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Project Management Methodologies: Comparing the Top 5

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Tags: Project management methodologies comparison



The project management discipline has a number of tried-and-true approaches for keeping things on track. But which one is right for your organisation?

Below we explore five popular methodologies and give examples of where they work best. *By comparing these project management methodologies and matching one to your own specific needs, you'll*

have a good starting point for a successful delivery. (Tweet this!)

5 Project Management Methodologies: Comparisons & Examples

Waterfall

Typical characteristics:

- Highly controlled.
- Requires that each phase be complete before proceeding to the next.
- Includes a large amount of documentation.
- Focuses on accuracy of defined scope areas.

Recommendations and examples for projects:

“Waterfall is well suited to projects that have a high degree of complexity or interdependency between parts and must be understood as part of the production process.

“For example, I managed a project producing software components for a warship-mounted guided missile system that met all the criteria for a waterfall approach. Software requirements needed to be clear, including interfaces to other systems. And accuracy was a must. Documentation was needed for many stakeholders, and the client had specific stipulations regarding cost and schedule controls, as well as progress reporting. The diligence of the waterfall methodology ensured the delivery met the time, cost, and quality parameters.”



Andrew de Bray, Managing Director at [Factum Ltd.](#)

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Agile

Typical characteristics:

- Highly adaptable to change.
- Aims to reach completion as quickly as possible.
- Favors flexibility over control and sticking to the plan.
- Focuses on iterative, incremental efforts.
- Primarily used for software development.

Recommendations and examples for projects:

“If project needs are being uncovered over time, agile methodology is quite effective. We converted projects from waterfall to agile due to its flexibility.

“In one case, we used agile to develop the business rules for a new product offering, as well as to modify the rules for an existing product. As our self-managed team wrote the user stories for the project, we uncovered additional changes to the user stories. Using agile, we were able to address these easily.”



Jean Ballard, Manager and PMP at [Actualize Consulting](#)

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Scrum

Typical characteristics:

- Highly collaborative.
- A sub-methodology to the agile methodology.
- Emphasises self-organisation and communication within the team.
- Consists of “sprints,” or iterations, which are repeatable time blocks of a few weeks that focus on different project areas.
- Primarily used for software development.

Recommendations and examples for projects:

“Scrum is perfect for software development and can work for large and small teams alike. The daily standups (scrums) enable teams to communicate, identify delays quickly, and accurately judge how much work can be done during each sprint cycle.

“We employed this strategy at our company, and it made us stronger, faster, and smarter. Not only could we release more features and products quicker, but we did so in an efficient manner that allowed for client and external stakeholder input throughout the process.”



Remy Kouffman, Co-Founder & CEO at [Blue Sails, LLC](#)

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Whatever your methodology, you need the right PM tool to bring its concepts to life. Start your free trial of Glasscubes today.

PRINCE2

Typical characteristics:

- Highly structured and process-based.
- Emphasises an organised and controlled start, middle, and end.
- Requires clearly defined roles, including a project board consisting of three members each representing the customer, user, and supplier/specialist.

- Focuses on risk management, change management, and quality management.

Recommendations and examples for projects:

"I prefer PRINCE2 as the standard operating methodology because it's thorough and leaves nothing to chance. Not surprising that it's used by the likes of the UK government.

"Further, I believe in the old adage *slow and steady wins the race*, and that the best business outcomes come from methodical preparation and consideration. PRINCE2 delivers on these concepts. However, given how structured it is, PRINCE2 is meant for large-scale, complex projects that require a lot of control to stay on course. It is not for smaller projects that require more agility and flexibility."



Nate Masterson, CEO of [Maple Holistics](#)

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Kanban

Typical characteristics:

- Highly visual style.
- Uses a "board" to organise projects and limit user access.
- Uses "cards" or lists to organise to-do items and tasks.
- Movement of cards on the board represents status.
- Team members are assigned to cards for ownership.
- Discussion occurs at the card level.

Recommendations and examples for projects:

"Kanban methodology works very well for the type of work that we do at Nectafy, which is primarily growth content creation for our clients. This includes creating all types of written deliverables, which all follow a similar process: interviewing, writing, editing, reviewing and approving, and publishing.

"Therefore, we can have the same columns on our Kanban boards for every client. And it's always clear when and where a card needs to be moved based on where it's at in the pipeline. It's easy to see just how much we have completed, what we still need to complete, what's delayed, etc."



Gabrielle Shultis, Head of Client Success at [Nectafy](#)

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The methodology is only as good as the tool you use to employ it.

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Posted by Brandon Hastings



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