

Agile Training Doesn't Have to be Disruptive

Rapid Agile training delivers measurable results in just two weeks.

Think “Agile Training” and your mind may conjure up images of time-consuming disruption that impedes development schedules.

While it is true that Agile requires a committed approach to transformation, some companies are dipping their toes in the water with rapid-fire Agile training to see how it works within their organization.

Insurance software company [Silvervine](#) recently tried this with outstanding results.

Silvervine offers a customized approach to its software with individual implementations for different insurance companies, many of which have unique feature sets. And sometimes those feature requests come in fast and furious to the development team.



Chaotic Release Days

With each member having multiple responsibilities, the Silvervine team was struggling to keep up with customer demands. Visibility into their scope of work and predictability was suffering, and release days were chaotic due to inadequate planning.

Silvervine Project Manager Jaron Wilkins thought Agile could help. The team was already aware of Agile, they just needed someone to teach them how to apply it.

Using “Real” Work for Training

While eager to explore Agile, Wilkins was wary of disruption. “Because we were a small team, taking everyone away from the work they had to do would cause issues,” he said.

MATRIX National Agile Practice Director Joshua Jack suggested a different approach from traditional training. “We took a limited impact approach so that we could minimize the amount of disturbance. Plus, unlike typical Practical Agile courses, we used their actual work during the training so they were not only training, but getting their work done,” he said.

The training took place over a two-week period. The goal was to get them to see their own work more clearly and get them to more of an Agile enabled state.

Over the course of two weeks, teams received introductory training and then dove right into condensed sprints on their initiatives. Each sprint included either training or feedback loops that helped the teams solve complex issues in their own environment using their own resources, and focused on their own bodies of work.

Most Scrum trainers and coaches recommend sprints to be one or two weeks long. Teams go through the stages of team development (forming, storming, norming and performing) in fewer sprints if the sprints are shorter.

For this engagement, MATRIX coaches took traditional training processes and “thin-sliced” them.

Two Weeks’ Work in Two Days

Jack explained, “We took what we normally did in two weeks and did it in two days. And then repeated it multiple times. For a two-day sprint, we planned 30 minutes, then sent the teams off to do their work.”

ITERATIVE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	<p><u>Kick-off Training</u> Introduction to Agile</p> <p><u>Sprint 0</u> Backlog refinement Training Backlog Refinement</p>	<p><u>Sprint 0</u> Sprint 0 Training Sprint 0 (Working Agreement, Definition of Done, Definition of Ready)</p>	<p><u>Start Sprint 1</u> Planning training Sprint Planning Embedded Training (Ways of Working, Ways of Thinking)</p>	<p><u>Sprint 1</u> Stand Up training Daily Stand Up Backlog refinement training Feedback loops training Backlog Refinement</p>	<p><u>End Sprint 1</u> Review Training Retrospective Training</p> <p><u>Start Sprint 2</u> Planning</p>
Week 2	<p><u>Sprint 2</u> Daily Stand Up Backlog Refinement</p>	<p><u>End Sprint 2</u> Review Retrospective</p> <p><u>Start Sprint 3</u> Planning</p>	<p><u>Sprint 3</u> Daily Stand Up Refinement Next Steps Revisit Working Agreement</p>	<p><u>End Sprint 3</u> Review Retrospective</p> <p><u>Celebration!</u> Training Retrospective</p>	

CONTINUOUS DELIVERY ROADMAP

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Agile • Process Steps and Kanban Board Configuration • Organization of Team Work on Board • Focus on Visualization of Work and Maximizing Current Flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Agreement, Definition of Done, Definition of Ready, Explicit Contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded Training (Ways of Working, Ways of Thinking) • Start Working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand Up training • Daily Stand Up • Work refinement training • Feedback loops training • Refinement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper Demo Training • Retrospective/Feedback loop Training • Adjust/Review Explicit Contracts and Board • Increase Feedback Loops • Daily Stand Up
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Stand Up • WIP Limits Refinement • Lead/Cycle Time Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Just-in-Time Training • Daily Stand Up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Stand Up • Refinement Next Steps • Revisit Working Agreement, Review Explicit Contracts and Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Demo • Review • Retrospective • Celebration! • Training Retrospective 	



The results speak for themselves, setting expectations on what the teams could accomplish and deliver to customers.

- **Improved project visibility.** Visualization of work was key to realizing that leaders were asking too much of the team. Timelines were set and backlogs built properly.
- **Work prioritization.** Better prioritization led to better understanding of workload.
- **Improved releases.** Release days now go much more smoothly.

“We have seen dramatic results in just two weeks. The difference in our releases is really night and day. You know things are running smoothly when you don’t even realize it’s a release day.”

- Jaron Wilkins, Project Manager

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About MATRIX

MATRIX is a technology solutions provider that blends staffing, consulting and professional services to help companies solve tough IT and business challenges in an increasingly complex and competitive world. Over the last 10 years, we've delivered more than 1,000 IT projects and filled nearly 25,000 jobs with talented IT professionals for clients across the U.S.