written specifications, managing requirement change through constant planning, extreme requirements prioritization, design, implementation, prototyping, verification, installation, operational support, review meetings and documentation. It also may include either temporary or long-term repair and/or enhancement to meet continuing needs (Humphrey, 1988 ; Baskerville, Cao & Ramesh, 2010). The Agile software engineering techniques are in line with the ninth and tenth principles relating to the "continuous attention to technical excellence and simple design" (Beck et al., 2001). Today, although Agile project management originate in the IT industry, Agile methods are moving into other businesses. In fact, the benefits of Agile methods have led to a widespread use of Agile project management even in non-software development contexts (Gustavsson, 2016). An article wrote by Pope-Ruark states that Agile methods show their reach in areas such as financial services, marketing, design, energy management, publishing, civil and mechanical engineering (as cited in Gustavsson, 2016, p. 116). Moreover, Agile techniques extending from one context to another are nothing new (Gustavsson, 2016). Although some values and principles in the Agile Manifesto are specifically expressed for designing and programming software products, their interpretation has broadened over time. Indeed, the second value "Working software over comprehensive documentation" means focusing on the outcome and the product in hand instead of only discussing the possibilities and placing great importance on documentation. By focus on what is accomplished, teams can be more effective by understanding and reviewing good and bad practices. In addition, the term "working software" can be used in a broad sense, to represent any project deliverable and does not have to be solely software. This may include designing prototypes, cost-benefit analysis or recruiting a new team (Wilson, 2017). Finally, iterative requirements specification, design, implementation, verification, installation, operational support, and documentation are Agile techniques that any

typical consulting project requires (Lawrence & Yslas, 2006). These steps are not exclusively reserved for software development projects, but can be studied in projects carried out by consultants for their clients. Agile techniques allow to improve quality and scope. Iterative requirements specification through face-to-face communication allows ideas to be directly transferred from the customer to the consultants team, which leaves less room for error and reduces the amount of documentation (Baskerville, Cao, & Ramesh, 2010). Besides, in Agile projects, requirements are not pre-defined, instead they emerge in an iterative manner throughout the project. Then, an inventory of the tasks to be prioritized is made on a regular basis (Baskerville, Cao, & Ramesh, 2010). In this way, the product designed and implemented sticks perfectly to the customer's expectations, and the developers do not create features out of scope. Finally, prototypes and tests ensure high-quality deliverables.

The third component pointed out by the literature is the team capability. This represents the set of team member characteristics such as knowledge, personality and skills. Besides, team capabilities are also influenced by the team characteristics such as size, staff turnover, shared beliefs and diversity. The projects productivity depends heavily on team capabilities (Conradi, Cruzes, Kon & Melo, 2013). Agile methods are mainly people-centric and take value of team members capabilities when bringing agility to development processes [8]. Indeed, in the manifesto, the "human" or "team" component is found in several principles. In addition, the team member characteristics that lead to success in Agile organization are different from those in a traditional organization, practising the Waterfall methodology. People in Agile organizations primarily need to have three capabilities. First, they handle ambiguity without losing focus. Second, they concentrate on outcomes over processes. Third, they work and contribute by being a team member (Aghina, Handscomb, Ludophl, West and Yip, 2019).

Based on the study, team capability enhances timeliness and costs. Since the Agile model is essentially people-centric, the value of team member characteristics is recognized. Characteristics are for example, knowledge, skills, personality and shared beliefs among the team. Team capabilities is the most significant personnel characteristic that influences projects success (Conradi, Cruzes, Kon and Melo, 2013). Getting the right people with required skills and empowering them are essential for Agile development success. Since teams with broader experience are positively associated with project performance, a diversified team with various backgrounds and competencies is key. Consequently, consultants productivity soars and project are completed on time and budget.

These results quoted above are in line with what is generally read in the literature on Agile methods used in project development (Gustavsson, 2016; Crowder & Friess, 2015). However, some of the other study findings are more surprising.

In fact, some conclusions fail to support some common assumptions about Agile success factors. Statistics in Cao and Chow's study (2008) indicate that strong executive support and/or sponsor commitment are not critical to conduct an Agile project, since they are non-factors. Moreover, unlike what is prominently written in Agile books, Agile-style work facility (working-in-pair stations, communal areas and open spaces) are not prerequisite for successful Agile projects. While nice to have, this means that this is not a critical factor (Cao & Chow, 2008). The project team should not rigidly follow work facility instructions to the letter. Even more surprising, the organizational environment factor has a negative coefficient in both regression analyses of the timeliness and cost dependent variables (Cao & Chow, 2008). It suggests that Agile projects could be complete on time and budget despite the lack of Agile-friendly organizational environment (Cao & Chow, 2008). Therefore, cooperative culture, universal acceptance of Agile mindset, oral culture or appropriate reward system are not critical factors. Only the "people" and "technical" dimensions seem to be important for the success of Agile projects. The "organisational" dimension is not critical as it is not well represented in the analysis. Finally, the "project" dimension records a zero contribution to success according to the statistics (Cao & Chow, 2008).

Although there had been ample discussion of this dimension in the literature, this seems to suggest that project managers, when deciding whether to go Agile for their software projects, may not have to put too much weight on factors such as the project nature, project type, or project schedule, thus broadening the applicability of Agile development methods. Despite intense discussions in the literature, this suggests that the type of project would not affect the successful use of Agile methods for projects in consulting (Cao & Chow, 2008). In other words, project managers may not have to put too much weight on factors such as the project nature, project type or project schedule when deciding to go Agile (Cao & Chow, 2008). This last finding allows to broaden the applicability of Agile development methods to the consulting



field, for both projects involving software products or not, which is, among other things, an ambition of this thesis.

### 3.8 DRAWBACKS

Each method has its opponents and downsides. According to some authors, Agile methods would not be accessible to project teams composed entirely of junior members. They state only senior consultants can take decisions necessary for the Agile type of development (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012). It leaves little room for newbie consultants, until their work is combined with the senior resources (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012). Moreover, Agile methods may be designed to smaller teams that are collocated (Špundak, 2014). Opponents think that projects being worked in multiple locations can lead to the use of different Agile methods depending on the location (Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008). Besides, commitment level from Agile team members must be greater than from traditional one, since they play a more important role in their projects.

Then, the influence of project size on the choice and success of Agile methods raises debate in the literature. The statistical study had shown surprising findings on this topic, suggesting that the type of project had no impact on the success of Agile projects. Nevertheless, in general, the authors believe that large projects are difficult to achieve with Agile methods. At issue, the difficulty for consultants to judge the efforts and the time required for the project (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012).

## CHAPTER 4. COMPARISON BETWEEN AGILE AND WATERFALL METHODS

After consulting the different opinions of the authors in the literature it is worthwhile to draw up a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

### 4.1 BENEFITS OVERVIEW

*Table 2. Comparison between the advantages of the Agile and Waterfall methods. (Aghina et al., 2020; Balaji and Murugayan, 2012; Bailey & Wu, 2007).*

| Agile methods                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Waterfall methodology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to respond to the changing project requirements</li> <li>• Combination of speed and stability</li> <li>• Iterative model leads to quicker results as well as faster problem awareness, resulting in increasing operational performance</li> <li>• Test-based approach to quality assurance</li> <li>• User-centric model that leads to increasing customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Rise in employee engagement</li> <li>• Improvement of financial performance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to implement, requires minimal resources for implementation</li> <li>• Document-driven approach ensures quality, makes it easier for juniors to understand and apply autonomously</li> <li>• Scheduling in one-time from the beginning reassures the customer</li> </ul> |

## 4.2 DRAWBACKS OVERVIEW

*Table 3. Comparison between the drawbacks of Agile and Waterfall methods. (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012; Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008; Špundak, 2014).*

| Agile methods                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Waterfall methodology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in applying these methods in young, large and geographically distributed teams</li> <li>• Difficulty in applying these methods in larger projects, because the forecasts in terms of time and costs are more blurred as a lot of room is left for requirements change</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical lack of adaptability to change that makes the method obsolete.</li> <li>• Too late awareness of problems/ insufficiencies due to a lack of regular communication with the client. This leads to higher costs, unused features and delays</li> <li>• Emphasis on documentation is very costly, time consuming and leads to administrative overhead</li> </ul> |

Naturally, each method has advantages and disadvantages. However, in today's world, the Waterfall methodology downsides are more harmful for consultants (Aghina et al., 2020; Pasmore, 2010). Indeed, they make the method completely obsolete and unsuited to the prevailing economic situation as well as technological and social developments.

Moreover, the essence of an Agile mindset is to adapt to every situation. Therefore, Agile methods recommend a set of techniques and practices that promote the successful application of these methods. Nevertheless, these techniques and practices should not be followed rigidly as a recipe (Gustavsson, 2016). The method can be adapted to the context, the project, the team and the organizational environment (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019). This is the first strength of Agile. The potential drawbacks of the Agile model pointed out in the literature can therefore be mitigated by retaining more "Waterfall" components for these specific elements. For example, larger projects will simply be broken down into iterations comparable to smaller Waterfall cycles or some Agile projects will have more documentation. Many authors talk about mixing Agile and traditional methods, the use of one type of method not being prohibitive for the use of its antagonist. The literature particularly tries to categorize the method choice according to

the type of project. However, the statistical study of the Agile methods critical success factors for software development has shown that the project dimension is a non-factor. Therefore, this suggests that any software development project can be Agile. The success of Agile will depend on the understanding and adaptability of the team to the context and the project. Of course, it is true that projects with frequently changing requirements, high-risk projects, projects requiring to deliver product in a short period of time and projects with skilled resources are particularly suited to Agile methods (Balaji & Murugaiyan, 2012). This does not mean, however, that larger projects and projects with less uncertainty where all the requirements are known from the outset cannot be Agile. Špundak (2014) concludes that there is no “silver bullet for using project management methodology for specific project”.

Furthermore, these results show that the analysis can be extended to other types of projects, not only in software development. Although most of the literature related to Agile methods in project management is within the software development area, there are attempts to widen the scope of these methods to the consulting field. In the literature, a lot of research has been done in the field of software development, pioneer of Agile. The trend is beginning to change, broadening the scope of the project area to the consulting field. Even the construction area is receiving particular attention. Indeed, there seems to be huge potential for success from the adoption of Agile methods in the pre-design and design phases of construction (Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008). In fact, iterative and incremental development promote creative solutions, especially to complex and uncertain requirements (Fernandez, D. J., & Fernandez, J. D., 2008).

In the last decade, Agile project management in consulting is thus gaining very wide public attention.

It is considered as “the” project management approach for today’s projects, traditional methods such as Waterfall being deemed obsolete (Špundak, 2014). Organizations are under pressures to find innovative ways to remain competitive in the current rapidly changing world. According to McKinsey & Company, Agility is therefore no longer just desirable, but essential to survive.

## CHAPTER 5. THE SPOTIFY MODEL

The findings of the literature review show that Agile is first and foremost a philosophy. The efficiency that will result from the application of Agile methods in project management carried out by consultants for their clients, depends to a large extent on the integration of the Agile mindset among those consultants. However, this integration is not without difficulties. In addition, each company adapts Agile methods to its structure and needs, making it difficult to imitate the model from one company to another (Brosseau et al., 2019). Therefore, in the end, the main danger of Agile methods is a misunderstanding and misapplication of the concept (Aghina et al., 2018).

Taking the example of a company that has successfully adopted this mindset. In fact, for Cockburn, the consecration of the implementation of Agile methods and its underlying philosophy can be illustrated by Spotify (as cited in Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). The Swedish company has completely absorbed the Agile values to become one with them and finally gave its name to the model: the Spotify model (Cruth, n.d.). This model demonstrates how Agile methods can be fully integrated into a company at all organizational levels (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012; Noble, Rigby & Sutherland, 2018).

Spotify is a Swedish digital music, podcast, and video streaming service founded in 2006 (Spotify, n.d.). Since Spotify is in the field of software development and since Alistair Cockburn himself, one of the founding fathers of Agile software development and manifesto author, after a visit to the company was impressed with the way Spotify had incorporated the Manifesto values and principles (Beck et al., 2001), the company is a good example in terms of implementing Agile methods, and especially the Agile Scrum method (The Agile Scrum Group, n.d.). Spotify is evolving fast and is, to date, one of the most impressive examples of organizations which kept an Agile mindset despite having scale to over 30 teams across three cities (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). In 2015, according to the Agile Scrum Group (n.d.), Spotify employed 1,600 people, had sales of \$ 2.18 billion and in nine years it has recruited 140 million active users since its foundation. Since then, Spotify has inspired many other organizations. Thus, the idea is to describe, in a nutshell, the way employees are working at Spotify.

First, a Squad is the basic unit of development and can be compared to a mini-startup since it decides its own way of working (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.; Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012; Dingsøy & Moe, 2008). The Squad is similar to a Scrum team which is seen as multifunctional and self-organized. It is represented schematically in Figure [5]. Both characteristics are important for the Scrum team, meaning the team is supposed to find out themselves how to solve the tasks they have to perform to deliver the project (Moe & Dingsøy, 2008). Each Squad has a long-term mission and will split the tasks over several Scrum sprints to complete the mission. The Scrum sprints are a series of short development phases, which typically last from one to four weeks (Moe & Dingsøy, 2008). Examples of long-term missions at Spotify are Android client construction and improvement, the Spotify radio experience creation, providing payment solutions or scaling the backend system (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Since each Squad is assigned a mission and a part of the product for a long time, the members of the Squad become real experts in that area (Moe & Dingsøy, 2008). Moreover, Spotify promotes the use of Lean Startup principles such as Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and validated learning (Bosch et al., 2018; Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Lean Startup has gained increasing visibility thanks to Eric Ries who states that Lean Startup is designed to operate in situations where we face extreme uncertainty (Ries, 2014). According to Ries, instead of actively assessing what customers value, most startups spend resources developing products that people are not interested in (Björk, Bosch, Ljungblad & Olsson, 2013). It is essential to understand the problem before developing the solution. Hence, most startups in the field of software development are following the lean startup methodology that combines short software development cycles with constant interactions with users (Björk et al., 2013). Moreover, MVP consists in releasing early and often, and validated learning relates to the use of metrics and A/B testing to find out what really works and what does not (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). People in Squads are encouraged to devote approximately 10% of their time on hack days to promote learning and innovation (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Hack days take place several times a month and their purpose is to try out new ideas with colleagues.

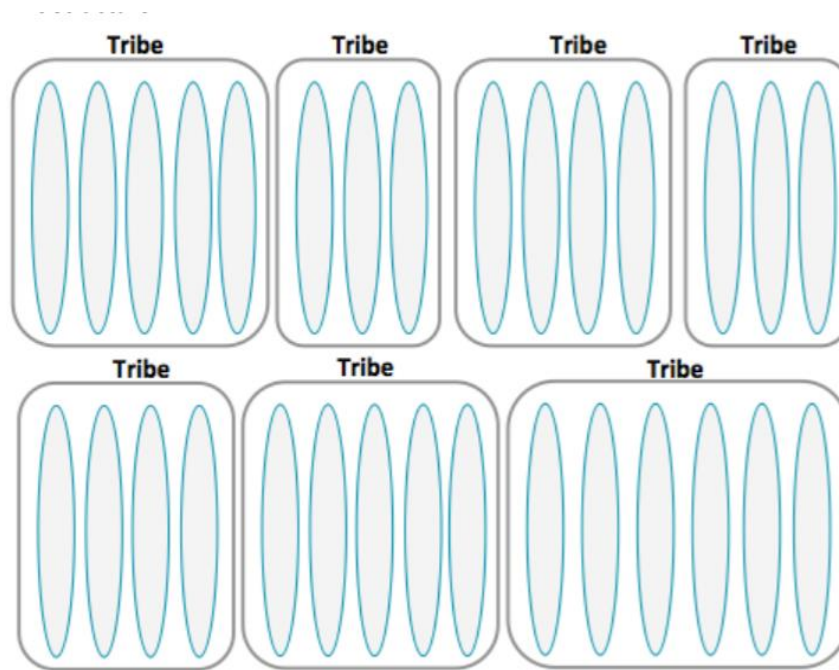


*Figure [5] : The Squad (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012, p. 2)*

Then, each Squad has a product owner (PO) who takes the responsibility to prioritize the tasks within the team. The product owner talks with stakeholders and customers to make a list of tasks and requirements which is referred as the “User story”. However, he is not involved in the way team members do their work. Product owners of every Squads collaborate to keep a high-level roadmap document where the organization, in this case Spotify, is heading (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.; Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Indeed, this document represents the strategic alignment between all the Squads. Based on this roadmap, each product owner has to maintain a matching product backlog for their respective Squad. Moreover, each Squad has access to an Agile coach. His role is to help team members to evolve and improve the way they are working. For instance, he can report impediments to the team and find a way to address them. To do so, the Agile coach runs retrospectives, sprint planning meetings and do 1-on-1 coaching among other things (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.; Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012).

Furthermore, when several Squads work together in related areas such as the music player or backend infrastructure in the Spotify’s example, this collection of Squads is called a Tribe. Figure [6] describes the concept of Tribe. For Ivarsson and Kniberg (2012), Tribes can be compared to the “incubator” for the autonomous Squad. Each Tribe has a Tribe leader who is responsible for providing an optimal working environment for the group of Squads (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). A Tribe does not exceed 100 people based on the concept of “Dunbar number” (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). This principle states that most people cannot maintain a social relationship with more than 100 people (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Squads in the same

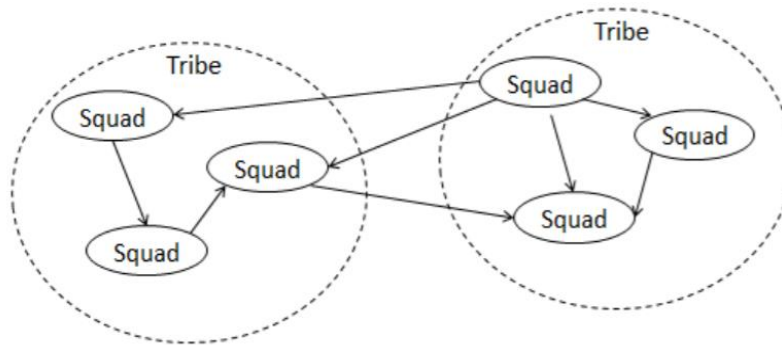
Tribe are all physically in the same office and share an open space to promote collaboration between them. To keep up to date with each other's work and to be aligned, meetings are held regularly (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.). During these informal meetings, employees show what they are working on or what they have delivered. It is also the opportunity to learn from each other. For example, live demos of working software, new tools and techniques are shown.



*Figure [6] : Tribes (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012, p. 5)*

Although the goal is to have Squads that are as autonomous as possible to avoid being slowed down or blocked, sometimes some dependencies are unavoidable. However, they are not necessarily negative. Figure [7] depicts the potential linkages between Squads. Ivarsson and Kniberg (2012) explain that a practice called “Scrum of Scrum” has been developed to manage dependencies. It is a synchronization meeting where one person from each team meets to discuss dependencies (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). Since this is a rare occurrence at Spotify, Scrum of Scrums happens only “on demand” when for example, a large project requires the coordinated work of multiple Squads for a few months (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.; Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012).





*Figure [7] : Squad dependencies (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012, p. 7)*

In addition, total Squad autonomy also has disadvantages, such as a loss of economies of scale. Indeed, a tester in Squad 1 may be facing a problem that the tester in Squad 2 solved last week (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). If each Squad runs like a fully independent start-up and has no communication with other Squads, there is no point in being part of a company. Moreover, if testers could discuss together across Squads and Tribes, they would share knowledge and tools for the benefit of all Squads (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). To alleviate this problem, Chapters and Guilds have been introduced. They are represented on Figures [8] and [9]. A Chapter is a group of employees with the same expertise within a Tribe (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). The Chapter leader who is also part of a Squad takes the lead when consultations are held regularly. They discuss experiences, knowledge and challenges related to their field. The Chapter leader is responsible to guide employees in their growth and skills development and to set salaries too (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012).



Thanks to these different elements, the Spotify model has two major strengths. First, employees with diverse expertise groups (in Squads) work together to deliver a product or service completely independently (Agile Scrum Group, n.d.). Second, employees with the same expertise (in Chapters and Guilds) share knowledge and experiences in order to develop further in the field of their expertise (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012).

Spotify is the quintessence of successful Agile mindset adoption (Ivarsson & Kniberg, 2012). It currently illustrates the maximum threshold in terms of maturity for the Agile methods integration. Among the consulting firms in which the consultants interviewed are working, McKinsey & Company has made an enterprise-wide Agile transformation. The comprehensive Agile transformation touches the 5 pillars of the company, people, strategy, process, structure and technology (Brosseau et al., 2019). The other field research firms, PwC, Deloitte and MANTU, although supportive of the model and encouraging the application of Agile in consultants' projects, operate a more gradual Agile transformation. Indeed, some projects combine Agile and Waterfall methods. Their Agile integration is not as advanced as in the Spotify company, but there are several similarities. Naturally, the comparison has its limits, as Spotify comes from a different field and is a “born-Agile” company, common in the technology sector (Brosseau et al., 2019). Spotify provides an overview of the horizons that can be reached by carrying out the most advanced Agile transformation.

## **PART II. FIELD RESEARCH**

### **CHAPTER 6. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The second part of this master thesis aims to validate or not the conclusions drawn from the literature review. In other words, through a field approach, the question of the Agile methods effectiveness and their components (delivery strategy, Agile software engineering techniques and team capability) for projects success compared to the Waterfall method will be discussed. The field research is both in the field of software and non-software consulting projects. Since the literature has less discussed Agile non-software projects, this second part aims to explore the subject.

The relevant practitioners to interview for the Agile field are the change agents who implement and apply this method in their daily professional life. Therefore, consultants seem to be the ideal candidates. Indeed, they are confronted with a plurality of projects, allowing them to extend the scope of Agile methods to non-software projects (Günzel & Kersch, 2019). Also, they collaborate with various types of customers and work in different teams.

Therefore, five consultants from four different consulting companies were interviewed. They have various professional experiences and are all qualified in the Agile field. They bring their view on the advantages, disadvantages and characteristics of Agile methods and compare them with the Waterfall methodology.

Furthermore, this field research is qualitative for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is of little relevance to quantify results on a general Agile principle. There are different Agile methods, but above all they evolve in different contexts and are applied in a variety of ways. The basis for the success of these methods is the Agile mindset, which could be integrated to varying degrees in different companies. Organizations have various characteristics including size, structure or area of specialization. Asking the practitioners interviewed to quantify the number of Agile projects considered successful is not interesting because some projects will be completely Agile, others a mix between Waterfall and Agile. In addition, the success factors should be aligned and consistent across the companies interviewed to allow a fair comparison.

Moreover, the disclosure of quantified (financial) results or detailed project descriptions are generally not accessible, either because of the client's desire for confidentiality or because of competitive secrecy concerns.

Then, qualitative research in the form of semi-directive individual interviews is best suited to the ambitions of this second part. Indeed, the idea is to capture the consultants' feelings on the use of Agile methods (Jacquemin, 2019). In the field, what do they see as the advantages over Waterfall? Do they identify any disadvantages or limitations? Are there gaps between the literature and their professional reality? Are there other influential Agile components not addressed in the studies? Is Agile transition really a necessity as demonstrated by the PESTLE

analysis? These are all kinds of questions that are more easily addressed in a discussion with open-ended questions and allow for flexibility in the interviews. Semi-directive individual interviews promote benchmarking and cumulative analysis strategies among respondents and allows the interview guide to be enriched according to emerging themes as they arise during the interviews. For example, the interview synthesis had already been started before conducting the last interview, which served as a control interview to verify the possible emergence of new data to validate the initial sample. However, two respondents from the same company (McKinsey & Company) were grouped. This duo interview made it possible to have the contributions of both the IT and the business parts simultaneously. In addition, the conversation was eminently enriching because everyone was rebounding on his colleague's statements.

Nevertheless, some selection of the interviews content had to be made. In fact, the varied experience of the consultants has sometimes extended the scope of research to the development of Agile internal projects. Our study focuses on Agile projects developed by consultants for their clients.

Before synthesizing the results of the interviews, a short respondents' presentation and the companies in which they work will be made.

## 6.1 COMPANIES PRESENTATION

The five consulting firms that contributed to this research are McKinsey & Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers, MANTU Group (ex Amaris Group) and Deloitte. Although they usually do not need any introduction, a brief outline of their activities and history will be given.

- McKinsey & Company

Created in 1926 by James O. McKinsey who was a University of Chicago professor and expert on management accounting, the company provides strategic and management consulting

services to private and public organizations. With over 90 years of experience, McKinsey & Company was ranked the top consulting firm to work for in North America according to Vault's 2020 Top 50 ranking (Vault, 2020). The company employs 30,000 people working in 65 different countries. McKinsey & Company's purpose is to "To help create positive, enduring change in the world". The three values written on McKinsey & Company's website (n.d.) are "Adhere to the highest professional standards", "Improve our clients' performance significantly" and "Create an unrivaled environment for exceptional people" (About us: our purpose, mission, and values, para. 3)

McKinsey & Company has written numerous articles on Agile methods, the Agile transition of organizations, and the outcomes of these methods. The consultants also assist many companies in their Agile transition.

- PricewaterhouseCoopers

In 1849 Samuel Lowell Price firstly established a business in London. Five years later, William Cooper set up his own practice in London, that became in 1861 Coopers Brothers as explained on PwC's website (n.d.) (About us: history and milestones para. 1). The company provides audit, tax and consulting services to private and public customers all over the world. Indeed, there are offices in 157 countries with a total of more than 276,000 employees. Being among the Big Four accounting firms, PwC ranks as the second-largest professional services network in the world. PwC's gross revenue on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were US\$42.4 billion (About us, para. 1). PwC's purpose is "to build trust in society and solve important problems", while the values include "Act with integrity, care, make a difference, work together and reimagine the impossible" (About us: purpose and values, para. 2).

PwC delivers enterprise agility transformation support to organizations wishing to embrace Agile. To help them become Agile, consultants operate transformations in technology and IT operating model, improve portfolio alignment and financial integrity and finally, manage organizational change.

- Amaris - MANTU Group

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, the Amaris Group founded in 2007 by Olivier Brouhant in Geneva became MANTU, which means “adviser” in Sanskrit. Indeed, Amaris group has become MANTU group, and Amaris consulting is a brand of MANTU group.

There is a slight difference between both. Amaris is a global consulting company providing services and technology solutions. MANTU is an international group providing guidance and consulting services to companies. MANTU consulting aims beside all businesses to assist organizations to design and drive their transformation journey to stay at the forefront of innovation. MANTU is present in more than 60 countries, has a 7,750-talent community and recorded an annual turnover of €450m in 2019. As mentioned on their website, MANTU’s values are boldness, trust, independence, performance and commitment (About us: our values, para. 2).

As the global economy undergoes a profound transformation, MANTU as an actor of change boosts its ability to reinvent corporate models through Agile methods and 360° approach to customer support.

- Deloitte

Since its creation in 1845 by William Welch Deloitte in London, the company has become the largest professional services network in the world being part of the Big Four. Today about 245,000 people dispersed in 150 countries are providing audit and assurance, tax, legal, risk and financial advisory as well as consulting services. Deloitte’s vision is “to be the Standard of Excellence, the first choice of the most sought-after clients and talent”. Moreover, the firm values integrity, the provision of outstanding value to markets and clients, the commitment to each other and building on strengths from cultural diversity according to Deloitte’s website (n.d.) (Vision, values, and strategy, para. 1).

Through a holistic approach composed of four steps, Deloitte helps organizations to become Agile. The first step is “pilot” where an Agile vision is established. Second, organizations have

to refine their Agile change and operations teams. The third step consists in the adoption of Agile change and operations teams. Finally, organizations have to scale Agile by creating enterprise wide Agile centres of excellence (Hui, Mischka and Vandeweghe, 2017, p.5).

Moreover, Deloitte Digital is one of Deloitte's fast-growing management consulting subsidiaries that specializes in digital technology. The speaker who agreed to help with this research is employed at Deloitte digital, and therefore brings his expertise in Agile methods to IT projects.

## 6.2 RESPONDENTS PRESENTATION

- Jonathan Wattiaux

Graduated in 2008, after studying management engineering at the IAG (former LSM) and pursuing a CEMS master's degree (International Management), Jonathan started his professional experience at Cockpit Group in Brussels. He has first been working as a business performance analyst for four months. Then, he decided to increase his international experience. For a little over a year, he was business control analyst for General Mills in Puerto Rico. In August 2009, he left for Colombia for 7 months to work as Business Control Manager at Carrefour. He then served as Project Manager and Product Manager at Cockpit Group, where he remained for three years. He acquired experience in consulting, mixing strategy and IT consulting. In December 2012 his career at McKinsey & Company began as Program Manager. Three years after, he also became Digital Manager for a period of 3 years. Finally, since November 2018 and until today, he is product manager at McKinsey Solutions in Louvain-la-Neuve. He mainly develops database-driven products that essentially help in decision making. The last product was a product on how to determine the best prices in a B2B environment knowing that lots of parameters come into play in the B2B world (color, quality, material). His knowledge of Agile methods and experience in Agile projects already started when he was working at Cockpit Group. Since then, at McKinsey & Company, all of the projects he has been working on are Agile (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).



- Quentin Jadoul

Regarding his academic background, Quentin Jadoul studied management engineering at the IAG, completed the CEMS master's degree and graduated in 2008 like Jonathan Wattiaux. From 2011 to 2012 he studied at Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois and obtained a MBA in business.

Concerning his career path, in 2008, he joined McKinsey & Company in Brussels, first as a business analyst. He has been with the company for 11 years now and is currently a Partner. Soon he started working on strategy and IT implementation. He set up Scrum or derivative methods. His professional devotions include “member of Digital practice”, “Member of the Banking Insurance practices” and “Leader of the Agile practice in Financial Institutions”. For the last 4-5 years what he has been doing a lot is how to apply Agile methods for the management of projects that are not only IT, but are much larger and for much larger organizations (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

Unlike J. Wattiaux who works more with IT teams, in the development and installation of products at the client's site, Q. Jadoul works more on consulting projects, especially in strategy for the banking and financial sector. Q. Jadoul works with consultants, executive committees in companies.

- Alexandre Olikier

Alexandre Olikier studied at the EPL (Uclouvain) where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Mathematical and Computer Science Engineering and a master's degree in Mathematical Engineering. He wrote a master thesis on “Open multi-agent systems with fixed-sized and possibly not complete topologies” and graduated in 2018. After graduation, he started working at PwC in Brussels as a Technology consultant. He has been with PwC for almost 2 years and has recently been promoted to Senior Technology Consultant.

A. Olikier has already worked on various Agile projects, mainly for software implementation and migration projects. He is currently working on an Agile project for an insurance company.

He has been learning about Agile methods since his early days with the company. His theoretical knowledge and experience in Agile projects gave him a solid understanding of the Agile approach (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

- Thibaut Randhaxe

Thibaut studied management science and completed the CEMS master's degree. Once graduated, he worked as a business developer at Amaris for three years. It is now one year that he works at MANTU, which is in the same group as Amaris. MANTU provides advice and services to companies and entrepreneur by supporting their growth and development as well as accompanying their transformation. At MANTU he works now as a product owner, meaning he is responsible for a product that helps organize project management. Currently, his job is to create an MS project that will be used at MANTU. This project is carried out with Agile methods. Before starting the project, he had the junior developers trained by experienced developers. In turn, he learned and taught them Agile methodologies. He therefore has an excellent understanding of the Agile approach and since the project started a year ago, he has already seen the benefits of agility in software development (T. Randaxe, May 29, 2020).

- Gauthier Muguerza

Gauthier Muguerza studied at the EPL (UCLouvain) where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Mathematical and Computer Science Engineering and a master's degree in Mathematical Engineering. Graduated in June 2018, he volunteered for six months in Guatemala. He then started working at Deloitte Brussels in January 2019 as a Business analyst. As a Business Analyst in the Digital Customer Offering, part of the Customer & Marketing Portfolio, he focuses on using Salesforce to empower clients to re-imagine how they connect and engage with their customers. In a Salesforce project for the Financial Services Industry he was leading the functional workshops and recommending the best Salesforce solution to solve the client's problems, with an Agile methodology. For other Salesforce integration projects in the Energy & Resources industry, he had an important position regarding the functional discussions and the technical implementation. He led the workshops and developed integrations with back-end systems outside of Salesforce, with the Scrum methodology. He also developed tools and

automated processes for call takers, which resulted in 30 % time won (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020). In order to acquire the necessary knowledge, he was bathed in Agile as soon as he arrived at Deloitte. He had a month's training before he started working on projects, including Agile training. He has been with Deloitte Digital for almost 2 years and has recently been promoted to Senior Consultant (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

## CHAPTER 7. FIELD RESEARCH KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 7.1 AGILE METHODS IMPLEMENTATION IN CONSULTANCY

Before addressing the question about the effectiveness of Agile methods and their components, in particular the three highlighted in the Cao and Chow's statistical study (2008), in comparison to the Waterfall methodology in IT and non-IT project management, it is interesting to explain concretely how consulting companies implement and apply Agile methods to carry out a typical project.

Indeed, in the literature there is scant description of Agile methods use in consulting firms to conduct projects. Admittedly, the literature gives a series of Agile principles, techniques and models to enable successful implementation of these methods, but they are a set of theoretical concepts that require some adaptation to the company concerned. The Agile mindset promotes the adaptation of Agile principles, values and methods as needed. It is not about literally following all the elements described in the literature.

Gauthier Muguerza, Deloitte Digital consultant, clearly explains how a typical Agile project of one client goes from start to end at Deloitte (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020). For example, a typical project could be a core banking aggregation, a website development or any other project for a client that involves, or not, software development. The common point between this plurality of projects, is the fact that they are carried out with Agile methods by consultants. Here we will take the example of a platform creation for a bank. This company wants to change the current solution it uses that it finds too old or wants to add

functionalities. He wants to have a more automated platform to manage customers according to their personal characteristics

Once the client company has consulted the budget it could free up, a pain points list to be improved for the new platform is built with the help of the project team's consultants (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020). Pain points are specific problems that clients or prospective clients are facing in the marketplace (CommBox, n.d.; Shewan, 2020). Identifying the clients' pain points is a perilous exercise where business consultants have to put themselves in their shoes. Pain points generally fall into four broad categories. First, productivity pain points encompass all problems that decreases time efficiency, makes customers experience less convenient and offers less comfortable solutions for users. Second, support pain points are areas where the user is not receiving help or cannot find an answer to a pressing question for example on a website or by wasting time waiting for a response from customer service. Implementing using intelligent agent routing for customer service on the website or in the software could be a way to solve this kind of pain points (CommBox, n.d.). The third category includes financial pain points where (prospective) customers are spending too much money with their current providers or products. Consequently, they want to change their solution, service or product (CommBox, n.d.). Finally, the last category is process pain points that relate to a lack of convenience or when there are additional time-consuming sub-processes. For example, the user has to trawl through lots of pages on the website to get the required information. Actually, the precise identification of these points makes it possible to list the customer's requirements to be met in order to make the project a success. Requirements identification is the first Agile practice to apply when a project is started (CommBox, n.d.).

After that, there is a discovery period where developers will be tool agnostic. It means that consultants are unbiased towards the use of different technology tools to solve various problems (Rouse, 2016). Indeed, according to "tool agnostic approach" consultants believe that "one size does not fit all" in website development industry (Rouse, 2016). Therefore, consultants are not necessarily going to push for one particular solution. The aim is to understand the pain points and to find a suitable solution. Discussion is guided to explain what the platform could do to solve these issues and in which architecture it fits (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

Once the requirements are specified and the platform adapted to the user's needs is identified, business consultants write the user stories. The user stories include precisely all the needs and pain points. One user story is a working unit. The user stories are written in collaboration with "super users", people in the business who best represent their colleagues who are going to use the tool. They are thus the most likely to say what they prefer and what is appropriate. All the user stories form the backlog (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

The project life is divided into sprints, that are short and fixed period when a team works to achieve a set amount of work. At the start of each sprint, the available capacity calculated in number of points is assessed. For example, a day for one person is worth two points. Therefore, if the team is composed of ten people, that the daily velocity is two points and the sprint lasts 20 days, a total of 400 points is available. In addition, daily stand-up meetings are held every day. Each member of the team must present in one minute, what they did yesterday, what they will do today and the possible blocking points they encounter. The Scrum Master's role is to unblock members facing a problem during the day. Furthermore, in the backlog consultants estimate the value of the points relative to each user story. This then allows to prioritize the user stories in relation to each other. A new backlog taking into account the user stories priority is established. A list of e.g. 50 classified user stories is made from which the sprints are built. Projects can have one sprint as they can have eight, depending on their size (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

Once a user story is developed it moves each time from the developer's hands to the product owner's hands, who validates or not depending on its response to the requirements defined at the outset. If the user story is validated, it is said to be burnt, which means that it has been delivered (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

Each sprint is run in this way so that there are none left in the end. At this stage, the first part "product construction" is therefore complete and the second part "test period" follows. Actually, during the sprint a test had already been passed by the time the product owner burned the user story. Indeed, several people, including a developer who hadn't worked on the project and the product owner, were running tests. Then, at the end of the sprint comes the second part with the more advanced test phase (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

First, there are tests end-to-end that concern integration. Developers are going to check that what has been implemented speaks well with other systems, how the elements fit together. To use the platform example, there may be interactions with Google or a data warehouse system (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020). It is thus necessary to check that the systems talk well to each other, that the piping between systems A and B is ok and that the news is getting through. During this test phase, a series of bugs usually come up. For example, poorly developed integration or synchronization that is unilateral but needs to be bilateral (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

The last phase is the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) phase. It is the moment when the tool is put in the end users' hands, those who are going to use the tool. Consultants show them what is built and ask them if they would be able to work with the product, if they can project themselves. Their opinion is important because only they know what they need to work. For example, if they feel that the new platform lacks important information or features, it means that the team still has work to do and needs to fix these gaps (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

At the end of UAT phase, comes a very clear question: go or no go? Through "Go" the users can project themselves with the tool and say yes. In this case the project team has reached the goal and is going to launch the tool to production. If "No go", then product is going back to sprint, to be improved (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

The project is completed. There may still be some follow-up, for example for two weeks, but the "development" part is well and truly over. At the end of the project a retrospective sprint is performed, which is an opportunity for the project team to self-inspect and create an improvement plan that will be implemented in the next sprint. Moreover, there may also be other teams of consultants coming in for maintenance or updates. (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

Alexandre Olikier, technology consultant at PwC also explained how an Agile consulting project is carried out. While G. Muguerza is an IT member of the development team that shaped the product, A. Olikier takes on a more business-like role. His input allows us to have this time, a perspective less focused on development, but rather in the upstream discussions with the client (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

The Agile project A. Olikier was working on at the time of the interview had been underway for just under a year. This was a software implementation and migration project for an insurance company. The whole project team consists of about 40 consultants, which is quite rare and high. There is a part in India which is in charge of development, and then there is another part in Belgium which is made up of Italians, Belgians, Swiss and Germans and this team has a business analyst role. In other words, the team in Belgium analyses the customer's needs and translates them into an understandable language for the developers in India (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). Software implementation and migration involve several things.

First of all, a migration of their personal database. The database typically contains all clients. Each client is linked to a series of accounts and each account is linked to a series of fonts. Policies are typically insurance contracts. Above all, it is necessary to match the data because the software was originally created in Java script. Consultants are going to transfer clients from software 1 to software 2 (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

Then, the new software must be customizable. Indeed, insurance software cannot be generic, it must adapt to the insured's business, needs and way of working. In order to identify all these subtleties and differences between insured persons, meetings will be arranged with the client, in this case the insurance company. At PwC, this stage is called the "inception phase" (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). As in G. Muguerza's project description, this is the stage where the customer's requirements are gathered. Consultants in the role of business analysts draw up a list of all the features that the client wishes to add to the software. For instance, adding the functionality for granting promotions to certain types of customers. A user story, that will be developed in the future is created (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). The following steps have already been explained, the list of user stories constitute the backlog which, once

prioritized, will be divided into sprints. Thanks to the backlog the team knows what it has to do and thanks to the sprints it knows when it has to do it.

A. Olikier adds some elements concerning the project organization. During the project life cycle, it is orchestrated as follows. The project is divided into releases that is a block of sprints. The releases are intended to achieve a big business goal and then each sprint is a piece of that big goal (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). The sprints are divided into sub-themes and last three weeks. The team located in Belgium itself is divided into sub-groups of four or five members and each group is focused on specific objectives. On top of that, each group will be supervised by a Scrum master (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

In addition to the division of the project team into subgroups, there is also a chronological separation. There are releases, sprints and dayleases, those being daily meetings allowing for alignment within groups. Moreover, once a week the Scrum master with his team will align with all the other Scrum masters in order to have both a precise vision on his team and a global vision on the project progress. (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

## 7.2 AGILE METHODS EXPERIENCE

This section examines how consultants have gained knowledge and experience on Agile methods. The idea is to determine whether trainings are organized and whether they are a prerequisite to apply Agile methods in project management.

Quentin Jadoul, partner at McKinsey & Company, describes his Agile journey. Ten years ago, Agile methods were already present but poorly represented. Only one or two projects in the portfolio were Agile. He learned only later but quickly through numerous readings and discussions about Agile. Although he has not undergone any formal training, nor is he certified, he has acquired a solid understanding of the model.

His colleague, Jonathan Wattiaux, Product Management Director, is also an autodidact. Having never heard about Agile methods during his university studies, he had to wait until his first



professional experience to learn about the subject. One of his former colleagues was interested in Agile methods and lent him a book entitled “Scrum”. After reading the book, J. Wattiaux wanted to experiment with these methods and it was conclusive. Subsequently, he began certifying employees through the Scrum Alliance and the evolution has continued unabated. Currently there is a lot of training at McKinsey around Agile methods. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

PwC's learning of Agile methods was much the same. A. Olikier received documentation on Agile principles and values. In addition, focused information on Agile frameworks was given. According to him, having a theoretical knowledge base of Agile methods before the project start is important so that all team members are aligned with the same practices. Moreover, these methods are the opposite of Waterfall methodology, and it is useful for those discovering them to understand the differences with their former way of conducting projects. Besides reading the documents, some of his colleagues have been certified as Scrum Master, but it is not mandatory. PwC encourages its employees to learn about the Agile approach. Furthermore, when a project is sold, the choice of a specific framework is justified according to the customer's needs and put forward on the proposal. Consultants have the frameworks available internally. (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

At Deloitte, G. Muguerza acquired his knowledge of the Agile approach during a week of practical "bootcamp" training. Simulations of client meetings and project management were organized during which he learned about Agile principles and practices. For example, he was confronted with situations where he was asked to show how he was implementing Agile in his project. Two to three times a year, optional bootcamps lasting a few days are organized to learn more about Agile methods. (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020).

Finally, at MANTU, T. Randaxhe learned the Agile methods on his side through literature. He then applied them directly in the field as part of a project. Later, having a proper understanding of the methods, he taught them to junior developers as part of a project of which he was the product owner. The purpose of this training was to work under the same terms and conditions. Although the training was quick, the project realization was efficient, and no changes had to be made. (T. Randaxhe, May 29, 2020).

From these testimonies it can be suggested that Agile methods are methods whose mastery is mainly acquired in the field. An upstream literature consultation is interesting, but training and certification are not prerequisite. According to J. Wattiaux, Agile methods have now become ubiquitous and their concepts are simple. They can be learned without training because it is more the application of the concepts that is interesting than the purely academic side. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

### 7.3 ADVANTAGES

The first advantage identified among the testimonials is the practicality in learning the method. Learning by doing leads to better understanding and retention. Agile methods appeal to common sense, they do not apply to the letter like a recipe. They provide a series of tools to be adapted to the context. In addition, learning is done progressively during the project, with a prioritization of the different user stories. Therefore, it is possible at any time to modify any element in the way of applying the method. Conversely, with the Waterfall methodology, this methodological flexibility is nil because the entire method is implemented from the start of the project and remains fixed until its completion. (T. Randaxhe, May 29, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

Moreover, according to Jadoul and Wattiaux (2020), an Agile project can work independently of the company's organizational environment. If the project is provided with a skilled project manager, a solid sponsor and a competent team, the Agile project can be a success in terms of quality, scope, costs and time, without the company having made an "all-in" Agile organizational transition. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

All types of projects can be Agile, as long as the "core backbone" is respected (see Appendix 2). The core backbone includes core processes, people elements and technology components. Core processes refer to planning, budgeting, talent management, risk and performance management (Brosseau et al., 2019). People elements encompass corporate core values, expected leadership behaviours and a shared purpose and vision. Technology components

are for example IT infrastructure, tools or supporting system. The backbone influences decisions about budget and capital deployment, as well as risk and people management (Brosseau et al., 2019). In other words, the core backbone ensures everyone is staffed, team communicate with each other, everyone is assessed in the same way and there is strategic alignment. At McKinsey & Company, out of IT field, all projects outside the IT field (projects in the field of banking and insurance) are Agile. In fact, every week or two an assessment of the project's progress through a conversation with the customer is carried out. Moreover, all IT projects and product development projects are also Agile. Through their experience in project management, the Agile methods effectiveness has already been proven many times over, both for IT and non-IT projects. Agile methods therefore have the advantage of having a universal scope of application. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). At PwC, Agile is given maximum prominence and every implementation project is Agile. Moreover, according to A. Olikier, Agile and traditional methods should not be exclusive. According to him, there is no particular type of project that cannot be Agile. (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

Then, people are unanimous about the Agile methods largest benefit. The ability to review the scope regularly is at the heart of agility. Consultants adopt a “hypothesis-driven approach” meaning the direction at some point in the project life, if it turns out to be wrong, may change. From sprint to sprint, the team makes sure to focus on the right priorities (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). In addition, Agile methods make it possible to rectify errors without causing too much disruption. Mistakes are part of everyday practice. In case of errors with the Waterfall methodology, their discovery only occurs at the end of the project. The correction would require going back to each phase in order to find the origin of the error, which would be very costly and time-consuming. In addition to not being of sufficient quality and within scope, the project would inevitably be out of time and out of budget. Even more, projects, especially those with a long lifespan, are bound to evolve before they completion. Therefore, Waterfall methodology would be irrelevant. Nowadays, projects are increasingly uncertain, as is their external environment. Most projects have unknown elements. Agile methods are best suited to manage these external disruptions (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

Another advantage is the focus on the delivered value. Since the customer is involved in the project, the team is responsible for a product, not a project. Team members have to define the

features that will bring the most benefit to the user. These features are likely to change from the first meetings, but the team has the flexibility to modify them. Previously, in the traditional methods world, people had a budget and a deadline for their project frozen at the outset. However, rarely were projects on time and budget since there were always undelivered features (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

Agile methods have a structuring but light side. When several project elements are partly uncertain, some stability is essential. Projects of all types must combine stability and speed. Agile methods are perfectly suited because they provide practices, frameworks and document user stories without falling into the over-documented side. On the contrary, Waterfall methodology requires planning and certifications ahead of time, or constraining administrative procedures. It results in a waste of time, resources and budget (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

Finally, the last advantage identified relates to the team. Agile removes organizational silos, especially between IT and business. Agile methods are more team-based and focus on transparency between members. In the traditional approach, the roles are split into silos. For example, only the project manager is responsible for the plan. In the event of a problem, he alone assumes the consequences. Agile methods therefore give more comfort to the team and promote mutual aid (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

#### **7.4 CRITICAL AGILE COMPONENTS TO SUCCESS**

After discussing the Agile methods benefits, practitioners were asked about the influence of the three most influential Agile components for project success according to Cao and Chow's study (2008), that are the delivery strategy, the Agile software engineering techniques and the team capability. As already stated in the literature review, project failure is considered in a broad sense. According to the Standish study, a project is considered as a failure if it is abandoned, cancelled or if it does not meet its budget, delivery and business objectives (Standish Group International, 1994 in Linberg, 1999).

The consultants interviewed agree on the important influence of the delivery strategy on mitigating the risk of project failure. Firstly, the Agile delivery strategy adapts to technological, social or economic macro environmental factors, unlike the Waterfall methodology. Indeed, traditional methods deliver the project only at its very end. Consequently, the solution provided is sometimes already obsolete, as new technologies or trends have already emerged. Second, in Waterfall methodology, the project team had to estimate months or even years in advance the exact planning and budget allocation, which is a very challenging exercise. The estimations were then frozen and could not be changed until project completion. However, user needs change over time. As a result, these estimations did not correspond to reality and Waterfall on time and budget projects were rare. The Agile delivery strategy allows to divide the project into different iterative phases during which the team delivers quickly, offering a better management of time and cost project success categories. Third, for the other two project success categories, scope and quality, the delivery strategy plays a key role as it enables regular delivery by prioritizing requirements with the help of user stories, backlog and sprints. Thus, customer feedback is frequently collected and helps to increase the value delivered. The project team can better align with the customer's expectations, which avoids going outside the scope and guarantees high product quality (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

Concerning Agile software engineering techniques respondents recognize the influence in the project success of their overall use. This means that these techniques are tools available to the team to promote the project success in terms of cost, time, scope and quality. According to these field actors, it is important to adapt the use of the tools to the project. Agile techniques should not be followed literally as a recipe. For instance, dayleaves seem unavoidable to allow an alignment between teams, but other meetings such as the retrospective sprint are sometimes omitted in some projects (G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020). Moreover, certain techniques taken in isolation are not a critical success factor in the success of projects. For example, working in open space, working in pair and all colocation techniques are favourable to the improvement of a project, but are not essential. Although studies show the more different locations there are, the more productivity is lost. Between 14 and 15% lost in productivity per additional location is estimated. If there are three locations, it is 30% less productive and so on. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the efficiency of the teams did not decrease, and no delays were taken. Face-to-face communication has its limits since the teams are sometimes very

geographically dispersed. Human interaction with the customer is indeed an added value but again can be replaced by technology without having too much impact on the success of projects as long as the exchanges are regular and in line with the Agile delivery strategy. Indeed, dayleases and other meetings were held via video conferencing and proved in some cases to be even more productive. However, the focus on communication rather than documentation saves time and costs, while having a better understanding of the scope and quality expected by the customer (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). Nevertheless, the set of certain Agile techniques remains a critical success factor for software and non-software projects. This set includes the iterative requirements specification, regular customer meetings, dayleases and different test phases (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

The last component tackled is team capability. According to respondents, the way people work together is a critical success factor. Agile methods are more team-based as they remove the organizational silos between IT and business. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). This allows for a knowledge plurality and a better exchange between team members. (T. Randaxhe, May 29, 2020). Ten years ago, at the Agile methods beginning, often IT was Agile, and business was not. Therefore, once a week a business consultant was used to joining IT developers meeting and providing reviews of the project. He acted as the product owner. Today, the whole team is Agile and includes IT, business and product owner. All capacities are in the team, e.g. eight consultants. The objectives are aligned, roles description is clear and is autonomous. Nevertheless, in case of problems responsibilities are shared, the team is fully involved and no longer a single member. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). Dayleases and regular meetings within and between project teams reinforce cohesion and motivation. Moreover, it allows a better follow-up of each one. Regarding individuals, if the talents have the skills, a good understanding of Agile values and principles, and are supported by a product owner and an Agile coach who know their roles, the project drastically increases its success chances. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

To conclude, according to the respondents the delivery strategy is a critical success factor for projects, whether there are software projects or not. Furthermore, the set of Agile techniques, assuming thorough understanding and proper use, is a critical success factor as

well. Nevertheless, the omission of certain techniques does not represent a major problem in the success of the projects. Finally, the team capability is critical for successful project development. The critical dimensions for mitigating the risk of project failure therefore refer mainly to "technical" and "people" aspects. The type of project or organisation was not mentioned as a critical aspect. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

## 7.5 DRAWBACKS

From an objective perspective, it is important to also address the disadvantages of Agile methods according to the actors in the field.

One disadvantage mentioned in the interviews was the permanent change of direction from the client's original requirements, made possible by the Agile delivery strategy. Sometimes, the customer will totally revise his expectations even if the last deliverable corresponds to the latest version of the specifications. (T. Randaxhe, May 29, 2020). However, if everyone aligns with the common goal of delivering value to the client, giving regular feedback that allows for changes in direction to improve the product remains an ongoing benefit. (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). Moreover, through the problematic of this thesis, this research tries to determine if Agile methods and their components allow, compared to the Waterfall methodology, to mitigate the risk of failure in projects consultants are conducting. In the scope of this thesis, a project is considered successful if it meets the client's expectations in terms of scope, cost, quality and time. As the indicators of success are mostly customer-centric, the delivery strategy remains a critical force to mitigate project failures.

Then, another negative point was raised during the interviews. Indeed, one of the speakers pointed out the time-consuming nature of the meetings. Consultants sometimes have the feeling that excessive meetings slow down the progress of the tasks to be accomplished. However, this has not to be perceived as an Agile methods disadvantage, but rather as a poor application of practice from his own experience, according to Olikier (2020). Indeed, the potential drawbacks of the Agile method and the risks associated with its misuse must be well dissociated. Therefore, from one team to another the effectiveness of team meetings is different even if the Agile method is the same (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

In fact, what reduces the effectiveness of Agile methods is a set of beliefs around the implementation of these methods and the way of working that are harmful. For Jadoul (2020), there are two wrong schools of thought. On one side of the spectrum, people who translate agility into total freedom, absence of procedures, rules and plans. On the other side of the spectrum are the people who literally follow every framework and practice like a recipe. Neither of the two extremes is correct, because Agile requires the implementation of constraints as represented by the core backbone (see Appendix 2) to have a certain alignment; on the other hand the frameworks must be adapted to the project requirements. The secret is to find the right balance because each company will be different according to its scope of activity, its strategy, its way of working or culture (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

Agile methods have very few drawbacks and their effectiveness compared to the Waterfall method is not to be proven. Unfortunately, their understanding and application is not always optimal (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).



## 7.6 RECAP

Agile methods advantages and drawbacks listed by the consultants interviewed can be summarized in the following table.

*Table 4. A summary of the advantages and disadvantages of Agile methods identified by the consultants interviewed (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020; G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020; T. Randaxhe, May 29, 2020).*

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Drawbacks                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicality in learning</li> <li>• Autonomous project management</li> <li>• Universal method</li> <li>• Regular scope review</li> <li>• Customer's involvement and focus on delivered value</li> <li>• Combination of speed and stability</li> <li>• No more silos between IT and Business</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The client's permanent change of direction</li> <li>• Time-consuming meetings</li> <li>• Difficulty to fully understand and absorb the Agile philosophy</li> </ul> |

## PART III. RESULTS DISCUSSION

### CHAPTER 8. RESULTS CONFRONTATION

#### 8.1 CONCORDANCES

The literature review and field research findings align on many points, whether on the benefits of Agile for consultants in their projects for clients, critical success factors or critical dimensions influencing the risk of project failure.

On the benefits of Agile methods, the literature and consultants recognize the importance of adaptability to changing project requirements (Balaji and Murugayan, 2012). The iterative aspect and the ability to frequently revise the scope based on customer feedback has become essential in today's uncertain, changing and ambiguous business environment. Through an effective Agile delivery strategy, early wins can be achieved by delivering faster, also allowing to stay competitive.

Then, Agile organizations combine stability and speed. Indeed, they maintain their core backbone while being flexible in their practices and frameworks in order not to lose time in costly, rigid and bureaucratic administrative processes.

Moreover, the requirements prioritization applied in Agile methods ensures staying within the scope by focusing on a product and its characteristics rather than on a project.

Consultants and authors also agree on the importance of iterative testing phases during the project. The test phases help to guarantee the quality of the product. Although opponents of Agile methods in the literature were concerned about maintaining product quality with less documentation, test phases are a strong response to this concern.

Regarding the three Agile components studied, again most agreements are observed. The delivery strategy seems to be the most critical success factor as it is at the origin of the method adaptability. Agile software engineering techniques as a whole, are critical as they include iterative requirements specification, meetings and testing phases. Nevertheless, consultants

insist that they do not require a strict application, but rather one tailored to the needs of the project. Concerning the team capability, there is no doubt that it is also critical because Agile methods put people as the "main drivers of success" according to Cockburn and Highsmith (2001). Consultants concur with this idea, saying that the way team members work together is decisive for the success of the project (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020).

A consensus is also reached on the critical dimensions for mitigating the risk of project failure. Indeed, the Agile components addressed by practitioners in all the interviews fall within the "Technical" and "People" dimensions only. They therefore confirm the conclusions of Cao and Chow's study (2008). More than that, since in the statistical analysis the "project" dimension had a zero contribution to the success factors, it confirms the respondents' contributions. Indeed, these quantitative results are in line with the qualitative findings of the field research, stating that project characteristics do not influence the success of Agile projects. In other words, Agile methods are not reserved for certain types of projects. According to the consultants interviewed, all projects can be Agile (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

A final point of agreement between Cao and Chow's (2008) quantitative study and the qualitative interviews is on the organizational environment influence. Indeed, the statistical analysis provided a negative coefficient for the organizational environment factor in both regression analyses of the Timeliness and Cost dependent variables. These results show that Agile projects can meet budget and deadlines without an Agile organizational environment. This is again in line with consultants' contributions, since according to them, an Agile project can work autonomously and deliver a successful project for clients (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

## 8.2 DISCREPANCIES

Some authors mention that the Agile methods implementation is difficult in teams with the following characteristics: large, geographically dispersed and young. However, regarding the interviews, the reality on the ground brings a completely different perspective.

During the interviews, a counter-example is given. For an implementation project, a team of 40 people is deployed. Moreover, this team was divided between Belgium and India. Finally, a majority of the consultants were young. These team characteristics did not interfere with the effective use of Agile methods. In terms of size, the team was simply further subdivided into groups of four to five people, each group having specific objectives. The dayleases were done within these groups of four or five people and were therefore not slowed down. There is still good communication with IT consultants in India, although it is not face-to-face. Finally, the project started in 2017 and is constantly being adapted to changes in the course of time, which is only possible thanks to Agile methods. Compared to one of his previous Agile projects of a much smaller size, A. Olikier therefore did not notice any obstacles to the implementation of Agile methods in the previous project (A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020). As long as the team is competent and aligned, Agile methods can work without restriction.

The consulting companies contacted are large, global structures and are attractive to many young talents. Therefore, geographical barriers are part of their daily life. These barriers are reduced thanks to technologies that enable remote dialogue. Moreover, according to practitioners, the COVID19-lockdown has shown that the techniques of co-location, peer programming and face-to-face communication are not critical success factors. In fact, the months of teleworking have not led to a drop in productivity, quality or delays in projects. Meetings were sometimes even more efficient by video-conferencing (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). Moreover, a young team is not a hindrance to the implementation of Agile methods as the examples in the interviews show. One of the advantages of Agile methods is its quick and practical learning. The various consultants interviewed did not need years of training to master the methods. Finally, examples of organizations that have evolved "Agile at scale" exist such as Spotify, ING or LEGO. A large team is not a problem as it can always be divided into sub-groups in which Agile methods will be applied at their scale. Meetings between Product owners of each group ensure alignment between all these groups.

Furthermore, some schools of thought in the literature argue that it is preferable not to apply Agile methods in larger projects involving too fuzzy forecasts in terms of time and costs as a lot of room is left for requirements change. However, from the example of a software implementation and migration project for an insurance company that started in 2017, agility is a strength. The needs for the insurance company have changed over time. Therefore, it is

advantageous not to have fixed a budget or an agenda from the beginning, allowing to adapt to the needs of the end users in order to deliver high added value to them. Finally, the speakers are unanimous on the non-exclusivity of Agile methods. In other words, Agile methods are applicable to all types of projects, as their size is not an obstacle.

### 8.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

From the comparison between the literature contributions and the interviews findings, different managerial implications can be concluded.

First, from the comparison of both contributions it is obvious that the effectiveness of Agile methods compared to Waterfall methodology is no longer to be proven. Agile methods and their components effectively provide significant efficiency gains in managing the risk of failure in projects carried out by consultants for their clients compared to the Waterfall methodology. They allow the best estimation and management of deadlines and budget. Moreover, by adopting a user-centric approach, they deliver products with high added value for all stakeholders and correspond precisely to the required scope. Even more, Agile methods are not only more efficient, but have become essential in the face of the ever-changing external macro environmental factors of today's world.

Regarding the three components in more detail, they also apply to non-IT projects. They are critical factors for the project success. The delivery strategy allows us to meet deadlines and manage the budget in a progressive manner. Agile techniques ensure product quality and stay within the scope to meet customer expectations. Team capability is the basis of all success, as it is the foundation for the understanding and application of Agile methods.

One of the ambitions of this thesis was to extend the scope of Agile methods to non-software projects. Indeed, this field was little represented in the scientific literature. Thanks to the contributions of experts in the field, it can be concluded that all projects can be Agile. Indeed, these quantitative results are in line with the qualitative findings of the field research, stating that project characteristics do not influence the success of Agile projects. In other words, Agile methods are not reserved for certain types of projects. Their effectiveness is observable in all

types of projects and that is why all projects at McKinsey & Company are Agile. In addition, PwC, Deloitte and MANTU promote the use of Agile methods in project management as much as possible. It is therefore necessary to take the Agile out of IT in academic circles.

Moreover, other literary clichés must be abolished. The idea that large, complex projects are not suitable for Agile methods is irrelevant. Most consulting projects are innovative and therefore have a part of unknown. The project has never been done before, which makes it riskier. In the banking world, for example, Q. Jadoul explains that the projects he manages on a daily basis are very expensive and high-risk. Some clients will want to adopt the Waterfall method for this type of project. They will make a very detailed project plan with the day's task in mind to minimize the level of uncertainty. This gives them a false sense of control and convinces them that the project will be successful. This is what leads to reserve Agile methods for small, simple projects. However, according to Q. Jadoul and J. Wattiaux, there is even more interest in using Agile methods for this type of "unknown" projects. It is impossible to know in advance how part A will interlock with part B. Therefore, delivering value faster in order to get feedbacks seems to be the most appropriate way to operate. Unfortunately, currently few people in the banking industry hear it.

Furthermore, trying to categorize according to the type of projects, organizations or isolating each Agile practice is not relevant for Agile methods. Beyond processes and frameworks, what prevails in the success of projects is the Agile mindset. Agile methods provide different tools that must be tailored to the customer's needs and not rigidly followed. In addition, what matters is how Agile methods are understood and applied. The project team has to find the right balance between maintaining certain processes, documents and rules building the core backbone, and adaptability to the context according to the common sense of the practitioners.

Finally, the literature is more nuanced than the consultants interviewed in the unconditional application of Agile methods. Some authors prefer to be more conservative for certain types of projects by maintaining the Waterfall methodology. However, the consultants interviewed would not go back to traditional methods in project management for any reason, as they attribute unique benefits to Agile methods. According to the interviewees and most of the authors, these advantages give Agile efficiency gains to mitigate project failures in absolute terms and relatively to Waterfall.

## 8.4 ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND ASSUMPTIONS

To the research question, we answer that according to the experts interviewed and a large majority of the literature, Agile methods help to mitigate project failures for consultants. Nevertheless, although the experts interviewed would not return to the Waterfall methodology under any circumstances, our conclusion is a little more nuanced considering the authors who in some cases were opposed to Agile. Indeed, the Waterfall methodology still defends itself very well for some projects, a classic example would be the construction of a bridge. While we conclude that all projects can be Agile, in some cases it is not always more efficient to use Agile methods to achieve them. In addition, users of Agile methods, in this study consultants, must be aware that their use is not without difficulties. Agile methods require an excellent understanding of their principles and practices as well as the integration of the Agile mindset upstream. In case of poor understanding, Agile methods can lead to more problems.

Moreover, we corroborate the first hypothesis. Indeed, all the experts interviewed (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020; T. Randhaxe, interview, May 29, 2020) as well as many authors (Aghina et al., 2020; Brosseau et al., 2020; Günzel, & Kerscher, 2019; Hamilton, & Paquette, 2017) agree that Agile methods will be all the more efficient if the client company for which the consulting team is carrying out a project is also Agile. This will enable her to understand how the team works and promote better collaboration between client and consultant, which is one of the fundamental values of the agile manifesto (Beck et al., 2001). The integration of the project that brings change to the client company into its day-to-day operations is also facilitated.

However, the second assumption that the organisational environment of the consulting firm also had to be Agile for methods to be efficient is refuted. Indeed, Cao and Chow's quantitative study (2008) shows that my organizational dimension is not critical in the successful application of Agile methods for project management. In addition, Q. Jadoul and J. Wattiaux assert that a team of consultants can apply Agile methods efficiently in their projects without the entire consulting firm being Agile. With a good sponsor, a good product owner and a good team, the Agile project can work independently (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). Nevertheless, while the a complete organisational Agile transformation is not critical for the Agile methods efficiency in project management, it can still facilitate the understanding and integration of Agile practices and mindset (Aghina et al., 2020; Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020).

## CHAPTER 9. LIMITATIONS

Although the literature review and field research confrontation provided enriching findings for consultancy project management and reached a moderate consensus, some limitations can be pointed out.

Firstly, the study is essentially qualitative. Indeed, the limited resources of this research in terms of time and budget prevented the interviews from being deepened by carrying out a quantitative investigation. Moreover, disclosure of financial and other figures is often confidential. Besides, the Agile philosophy is difficult to quantify because it adapts to each organization. As the research question is part of an organizational context and mobilizes several dimensions, it was appropriate to interview experts from large consulting companies. Nevertheless, consultants interviewed are working on multiple projects with different clients and scope, have different specialities, experiences or working methods. Therefore, there is some heterogeneity in the respondents' statements. As a result, this sample is to be taken with a grain of salt since some critical selection of the key elements from the interviews had to be made.

Then, since only consultants were interviewed about the efficiency of Agile approaches to reduce project failures, interviews are automatically biased because their clients' opinions are not taken into account. Again, the limited means of this research made it difficult to reach the consultants' clients. Above all, consultancy projects are confidential and the data are therefore not accessible to students.

Furthermore, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown in Belgium has created difficulties in finding and interviewing consultants. The search for experts was not easy as it is a specific subject and not all consultants contacted necessarily had experience in Agile project management methods. All interviews were conducted online. In addition, the access to libraries and books were restricted, which implies that mainly sources in the bibliography have been drawn from the Internet. However, the literature review was supported by relevant studies and articles. Besides, quality respondents made valuable contributions to this thesis. These consultants each operate in consulting firms that are advanced in the use of Agile methods.



Finally, the field research scope is also limited. Indeed, four out of the five respondents are working in Belgium, with only one in Austria. Although the four consulting companies are worldwide players, it might have been interesting to broaden geographical horizons, for example to the United States, where Agile methods were born. However, a common and aligned organizational culture and strategy are shared among all colleagues from one similar structure. Moreover, with globalisation and ICT (Information and Communications Technology), good practices can be exchanged across the world. Then, only five interviews were conducted, but after the first three interviews, the majority of the statements were aligned. The last interview also verified the previous findings. Furthermore, only the three most critical Agile components according to Cao and Chow's quantitative study (2008) were addressed in the literature review and interviews. Agile methods have more components, but it was a choice to limit their number to three for the research scope. Indeed, seeking to study the efficiency gains of methods in mitigating project failures, only the most critical components have a significant influence on this efficiency.

## CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION AND PATHS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

### 10.1 BRIEF SUMMARY

Through this thesis, we have seen that Agile methods offer a totally different perspective than Waterfall methodology. This "Agile mindset" is much more appropriate to the changing environment in which businesses operate today, as demonstrated in the PESTLE analysis.

Over the past 10 years, literature has already strongly suggested the need to move to Agile methods. Nevertheless, studies have been concentrated mainly in the area of software development.

It was therefore necessary to take the Agile methods out of the IT circle because their many advantages can undoubtedly benefit the consulting field (Günzel & Kerscher, 2019; Gustavsson, 2016). To do this, it was decided to interview experts in the field who are the main actors of technological, social and economic changes: the consultants.

Furthermore, some authors were reluctant to use Agile methods, particularly for fear of losing quality to a potential lack of rigour or because they think they are not suitable for certain types of projects. The interviews with the consultants were therefore intended to verify the arguments of the two schools of thought.

The consultants who contributed to this research are unanimous. For them, Agile methods have little or no downside. Consultants would not want to go back to the Waterfall method for anything in the world (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020; G. Muguerza, interview, July 12, 2020; A. Olikier, interview, June 5, 2020; T. Randhaxe, interview, May 29, 2020). Nevertheless, Agile methods are not without risk. Potential problems that affect the quality of a project stem from a poor understanding and application of the Agile philosophy.

Although the consultants have confirmed the importance and the real impact of the three components studied in the success of the projects (according to scope, time, cost and quality), trying to categorize which components are important is not a priority, because it is necessary to be able to really adopt the Agile mindset. The question is not so much “critical component or not”, but rather "bad agent or good agent" (Q. Jadoul & J. Wattiaux, interview, June 16, 2020). The risk is to want to be Agile at all costs because it is "in fashion" but to follow the practices like a recipe.

## 10.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concordances between the literature review and the consultants' interviews make it possible to answer the research question introduced on the first pages of this thesis. Indeed, Agile methods, in absolute terms, provide efficiency gains to mitigate the failure of projects carried out by consultants for their clients. Furthermore, the concordances between authors and experts also show that, in today's changing world, the Waterfall method is obsolete in many consultancy projects. Therefore, it is less efficient than Agile methods in those cases.

In the light of the discrepancies, however, the conclusion of this thesis is more nuanced. The choice of method does not necessarily have to be so categorical. Never again use the Waterfall method in project management carried out by consultants needs to be adjusted.

Some authors who were more reluctant to make a completely Agile transition to project management had referred to certain types of projects they felt were preferably carried out with Waterfall. While the idea is that Agile methods can be applied to all types of projects, this does not mean that all projects must be Agile. Indeed, some known projects where all the requirements are known from the outset, such as the construction of a bridge, do not necessarily necessitate switching to Agile. If a significant amount of documentation is already provided on the project and there are no new and unknown aspects to it, the company and the consultants team will gain time in retaining the Waterfall approach.

Moreover, although Agile methods are efficient, understanding and adopting their philosophy is not easy. If applied incorrectly, Agile methods can create problems that did not exist before. Finally, the integration of the Agile mindset, for some structures, is a long journey fraught with pitfalls.

### 10.3 FURTHER RESEARCH

Some paths could be interesting to follow in order to further investigate the subject. Indeed, agility is a vast subject with a recent craze, and thus offers many research prospects.

The first idea would be to interview the clients for whom the Agile projects were delivered. Thus, qualitative analysis would be more objective, allowing the client to express his opinion on the efficiency of Agile methods in consulting projects. Clients with experience in Agile and Waterfall methods would also contribute to the comparison between the two approaches.

Secondly, extending the research to other countries and to other consultancy firms, for example smaller structures or firms specialising in other areas of consultancy could be instructive for the topic.

Finally, to go further we would need figures, in the consulting, but not only. Other sectors that have not been studied in the literature, such as construction, or the administrative and public sectors, would be interesting to see whether Agile approaches can lead to efficiencies in mitigating the risk of project failure in these areas.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. – PESTLE ANALYSIS

A PESTLE analysis is a framework to analyse the macro environmental factors (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) influencing an organisation from its external environment (CIPD, 2020).

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Political</b></p> <p>Due to Globalization, companies are doing business with each part of the world. Recurrent changes in government policies affect all businesses performance by increasing environmental uncertainty. It is important for consulting firms to analyse the current trends in order to predict all scenarios for their clients. Therefore, consultants need flexible project management methods that make it easy to take a different direction if there is a change of scenario (Henry, 2018).</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Economic</b></p> <p>According to Boehm, rapid changes in competitive threats and time-to-market pressures strongly challenge project management based on pre-specified requirements, such as the Waterfall methodology (as cited in Baskerville, Cao &amp; Ramesh, 2010, p. 449).</p>                                                                                   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social</b></p> <p>The social aspect is also undergoing huge upheavals compared to before.</p> <p>Indeed, clients, especially generation Y and millennials are increasingly waiting for quick solutions. In the future, there is no doubt that following generations will be further connected to the internet in both personal and professional lives. Companies have to be able</p>                                                                                                                                 | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technological</b></p> <p>First, shorter development cycles due to more complex interrelation, increasing use of COTS products, rapid changes in IT, rapid changes in competitive threats, stakeholders needs, and price structures make requirements gathered from the outset already obsolete. Second, cloud computing and virtualization development allow simple</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>to leverage these changing needs to connect with their customers and prospects (Bakri et al., 2012).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>design without operating system and customized for the client. IKIWISI trend tends to promote iterative requirement specification, and thus Agile methods. Finally, technological factors influence do not only influence the software project sector but also many other horizons that consultants are confronted with in their assignments for clients.</p>                                                                                                             |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Legal</b></p> <p>Legal factors are less represented in the literature. However, legacy system is one of the biggest hurdles for consulting companies developing projects for their clients involving non-functional requirements software products like data privacy, security or continuity. Over the years, legacy systems become harder and harder to maintain due to their immutable and inflexible nature. Agile methods facilitate the development upstream of non-functional requirements software products in order to meet compliance requirements such as GDPR or BCE/NBB for the financial sector.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environmental</b></p> <p>The last category is environment, which raises awareness more and more over the years. Growing concerns about green issues among clients are giving way to demands for more environmentally friendly products. Agile lean management of doing more with less is in vogue, also in the consulting field. Simple design, frequent releases and testing are the watchwords to avoid waste. (Bakri et al., 2012).</p> |

## APPENDIX 2. - CORE BACKBONE COMPONENTS

The organization's backbone must be transformed for an agile operating model.

### Backbone components



#### Decision making and governance setup

The governance and decision-making process is simplified—for example, a set of ring-fenced decision rights that need to be taken at the executive-committee level (typically a subset of decisions made today by those bodies), while everything else is pushed down the organization



#### Business planning and budgeting

The methods of strategic decision making change significantly in agile, as organization-wide goals need to be set, aligned, and reviewed through more fit-for-purpose processes; budgeting becomes a flexible process that seeks to reprioritize and reallocate capital as necessary



#### Funding decision making

Funding decisions are made more frequently (from annual cycles), and a continuous review of capital allocation can be done through quarterly-business-review-based and venture-capital-like approaches



#### Performance management

Performance management moves from optimizing individual key performance indicators to assessing performance based on results achieved by teams, or so-called objectives and key results



#### Roles and career paths

Agile roles need to be defined initially to ensure coverage of strategic priorities and alignment; it is also critical to define the career path through a flatter organization to sustain the transformation and to lay out how roles are initially selected to enact the new operating model



#### Risk management and assurance

Done well, an agile operating model can strengthen control around risks and assure technical quality by removing layers, increasing transparency around what is happening, and preserving technical competency—especially critical for organizations in high-hazard industries



#### Workforce location and workspace

Agile team members will likely need to co-locate and will require a workspace to enable agile ways of working and collaboration with other cells



#### Technology

Deploying technology foundations will enable short time to market and high quality, for instance, via architecture evolution and the use of a self-service delivery pipeline and infrastructure (eg, cloud)

*Appendix [2]: The organization's backbone must be transformed for an Agile operating model. (Brousseau et al., 2019).*

### APPENDIX 3. – CONSULTING FIRMS INTERVIEWS

#### Questions

Dans le cadre de mes études en master 2 ingénieur de gestion (option innovation management) à la Louvain School of Management (UCLouvain), je rédige un mémoire traitant la problématique suivante :

***“To what extent do the Agile methods and its components (delivery strategy, Agile software engineering techniques and team capability) provide significant efficiency gains to mitigate the risk of project failure in comparison with the Waterfall methodology?”***

**Remarque :** Je concentre ma recherche sur la gestion de projets dans les entreprises de consultance. Dès lors à travers ce questionnaire, j’aimerais confronter les apports de la littérature sur ce sujet avec la réalité du terrain.

Par ailleurs, pour l’intégralité de ce questionnaire, le terme “project failure” est employé au sens large. En effet, dans ce questionnaire, l’expression “project failure” ou “échec de projets” recouvre à la fois les projets abandonnés, non terminés mais aussi tous les projets qui ne rencontrent pas les critères de succès attendus par le client/l’utilisateur. Ces critères sont classés en 4 catégories : time, costs, quality and scope. Ci-dessous, la définition utilisée pour préciser ma problématique :

*Project failure is defined as any project that is set to support the operations of an organization by exploiting the resources of information technology that fails to deliver the intended output within the originally allocated cost, time schedule, or initially-approved functionality, as well as the project comfortably satisfying the stakeholders and being accepted and largely used by the end users after deployment.<sup>1</sup>*

#### *PARTIE 1 : Vos études, formations et expériences*

1. Quelles études avez-vous fait ?
2. Quel(s) poste(s) avez-vous occupé(s) après vos études et dans quelle(s) entreprise(s) ?
3. Pouvez-vous expliquer votre expérience relative aux méthodes Agiles ?  
Où/quand/comment l’avez-vous acquise (type de projet, équipe, formation... ?)

#### *PARTIE 2 : Environnement organisationnel*

1. Concernant la/les entreprises dans laquelle/lesquelles vous avez utilisé des méthodes Agiles, s’agit-il d’une entreprise qui promeut particulièrement l’Agile ? Si

oui, comment ?

2. Pensez-vous qu'il soit nécessaire pour l'entreprise d'opérer une transition Agile complète (= pas uniquement pour la gestion de projets externes, mais aussi par exemple pour les processus internes, la culture organisationnelle, le développement de la corporate strategy, du recrutement et autres process RH) pour que les méthodes Agiles soient efficaces et contribuent au succès des projets réalisés pour les clients ? Pourquoi ?

### *PART 3 : comparaison Agile versus Waterfall*

1. Selon vous, quels sont les avantages des méthodes Agile dans la gestion de projets en consultance ?
2. Pensez-vous que les méthodes Agiles sont plus adaptées à certains types de projets ? Si oui, lesquels ?
3. En revanche, pour quels types de projets pensez-vous qu'il soit préférable de ne pas utiliser des méthodes Agiles, mais plutôt de conserver la méthodologie *Waterfall* ?
4. Dans la littérature scientifique, certains experts s'accordent à dire que le type de projet a peu d'incidence sur le choix de méthode utilisée. Tout réside dans la manière d'adapter la méthode au projet. Qu'en pensez-vous dans la pratique ?
5. Quels sont les inconvénients des méthodes Agiles ?
6. Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés dans la gestion de votre projet pour implémenter et utiliser les méthodes Agiles ? Si oui, lesquelles ?
7. Pensez-vous qu'il soit intéressant, pour certains ou pour tous les projets, de combiner des éléments Agiles avec des éléments de la méthode *Waterfall* ? Si oui, quelles seraient les étapes/phases du projet que vous effectueriez de manière Agile et celles que vous conserveriez plus "Waterfall" ? Si non, pourquoi pas ?

### *PART 4 : questions directement liées à la problématique*

1. Quelles sont les composantes Agiles qui selon vous réduisent le plus l'échec de projets ?

**Remarque 1** : selon la littérature, les trois composantes qui influencent le plus la réussite des projets sont *delivery strategy*, *Agile software engineering techniques* et *team capability*. C'est la raison pour laquelle je concentre ma recherche dans un premier temps, sur ces dernières.

**Remarque 2** : Parmi les Agile Software engineering techniques, on considère principalement celles-ci :

- iterative requirements specification
- face-to-face communication over written specifications
- managing requirement change through constant planning

- extreme requirements prioritization
- simple design and implementation
- prototyping
- verification
- installation
- operational support
- review meetings
- working in pair, open-space

2. Concernant des composantes Agiles, pensez-vous par exemple que la “*delivery strategy*” (le fait de remettre les avancées du projet de manière très régulière afin que l'utilisateur puisse valider ou non l'achèvement d'une phase, demander des modifications) contribue à diminuer le risque de rater un projet ? Pourquoi ?
3. Concernant les composantes Agiles, pensez-vous par exemple que les « *Agile software engineering techniques* » contribue à diminuer le risque d'échec dans les projets ? Pourquoi ?
4. Concernant les composantes Agiles, pensez-vous par exemple que la “*team capability*” (avoir une équipe à la fois motivée, flexible et pluridisciplinaire) contribue à diminuer le risque d'échec dans les projets ? Pourquoi ?
5. Voyez-vous d'autres composantes Agiles non abordées qui vous semblent importantes dans la réussite des projets ? Lesquelles ?
6. Avez-vous aimé travailler de manière Agile ? oui/non pourquoi ?
7. Le fait de travailler de manière Agile a-t-il eu un impact positif sur votre motivation ? Pourquoi ?

*Je vous remercie d'avoir consacré de votre temps pour répondre à ce questionnaire. Si vous le souhaitez, je pourrai vous envoyer le résultat final de ma recherche.*

*Laura Stainier*

**Thibaut Randaxhe – MANTU (May 29, 2020)**

***Bonjour Thibaud, tu m'entends bien ? Cela ne te dérange pas si j'enregistre cet entretien ?***

Bonjour Laura, oui c'est bon.

***Donc comme déjà dit durant nos échanges de mails, je réalise un mémoire sur les méthodes Agiles en project management dans les entreprises de consultance.***

***Mon objectif est de voir si ces méthodes Agiles et leurs composantes permettent de mitiger le risque d'échecs de projets en comparaison avec la méthodologie Waterfall.***

***Avant de démarrer cette interview, je dois préciser ce que j'entends par "échecs de projets". Je considère le terme "échec" au sens large, c'est-à-dire pas uniquement les projets abandonnés mais aussi tous les projets qui ne rencontrent pas les attentes du client.***

***Ces attentes sont reprises dans quatre catégories : qualité, temps, coûts et délais.***

***Dans un premier temps, j'aimerais connaître ton parcours. Quelles études as-tu fait, quels premiers emploi et fonction as-tu exercé ? Quelle expérience avec les méthodes Agiles as-tu ?***

J'ai étudié sciences de gestion à l'UCLouvain et j'ai ensuite fait le master CEMS. Une fois diplômé, j'ai travaillé en tant que business developer chez Amaris pendant trois ans. Cela fait maintenant un an que je travaille chez MANTU, qui est dans le même groupe que Amaris. MANTU est un groupe international qui fournit des conseils et des services aux entreprises et aux entrepreneurs. Le groupe est présent dans 60 pays différents. MANTU se tient aux côtés des entreprises et des entrepreneurs pour les aider à réaliser leurs rêves, leurs ambitions et leurs projets en soutenant leur croissance, et développement ainsi qu'en accompagnant leur transformation.

Chez MANTU je travaille en tant que product owner, je suis responsable d'un produit qui aide à organiser la gestion de projet. Je ne sais pas si tu connais MS<sup>2</sup> project.

***Oui je connais, j'en ai déjà entendu parler.***

OK super. Mon travail consiste à créer un MS project qui sera utilisé chez MANTU. Pour ce faire, j'ai recruté cinq développeurs qui travaillent directement avec moi depuis l'Autriche. Ils sont donc venus habiter en Autriche. Je les ai fait former par des développeurs expérimentés et de mon côté, j'ai appris les méthodologies Agiles et je leur ai enseigné ces méthodes. Le but était d'être sûr de tous travailler selon les mêmes termes et conditions. Je ne peux pas dire que je sois le Scrum master ou quoi que ce soit. Mais j'ai déjà pris les rôles

de Scrum master. Globalement, c'est ainsi que l'équipe et la "formation" Agile s'est produite. Depuis, nous n'avons pas eu besoin de changer quoi que ce soit aux méthodes et le projet se déroule bien. J'imagine que tu connais bien les méthodes Agiles, que tu es suffisamment renseignée sur le sujet ?

***Oui j'ai pu prendre connaissance de la littérature avant de réaliser ma recherche sur le terrain. Ce que je souhaite, c'est de voir si la littérature concorde avec la réalité du terrain. Dans un premier temps j'aimerais savoir s'il y a vraiment un avantage à utiliser des méthodes Agiles ? Dans un second temps, au niveau des méthodes Agiles, quelles sont selon les toi les composantes qui ont le plus d'importance et d'influence dans l'échec ou réussite de projets ?***

Alors pour ma part, c'était la première fois que je travaillais avec une méthode Agile dans un projet de développement software. Je n'ai donc pas vraiment de "benchmark" à faire entre des méthodes Agiles et la méthodologie Waterfall dans le développement de software. En revanche, je peux identifier les forces des méthodes Agiles, je peux te dire ce que j'apprécie fortement dans ce type de méthodes et qui selon moi, contribue au succès des projets.

Premièrement ce qu'il y a d'intéressant dans l'utilisation d'une méthodologie, peu importe laquelle, c'est qu'on est tous d'accord d'entrée de jeu. On va tous utiliser le même vocabulaire aussi. Un premier aspect des méthodes Agiles, que tu ne trouveras probablement pas en Waterfall, est qu'il est possible de les apprendre pas à pas. Etant donné qu'en Waterfall tout doit être prêt avant de débiter la réalisation du projet, cet apprentissage progressif semble plus compromis. En Agile, on va la première semaine se concentrer sur telle "partie" ce qui permet d'apprendre les éléments nécessaires à cette partie et puis la semaine suivante, on se concentrera sur autre chose, nécessitant d'autres éléments de la méthode Agile utilisée. L'avantage est de pouvoir construire sa connaissance petit à petit. On ne te demande pas, comme durant un blocus d'étudier 200 pages de théorie pour ensuite utiliser la méthodologie. Cette manière de procéder permet une meilleure mémorisation : tu apprends un peu et puis tu mets en pratique aussitôt. On apprend en mettant en application, en étant sur le terrain. Ces connaissances vont rester, car quand on utilise un savoir directement après l'avoir acquis, ce sont des connaissances qui ont tendance à être mieux mémorisées. Un autre avantage de cet apprentissage pas à pas, est le fait de pouvoir apporter plus facilement des modifications dans la méthode elle-même.

En Waterfall ce serait plus compliqué, car toute la méthode est implémentée et utilisée dès le départ.

Ce qui est particulier dans notre équipe de développeurs, c'est que j'ai notamment recruté des développeurs très jeunes. J'avais recruté un développeur plus expérimenté mais sinon tous les autres étaient fraîchement diplômés, ils sortaient de l'université. Dès lors, ils n'avaient aucune connaissance de méthodes, que ce soit Agile ou Waterfall. Ils n'avaient donc pas de benchmark, et lorsque je les formais aux méthodes Agiles, ils "buvaient" mes paroles car ils n'ont pas de comparaison. C'était en l'occurrence ici aussi un petit inconvénient, car en Agile le but est aussi de régulièrement s'interroger et éventuellement apporter des modifications, faire des recommandations, ce que les juniors ne faisaient pas. Les méthodes Agiles sont faites pour être modulables (par exemple décision du nombre de réunions, fréquence, temps). Je leur disais pourtant de ne pas hésiter à proposer des choses.

***Tu as bien spécifié les avantages que tu retrouves dans les méthodes Agiles. A présent, j'aimerais savoir selon toi, si la composante "delivery strategy" qui consiste à remettre plus régulièrement les avancées des projets, contribue à réduire l'échec des projets ? Par conséquent, le client peut demander des modifications ou approuver ce qui a été fait au cours du projet et non, uniquement à la fin du projet.***

Oui, enfin je dirais que ça dépend des indicateurs de succès. Si ton indicateur de succès c'est la satisfaction client, il faut te dire que ton client il ne sera jamais à 100% satisfait. Il aura toujours quelque chose à ajouter ou modifier, même si cela contredit ce qu'il avait demandé au départ. Le fait de leur permettre de revenir sur le projet, d'ajouter des détails est à double tranchant pour le succès des projets. Le problème aussi c'est que le client ne sait pas comment ça se passe lorsqu'il demande une modification. Il croit qu'il suffit de contacter le développeur pour qu'il procède au changement tout de suite. Gérer une équipe de développeurs, notamment avec les méthodes Agiles n'est pas simple. Le client ne connaît pas forcément ces méthodes. Si le client est une girouette qui change tout le temps d'avis, cela peut fortement diminuer le moral au sein de l'équipe de développeurs. Ils perdent le sens de ce qu'ils font s'ils estiment que ces changements ne sont pas logiques, pas cohérents. S'ils sont moins motivés, ils vont donner moins de leur temps et/ou facturer davantage. La motivation et l'implication que l'on tire de la part de l'équipe de développeur sont primordiales et influencent grandement le succès des projets.



***Et au niveau des deadlines, dans quelle mesure la delivery strategy Agile permet-elle de respecter ou non les délais imposés ? Souvent on remarque qu'il y a des retards dans les délais de remise des projets. La date de remise décidée au début du projet ne concorde pas toujours avec la réelle date de fin de projet. Dans la littérature, il est dit que les méthodes Agiles permettent de restreindre voire d'éviter ce genre de retard. Qu'en penses-tu ?***

Cela permet effectivement de moins se tromper. Cependant, attention c'est à double tranchant car on permet les modifications au cours du projet. C'est un avantage dans le sens où ça permet de corriger le tir. Mais lorsque tu corriges le tir, souvent ça consiste à effacer quelque chose fait précédemment, ce qui prend plus de temps. Souvent c'est parce que le client définit mal ses préférences dans le cahier des charges.

***Au niveau des Agile software engineering techniques, même question, dans quelle mesure ces pratiques permettent-elles d'augmenter le succès des projets ?***

Je n'ai pas vraiment de connaissances sur ce que la littérature préconise en termes de techniques Agiles. Je peux expliquer comment on s'organise. J'ai engagé un développeur plus expérimenté que les autres qui doit être disponible tout le temps. Ainsi, les autres développeurs plus jeunes ne sont pas bloqués. Le développeur plus expérimenté doit toujours être disponible pour aider les autres.

***Enfin, la troisième composante est la capacité de l'équipe. Penses-tu que les méthodes Agiles contribuent à l'efficacité de l'équipe.***

On travaille avec plusieurs équipes en Agile ce qui permet un meilleur échange de connaissances, car on peut consacrer du temps dans d'autres projets. Au niveau de la motivation, oui les méthodes Agiles sont clairement positives. On peut rectifier le tir aussi au niveau de la motivation si on observe une baisse.

***A présent, j'aimerais savoir, selon toi quels sont les éventuels inconvénients des méthodes Agiles et pourquoi ?***

C'est difficile de faire du management en Agile car on ne sait avoir qu'une vision tous les x temps. On doit faire confiance. Mais si l'équipe n'est pas motivée, il vaut mieux savoir qui fait quoi exactement. Car les développeurs ont beaucoup d'indépendance. S'ils veulent passer du temps sur Facebook au lieu de travailler, c'est compliqué de les surveiller.

***Comment faites-vous pour éviter ce genre de problèmes ?***

On fixe des objectifs, donc beaucoup de Management by Objectives (MBO). On leur dit que s'ils veulent évoluer dans l'entreprise, certaines choses doivent être accomplies.

***Dernière question, penses-tu que certains types de projets soient plus adaptables aux méthodes Agiles ou justement moins ? Si oui, quel(s) type(s) ?***

Je ne sais pas. Je n'ai pas de comparaison à vrai dire.

***Pas de soucis. Merci d'avoir répondu à mes questions, l'interview est terminée.***

De rien, si tu as d'autres questions plus tard n'hésite pas.

***Merci, au revoir.***

**Alexandre Olikier – PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (June 5, 2020)**

***Bonjour Alexandre, tu m'entends bien ?***

Bonjour Laura. Oui impeccable.

***Ça ne te dérange pas si j'enregistre notre entretien ?***

Non pas de soucis.

***Merci. A présent je commence tout de suite par les questions. Quelles études as-tu fait ?***

J'ai étudié à l'EPL (UCLouvain) en ingénieur civil et j'ai réalisé un master en mathématiques appliquées.

***Quel(s) poste(s) as-tu occupé(s) après tes études et dans quelle(s) entreprise(s) ?***

Je travaille depuis 2 ans chez PwC (Bruxelles) en tant que technology consultant.

***Peux-tu expliquer votre expérience relative aux méthodes Agiles ? Où/quand/comment l'as-tu acquise (type de projet, équipe, formation... ?)***

La méthodologie Agile est utilisée dans mon projet actuel, qui a commencé en septembre il y a presque un an maintenant. Le projet consiste à l'implémentation et migration d'un logiciel d'assurance. Au niveau de l'équipe, elle est constituée de 40 consultants environ. Il y a une partie en Inde qui s'occupe du développement, et puis il y a une autre équipe en Belgique qui est constituée d'Italiens, de Belges, de Suisses et d'Allemands et cette équipe a un rôle de business analyst. En d'autres termes, l'équipe en Belgique analyse les besoins du client et elle les traduit en langage compréhensible pour les développeurs en Inde.

Et donc comment s'organise le projet ? Il est divisé en release – un release est un bloc de sprints. Les releases ont pour objectif d'accomplir un grand objectif de type business et puis chaque sprint constitue un morceau de ce grand objectif. Les sprints sont divisés en sous-thèmes et durent trois semaines. Dès lors, on travaille principalement par sprint, qui sont inclus dans les releases. Par ailleurs, au sein d'un sprint on a des réunions journalières pour s'aligner avec nos équipes.

Au sein des équipes il y a deux choses : premièrement la séparation purement chronologique (release, sprint, daylease c'est-à-dire les réunions journalières) et deuxièmement, une division par équipe au niveau des ressources. Par exemple, on a le projet global à réaliser qui va être divisé être en sous-groupe de 4 à 5 personnes et ces groupes sont chacun concentré sur des objectifs. Chaque équipe va être supervisée par un Scrum master. Le Scrum master avec

son équipe va s'aligner une fois par semaine avec tous les autres Scrum masters afin d'avoir à la fois une vision précise sur son équipe et une vision globale sur l'avancée du projet.

***Tout ce niveau de fonctionnement comment l'as-tu intégré ? Est-ce venu en pratiquant ou est-ce qu'on t'a briefé au tout début du projet en te disant il y aura donc des dayleases etc ?***

On nous a briefé comme cela, on nous a donné quelques documentations sur les méthodes Agiles. Certains collègues ont passé la formation de Scrum master mais je n'étais pas particulièrement intéressé. Donc oui on nous a fourni des informations au tout début car il est vrai que les méthodes Agiles sont bien différentes du Waterfall et cela nécessite une certaine connaissance du fonctionnement dès le départ afin de tous s'aligner sur les mêmes pratiques.

***Penses-tu que les méthodes Agiles sont plus adaptées à certains types de projets ? Si oui, lesquels ?***

Pour le projet actuel c'est-à-dire pour des projets d'implémentation j'ai tendance à dire que c'est indispensable d'utiliser de l'Agile. Bien sûr, il peut y avoir des exceptions en fonction du projet d'implémentation. Néanmoins, en ce qui concerne ma propre expérience il s'agit d'un projet qui a commencé en 2017 et qui pourrait continuer encore sur plusieurs années. D'un point de vue purement organisationnel pour l'entreprise, cela veut dire qu'il faudrait avoir en 2017 une vue d'ensemble sur tout ce que le projet implique et requiert, tous les risques à couvrir et éléments à penser. Ce n'est pas pertinent car le projet est voué à être modifié. Dès lors, les méthodes Agiles permettent de mieux réagir aux perturbations extérieures. De plus, cela permet d'être beaucoup plus flexible au niveau des besoins du client. Agile permet de réagir facilement en cas de pépins, et dieu sait que des pépins on en a chaque semaine. S'aligner de manière très fréquente avec le client et communiquer régulièrement en équipe est très important car cela limite fortement l'impact des contraintes auxquelles on est confronté. En Waterfall, c'est impossible et pour être honnête du Waterfall pur je n'en ai jamais réellement pratiqué car on va d'office ajouter des releases et des réunions plus fréquentes durant le projet. On avait un projet mi-Waterfall mi-Agile mais par bon sens très vite on a migré davantage vers un projet Agile car on donnait des feedbacks réguliers. Je pense que les méthodes Agiles sont elles-mêmes très flexibles, la méthode peut être adaptée aussi. Une

méthodologie est là pour aider. Les méthodes Agiles permettent selon moi une meilleure flexibilité et ouverture d'esprit.

***Donc tu penses qu'au sein de PwC, il y a presque toujours un peu de méthodes Agiles dans la gestion des projets ?***

Oui c'est ça on essaye toujours d'intégrer certains éléments Agiles, ne serait-ce que par bon sens. Attention il y aura toujours des exceptions, mais je dirais que globalement c'est toujours avec de l'Agile parce que c'est ce qui est le plus smooth dans le cycle de vie d'un projet. Après on a deux types de projets sans rentrer dans les détails. Tout d'abord, les projets avec un budget flexible et ceux avec des budgets fixes. Pour ces derniers, la flexibilité va toujours être contrainte, avoir ses limites.

***Ok donc on peut dire que PwC est pro Agile ?***

Oui clairement.

***Au niveau organisationnel aussi tu trouves qu'ils opèrent une transition plus Agile aussi, est-ce que ça se ressent dans la culture d'entreprise notamment ?***

Il y a des formations, tu peux être certifié comme Scrum master. Ce sont des formations qui s'inscrivent dans le scope Agile. PwC essaye de nous pousser à nous renseigner dans ce type de gestion de projets. De plus, quand on vend un projet c'est généralement ce qu'on essaye de mettre en avant sur les différentes propales ; on a utilisé tel framework adapté à tel type de besoin le fait d'utiliser tel framework, tout en précisant bien qu'il n'y a pas qu'une seule méthodologie à utiliser. Nous disposons des frameworks en interne et il faut aussi du bon sens pour les mettre en application.

***Peux-tu redire brièvement les avantages des méthodes Agiles par rapport à Waterfall***

Oui alors une meilleure flexibilité, meilleure capacité à réagir en cas d'imprévus. Dans mon projet, qui est un projet de longue durée, le côté Waterfall aurait été extrêmement complexe et non pertinent. Il est toujours possible d'appliquer du Waterfall et dire "pas de release avant la fin" mais au final déjà se dire cela on se rend bien compte que ça tend vers de l'Agile. Si on fait du Waterfall d'abord sur 6mois et puis de décomposer ensuite sur une période de 3Mois ça équivaut à faire un peu de l'Agile, même implicitement. Donc meilleure flexibilité et meilleure capacité à travailler dans de meilleures conditions pour des projets de plus grande envergure.

***Est-ce que tu penses qu'il y a un type de projet réservé à l'Agile et d'autres réservés au Waterfall ? Lesquels (tu en as déjà un peu parlé)***

En Agile j'aurais tendance à dire que tout ce qui est projet d'implémentation se prête bien à l'Agile. D'ailleurs, selon mon expérience (assez courte) je n'ai jamais vu de projet d'implémentation géré autrement qu'en Agile. Après en Waterfall, quel type de projet s'y prêterait plus ? C'est difficile de dire dans quel contexte le Waterfall convient mieux car il est toujours possible de combiner Waterfall et Agile. Pour les projets d'implémentation je l'ai dit je pense que les méthodes Agiles sont essentielles. Mais pour les autres types de projets, je ne vois pas l'intérêt de se mettre des exclusivités sur une méthode. Pour moi ce sont des facilitateurs pas des contraintes. Pour des projets d'implémentation en revanche, l'Agile convient tellement bien que ça devient presque un must have. En termes d'expérience je ne sais pas vraiment dire pour quels types de projets la méthodologie Waterfall est plus appropriée. Dans tous les cas je pense que cela peut être enrichissant de combiner les deux (Agile et Waterfall). A mon stade actuel, je vois vraiment cela comme des aides pour gérer le déroulement du projet au niveau temps et avancées par étape.

***Quels seraient les inconvénients des méthodes Agiles ? Ou encore des difficultés pour implémenter et utiliser ces méthodes dans la pratique ?***

Je vais te parler des problèmes auxquels on est confronté. On est une équipe de 40 au total ce qui n'est pas fréquent dans projets consultance. Je constate deux choses.

Premièrement le côté chronophage des meetings. On est beaucoup, beaucoup de meetings d'alignement, parfois des meetings qui durent 1h 1h30 où productivité est vraiment négligeable voire nulle. Trouver le bon équilibre entre communication, partage d'information et efficience. Dans le sens où c'est bien de savoir des choses mais si ça ne sert à rien tu vas la retenir 2 semaines. Puis au bout de deux semaines tu l'auras oublié. Pendant ce temps-là tu auras perdu du temps et tu ne sauras pas avancer sur tes tâches. C'est un peu le piège de l'Agile selon moi, tu n'as plus l'opportunité de travailler véritablement sur ce que tu as à faire et d'avancer dans tes tâches. C'est trop d'Agile tue l'Agile, pris au piège de je m'aligne avec tout le monde, tout le monde s'aligne tellement qu'il ne passe rien. Deuxièmement, au niveau des problèmes qu'on rencontre. Attention cependant, c'est à prendre avec des pincettes car je ne sais pas si c'est propre à l'Agile ou juste propre à notre projet, mais je vais parler ici de la manière dont les problèmes sont gérés. Néanmoins, lorsqu'on rencontre un problème, il y a différents types de problèmes. Il y a des problèmes dit "bloquants", d'autres "majeurs" et d'autres "mineurs".

Le problème mineur tu peux passer outre, ça n'a pas d'impact dans le déroulement, tu peux continuer le projet. Un problème majeur est un élément qui ne bloque pas d'autre processus mais qui signifie que pour cet élément particulier ça ne fonctionne pas. Les citriques/les bloquants ça signifie simplement que tout ce qui touche à cet élément ne fonctionne plus non plus. La manière dont les problèmes sont gérés est parfois un peu désordonnée selon moi.

Le premier inconvénient pour faire un petit summary, trop de communication qui peut mener à une perte en efficience. Le deuxième élément c'est la gestion des livrables qui n'est pas toujours tout-à-fait claire. Par exemple, tu ne sais pas pourquoi tel élément a été accepté par le client alors que ça ne fonctionnait pas et qu'un autre élément a été refusé. Parfois être flexible peut aller à l'encontre de la rigueur, de la structure et du bon sens selon moi. Mais à nouveau, je ne pense pas que ce soit le propre d'une méthodologie, je pense que c'est la manière dont on applique la méthode. Je pense que les imperfections viennent plus de la manière d'utiliser les frameworks, plutôt que des frameworks eux-mêmes.

Ce sont donc les deux éléments auxquels je pense. Je rajoute, au niveau de la communication je ne pense pas que ce soit la méthode Agile qui préconise de faire trop de meetings qui impactent l'efficience, je pense que c'est plutôt nous qui nous alignons trop.

Il faut bien dissocier dans ton travail les inconvénients éventuels de la méthode Agile et les risques liés à sa (mauvaise) utilisation. Ici les éléments que je te donne, c'est ma propre expérience chez PwC pour un certain projet.

***Oui tout-à-fait, mais ton expérience est enrichissante pour ma recherche car je veux confronter la théorie des articles scientifiques avec la mise en application des méthodes Agiles sur le terrain. Parfois la pratique n'est pas aussi simple et belle que la théorie.***

Non c'est vrai. A l'inverse de cela, avant ce projet j'avais déjà réalisé un autre projet d'implémentation beaucoup plus petit en Agile. Nous étions une équipe de 3 et nous devions rapporter à trois clients et donc c'était complètement différent d'un point de vue structure et organisation. Là typiquement on avait aussi une méthodologie Agile et c'était beaucoup plus efficace. Pour moi, on appelait cela une méthode Agile mais c'était en fait du Waterfall avec des horizons de deux semaines ; La grande distinction pour moi se fait dans la manière de gérer des erreurs et de délivrer. Pour moi, l'Agile offre beaucoup de liberté en matière de livrables que le Waterfall. Si tu as un projet, dans tous les cas à la fin ce n'est pas flexible, mais je parle de ce qui se passe entre le début et la fin d'un projet. En Waterfall, entre ces étapes-là il n'y a pas beaucoup de moyen de dévier car on divise en petites parties. En Agile on est beaucoup plus flexible. Voilà ce sont les deux expériences Agiles que j'ai, et je me rends compte que les problèmes ont été totalement différents dans les deux cas. C'était totalement différent, donc je pense que ça dépend du contexte et des équipes.

***Le second projet où vous étiez trois, si je peux le savoir, quel était le type de projet ?***

C'était la réalisation de deux POC (proof of concept), des petits prototypes en gros pour la commission européenne qui était mis pour l'éducation.

En résumé, on avait différentes données d'universités, chaque université présente une liste d'études. Chaque liste d'études propose une liste de cours qui est énorme, et chaque liste de cours propose une description. Sur base de cette description, on avait fait un graph qui connectait les études d'universités à des compétences que tu développes au cours de ces études et chaque compétence était elles-mêmes reliées à des métiers. Le but était de pouvoir faire un matching entre ce qu'une étude spécifique te permet de développer en matière de skills et ce que ces skills permettent de faire en tant que métier. Je peux d'ailleurs te les envoyer.



Toujours est-il que pour ce projet d'implémentation là, on avait fait une méthodologie Agile on avait divisé le travail en sprint de deux semaines et donc toutes les deux semaines on allait s'aligner avec le client. Mais donc en dehors de ces deux semaines, on avait très peu d'interaction avec le client. Les interactions étaient vraiment moins nombreuses que celles que j'ai maintenant dans mon projet. Tout cela pour dire que oui on utilisait une méthode du même nom, mais le ressenti et la pratique était complètement différent.

***D'accord je vois. Et pour en revenir au premier projet que tu as mentionné où vous êtes une équipe de 40, tu as dit que c'était un projet d'implémentation pour une compagnie d'assurance mais peux-tu en dire un peu plus ?***

Donc en fait la boîte s'appelle PNV et ce que PNV souhaite faire c'est passer d'un logiciel d'assurance à un autre. Cela implique plusieurs choses ; tout d'abord une migration de leur base de données personnelles. La base de données typiquement qui contient tous les clients. Chaque client est lié à une série de compte et chaque compte est lié à une série de polices. Les polices sont typiquement les contrats d'assurance. Dès lors, eux ce qu'ils souhaitent faire c'est de passer d'un logiciel à un autre et ils veulent tout d'abord que l'on s'occupe de matcher les données. Ce sont des logiciels créés initialement en java. La première étape est de matcher les deux, ce qu'on appelle la migration. On va migrer les clients du logiciel 1 vers le logiciel 2. La deuxième chose c'est se dire un logiciel d'assurance c'est bien mais ce n'est pas quelque chose de générique, ça doit être personnalisable en fonction du business de ton client, de sa manière de fonctionner. Pour ce faire, on applique des changements au nouveau logiciel d'assurance qu'on souhaite implémenter. On procède en commençant par avoir des réunions avec le client, c'est la phase d'inception où on notifie tous les caractéristiques qu'on souhaite ajouter au logiciel actuel. Par exemple, je souhaite pouvoir appliquer des promotions à tel type de client. On crée dès lors une user story qui va faire l'objet d'un développement dans le futur. On a après tout une liste de user story qui forme un backlog. Ce backlog va être divisé en sprints. Au final, avec ces éléments on sait ce qu'on doit faire (le backlog) et quand on doit le faire (sprints). Le projet qu'on a c'est de passer d'un logiciel à un autre et s'assurer que toutes les caractéristiques dont le client pense avoir besoin (car souvent il n'utilisera pas tout) s'y retrouvent pour le client et ses utilisateurs.

***Merci c'était très clair, c'était pour voir vraiment quel type de projet c'était. La question suivante est si tu trouves intéressant de mixer de l'Agile avec du Waterfall. Tu avais déjà donné des éléments de réponse à ce sujet plus haut mais peux-tu développer ?***

Oui clairement je pense qu'un mix peut être intéressant. Pour moi une méthodologie ce n'est pas la Bible. Je trouve cela bête de restreindre à un objet spécifique et l'appliquer de manière rigide. Au final c'est la méthodologie qui est néfaste. Je ne pense pas qu'il y a de mauvaise méthode, je pense qu'il faut montrer du bon sens lorsqu'on s'attaque à un projet. Il faut savoir qui est mon client, quels sont ses besoins et quels sont moi mes ressources pour pouvoir matcher les deux. Une fois que tu sais ce que tu as et ce que le client veut, pour moi la méthodologie est celle qui permet d'y répondre. C'est tout une science de trade-offs au final ; si tu arrives à utiliser du Waterfall mais coupée de manière régulière tous les deux mois ou une méthode Agile un peu adaptée où ton client va davantage participer au projet ça peut être très bien aussi, tant que ton client est content c'est le principal. Il faut juste savoir quoi utiliser, quand et comment. Je ne suis pas forcément pour ou contre une méthode, je suis pro bon sens. On sait que l'on dispose de Waterfall, d'Agile, Scrum master etc et sur base de cela en fonction de ton client tu construis quelque chose que tu lui proposes. Ces méthodologies sont un moyen et non un but. Après tu combines au mieux tous ces éléments pour mener à bien ton projet.

***Donc cela c'est en fonction de ton bon sens. Tu n'as pas eu de formation, tu n'en as pas eu besoin pour savoir comment les utiliser ? Ce ne fut pas trop compliqué de les mettre en pratique ? Comment as-tu fait ?***

Non ça allait, on nous avait dit de lire un article de la personne qui a lancé les méthodes Agiles. Cela ne demandait pas trop de temps, juste quelques heures. Au début tu te lances tu essayes et au fur et à mesure les gens te donnent des conseils. Tu corriges et rectifies le tir. C'est plus une science de terrain. Il n'est selon moi pas nécessaire de bloquer 100pages sur l'Agile. Je pense qu'on apprend surtout en la mettant en pratique. Tu te rends compte que tu fais de l'Agile modifié qui correspond à ce que ton projet exige car chaque projet va présenter des différences.

***Le fait d'être une science plutôt de terrain, trouves-tu que c'est un avantage ?***

Oui ce qui est un avantage et surtout pour moi qui est nécessaire car je ne pense pas qu'il y ait une méthode golden ticket qui permet de gérer tous tes projets.

***A présent, j'aimerais savoir selon toi dans les composantes des méthodes Agiles quelle est selon toi celle qui intervient le plus, qui a le plus d'influence dans la réussite des projets ?***

Cela va peut-être paraître bateau mais je dirais la communication. Au final c'est simplement se dire que par une bonne communication tu sais toujours identifier les gaps entre les attentes et ce qui est délivrés. C'est uniquement la prise de connaissance de ces gaps qui permet de les combler. Par exemple, si je te commande une voiture et que je ne te dis rien de plus tu peux te ramener avec une fiat alors que je voulais une Porsche. Alors que si on s'aligne de manière très fréquente on va avoir l'occasion de construire ensemble élément par élément qqch qui correspond à tes attentes sur base de mes ressources. Je pense que c'est cela l'objectif intrinsèque de la méthode Agile. Communique suffisamment fréquemment pour que je sache en tant que client ce que tu t'apprêtes à délivrer. Ensuite en tant que client je peux te dire ce qui doit être modifié. Tout cela rejoint la case communication pour moi.

***Ok en fait dans la littérature les trois composantes qui influencent le plus le succès des projets sont la delivery strategy, les Agile software engineering techniques ainsi que la team capability. Sur base de ce que tu as dit, tu as parlé de la communication régulière mais je pense qu'on peut dire qu'elle rejoint la composante delivery strategy qui permet de communiquer régulièrement avec le client pour répondre à ses attentes, qu'en penses-tu ?***

Oui effectivement je pense que c'est un élément qui englobe différentes choses. Je pense que tu peux le relier à ce point "delivery strategy" mais la communication finalement est dans les trois composantes citées.

***Dans ma problématique je cherche donc à savoir si les méthodes Agiles et leurs composantes permettent de mitiger le risque d'échecs dans les projets. Par échecs j'entends non seulement les projets échoués, abandonnés mais aussi tous les projets qui ne rencontrent pas les attentes du client/de l'utilisateur en termes de coût, de qualité, de deadlines ou encore de scope. La***

***littérature met en avant trois composantes dont je viens de te parler. J'aimerais donc avoir ton avis sur 'l'influence de ces trois composantes afin de voir si toi aussi, tu observes ces tendances sur le terrain. Premièrement si on dit que la delivery strategy permet de diminuer le risque d'échecs de projets ?***

Oui je pense que c'est une des forces de la méthode Agile. Cela permet de rectifier le tir si le projet ne suit pas exactement les attentes du client.

***Oui c'est ce qui ressort dans la littérature aussi. Par contre, j'aimerais avoir ton avis. Lors d'une précédente interview, l'intervenant m'a dit que la delivery strategy selon lui est à double tranchant pour mitiger le risque d'échecs de projets. En effet, selon lui cela permettait parfois aux clients de revenir sur des éléments qu'ils avaient demandés, qui auraient été inscrits dans le cahier des charges au début. De plus, cela pouvait atteindre la motivation des équipes qui ne comprenaient pas toujours ces changements de direction. Ces modifications récurrentes engendraient une perte de sens dans le projet et impliquaient de devoir effacer certaines avancées pour recommencer autrement. Que penses-tu de cela ?***

Oui alors ce qu'on utilise chez PwC c'est une plateforme nommée GIRA qui stocke toutes les user stories (liste de tâches à effectuer dont je te parlais avant). Toutes les user stories sont mentionnées et par user story on a une story card. C'est à la fois une description de la tâche et une explication technique des éléments à changer. Cette story card doit être à chaque fois validée par le client. En effet, il arrive fréquemment que le client dise "ah mais non pour ceci je ne voulais pas comme ça, j'avais dit autrement". Soit effectivement on (càd PwC) a fait une connerie, on appelle cela un defect et on doit le corriger. Soit, et ça arrive souvent, le client change son fusil d'épaule et dit "ah mais non finalement je veux ça et pas ça". Dans ces cas-là, et c'est toute l'utilité de la story card, on peut aller la consulter et elle permet de nous protéger via une trace écrite. Si sur le papier il est marqué ce qui a été développée par l'équipe, cela prouve que ce n'est pas un defect, mais un change request. Souvent ce qui se passe, c'est le client qui a voulu gagner 20min en bâclant la story card ou sa relecture. La rédaction de bons documents en amont est très importante pour éviter le risque mentionné par l'autre intervenant. Je pense donc qu'il n'a pas tout-à-fait tort mais je pense également qu'il y a des solutions pour réduire ce risque : en rédigeant des documents. Néanmoins, avoir des bons documents bien

complets est compliqué afin d'être protégés. C'est déjà arrivé que des change request ne soient pas considérés comme tels car la story card n'était pas complète. Oui effectivement c'est un risque pertinent qui peut amener des perturbations mais qui peut être évités. Le client peut parfois un peu en profiter un peu ou tout simplement ne pas forcément comprendre l'intégralité du projet.

***D'accord merci pour ton input, donc on peut quand même se dire que finalement il y a moyen de mettre un process en place pour diminuer ce risque. Peut-être que ce n'était pas le cas chez le premier intervenant mais chez vous, vous y avez réfléchi et avez mis quelque chose en place.***

Oui voilà je pense qu'on peut se protéger via la documentation. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que même si ce process paraît béton sur papier, dans la pratique ce sont des consultants, des êtres humains qui vont devoir remplir ces story cards et donc on n'est pas à l'abri de certaines erreurs. La faille pourrait venir de là aussi.

***Concernant la seconde composante les Agiles software engineering techniques donc par exemple le fait de programmer à deux, de se partager le code, de travailler en open space, de développer le plus simplement possible etc, dans quelle mesure penses-tu que ces pratiques influencent l'échec des projets ?***

Ecoute tu m'aurais posé la question il y a trois mois je t'aurais dit oui mais actuellement je me rends compte, qu'après un temps d'adaptation certes, ce n'est pas indispensable. Avec le confinement on a été limité dans ces pratiques et pourtant tout se passe très bien. Le confinement est donc un bon exemple de mise à l'épreuve de ces pratiques. On avait beaucoup de contraintes, on était dans un open space, on devait faire des rdvs avec le client pour faciliter la communication. Au final avec des outils comme teams, skype et des échanges de mails pertinents on s'en sort bien. Pour moi il y a une grande remise en question à faire sur les contraintes du mode de travail comme la limitation des jours de homeworking, les présences physiques à des meetings etc. Avec cette période de confinement, je n'ai pas du tout ressenti que mon travail était menacé par ce manque de contact face to face. On n'a pas eu de retard suite au confinement, j'ai vraiment le sentiment que non ce n'est pas nécessaire même

s'il y a trois mois je t'aurais dit que oui. Comme quoi ça montre que le plus important c'est la manière de s'adapter. La capacité d'adaptation est le plus important. Mon père est consultant aussi et j'en avais parlé avec lui, même chose de son côté cela n'a rien changé au niveau de la qualité de son travail, au niveau des retards ou autre.

***Ah oui ok et au niveau de votre motivation ? Le fait de ne plus revoir ses collègues par exemple, cela a-t-il eu un impact ?***

Pour cela si. Par ailleurs c'est aussi beaucoup plus difficile de scinder vie privée et vie professionnelle. Quand tu reviens du boulot tu es dans ta voiture et tu rentres chez toi tu relâches ta pression, et ta journée est finie. Maintenant quand tu te lèves, entre ta chambre et la pièce où tu travailles il y a plusieurs mètres seulement. Tu ne sais pas vraiment quand arrêter de travailler, tu vois que tu reçois un mail tu te dis que tu vas vite y répondre même si ta journée est sensée être finie. Puis au niveau de la motivation, oui ça me motive de voir mes collègues, de faire une petite pause à la machine à café et d'échanger avec eux.

***On en arrive à la troisième composante qui traite l'équipe. La team capability dans les méthodes Agiles aurait selon la littérature, une influence relativement importante aussi dans le succès des projets. On entend par là une équipe pluridisciplinaire, flexible. Néanmoins, avec le confinement cela a été plus contraint. Dans quelle mesure penses-tu que la motivation joue un rôle dans le succès des projets ?***

Je pense que c'est très important. La motivation et l'entente, quel que soit la méthode utilisée d'ailleurs, est importante. J'ai connu le cas car dans mes collaborateurs il y en a un avec qui ça ne passe pas.

***Comment gères-tu cela ?***

Il est arrivé en octobre, lorsque j'étais sur le projet depuis un mois. Il avait 10 ans d'expérience dans les projets en assurance. On peut presque parler de harcèlement moral envers moi et d'autres. J'ai organisé une réunion avec lui. Nous avons prévenu un manager aussi. Au final nous avons mis les choses à plat. Donc oui clairement l'ambiance au sein de l'équipe c'est un

facteur de réussite important. Sur le précédent prochain on était trois on s'entendait super bien. Le client au final était très content des livrables. Si tu travailles avec des gens avec qui tu t'entends bien c'est plus ludique donc même si tu as des grosses journées, tu ne vois pas d'inconvénient à travailler plus et plus longtemps. A l'inverse si tu es stressé et non épanoui, à 17h tu as envie de partir.

Je pense qu'au-delà de la méthodologie, le plus gros facteur de réussite c'est la manière dont les gens arrivent à travailler ensemble, matchent ensemble.

*Autre chose qui est revenu dans l'autre interview il disait que grâce aux méthodes Agiles l'équipe avait la possibilité de gérer son temps de manière plus flexible en travaillant sur plusieurs projets en parallèle.*

En effet, ça m'a déjà arrivé mais je ne sais pas si c'est vraiment lié à la méthodologie. Je pense que ça dépend des dépendances dans le projet.

*As-tu aimé travailler de manière Agile, pourquoi ?*

Oui en plus c'était des nouveautés et je trouve que c'est la méthode adaptée à mes projets d'implémentation.

*Voilà, j'ai posé toutes les questions que je souhaitais. Merci beaucoup pour ta participation, ce fut très enrichissant.*

Avec plaisir c'était très bien. Si tu as encore d'autres questions ultérieurement n'hésite pas.

**McKinsey & Company – Jonathan Wattiaux and Quentin Jadoul (June 16, 2020)**

***Bonjour, je vais d’abord m’intéresser à votre parcours académique, votre expérience professionnelle et plus particulièrement au niveau des méthodes Agiles. Si cela ne vous pose pas de problème, cet entretien sera enregistré. Quelles études avez-vous fait ?***

Q : Bonjour. Pas de soucis. Alors, je m’appelle Quentin Jadoul je suis un partner chez McKinsey Bruxelles. J’ai fait l’IAG et je suis sorti en 2008, j’ai fait le master CEMS. Je suis entré chez McKinsey en tant que généraliste dans le domaine des banques et assurances. Rapidement j’ai commencé à bosser pour l’implémentation de leur stratégie et leur implémentation IT. J’ai mis en place des méthodes Scrum ou dérivées cela fait une dizaine d’années.

Depuis 4-5 ans ce que je fais beaucoup c’est comment on applique les méthodes Agiles pour la gestion de projet qui ne sont pas seulement IT mais qui sont beaucoup plus larges et pour des organisations beaucoup plus larges.

J : Et Jonathan j’ai terminé aussi en 2008. J’ai fait comme Quentin IAG et CEMS. D’abord j’ai commencé en résumant, dans une petite boîte de conseils “management cockpit” et qui faisait déjà un mix de conseil en stratégie et conseil en informatique.

Puis après je suis passé sur un job plus produit chez McKinsey solutions à Louvain-la-Neuve. J’y développe principalement des produits sur base de données essentiellement qui aident à la prise de décisions. Le dernier produit c’était un produit comment déterminer les meilleurs prix dans un environnement B2B sachant que tu as énormément de paramètres qui rentrent en compte dans le monde B2B, ça peut être la couleur, la qualité etc.

La différence c’est que Quentin travaille plus sur des projets de conseils, avec conseils surtout stratégie et côté banques et travaille vraiment avec des consultants, des comités exécutifs dans des entreprises etc. Moi je travaille plus avec des équipes IT et dans le développement de produit et installation du produit chez le client.

***Pouvez-vous expliquer votre expérience relative aux méthodes Agiles ? Où/quand/comment l’avez-vous acquise (type de projet, équipe, formation... ?)***



Q: De mon côté ça a très vite été. Il y a 10ans Agile était déjà là mais c'était vraiment l'un ou l'autre projet dans un portefeuille de projets. La question c'était qu'est-ce qu'on fait de ces projets et j'ai appris un peu sur le tard, j'ai lu et eu beaucoup de discussions à propos de l'Agile mais ça a été un peu sur le tard. Je n'ai pas de formation et je ne suis pas certifié quoi que ce soit, mais je pense avoir une bonne compréhension du système et j'ai lu pas mal d'articles sur le sujet, mais pas de formation à proprement dite.

***D'accord ce n'est pas indispensable je vois.***

J : Non on peut l'apprendre comme ça. C'est devenu tellement omniprésent et les concepts sont assez simples. C'est plus l'application des concepts qui est intéressante que vraiment le côté académique je pense. De mon côté, à l'université on n'a jamais parlé de méthode Agile. Je me souviens du cours de project management, à aucun moment on ne parlait des méthodes Agiles. C'est arrivé en fait de par la première entreprise pour laquelle j'ai travaillé, une des personnes était intéressée par les méthodes Agiles et m'a filé un bouquin qui trainait sur un des bureaux intitulé "Scrum" je pense. Ensuite, on s'est demandé si on allait expérimenter avec cela. On a commencé à le faire et ça marchait. On a commencé à certifier les gens qui étaient dans l'entreprise à travers la Scrum Alliance, et puis ça a continué à évoluer. Actuellement il y a aussi énormément de formations chez McKinsey autour des méthodes Agiles.

***D'accord merci. Ici la seconde partie de mes questions, je m'intéresse davantage à l'environnement organisationnel de McKinsey justement. Selon vous, est-il nécessaire que l'entreprise elle-même au sens large opère une transition Agile "all-in" (j'avais lu cela dans un article de McKinsey justement). Est-ce que cette transition all-in est nécessaire pour que les méthodes Agiles soient efficaces dans la gestion de projets et diminue le risque d'échecs ?***

Q: Donc alors deux choses. En tant que consultant McKinsey j'ai juste mes clients. Chez McKinsey il n'y a pas de projets Agiles, tous les projets sont Agiles. Moi ce que j'ai vu chez les clients c'est qu'un projet Agile peut fonctionner de manière complètement indépendante. S'il a un bon chef de projet, un bon sponsor etc et by the way, si tu prends une organisation qui

est d'une taille un peu critique, y'a 100-200-300-1000 projets à un certain moment dans le temps, personne ne va voir ton projet Agile, tout le monde s'en fout. Donc si tu as un bon chef de projet et un bon sponsor, ils vont livrer. La question c'est une fois que tu crées un noyau qui continue à grandir. Il y a dix ans 10% des projets étaient Agiles et 90% non. Maintenant, tu rentres chez des clients qui font quasi tous leurs projets en Agile, même des trucs plus compliqués, des core banking aggregation des trucs très chers qu'ils font en Agile. C'est possible, mais ça nécessite un ensemble de mesures que l'on appelle le core backbone chez McKinsey. Ces processus et ces mesures s'assurent que tout le monde est staffé, que tout le monde est évalué de la même façon, qu'il y a un alignement entre la stratégie et entre ce qu'ils font, que les équipes se parlent. Je pense que la question c'est "tout le monde veut un projet Agile qui fonctionne, le débat c'est comment, car tu as seulement un projet Agile, guess what? Tout le monde va le regarder et le succès va être évalué un peu chacun comme il veut et au final ce sera toujours successful. La question c'est une fois que tu as eu un projet successful, tu le scales up pour avoir non pas un projet à succès, mais 100 projets réussis. C'est ça le débat.

J: Oui tout-à-fait d'accord. J'étais un peu dans les deux situations aussi tu vois. A la fois à la tête d'un projet Agile qui était le seul projet Agile dans l'entreprise et effectivement si tu as le bon sponsorship alors ça peut très bien se passer. Est-ce que ça va complètement convertir ton organisation ? Je ne pense pas. Et alors on a eu en interne un changement au niveau de l'IT interne de McKinsey qui a vraiment été une transformation Agile Top-down, donc guidée par le leadership. Ce qui est intéressant dans ces approches-là c'est que tu vois que tu convertis plus une organisation quand tu as l'entière de l'organisation qui apprend un peu le langage Agile, quelles sont les valeurs, comment va-t-on s'organiser... Tu es un peu moins dans ton coin. T'avances dans la même direction ce qui peut être pas mal. Ce n'est jamais évident de dire si ça doit être all-in ou spécifique, je pense que ça dépend du cas par cas, mais il y a du bon dans chacun.

***A présent j'aimerais davantage faire des comparaisons entre Agile et Waterfall. Premièrement, selon vous quels sont les avantages des méthodes Agiles dans la gestion des projets en consultance ?***

Q: Donc je pense que l'avantage des méthodes Agiles c'est de revoir le scope. C'est-à-dire que de semaines en semaines, sprint en sprint tu es capable d'être sûr que tu te focalises sur les bonnes priorités, et potentiellement revoir le scope de l'équipe, le scope de ce que l'ont fait, de revoir le staffing etc. C'est pour moi le plus grand avantage. C'est pour ça que je te disais, chez McKinsey de base, hors de l'IT, hors de ce que Jonathan fait, en tant que vraiment consultants tous nos projets sont Agiles parce que toutes les semaines, ou toutes les deux semaines on a une conversation avec le client où on lui dit voilà ce qu'on a fait, on n'a pas tous les résultats mais voilà où est-ce qu'on en est, on va raffiner. Il y a une espèce de ce qu'on appelle l' "hypothesis-driven approach" qui veut dire vraiment on va aller dans une direction mais potentiellement on va avoir faux et on va raffiner notre approche etc. Donc ça c'est le plus grand avantage pour moi de l'application des méthodes Agiles dans notre boulot. La même chose se passe au niveau de nos clients, excepté le fait que, pour moi l'avantage des méthodes Agiles chez mes clients en plus de tout ce que je viens de dire, c'est qu'ils vont avoir quelque chose de très focalisé sur la valeur. Dans l'ancien monde les gens avaient un budget et un délai pour leur projet et guess what? Aucun projet ne finissait en temps et en budget car il y avait toujours des features qui n'étaient pas délivrées, il y avait toujours des choses pour lesquelles les gens revenaient à la fin des deadlines en demandant plus de budget car ce n'était pas fini. Donc je pense que ce que l'on voit dans le scale-up de nos clients, c'est que tu n'es plus responsable d'un projet mais d'un produit. Tu es responsable de définir les fonctionnalités qui vont amener le plus de bénéfice mais peut-être que les hypothèses faites lors des premiers meetings changent mais au moins tu as la flexibilité de changer et tu ne dois pas aller demander du budget ou revoir ton staffing car tu as tous les leviers pour le faire. C'est pour moi le grand avantage chez nos clients.

J: Tout-à-fait d'accord ça s'applique aussi à la création de produits et au cycle IT. Je pense un élément en plus que je peux rajouter par rapport à ce que Quentin a dit c'est aussi le côté structurant mais qui est léger. C'est -à-dire que lorsque tu demandes à un groupe de personnes de travailler vers un objectif mais qui est assez incertain en général c'est assez souvent le bordel. C'est là qu'arrive à la fois le Waterfall et l'Agile mais le Waterfall est très contraignant, tu dois préparer un plan à l'avance, parfois ça engendre aussi des certifications à avoir à l'avance donc tu as un peu une science autour de tout cela qui est difficile à comprendre ainsi que des rôles qui sont en silos. C'est le project manager qui est responsable du plan, si quelque chose va mal c'est sa responsabilité. Je pense que l'Agile est beaucoup plus basé sur l'équipe, sur des

processus assez simples, tu donnes vraiment la transparence sur ce qui a été accompli et ce chaque jour. D'un projet Agile à un autre, celui qui suit bien ces cérémonies-là en général aura une bonne reconnaissance comme un projet qui fonctionne bien. Parfois le fait de ne pas bien savoir ce qu'il se passe va amener du sponsorship, voilà ça c'est un projet qui se passe mal parce que je n'ai pas la transparence, je ne sais pas ce qui se passe. Avec ce côté Agile qui est simple où tout le monde sait ce qu'il se passe, et sprint après sprint tu peux rectifier le tir. Cela donne quand même un peu de confort à chacun.

***Ma question suivante est si vous pensez que certains types de projets sont plus adaptés aux méthodes Agiles et si oui, lesquels? Est-ce que selon vous certains projets ne sont vraiment pas faisable avec des méthodes Agiles ?***

Q: c'est une bonne question. J'ai eu le débat avec beaucoup de mes clients. Je discutais de core banking aggregation, parce que dans un monde "simple" les gens se disent "un core banking aggregation" ce n'est pas pour l'IT c'est trop compliqué. Mais j'en discutais avec mes clients et je pense qu'ils ont raison : c'est quoi l'Agile ? Je ne veux pas donner ici une définition de l'Agile mais si tu regardes la méthode Waterfall. Waterfall c'est basé sur les vieilles méthodes d'ingénierie. Je dois construire un pont, un immeuble et guess what ? Je sais exactement comment je dois construire un pont ou immeuble. Je sais comment le pont fonctionne, je sais ce que je dois faire et comment le faire. Entre le moment où j'ai commencé et le moment où j'ai terminé, le monde ne change pas fondamentalement. Parce que ce sont des méthodes très stables pour des processus très stables. Ce qu'on se rend compte de plus en plus c'est que les projets dans lesquels nos clients se lancent, ce sont des choses qu'ils n'ont jamais faites. Un core banking aggregation c'est un truc que personne n'a jamais fait. Pour moi les clients les plus intelligents sont ceux qui disent c'est justement pour ce type de projets "inconnus" qu'on doit utiliser Agile. Tu ne sais pas exactement comment ça va fonctionner. Tu ne sais pas exactement comment le bloc A et le bloc B vont interagir. Et donc livrer de la valeur plus rapidement et obtenir des feedbacks c'est peut-être la meilleure chose qui puisse nous arriver. Mais ça peu de clients dans l'industrie l'entendent.

***D'accord je vois. Il est vrai que dans la littérature j'ai souvent lu que lorsque les projets étaient trop grands, à trop grande échelle on laissait tomber l'Agile. Mais après ce que vous***

***me dites, je trouve qu'il est plus logique de se concentrer sur l'incertitude liée au projet afin de choisir la méthode.***

Q: Mais voilà! Je pense que, on a publié un article là-dessus récemment que je vais t'envoyer, je pense que dans le monde bancaire en tout cas de là où je viens, ce genre de projets c'est des projets à haut risque et très coûteux. Dès lors, les gens pensent qu'en faisant un projet plan très détaillé avec la tâche à la journée etc ça va fonctionner mieux qu'en Agile. Ils se disent "je minimise l'incertitude". Cette fausse impression de contrôle leur donne "la conscience" qu'on va y arriver ; et btw ce genre de core banking aggregation il y a 10 ou 20 ans c'était déjà des projets compliqués et je ne pense pas qu'on avait un meilleur niveau de succès. Dès lors on utilise les méthodes qu'on connaît comme Waterfall tandis qu'Agile on ne connaît pas. C'est pourquoi on se dit qu'Agile est bien pour les petits trucs. On revient à la question au fond les gens mettent en place des processus Agiles mais ne changent pas le reste de l'organisation sur la façon dont on apporte les projets, dont on mesure l'état d'avancement. C'est un peu mon point de vue.

J: Je suis d'accord aussi. Ce n'est pas vraiment une question de taille de projet. L'industrie s'est un peu trompée au début même si je pense que c'est en train de corriger avec les frameworks qui arrivent sur Agile, on se rend compte qu'il y a besoin de compléter pour les gros projets, comment faire ce genre de transformation. C'est effectivement une question de certitude. Le seul endroit où je pourrais dire que tu peux être meilleur en Waterfall plutôt qu'en Agile c'est si tu es 100% certain de tous les paramètres de l'équation, ce qui arrive vraiment très très peu. A ce moment-là alors si c'est juste répéter 100% la même chose sans incertitude alors oui tu seras plus efficace en Waterfall. L'autre aspect c'est aussi, même si c'est plus intéressant de prendre Agile dans son ensemble et essayer de convertir l'organisation pour l'entièreté des cérémonies, la manière de travailler, aller ensemble vers la valeur, je pense qu'il y a certaines choses qui peuvent être utilisées sans les autres; ce n'est pas non plus un menu que tu prends et tu choisis à la carte mais pour rendre de la valeur peu importe le projet sur lequel tu es mais ne serait-ce que le point sur la transparence, je pense que ça peut déjà aider pour le projet.

Q: Je viens de mettre un article que l'on a publié sur la conversation et il y a un ou l'autre paragraphes qui traitent sur ce que l'on vient de dire.

***Merci beaucoup je le lirai. A présent quels seraient les inconvénients des méthodes Agiles ? (Si vous en voyez). Ou peut-être aussi leurs limites, ou des difficultés à les mettre en pratique, à les utiliser ?***

Q: Pour moi il y a deux choses. Pour moi la méthode Agile a vraiment très peu d'inconvénient. Pour moi le problème est que la méthode Agile a une série de croyances autour de la mise en place de ces méthodes, la façon de travailler qui sont nocives. D'un côté du spectre tu as des gens qui se disent Agile ça veut dire chacun fait ce qu'il veut, y'a une énorme liberté et plus de contraintes, y'a plus de plan y'a plus rien. L'autre côté du spectre c'est tous ces Frameworks dont Jonathan parlait à l'instant sur la mise en place des Framework les gens suivent cela comme une recette. Ils lisent ces Frameworks et se disent qu'il faut absolument les mettre en place tels quels. Les framework comme SAFE sont extrêmement lourds. A chaque niveau il y a des contraintes et c'est très lourd ? Je pense que ce genre de framework fonctionne dans un environnement qui a besoin de beaucoup d'alignement mais les gens ont tendance à foncer et à vouloir le faire pour tout. On a donc deux extrêmes, d'un côté certains qui pensent qu'en Agile on fait ce qu'on veut et d'un autre coté certains qui se disent Agile = SAFE: aucun des deux extrêmes n'est correct. D'un côté Agile nécessite la mise en place de contraintes comme j'ai dit au début qui s'appelle le core backbone pour qu'il est un certain alignement, d'un autre coté les frameworks doivent être adaptés aux besoins que tu as. Il faut trouver le juste milieu car chaque entreprise va être différente, le scope d'activité, la stratégie, la façon de travailler ou encore les objectifs seront très différents. Donc pour moi il n'y a pas une méthode qui est meilleure que l'autre, il faut chaque fois l'adapter.

J: Il faut être assez flexible sur ces méthodes tu vois. Effectivement, Quentin parlait de recette, ça devient presque une Bible parfois. Je me suis déjà presque retrouvé à reprendre une équipe qui avait sa méthode Agile de travail et dans laquelle ils définissaient un scope de travail par quarter, par trimestre. La règle était, une règle dont je n'étais pas au courant, que le scope est fixé, on n'en parle plus. Si tu as d'autres tâches à effectuer, tu devras les faire le quarter suivant. C'est toujours un peu marrant car les gens se défendent derrière cela en disant "non c'est l'Agile c'est notre méthode". Cela engendre pas mal de frustrations et c'est assez difficile d'aligner les gens et de trouver le bon équilibre. Il y a une direction qui est donnée par l'Agile, et j'imagine que tu l'as déjà regardée dans l'Agile manifesto qui est un peu la base de l'Agile ; ces directions sont des bonnes directions. On valorise plus, par exemple, un software qui fonctionne plutôt

que de la documentation extensible, on valorise plus nos capacités à changer de direction et être sur base de ce qu'on apprend plutôt que de suivre un plan à la lettre. Ce sont toutes sortes de bonnes choses, qui peuvent être un "peu une recette". En revanche, la manière de l'appliquer doit être adaptée. Par exemple, les méthodes qu'on utilise nous on a fait notre propre mélange. On utilise Agile + lean qui en fait le modèle un peu toyota (enlever un peu tout ce qui n'a pas de valeur) et design thinking avec l'utilisateur au centre où on essaye de comprendre ce qui se passe dans la vie de l'utilisateur pas seulement pour un problème spécifique. Cela marche bien pour nous avec une certaine flexibilité.

***Ok merci. La dernière partie de mon questionnaire se concentre sur ma problématique. Dans la littérature j'ai dû me concentrer sur trois composantes Agiles, celles qui avaient le plus d'influence dans le succès des projets. Donc c'était d'abord la delivery strategy. Vous en avez déjà parlé, donc c'était le fait de remettre plus régulièrement, de revenir vers le client régulièrement. Je pense que vous confirmez globalement que c'est un des avantages des méthodes Agiles et c'est ce qui permet aussi de mieux respecter les délais, les coûts. Est-ce que cela se confirme selon-vous dans la pratique ? Dans quelle mesure la delivery strategy permet-elle de réduire le risque d'échecs dans les projets ?***

J: La question est assez fermée c'est difficile de répondre différemment que par oui et non. Donc je dirais oui.

Q: je reprends ce que tu disais. Si on dit tiens passer en mode Agile ou tiens toutes les deux semaines, on va faire des suivis réguliers, on va voir ce qu'on va livrer est-ce que ça a un impact, oui ça a un impact car c'est toujours mieux de faire plus régulièrement que moins régulièrement. Je ne sais pas si ça t'aide vraiment ?

***Oui ça m'aide car par exemple, avec un précédent intervenant lorsque j'ai posé cette question il m'a dit que la delivery strategy est à la fois un avantage et un inconvénient, que c'est à double tranchant. Il disait que le fait que le client puisse revenir plus souvent vers eux et faire des modifications plus régulières, il trouvait que le client en demandait trop, qu'il en profitait, qu'au final on devait toujours revenir sur ce qui avait été fait et on rendait le projet plus tard.***

Q: Oui c'est vrai. Mais pour moi on en revient à la base qui est qu'est-ce qui rajoute de la valeur pour le client ? Donc si le business change d'avis ou veut refaire des choses, ou ça fonctionne pas) il faut qu'il explique pourquoi et s'il pense que pour une raison ou pour une autre il pense que le produit n'est pas prêt, on ne peut pas aller en production. C'est comme ça que je le positionnerai. Donc oui potentiellement ça va rendre la vie de certaines personnes plus compliquées mais si on est tous alignés sur le fait que l'objectif c'est le client final et que tant que ce n'est pas bon ou suffisamment bon, ça ne sert à rien d'aller en production, ça reste un avantage pour moi.

J: Un des points dans le manifeste, il y en a quatre dans le manifeste. Un des points stipule "on se met d'accord pour favoriser la collaboration au-dessus du contrat". Donc c'est la manière de travailler. Si on décide d'aller ensemble en Agile, il est certain qu'on ne pourra pas fixer tous les petits bugs avec un scope illimité et un budget illimité. Ou alors il va falloir que moi je prenne sur mon budget les dépassements qui se passent à ce niveau-là. Il y a peut-être aussi une certaine expérience de la part du project manager à gérer l'équipe et la relation avec le client pour s'aligner sur ce genre de choses. C'est un peu à double tranchant, je suis d'accord qu'il y a un second tranchant.

***Il ne plaçait peut-être pas, dans leur perspective, les envies du client, son bien-être avant le contrat comme vous dites.***

J: Oui mais le bien-être client a d'autres aspects, parfois c'est d'être bien vu par mon boss et prendre absolument 0 risque et donc Waterfall pourrait être mieux pour ça. Je prends un peu des exemples extrêmes mais y'a beaucoup de paramètres à prendre en compte.

***Il parlait aussi du fait que vu que le client peut revenir régulièrement et faire des modifications parfois un peu exagérées selon eux, cela pouvait également miner la motivation des équipes.***

Q: Soyons honnêtes. Pour moi je ne vois pas un monde dans lequel Waterfall est meilleur



qu'Agile, dans aucun cas. Parce qu'Agile qu'est-ce que c'est ? Ce n'est jamais que des petits Waterfall qui dure une semaine ou deux et on les met bout à bout plutôt que de faire des blocs de 3 mois, on fait des blocs d'une ou deux semaines. Par contre, on en revient à "tiens comment ça a été mis en place dans la société ?" Certaines boîtes le font mieux que d'autres et donc c'est important de revenir à "qu'est-ce qui est important pour nous ? En quoi croit-on ? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on fait ce qu'on fait ? Il y a un modèle très intéressant d'Agile coaching qui s'appelle Shu Ha Ri. Shu = tu fais exactement ce qu'on te dit de faire, Ha= tu comprends les principes et Ri= tu commences à changer les pratiques car tu as compris les principes. Donc ce que j'entends de toi, c'est au fond souvent des mauvaises mises en place. J'en vois plein chez mes clients, des mauvaises mises en place de modèles. Mes clients me disent oui donc Agile c'est permettre au client de changer d'avis comme de chemise et donc on ne sait pas très bien où on va. Cela peut être le cas mais dans mon expérience c'est relativement limité, dans le sens où si tu commences un projet qui est bien définir, you know where you go, effectivement il va y avoir un changement de scope mais au final on va tous être d'accord pour dire que ces changements sont importants pour le client. Si on trouve que ces changements ne sont pas importants, alors on ne les fait pas. Avoir cette espèce de "ah oui mais le business veut qu'on change des trucs" c'est trop facile.

J: Oui je suis d'accord avec Quentin. Le truc c'est que ces comportements arrivent. Tu peux arriver sur des projets où malgré le fait que tu sois super Agile, malgré le fait que tu ais été très transparent tu peux te retrouver face à qqun qui n'a pas suffisamment avec la valeur qui a été délivrée dans les 10 sprints convenus. C'est vrai on s'est déjà retrouvé dans des projets comme ceux-là. Est-ce que c'est un bon exemple ou justement un contre-exemple qu'Agile apporte de la valeur sur la delivery? Je ne pense pas.

Q: Je pense aussi qu'un des problèmes de l'Agile c'est que les pratiques ne sont pas définies. Si tu lis l'Agile manifesto il y a quatre valeurs et douze principes. Les valeurs ce n'est pas "on n'a pas de plan" c'est "on préfère s'adapter par rapport au plan". Ce n'est pas l'un ou l'autre, c'est "on préfère s'adapter mais on a un plan" et ça je pense que beaucoup de gens le comprennent, tout le monde ne lit pas ce manifesto et beaucoup ne le comprennent pas. Je pense que sur cette base-là les gens mettent en place des pratiques qu'ils ne comprennent pas et dont ils ne comprennent pas les principes et alors ils arrivent à faire n'importe quoi.

J: Je rajouterais encore un truc par rapport à une expérience qu'on a eue. C'était un projet 100% Agile, le process était parfait mais l'idée était mauvaise. Donc voilà on essayait de créer un produit dont l'idée est mauvaise, la vision n'était pas claire du tout, qu'est-ce qu'on va construire quel problème on essaye de résoudre ? On n'avait pas vraiment fait de recherche à l'avance, c'est plus une idée qui est arrivée sur la table par qqun qui pensait avoir une super idée et qui avait un client pour l'appliquer. Le projet a foiré même s'il était très Agile, qu'il y avait des sprints, qu'on faisait des démos etc le produit n'a jamais été utilisé et n'est jamais rentré en production. Donc pas trop se reposer sur Agile pour se dire c'est ce qui va nous permettre de magiquement délivrer quelque chose de qualitatif. C'est aussi pour ça que maintenant avant de lancer un projet on fait énormément de recherche pour savoir ce qu'on essaye de résoudre, ou est-ce qu'on a l'impression qu'écrire un software va être plus efficace que d'écrire sur une feuille de papier ou un tableau Excel.

***La deuxième composante qui revenait souvent dans la littérature c'était les Agile software engineering techniques donc le fait par exemple de travailler par paires, de concevoir simplement, d'intégrer de manière continue, de tester les premières lignes de code dans le cas de projets IT. Aussi le fait de travailler en open-space. Par ailleurs, avec le problème du COVID19 pensez-vous que ça a eu un impact, vu qu'en Agile on vend aussi beaucoup le fait de travailler en open space, de beaucoup communiquer en face-to-face est-ce que ça été également restreint avec le confinement et dans quelle mesure ?***

Q: Ce que je propose c'est que tu nous donnes ton troisième bucket et qu'on en discute parce que chez McKinsey nous la façon dont on regarde le truc on constate qu'il y a 5 buckets. Nous avons la stratégie, la structure de ton équipe, les gens et les talents (et ça on n'en a pas encore parlé), tous les processus dans lesquels je mets le processus de delivery mais aussi le processus d'alignement etc et alors à la fin il y a la technology. Et donc potentiellement on peut discuter de ces 5 buckets mais pour moi l'aspect delivery strategy, l'aspect sur software engineering techniques selon moi c'est aspect très pratico-pratique d'un projet. Je ne sais donc pas dans quel contexte tu discutes avec quel prof etc mais software delivery practice c'est super important. On nous prouve tous les jours que si tu es capable de faire du code, de travailler en équipe, de faire du testing c'est super important mais ce n'est jamais que le delivery d'une strategy qui est beaucoup plus large qu'un produit. Tiens qu'est-ce qu'on veut faire et comment ? C'est un truc

qui prend quasi autant de temps que d'écrire le code. Pour revenir à mon point, c'est dire tu regardes la fin du processus mais y'a tous les processus avant comme "comment j'ai donné un objectif à l'équipe ? Comment l'équipe a défini l'objectif à atteindre ? Chez McKinsey on parle beaucoup de objectifs and results : tu reçois un objectif, comment le traduis-tu en results, en backlogs ? Une fois que tu as ton backlog tu peux commencer à délivrer. Je crois qu'on a prouvé suffisamment que les delivery practices étaient très importantes. Néanmoins, si tu fais de la merde, même si tu automatises ça restera de la merde.

***Oui ok. La troisième composante qui revenait dans l'article que j'avais consulté, c'était justement la team capability. Le fait d'avoir une team flexible et pluridisciplinaire. C'était les trois composantes delivery strategy, Agile software engineering techniques et team capability. En vous écoutant je comprends tout-à-fait qu'il tenir compte aussi de tout ce qu'il y a en amont et en aval par exemple au niveau de la stratégie et structure.***

Q: effectivement il y a beaucoup de choses qu'on peut mettre dans ces trois points, mais je pense qu'il y en a d'autres qui ne rentrent pas dedans. Pour moi il faut être sûr que tu as une bonne équipe. Il y a 10 ans ce qu'on faisait c'est que par exemple l'IT était Agile et le business ne l'était pas. Dès lors, une fois par semaine t'avais un gars de business qui venait assister à une réunion et qui faisait ses commentaires en mode "oui j'aime bien ou je n'aime pas", et donc c'était le product owner. Maintenant, dans les boîtes les plus avancées, le product owner est dans l'équipe, le business est dans l'équipe, tout le monde est dans l'équipe, on est 8, on a toutes les capacités et on travaille en équipe. Nos objectifs sont alignés et on sait ce qu'on doit faire. Donc ça c'était la première chose c'est ce qu'on appelle la structure de l'équipe, quelles sont les capacités qu'on a dans l'équipe. Il y a une deuxième chose qui sont pour moi les talents, être sûr que tu as dans ton équipe des gars qui ont les capacités, l'expérience, la compréhension, qui sont smart c'est pour moi aussi important que la structure. Avoir un product owner, un coach Agile etc qui connaissent leurs rôles et le comprennent c'est aussi important que la structure. Enfin, j'arrive à la question des colocation (travailler côte à côte) il y a trois mois je t'aurais dit c'est super important parce qu'on a fait des études, et on voit que typiquement plus tu as de locations différentes, plus tu perds de la productivité. On estime cela à 14-15% par addition de location. Donc si tu as deux locations c'est 14% moins productifs, si tu en as trois c'est 30% moins productifs. Par contre ce qu'on voit beaucoup avec le covid, beaucoup de gens ont été coincé chez eux et on a eu une productivité qui a été assez élevée. Ce n'était plus une

équipe qui était en Belgique et une équipe qui était en Inde et là clairement on avait une perte de productivité. Ici chacun est chez lui, et donc l'équipe tout entière doit se réhabituer, se modifier, se réorganiser.

Ici je vois que beaucoup de mes clients vont continuer en homeworking. Seulement, on ne va plus le faire comme avant en ayant une équipe qui est on side et un ou deux gars qui va joindre par call parfois et qui a peu d'idées de ce qui se passe. Tout le monde va se mettre sur son laptop comme ici (période télétravail).

J: Même chose de notre côté, donc on travaille déjà assez bien en remote car les équipes sont fort dispersées. Effectivement selon les locations tu perds en efficacité surtout au niveau des timezones donc on essaye de regrouper les personnes dans les mêmes fuseaux horaires. Ce que le covid a changé pour nous c'est qu'on s'était vraiment mis comme barrières que certaines choses on ne le ferait jamais en remote. Par exemple, des workshops qu'on fait tous les quaters en général on préfère avoir tout le monde sur place. On a été obligé de le faire à distance et ça se passe tout aussi bien voire mieux à distance. On est en train de discuter de trouver un moyen d'avoir un contact au minimum tous les 6mois mais pas pour ce genre d'objectif, de workshops.

Q: Je réfléchissais un peu à ce que dit Jonathan. Je pense qu'on va voir beaucoup de remplacements de ce qu'on appelle colocation par "face time communication" quelque chose comme ça. En fait le problème d'avoir plusieurs locations c'est que les gens ne se parlent pas. Lorsqu'ils ont une question, on va envoyer un mail, on doit lire le mail, tu dois écrire et cela prend du temps. Ce que la colocation permettait c'est se dire j'ai une question, tu es en face de moi je te la pose et j'ai ma réponse. A présent vu que tout le monde est à la maison, si on a une question on va directement faire un call avancé, et les gens se parlent quasiment comme s'ils étaient au bureau ensemble. Dans les boites avancées, on voit que les gens se parlent presque en full time comme s'ils étaient ensemble. Cela permet de réduire cette communication channel le plus possible.

J: Et même sur des outils parfois où tu as l'impression qu'il faut absolument un whiteboard pour régler un problème ensemble, on utilise Miro maintenant qui est un whiteboard virtuel et on est presque devenu plus productif sur ce whiteboard virtuel parce qu'on a vraiment pris l'habitude

de travailler là-dessus que si on revenait dans une pièce physique en fait, c'est vraiment une dynamique assez intéressante.

***Oui c'est pour ça que vous disiez que ça se passait limite mieux qu'avant le COVID-19?***

J: Oui ça dépend du genre de situations. Pour ce workshop-là c'était le cas. Je pense qu'il y a quand même le côté humain qui est en train de se perdre. Un des gros feedbacks qu'on a dans nos équipes, c'est le fait qu'on n'a plus cette impression de célébrer quelque chose ensemble, avoir un groupe de personnes qui travaille vers un objectif commun, et une fois qu'on l'a atteint on célèbre ensemble, on revoit un petit peu ce qui s'est passé et on voit ce qu'on veut améliorer par la suite. Bon il y a un process en Agile qui est la rétrospective mais tu ne retrouves pas cela en fait. C'est un problème qu'on n'a pas encore réussi à résoudre.

***Cela allait être ma question, est-ce que le télétravail a aussi un impact sur la motivation des équipes ? J'imagine que c'est aussi motivant d'aller au travail et de voir ses collègues.***

J: tu peux quand même aller au travail et voir tes collègues, ça ne va juste pas être les collègues avec qui tu vas bosser sur le même projet. L'un compense d'une certaine manière l'autre mais pas totalement. Il manque quand même ce côté "un groupe de personnes atteint un objectif commun et célèbre ensemble". Ça reste difficile à faire sur Zoom.

***La troisième composante c'était vraiment team capability donc selon vous quelles sont les différences que l'on va retrouver dans une équipe en Agile et dans une équipe en Waterfall ?***

J: Je pense que Quentin a déjà bien répondu à cette question-là tu vois en disant que cet ancien mode de travail avec le business d'un côté et l'IT de l'autre, le fait d'être passé à des équipes vraiment multifonctionnelles qui own vraiment l'entièreté du produit c'est beaucoup plus efficace, il n'y a rien à faire. Il y a ce côté efficacité de par le fait que toutes les personnes requises à la prise de décisions sont ensemble. Il y a un autre côté qui est intéressant aussi c'est l'idée que les problèmes qu'on résout appartiennent à l'équipe entière et n'appartiennent plus uniquement au project manager. C'est quand même aussi un certain

confort pour le gestionnaire de projet sur qui tout le poids pesait. Il doit vérifier que cette idée va être une bonne idée, mais comment savoir lui par lui-même ? Alors que là on a vraiment une équipe entière de 8 cerveaux smart avec différentes capabilities, un designer, un ingénieur, une personne plus “produits” et recherche etc. En général tu vas quand même avoir une richesse de résolution du problème qui est beaucoup plus grande que si tu avais juste une personne qui se retrouvent avec le poids de devoir prendre toutes les décisions pour le produit que tu veux créer ou sur le projet.

Q: Et aussi le fait que tout le monde est dans le même bateau. Avant il y avait le business, l’IT et puis il y avait un project manager qui était coincé parce que premièrement ce n’est pas lui qui délivre le projet et deuxièmement tout le monde va lui râler dessus parce que le projet est trop cher et le business va râler, ensuite l’IT va râler parce que le business ne sait pas ce qu’il veut donc c’est juste l’enfer pour ce gars. Et donc de dire on a tous les mêmes objectifs et on est tous dans le même bateau c’est très important.

***Ok donc un sentiment de responsabilité en commun aussi.***

Q: Voilà.

Merci j’ai terminé avec mes questions. Merci beaucoup d’avoir consacré de votre temps. Je peux évidemment vous envoyer mon travail une fois terminé, si vous le souhaitez.

Q: Bien sûr !

J: Si tu as des questions plus spécifiques, n’hésite pas à nous contacter.

***Oui je reviendrai peut-être vers vous si vous avez le temps. Merci beaucoup, c’était très intéressant. Je ne sais pas si vous avez des questions pour moi.***

Q: Non pas vraiment si ce n'est que ma question principale est qu'on a dit beaucoup de choses ici, les autres intervenants disent-ils la même chose ? Et deuxièmement, pour moi la grande différence ce n'est pas tellement Agile ou Waterfall mais "good agent or bad agent". C'est un peu mon point de vue. Pour moi c'est comme ce que tu disais tout à l'heure, pour le moi le problème ce n'est pas tellement Agile ou Waterfall c'est les gens ont mis en place Agile, ils appellent cela Agile, ça ressemble à l'Agile mais ça n'est pas de l'Agile. C'est là que tu vas voir la différence de productivité, la différence de qualité, la différence au niveau de la satisfaction des gens. C'est plus cela la question, est-ce que ce qu'on t'a dit c'est quelque chose qui est nouveau ou est-ce que c'est quelque chose que tu as entendu d'autres ? Comment ça se passe ?

*Mais donc jusqu'à présent les entretiens que j'ai passés ils étaient quand même tous pro Agile, plutôt comme vous. En disant que par exemple, oui c'était clairement un avantage de diviser le projet et de retourner vers les clients plus souvent. Après comme je vous en avais parlé, il y a un des intervenants qui m'avait quand même dit ça peut être un inconvénient d'avoir le client qui revient sans cesse sur ces choix, mais je trouve que vous m'avez vraiment bien expliqué aussi que ça dépendait aussi de sa perspective, de son point de vue de voir finalement ce que vous voulez ? Satisfaire le client ? Dans ce cas-là finalement on n'est pas vraiment là pour se plaindre des retours du client. Donc de manière globale, oui les entreprises que j'ai ici interviewées sont pro Agile et font de l'Agile au maximum. Maintenant ils disent bien qu'il ne faut pas suivre une recette, il faut adapter en suivant les besoins du projet et du client. On peut toujours garder des composantes un peu plus Waterfall, on peut faire un mix des deux, on n'est pas obligé se cloîtrer avec une méthodologie non plus. De la littérature ce qui est encore revenu parfois ils prennent un peu plus parti. Certains sont vraiment contre Waterfall, d'autres qui trouvent qu'Agile est plus une mode, plus un concept un peu marketing qu'on ne comprend pas. Cela dépend, il y avait un peu plusieurs écoles. Globalement ce que vous m'avez dit ici confirme, s'aligne quand même avec ce que j'ai lu et déjà rédigé.*

Q: Ok merci

J: Super!

Q: Pour moi je pense que ce qu'ils critiquent, quand tu le rédigeras, c'est comment on sort Agile de cet IT. Je sais qu'à la LSM ils ont mis Agile dans l'IT. Donc pour moi c'est critique de sortir ça d'un concept qui est ah ça sert à délivrer les projets IT et donc c'est la responsabilité d'IT et l'IT fait ce qu'il veut mais tout le reste du monde ne change pas, à quelque chose qui est beaucoup plus inclusif et beaucoup plus "Agile with the fork" c'est un concept qui est beaucoup plus global pour moi. Et donc ce n'est pas uniquement Scrum, c'est un raccourci que beaucoup de gens font. Et donc ils sont coincés sur des choses qui sont un peu basiques pour les gens qui regardent un peu hors du principe IT. Si tu restes uniquement sur le principe IT tu vas être coincé sur des choses "ah oui mais le client n'avait qu'à pas changer d'avis tout le temps"

J: Je pense c'est vrai que beaucoup de gens se cachent derrière ces méthodes et ça a un peu impact quand je parle à certains potes, qui sont mis sur des projets Agiles c'est "ah maintenant on travaille avec des post-its". Voilà ce qui n'a aucun lien avec l'idée de la méthode Agile. Parfois on s'attache plus à la méthode, aux cérémonies et au joli whiteboard avec des post-its etc plutôt que "quelle est la valeur que j'essaie de créer à travers l'Agile ?" quel est vraiment le problème qu'on essaye de résoudre en transformant notre organisation vers un monde plus Agile ?

Q: Oui ça j'aime bien ça ! Car effectivement beaucoup de boîtes disent qu'elles vont faire de l'Agile mais ne savent pas vraiment pourquoi. Donc elles veulent un concept on veut livrer plus vite, on veut être plus productifs, c'est quoi le problème qu'on essaye de résoudre ET c'est quoi notre vision de l'Agile ? J'aime bien ce que Jonathan dit car ma sœur est product owner chez AG assurance. Elle dit on leur a mis du jour au lendemain des post-its et elle ne sait pas très bien pourquoi, et on leur dit on va étendre ça dans toute la boîte mais ils ne se savent pas trop quoi faire avec. Moi je passe beaucoup de temps avec mes clients à chercher ce qu'est le problème et c'est quoi la solution, c'est quoi Agile pour nous ? Ce n'est pas seulement Scrum et tout le monde doit faire ça.

***Agile permet d'apporter plus de valeur au client peut-on souvent lire car on peut se rapprocher davantage de ses besoins.***



Q : oui mais ça c'est trop facile. Parce que personne ne va te dire qu'il ne veut pas apporter de valeur au client, ce n'est pas un choix c'est un lieu commun. Par contre si tu dis "je veux apporter de la valeur au client avec Agile et nous allons changer l'organisation, l'équipe, la façon dont on alloue notre budget" là ça commence à faire mal. Là on commence à avoir des discussions qui sont compliquées. Comment traduire Agile dans son organisation. Je vais d'ailleurs avoir la discussion dans deux minutes car j'ai rendez-vous avec une banque hollandaise.

***Merci je vais réfléchir à tout ce que vous m'avez dit.***

Q si tu as encore des questions n'hésite pas. Quand tu veux.

***Merci de m'avoir accordé de votre temps, d'autant plus que je constate que vous êtes tous deux fort pris.***

J: Avec plaisir, au revoir Quentin, au revoir Laura.

***Au revoir merci.***

**Deloitte – Gauthier Muguerza (July 12, 2020)**

***Bonjour Gauthier, tout d'abord j'aimerais que tu me parles de ton parcours académique et professionnel.***

J'ai fait les mêmes études que Alexandre Olikier, donc ingénieur civil à l'EPL (UCLouvain) option mathématiques appliquées. J'ai été diplômé en 2018. J'ai d'abord fait 6 mois de volontariat au Guatemala et en Colombie. J'ai rejoint Deloitte en janvier 2019.

Donc là moi ça fait un peu plus d'un an et demi que je travaille. J'ai été baigné dans Agile dès le début, on nous a appris ça dès les premières semaines. J'ai commencé par 1 mois de formation et en février j'étais sur projets. On a vraiment tous les rituels Agiles ; donc ton daily stand up le matin, tes backlogs, tes user story, au début du sprint, à la fin du sprint ta rétrospective. Soit t'as une équipe qui respecte vraiment très fort la méthode, ne soit pas très bien. La méthode Agile peut être bien respectée ou pas si bien. Cela dépend aussi de l'équipe, si tout le monde est à l'aise avec la méthode ou non. Cela dépend aussi si Deloitte gère le projet de A à Z. Souvent le product owner fait partie de l'équipe du client. S'il n'a pas assez de leadership, ou une compréhension suffisante de l'approche Agile, tout peut s'effondrer comme un château de cartes, du moins c'est un peu l'impression que j'ai. Tu te retrouves parfois avec un mélange d'hybride - Waterfall – Agile parce que pour faire de l'Agile à 100% ça nécessite vraiment une très bonne maîtrise de la méthode par chacun. Après il y a aussi des raisons de ne pas faire 100% Agile, par exemple lorsque toutes les exigences du projet sont connues à l'avance.

***Peux-tu donner un exemple de projet pour lequel on peut garder du Waterfall à certaines étapes ? Donc pour lequel une transition 100% Agile n'est pas obligatoire.***

Un projet pour lequel où on connaît déjà le scope. On peut rester dans un mindset MVP (Minimum Viable Product) où on a les fonctionnalités de base qu'on veut avoir et après on reste flexible sur des features qu'on veut ajouter. Si tout est clair au niveau du scope, ce n'est pas nécessaire d'opérer une transition 100% Agile. L'exemple type du projet Agile est tu fais un skateboard, puis une trottinette puis une voiture. Or si tu sais dès le départ qu'il te faut une voiture, tu ne vas faire un skateboard.

Pas besoin d'être 100% Agile mais on garde toujours des caractéristiques pour rester flexible. Idem pour les rituels, surtout le daily stand up. Donc daily = car ça a lieu tous les jours et généralement debout (stand-up). Donc chaque jour, on a une minute pour présenter ce qu'on a fait hier, ce qu'on va faire aujourd'hui et quels sont les éventuels points bloquants. Ce daily stand-up, même pour les projets hybrides on va le garder car il est très utile, encore plus en période de confinement où on ne voit pas ses collègues tous les jours. Parfois ça ressemble un peu à du micro management qui a une connotation négative. Mais voilà c'est une composant

que je retrouve dans chacun de mes projets. Autant d'autres meetings, ou les sprints rétrospective parfois on fait sans, autant le daily stand-up il est immanquable.

***Donc selon toi c'est utile, toujours bien efficace ? Pourquoi ?***

Oui car c'est time-boxed, donc on n'a pas le temps de s'éterniser ou de s'égarer. On n'a pas le droit de parler plus d'une minute. Si quelqu'un commence à raconter sa vie, le project manager ou le Scrum master, ou du moins quelqu'un avec plus de sonorité et d'assurance va le remettre à sa place et lui proposer d'en discuter à 2 après le daily stand-up, pour ne pas bloquer le temps des autres.

***Oui parce que ce qui était revenu dans une de mes interviews, c'est que parfois les réunions étaient chronophages. Mais l'interviewé précisait bien qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'un inconvénient à proprement dit de la méthode, mais plutôt d'une mauvaise application de celle-ci.***

Oui on peut toujours adapter, ne pas faire tous les meetings proposés dans une méthodes Agiles. Néanmoins, j'observe que les daily stand ups sont toujours conservés et je pense que si on garde bien la règle d'une minute, il n'y a pas de soucis, on ne déborde pas au niveau du temps.

***Je reviens juste sur le point dont tu as parlé ; les formations. Donc tu as eu des formations spécifiques pour les méthodes Agiles en amont des projets, tu n'as pas du uniquement apprendre sur le terrain ? Peux-tu m'en dire plus ?***

J'ai eu une semaine de formation générique en consulting. Puis j'ai eu une semaine de formations style bootcamp où on est chez un client comme mise en situations. Là on allie à la fois des formations plus théoriques sur Agile et puis en même temps on simulait un projet où on devait les appliquer. Enfin j'ai eu une semaine de formation plus technique pour els softwares. Donc oui j'ai eu une semaine entière de formation sur Agile et après tu peux encore participer à des bootcamps deux ou trois fois l'année pour améliorer tes connaissances au niveau

Agile. Je pense que la formation théorique en amont a aidé mais rien ne vaut l'expérience sur le terrain et voir comment appliquer les concepts à ton projet en particulier.

***Oui, d'accord merci. A présent peux-tu me dire, selon toi, quels sont les avantages des méthodes Agiles par rapport à la méthodologie Waterfall?***

Je trouve que quand les méthodes Agiles sont bien implémentées, ce qui est une condition pas toujours bien remplie, ça permet de voir arriver les risques bcp plus vite et de les éviter à temps. Le problème en Waterfall étant qu'à la fin du projet il arrive que l'IT se rende compte en délivrant, que ce n'était pas du tout ce que le business souhaite. On travaille en silos, très peu de communication entre business et IT durant le projet.

Attention les conditions pour que ça se passe bien sont par exemple que le product owner soit bien impliqué, c'est-à-dire qu'il connaisse aussi bien les besoins IT et les exigences business.

Si en revanche les deux pôles bossent chacun de leur côté, on risque à la fin du projet lors des tests de se rendre compte que ce n'est pas du tout ça.

***Selon toi les méthodes Agiles permettent au business et IT de travailler davantage main dans la main ? (C'était ressorti dans une de mes interviews aussi). Comment peut-on expliquer cela ?***

Oui tout-à-fait, en fait si le product owner remplit bien son rôle, qu'il traduit bien les requirements récoltés par la partie business en langage compréhensible pour l'IT alors c'est un avantage. Pour moi le rôle du product owner il est quand même nouveau et spécifique aux méthodes agiles. Je ne vois pas de rôle équivalent dans les méthodes Waterfall.

***Identifies-tu d'autres avantages des méthodes Agiles ? Peut-être au niveau de l'équipe ?***

Au niveau de l'équipe pour moi c'est surtout au niveau d'une petite équipe que c'est plus facile d'implémenter Agile ; pour les plus grandes équipes alors il faut les diviser en sous-groupes et y appliquer les méthodes dans chacune.

Un autre avantage de l'Agile : le plan a l'air toujours d'être simple mais dans la réalité ça ne se passe jamais comme prévu (=changement de scope). En Waterfall, si changement de scope il y a, on n'a pas la flexibilité pour l'effectuer. En Agile par contre, on a cette flexibilité de changer le scope à tout moment. La réalité n'est jamais aussi linéaire que ce que tu crois.

***Et aussi ce que j'ai lu c'est que parfois, durant le développement du projet, de nouvelles technologies/avancées ont été faites qui vont influencer le livrable. Dès lors, il faut s'adapter à ces nouvelles émergences. As-tu déjà été confronté à ce cas de figure ? Comment avez-vous géré cela ?***

Oui tout-à-fait ; la technologie sur laquelle on construit notre logiciel est Salesforce et typiquement Salesforce évolue 3 x par an. Alors il ne va pas changer de fond en comble, mais il y a quelques fonctionnalités supplémentaires mais il faut analyser leur influence et interrelation avec le programme, les besoins du client. En Waterfall vu qu'on a qu'une seule release, on va rendre un projet qui sera déjà dépassé dans ce cas de figure. Dès lors, il est primordial de faire plusieurs releases comme avec Agile. Sinon c'est trop tard pour se rendre compte des écarts entre ce qu'on a fait et ce qui a déjà évolué entre temps. Tu as un petit risque à chaque release en Agile (de ne pas avoir fait ce qu'il fallait) mais en Waterfall le risque est énorme. Donc on diminue grandement le risque avec Agile.

***Peux-tu me décrire de A à Z comment se passe un projet typique Agile au sein de Deloitte ?***

Un client une banque, une marque de chaussure peu importe, utilise un CRM, un site internet ou une plateforme trop vieux ou auquel ils veulent ajouter des fonctionnalités, d'abord ils vont se poser la question est-ce qu'on a du budget à débloquer pour développer la plateforme? Si la réponse est oui, ils vont regarder quel est la plateforme, ou site ou CRM qu'ils veulent, ce qu'ils veulent qu'on fasse, quels sont les key/ points à tacler.

Puis on va avoir toute une période de discovery où on va être tool agnostic. Cela veut dire qu'on ne va pas forcément pousser vers Salesforce on va juste essayer de comprendre les points et on

va guider la discussion pour expliquer ce qu'un /site/plateforme/CRM pourrait faire, dans quelle architecture il vient s'installer donc ça c'est une discussion plus pas forcément liée au site/CRM/plateforme qui vient s'inscrire dans la collection de tous les outils dont une entreprise a besoin pour fonctionner.

Une fois que c'est terminé et que le client a par exemple décidé d'utiliser Salesforce, on vient concrétiser les besoins et tous ces points en user story. Donc une user story est un peu une unité de travail. On n'écrit pas mal de user story on essaye de les rendre un maximum précis avec le product owner et les personnes du business qu'on appelle les super user, des gens qui vont utiliser l'outil et qui représente au mieux leurs collègues. Ce sont donc les plus amènes à dire ce qu'ils préfèrent et ce qui convient.

Une fois qu'on a toutes ces user story, cet ensemble forme un backlog. C'est une liste de plein de user story. Ensuite, au début du sprint tu vas te dire on a autant de capacité qu'on compte en points : une journée pour une personne ça équivaut à 2 points et tu te dis ok si on a une équipe de 10 développeurs et qu'on a une vélocité de 2 points par jours et que le sprint va durer deux 20 jours ça fait  $20 \times 2 \times 10 = 400$  points. Et comme avec tin backlog tu as estimé tes user stories on dit pour chaque user story elle vaut 3, 5 8 points, tu établis un nouveau backlog où tu priorises en disant par quel user story tu commences, sachant que tu as une capacité de 400 points. Tu as ensuite une liste par exemple de 50 user sto classées par ordre de priorité et tu commences à construire tes sprints. Des projets peuvent avoir 1 sprint comme 8 sprints, ça dépend de la taille du projet. Lorsqu'une user storyest développée, elle passe chaque fois des mains du développeur à celles du product owner qui va valider ou non en fonction de si elle répond bien à ce qui avait été défini à la base : il va bruler la user story si validée, c'est qu'elle a été délivrée.

Donc ça c'était toute la partie construction du produit avec tous les sprints. Une fois que tous les sprints sont terminés, on passe à la période de tests. Durant le sprint il y a déjà un volet de tests, c'est le moment où le product owner brule la user story, car à ce moment plusieurs personnes ont vérifié qu'on avait bien fait ce qui était demandé. Par exemple, t'as un développeur qui a bossé sur la user story qui vérifie, t'as un autre développeur qui n'a pas bossé dessus et le product owner qui vérifie aussi.

A la fin du sprint, on passe à la phase de tests plus avancés. Donc là on a d'abord les test end to end donc là ça concerne l'intégration. On va vérifier que ce qui a été implémenté sait bien parler avec les autres systèmes. Imagine on implémente Salesforce et il y a une interaction avec google, Facebook ou un système de data warehouse, on vient vérifier que les systèmes parlent bien entre eux, que la tuyauterie entre les systèmes a et b est ok et que les infos passent bien. Durant cette phase end-to-end on a souvent une série de bugs qui remontent : une intégration mal développée ou une synchronisation unilatérale mais qui doit être bilatérale.

La phase suivante et finale est la phase UAT : user acceptance testing c'est le moment où on met l'outil dans les mains des utilisateurs finaux, ceux qui vont utiliser l'outil et on leur dit voilà ce qu'on a construit pour vous, c'est avec ceci que vous pourrez travailler dans qqes semaines, cela vous convient-il ? Arrivez-vous à vous projeter ? Est-ce que vous vous dites que dans un mois vous pourrez utiliser cet outil pour votre travail ? C'est important car eux seuls savent le mieux ce dont ils ont besoin. Par exemple, s'ils jugent dans le nouveau CRM/site/plateforme ou nouvelle version ils n'ont pas accès à certaines infos importantes, cela veut dire que l'équipe a encore du travail et doit régler ces manques/problèmes

A la fin de cet UAT on a une question très claire : go or no go ? Go les utilisateurs arrivent à se projeter avec l'outil et disent oui. Dans ce cas on a le goal atteint et on va lancer l'outil vers la production. Sinon alors on retourne dans notre sprint.

*Merci j'avais déjà pu me renseigner dans la littérature comment un projet Agile était appliqué, mais je trouvais intéressant de vraiment demander à un acteur de terrain comment il s'organisait avec l'équipe pour appliquer les méthodes Agiles sur un projet en consultance. J'aurais peut-être encore une question en rapport avec le COVID19. Dans les pratiques Agiles on mentionne de faire du pair-programming, de travailler en open space. Or, étant confiné ces pratiques n'ont pas été réalisées. As-tu observé une baisse de productivité à cause de ces perturbations ?*

Oui mais ce n'est pas lié à l'équipe ou à la méthode Agile. Pour moi les méthodes Agiles n'ont pas besoin absolument de pair programming, open-space et réellement contact "face-to-face" pour être efficaces. Par contre, je ne dis pas que ce n'est pas agréable de pouvoir le faire.

Mais donc je pense que nous avons été moins efficaces parce que les méthodes Agiles, si on est géographiquement dispersés demandent un investissement, une rigueur et une bonne compréhension de la méthode que le client n'a pas toujours. Donc dans mon projet actuel ça n'a pas toujours été le cas. Même si on est tous formé Agile et formés pour pallier le manque de contact "physique". Quand tu es en open space les questions se posent de manière beaucoup plus spontanée, tandis qu'en confinement on se demande si on veut vraiment déranger et appeler la personne.

Cela n'a finalement pas été problématique pour la qualité du projet mais disons que c'était une difficulté en plus car le client du projet actuel n'avait pas Salesforce, ne connaissait pas vraiment. Dès lors il a eu un manque de maturité et de connaissances du projet. Cela veut dire que c'est un client que Deloitte connaît moins, et ce client connaît peu Deloitte et la technologie qu'il implémente. La livraison du projet n'est pas à risque non plus à cause de ces perturbations.

*Merci beaucoup de m'avoir aidée, je peux t'envoyer le mémoire une fois terminé si cela t'intéresse.*

Avec plaisir oui ! Courage pour la fin. Si tu as d'autres questions n'hésite pas je suis disponible. Je peux également t'envoyer certains documents sur Agile, notamment issus des formations.

*Oui je veux bien, c'est toujours intéressant. Merci*



