Agile 101

The workplace practice

Agile is a mindset and approach that helps teams more effectively solve problems that deliver value to their customers quickly and smoothly. How? Rather than having one single "big bang" launch, teams can release better work, faster because they're able to iterate and incorporate feedback.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY

Rather than have one giant project launch, agile teams deliver continuously. That way, they are able to collect customer feedback and use that to help them revise or change direction along the way.

The origins

Today, it's a popular practice, especially in software development teams and project management. But surprise: it's actually a relatively new practice. In 2001, a group of 17 software developers gathered in Snowbird, Utah—not to ski the slopes, but to figure out how to speed up the development process. They were frustrated with the slow pace of the traditional "waterfall" method. Together, they put their recommendations down on paper - into what we now know as the "Agile Manifesto."

This manifesto outlined a bunch of values and principles, like "Individuals and interactions over processes and tools," "working software over comprehensive documentation," and "responding to change, over following a plan."

Agile at scale

In the decades since, practitioners turned these ideas into frameworks to deliver agile to companies, and help them scale. This 101 digs into agile at scale more broadly, but there are tons of specific approaches. There's Scrum, SAFe - which stands for Scaled Agile Framework. LeSS - Large Scale Scrum. Or even "The Spotify Model," which some argue is not a framework at all.

When we say "scale" we mean both "horizontally," and "vertically." Horizontal scaling means a company is bringing agile to all of their teams, and vertical means the company uses agile practices in how those teams work together. And when we say "true," we mean the mindset and all of the practices.