



# PMI South Asia Disciplined Agile Conference

5-6 December 2020

 **Key Takeaways**

**PMI South Asia**  
**Disciplined Agile Conference**  
Disciplined Agile: Unlock Business Agility  
A PMI Region 11 offering





## About the Conference

The PMI South Asia Disciplined Agile Conference, 2020 was the first-of-its-kind learning experience in Disciplined Agile (DA) from the creators of the DA toolkit, transformation leaders from around the world and early adopters of DA. Leaders from different industries spoke on the conference theme of “unlocking business agility,” for greater project success.

Practitioners who are keen to explore the toolkit and want a deeper understanding of it used this opportunity to expand their knowledge and learn how to get started. The experts took the delegates past some of the concepts and key terms used in DA so that they gain functional knowledge of the toolkit.

The virtual conference that took place over the weekend of 5-6 December 2020 was attended by project managers and agile enthusiasts from across the region. It was co-hosted by PMI Kerala Chapter and PMI Pearl City Hyderabad Chapter, and supported by all the other chapters of PMI South Asia.

# Keynote Sessions

- **Sunil Prashara**, President and CEO, PMI
- **Stephen Townsend**, Networks Engagement Facilitator, PMI
- **Krishnan Unni**, Associate Partner & Delivery Leader, IBM
- **Dr. Rupesh Kumar Pati**, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode
- **Nishore C L**, Director - Engineering Services, Cognizant Technology Solutions
- **Dr. Kamala R.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram
- **Al Shalloway**, Director for Thought Leadership of Agile at Scale, Creator of DA FLEX, PMI

- **Galen Townson**, PMP, PMI Board Member, Audit Committee Chair and Disciplined Agile Instructor

## Panel Discussion: Challenges in Enterprise Agility

### Moderator:

- **C. Venkata Reddy**, Vice President, PMI Pearl City Hyderabad Chapter

### Panellists:

- **Venkatachaliah Babu**, Head - Project Management Center of Excellence, Infosys
- **Daniel Gagnon**, Organizational Agility Advisor, Disciplined Agile Fellow, Instructor Trainer and Coach
- **Brijesh Shah**, Vice President – Training & Development, PMI Gujarat Chapter
- **Nivarti Jayaram**, Vice President, Head of Transformation, Societe Generale Global Solution Centre

- **Mark Lines**, Vice President, Disciplined Agile, PMI
- **Scott W. Ambler**, Vice President and Chief Scientist, Disciplined Agile, PMI
- **Brantlee J. Underhill**, Managing Director, North America, PMI
- **Mark Lines**, Vice President, Disciplined Agile, PMI
- **Scott W. Ambler**, Vice President and Chief Scientist, Disciplined Agile, PMI
- **Brantlee J. Underhill**, Managing Director, North America, PMI



## Sunil Prashara

President and CEO, PMI

## Disciplined Agile Roadmap

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*As the President and CEO of PMI, Sunil Prashara is the lead advocate for PMI's global organization that serves more than three million professionals in nearly every country in the world. Prior to taking over this role, Mr. Prashara served in leadership positions in program management, sales, operations and digital transformation in telecom, ICT and not-for-profit sectors.*

Sunil Prashara kicked off the PMI South Asia Disciplined Agile Conference, 2020 by laying down the agenda and inviting project professionals to acquire business agility through a hybrid approach that DA propounds.

He called DA a commitment from PMI to help project professionals with more choice in frameworks, practices and techniques so that they can customize their approach to make it work better for their needs.

Organizations are moving away from singular approaches to project delivery. Leaders need better ways to address uncertainty and deliver results, and make choices and adaptations to suit their unique situations and project needs. Teams must be able to choose among waterfall, lean, agile or Kanban, or take a hybrid route that is a blend of different approaches to meet their goals.



At a time when practitioners are struggling with remote teams and new ways of working (WoW), DA is simplifying the task of picking the right technique to deliver a project under changed circumstances. With DA, PMI is taking a balanced view by helping organizations identify and apply the right methods to the right situation and at the right time.

DA provides professionals guidance on how to choose their WoW to suit their context, and thus attain business agility. He defined DA as a comprehensive library of lean and agile practices, lifecycle and strategies that are combined with fit for context and advised for different situations.

PMI sees itself as a unifying body that is bringing cohesion in the industry, driving agreement on common terminology, organizing content and removing redundancy. He said PMI has reimagined the agile certification journey by offering practitioners, teams and organizations certifications to suit different levels of mastery.

They can start wherever they currently are in terms of agile maturity and build on it. PMI now offers a number of certifications under DA – the Disciplined Agile Scrum Master (DASM), Disciplined Agile Senior Scrum Master (DASSM), Disciplined Agile Coach (DAC) and Disciplined Agile Value Stream Consultant (DAVSC). These certifications present agile enthusiasts an edge in the market with faster growth, new opportunities and better compensation.

## Key Takeaways

- Choice of project delivery approach is critical for business agility.
- Adopt DA for greater choice in frameworks, practices and techniques.
- Find a comprehensive library of lean and agile practices, lifecycle and strategies in the DA toolkit.
- PMI is driving a hybrid, reimagined approach to agile practices and techniques.
- Get a competitive edge with DA certifications.



PMI is driving a hybrid, reimagined approach to agile practices and techniques.





## Stephen Townsend

Networks Engagement  
Facilitator, PMI

# Hybrid Approaches to Business Agility

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*As PMI's Networks Engagement Facilitator, Stephen Townsend enables PMI's thought leadership and knowledge activities leveraging PMI's global community of subject matter experts. Mr. Townsend has worked within PMI since 1999 in the areas of member services, chapter/community relations, business/government relations, strategic alliance and global development.*

In the opening keynote at the DA Conference, Stephen Townsend provided in-depth insights on the hybrid approach to business agility. He emphasized that in the current context the main goal for project managers was to deliver outcomes that added value.

The DA approach helps align teams around a common vision, integrates teamwork, enhances communication, collaboration and creativity, and optimizes value for the customer and the business. There is a spectrum within which that value can be delivered.

One is a predictive approach that is traditional and sequential, with features defined early, scope of work planned ahead and project delivery at the end. An agile approach employs speed, continuous feedback and accelerated delivery to achieve incremental results.



DA brings these two approaches together, which is a hybrid format that combines elements such as iterative, adaptive and flexible from agile into a more traditional process. This approach balances objectives and accelerates delivery, employs both serial and agile elements for changing or unclear requirements, and integrates stabilized agile elements into a serial process. Going forward, businesses will increasingly adopt this hybrid approach.

In today's disruptive environment, project managers must be changemakers. According to Mr. Townsend, changemakers must be adaptive (pivot when needed), be resilient (recognize failures, use them as learnings), focus on outcomes (for the organization as a whole) and deliver change (transform organizations). A changemaker needs an agile mindset based on a set of values and key principles designed to better enable collaborative work, deliver continuous value and satisfy customers.

A hybrid organization can adapt to external and internal changes to deliver results in a productive and cost-effective manner. For project managers, an agile mindset needs to go beyond SCRUM, and that must reflect in leadership, team engagement and collaboration. Organizations need their people to invest in education and certifications, hone their leadership skills, and cultivate continuous and fast learning attitudes. All this must be done within the context of desired outcomes, team characteristics and stakeholder alignment.

Mr. Townsend concluded by showcasing hybrid models that have been used effectively by companies like Cisco (hybrid for innovation), British Telecom (hybrid for speed) and the Royal Australian Navy (hybrid for complexity and risk management).



## Key Takeaways

- Project managers must deliver outcomes that add value.
- DA is a hybrid approach that combines agile with the traditional, and is gaining ground.
- Be changemakers who are adaptive, resilient and focussed on outcomes.
- Acquire an agile mindset to work collaboratively, provide continuous value and satisfy customers.
- Hybrid organizations can adapt and deliver results in a productive and cost-effective manner.



Be changemakers who are adaptive, resilient and focussed on outcomes. |





## Krishnan Unni

Associate Partner,  
Delivery Leader, IBM

## Business Agility

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*Krishnan Unni leads project delivery for an extensive portfolio of applications for a large organization as a client. In his wide industry experience, he has managed large, complex, first-of-a-kind transformational projects involving big teams.*

Business agility is a top priority for CXOs today as the world undergoes change driven by multiple factors.

Krishnan Unni spoke about companies like Uber, Swiggy and Airbnb that have impacted consumer behavior, prompting them to seek instant gratification. Technological innovation has also spanned across sectors. Customer loyalty is up for grabs. Customers want things available at the click of a button and are willing to pay a premium for it. These changing consumer behaviors have made businesses look at innovative and agile ways of meeting customer demand.

Mr. Unni presented an inside-out perspective of the enterprise IT world. Enterprise customers use mobile phones for personal tasks and expect the same seamless experience and intuitive graphical user interface at work. Today, with focus on cost savings, IT investments are being scrutinized. Time-to-market is key, and organizations want to see the impact of solutions deployed immediately.



Technology is driving efficiency, cost and safety, and giving companies a competitive advantage. Scalability and flexibility are important aspects, with investments growing in cloud technologies and software-as-a-service. Organizations want to collaborate and co-create solutions with their IT partners. Enterprise security is vital. Any vulnerability will compromise reputation and result in losses.

Mr. Unni urged companies to bind people, processes, technology, tools, security, governance mechanism and business outlook together through organizational culture. Business leaders must encourage an agile mindset. He called PMI's DA toolkit a capability that brings all these factors together in an integrated fashion.

## Key Takeaways

- Use innovative and agile ways to cater to customer demand.
- Focus on speed, incremental development and constantly evolving solutions.
- Drive outcomes over output.
- Encourage an agile mindset and culture.
- The DA toolkit enables organizations to address current business needs.



Focus on speed, incremental development  
and constantly evolving solutions





## Dr. Rupesh Kumar Pati

Associate Professor,  
Indian Institute of Management  
Kozhikode

## Agility in Academia

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*Dr. Rupesh Kumar Pati is a faculty member at the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, Kerala, with around 14 years of experience in academia. Prior to this role, he was a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organisation. He received the prestigious Indo-Shastri Partnership Development Seed Grant in 2012-13 to work at HEC Montreal, a business school in Canada, for “Understanding and designing sustainable pharmaceutical supply chains for Indian and Canadian industries.”*

Agility is a buzzword that is being frequently discussed across industries these days. However, as Dr. Rupesh Kumar Pati noted, agility is not generally associated with academia. But the pandemic has proven that it is important for an educational institute to be agile to adapt and respond to changes quickly. Going by the difficulty of transitioning to online education during the pandemic, academic institutes must be better prepared for such eventualities in these uncertain times. He said that among prominent universities in the world, Harvard University in the US was one of the few to have discussed the need to adapt to such a situation way back in 2006.

Dr. Pati used the cheetah as an example to explain agility. He said people can learn important values from the fastest land animal. For example, the cheetah has an enlarged heart and lungs that allow it to function at its maximum capacity. Similar to the cheetah, organizations and people can function better if we enlarged our capacity by updating our skill set constantly.

Dr. Pati believes agility in academia will enhance organizational outcomes and student experience. It can be achieved by flattening the organization and creating a streamlined academic environment. This process involves training employees on decision-making skills so that hierarchy is not a barrier to agility.

## Key Takeaways

- Learn to collaborate with people and share a similar vision.
- Have a positive attitude and mindset.
- Flatten the organization to enable quick decision-making.
- Be ready to adapt to changes as they come.
- Train yourself to make quick decisions.



Flatten the organization to enable quick decision-making.





## Nishore C L

Director Engineering Services,  
Cognizant Technology Solutions

# Business Agility: Observations and Inferences

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*Nishore C L has donned multiple hats across delivery organizations in various capacities, serving clients across the globe as client relationship manager, delivery owner and program manager. He is an agile enthusiast and has worked with multiple companies, helping them develop products from concept to deployment, supporting product strategy and engineering a roadmap for digital transformation initiatives.*

Drawing a parallel between the rise and fall of empires and enterprises, Nishore C L highlighted the importance of business agility. Empires have conducted global conquests to expand territory, effectively distributing their resources and adopting specialist skills. Similarly, enterprises have also focused on expanding marketshare, effectively distributing revenues and improving innovation. Both face similar challenges. How do they allocate surplus resources? How do they overcome internal conflicts and fight off external threats?

Agility determines success for enterprises. Market agility is difficult for any enterprise in the current context, as there is no safe shore - no niche market without competition. Tech fragmentation and constantly evolving technology





are other issues. Companies also have to deal with diverse and complex markets, with increased risks and uncertainties.

Business agility can be achieved through flexible alternatives, modularity, feedback and innovation. Flexible alternatives are about having multiple lines of business, partners or vendors, and keeping options for business diversification. Modularity encourages parallelism in execution tracks and allows for higher throughput for change. Strong feedback loops are an indispensable indicator of an agile organization as they focus on the ability to react to insights from data, covering the entire value chain. Innovation must also be built into an organization's structure so as to encourage agility.

He reiterated that business agility is about being flexible and scalable on a stable infrastructure in order to bring certainty to an organization's outcomes. Stability here refers to a unifying culture and a shared vision. Flexibility refers to resource allocation and modularity. Outcome certainty is measured by employee engagement, customer satisfaction and operational effectiveness.

## Key Takeaways

- Agility determines the rise and fall of both enterprises and empires.
- Market agility is challenging in the current context.
- Deploy agile strategies: flexible alternatives, modularity, feedback and innovation.
- Be flexible and scalable on a stable infrastructure.
- Focus on employee engagement, customer satisfaction and operational effectiveness.



Deploy agile strategies: flexible alternatives, modularity, feedback and innovation.





## Dr. Kamala R

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Pulmonary Medicine,  
Government Medical College,  
Thiruvananthapuram

# Experience Sharing on Agility in Medical Industry During the Pandemic

*Besides her role at the Government Medical College, Dr. Kamala R. has worked as a specialist in the Kerala State Government Health Services Department for eight years. She is a member of the technical committee of Kerala State Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease program and a technical expert for the Kerala State Clinical Establishments Registration and Regulation Act. She is a frontline warrior from the medical community in the fight against COVID-19.*

Dr. Kamala R. was a part of a specialist medical team that was formed to establish an exclusive COVID care facility at the Kasaragode Government Medical College at the start of the outbreak in Kerala. In an inspirational session, Dr. Kamala shared her journey of ups and downs as she established the emergency care facility together with her medical team.

The team had to overcome several constraints, ranging from a nationwide lockdown to a lack of facilities, resources and finances, while protecting themselves from the risk of getting infected. Through teamwork and community



support, the team converted the college into a care facility. They used barriers to partition rooms for different uses. Despite the initial unknowns, the team was able to set up the first emergency ward in seven hours.

Dr. Kamala expressed gratitude to a number of organizations that helped her team succeed in their goal. The Government of Kerala, non-government organizations and the local community served as an anchor for the team. Since shops and restaurants were closed due to the lockdown, many local residents came forward to share home-cooked meals with the team. Her experience was a reminder of the need for community support and efficient decision-making skills to successfully execute public service projects. Teamwork also played a big role in overcoming the constraints and achieving success.

## Key Takeaways

- Learn to extend support to both your team and others.
- Remain calm and composed in the face of challenges.
- Develop critical thinking skills to help guide you during stressful times.
- Have an open and flexible mind toward new ideas and solutions.
- Develop a habit of creating strategies as quickly as possible.



Develop critical thinking skills to help guide you during stressful times.





## Al Shalloway

PMI Director for Thought  
Leadership of Agile at Scale,  
Creator of FLEX

# An Introduction to DA FLEX – Achieving Business Agility at Scale

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*Al Shalloway is the co-author of five books and the creator of Flow and Lean for Enterprise Transformation (FLEX). He is a co-founder of Lean Systems Society and Lean Kanban University.*

Al Shalloway provided a deeper understanding of DA FLEX, a different approach to agility. DA FLEX is based on systems thinking that offers a holistic view and contextual prescriptions to unique situations.

Today, an inherent problem that companies face is their hierarchical structure. It causes handoffs, miscommunications, bottlenecks and silos. Most leaders manage problems top down, while the value flow is across departments. He calls for an entire organization to take the agile approach. It must include the throughput of value, ensuring that teamwork upstream and downstream is visible.

DA FLEX looks at the value network. Since the value stream is not linear, lean shifts must be made.



Agility means shortening the time-to-market and creating workflows with fewer delays. Instead of looking at the resource available for a particular task, look at a person's capacity to take on work. Implement networks of self-organizing, autonomous teams, where teams work with a common cadence and integrate frequently.

An ideal value stream begins and ends with the customer. Mr. Shalloway emphasized the need for organizations to focus on their goals, define initiatives, decide how to measure value and break initiatives into smaller pieces. They must be able to change workflows at any time, if the parties involved are in agreement. Feedback loops must be present throughout the value stream.

DA FLEX enables local decisions to improve the overall result. Each action is taken with the bigger picture in mind. Organizations must be clear on strategies to be implemented by identifying business objectives. Instead of creating a well-defined backlog of small, sequenced items to provide value quickly, initiatives must be broken into a sequence of small chunks of business. Pause to check if teams pull from the intake queue when they have the capacity so as to build full value. Organize teams around products. When work requires multiple teams, use common cadence and synchronization, focusing on value realization. Teams need to work with the end-to-end customer experience in mind.

DA FLEX uses case studies in playbooks while avoiding being overly prescriptive. DA FLEX consultants can use a generic playbook or find one of the seven playbooks to suit their situation.

# Key Takeaways

- Manage the value stream, not people.
- Involve the entire enterprise and focus on cutting time-to-market.
- The ideal value stream starts and ends with the customer.
- Organize your teams around products.
- DA FLEX uses case studies as guidance, rather than as a prescription to a problem.



Manage the value stream, not people.







## Galen Townson, PMP

PMI Board Member,  
Audit Committee Chair,  
Disciplined Agile Instructor

# Agility in the Project Economy

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*Galen Townson is a strategic systems leader with 28 years in strategic execution, projects, complex change programs and PMOs, for education, energy, government, finance and for-purpose sectors, including the United Nations. He currently leads the portfolio management office for Western Australia's Department of Communities, supporting pathways for individual, family and community wellbeing.*

Galen Townson provided an overview of today's macro-level developments that are driving change in the project management profession. He pointed to PMI research and studies by leading consulting companies that show there have been dramatic shifts in the market. A lot is at stake today because of climate change, political tensions among nations and globalization.

These developments are forcing organizations to be more nimble about the way they deliver projects and meet customer expectations. Quoting a McKinsey report, he said that project management is a higher cognitive skill, the need for which is likely to rise. Until recently, the consulting or movie industry was familiar with talent moving from project to project. Now that model is seen in other industries as well with companies adapting to the Project Economy.



Mr. Townson spoke about COVID-19 making reskilling an even bigger priority with leaders looking to upskill and reskill their workforce.

Traditional project management skills are evolving, and so is a project manager's understanding of PMI's Talent Triangle. Technical project management is giving way to new ways of working; leadership is about developing power skills such as empathy, collaborative leadership and innovative thinking; and strategic and business management means having business acumen to steer a project successfully.

He said that as machines take over a number of roles that project managers earlier performed, the future will be about adding value through human capabilities such as having a high emotional quotient. He elaborated on some of the new launches from PMI such as DA, Citizen Developer and Wicked Problem Solving. Together, these toolkits will enable project managers to perform their jobs better and deliver better value.

## Key Takeaways

- Be ready for anything in the future.
- Material change can and will happen fast.
- See change as an opportunity to build gymnastic cultures in your organizations.
- Be prepared to build your own software solutions with low code/no code applications in the near future.
- Get familiar with citizen developer platforms; these will become as common as spreadsheets.



Be ready for anything in the future.





**C. Venkata Reddy**

Vice President, PMI Pearl City  
Hyderabad Chapter



**Venkatachaliah Babu**

Head - Project Management  
Center of Excellence, Infosys

## Panel Discussion: Challenges in Enterprise Agility Moderator:

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*The panellists broke down the concept of business agility, defined the way for an organization to work toward it and cleared some misconceptions about frameworks and methodologies.*

Daniel Gagnon called DA the right fit for disruption, a much-needed change after 25 years since Scrum entered the world of projects. On the relevance of frameworks, he said people often want to just buy a solution and not do the critical thinking of what will work for their situation. DA places critical thinking at the center of it all, encouraging teams to define their WoW and apply that context while making a choice.

Nivarti Jayaram urged business leaders to embrace change so that the organization can find strategic agility. Coaches must work toward challenging the status quo and developing an understanding in the organization that there is no end state to business agility; it's a continuous journey. He urged practitioners to not get stuck with frameworks and have an open mindset to be truly agile.



## Daniel Gagnon

Organizational Agility Advisor,  
Disciplined Agile Fellow,  
Instructor Trainer and Coach



## Brijesh Shah

Vice President –Training & Development,  
PMI Gujarat Chapter

Venkatachaliah Babu said that the objective of business agility is for organizations to stay relevant to the customer even when the market is in a state of flux. A truly agile business manages the flow of value across the organization and persists with change in the long-term.

Brijesh Shah placed customer centricity and people at the heart of business agility. Customer centricity helps bind an organization together and break down silos, and people are the source of creative innovation without whom the business cannot stay competitive in a disruptive market. Since no two organizations are alike, they need flexibility to create their own framework, which DA allows them to do.



## Nivarti Jayaram

Vice President, Head of Transformation,  
Societe Generale Global Solution Centre

## Key Takeaways

- DA encourages critical thinking so you can choose what suits your WoW.
- Align organizational capability to customer needs, encourage internal collaboration and know how to manage the flow of value across the organization.
- Think of business agility as a continuous journey; there is no end state.
- No single framework results in business agility; create your own path to suit your context.



DA encourages critical thinking so you can choose what suits your WoW.





## Mark Lines

Vice President,  
Disciplined Agile, PMI

# Disciplined Agile – Past, Present and Future

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*Mark Lines is the co-creator of the DA toolkit, along with Scott W. Ambler, and co-author of several books on DA. He has over 25 years of experience in helping organizations around the world to be successful with project delivery using agile, lean, traditional and hybrid approaches. He has a record of successfully transforming entire organizations to business agility so that they can rapidly and continuously deliver value to their customers and other stakeholders.*

Mark Lines offered a crash course in DA with his keynote, outlining both the history behind the evolution of DA and what users can expect while adopting the toolkit.

He went over the fundamentals of DA, explaining that it is a toolkit and not a framework. It provides straightforward guidance to enable practitioners to make better decisions about their Way of Working. DA is a set of strategies and approaches that someone can cherry pick and apply to one's own WoW. It is an umbrella of practices that are organized for easy reference; kind of a Wikipedia of all things agile.

Mr. Lines dived into some of the key facets of the DA toolkit – the DA Principles such as delight customers, be awesome, context counts and choice is good;



DA Promises such as create psychological safety and embrace diversity, accelerate value realization and improve continuously, and DA Guidelines such as validate the learnings, change culture by improving the system, and adopt measures to improve outcomes.

The DA Principles, Promises and Guidelines, together with WoW and some of the other basic premises, form the foundational layer of the toolkit. Next is Disciplined DevOps that combines the delivery aspects, for example how does one deliver more frequently, monitor execution or deliver in a secure manner? Above that are the value streams based on the DA FLEX workflow, and finally, the process blades that together constitute Disciplined Agile Enterprise (DAE). DAE provides guidance on how to extend agility to the end-to-end value stream and across the enterprise such as HR, finance and vendor management.

Mr. Lines cited the example of a pizza company that adopted DA to explain how it can help transform a business across all functions. In the case of the pizza company, it brought in DA to improve customer experience starting from the time someone places an order on the mobile phone to consuming the pizza, thus covering functions such as IT, payments and logistics.

He also touched upon DA Delivery (DAD) teams that can build consumable solutions and not just working software by choosing approaches that suit their WoW. Lean governance is a light-weight approach to governance and is baked into DA so that teams can just pick what applies to them and build on it further. For example, pick the milestones you want and add some of your own. The toolkit comes with process goals that are organized by phases. For example, if you want to create user stories, you can pick from around 40 diagrammatic and textual techniques to supplement it.



## Key Takeaways

- Think of agility beyond IT; extend it to the entire organization.
- Use the DA toolkit to accelerate value delivery in scaled agile situations.
- True agility is about choosing your Way of Working, not by a prescriptive framework or methodology.
- Think of succeeding earlier than failing fast; failure is expensive.
- Use guided continuous improvement for faster results.



True agility is about choosing your Way of Working, not by a prescriptive framework or methodology.





## Scott Ambler

Vice President,  
Chief Scientist of  
Disciplined Agile, PMI

## Disciplined DevOps

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*Scott Ambler leads the evolution of the DA toolkit and is an international keynote speaker. He is the co-creator of the DA toolkit as well as the Agile Modeling and Agile Data methodologies. He has authored and co-authored several books including Choose Your WoW!, An Executive's Guide to the Disciplined Agile Framework, Refactoring Databases, Agile Modeling, Agile Database Techniques, and The Object Primer 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.*

Scott Ambler dived into one area of DA that is of particular interest to those in software development and IT operations, which is Disciplined DevOps.

He believes DevOps is table stakes for organizations today and they need to move far beyond that to address many of the real-world issues that are out of the ambit of DevOps. When it started 10-15 years ago, DevOps was a great way to streamline the flow between development and operations through continuous delivery strategies. However, it does not meet the real-world needs of enterprises today with multiple teams working on highly complex projects.

Mr. Ambler listed out the factors that define the “DevOps mindset” such as a reduced feedback cycle, a flexible and skilled team, multidisciplinary ‘generalizing



specialists', a standardized infrastructure, and letting people who build a product to also manage it across the product lifecycle.

However, today's solution development and operations teams also have other vital considerations to make – security, closer alignment with business, data analytics or management, or managing scale.

Disciplined DevOps integrates them all to address real-world enterprise class needs and different types of WoW. Making a reference to the diagrammatic representation of DevOps into an infinite loop, Mr. Ambler said that is a sleek and pretty graphic but the reality is much more complex that no simple diagram will do justice.

Disciplined DevOps recognizes that teams need freedom of choice since the circumstances of each team and organization are different. But there are commonalities among the issues that teams across organizations face. Hence, Disciplined DevOps brings together a host of techniques that they can use off the shelf and combine them in a way fits their WoW.

Using the security module within Disciplined DevOps as an example, he showed the extensive range of techniques that are at a team's disposal. However, though it's a comprehensive range, it is by no means definitive. Modules under Disciplined DevOps will continue to evolve to stay in tune with changes in the market, thereby staying true to the DA Principles that form the basis for the toolkit.

## Key Takeaways

- Go beyond DevOps to solve real-world issues.
- DA DevOps is built on freedom of choice to fit different contexts, circumstances.
- Adopt DA DevOps for enterprise class needs and your own WoW.
- Integrate security, data, business into your strategy with DA DevOps.
- Pick from a comprehensive set of techniques off the shelf; combine them in a way that works for you.



DA DevOps is built on freedom of choice to fit different contexts, circumstances.





## Brantlee J. Underhill

Managing Director,  
North America, PMI

## An Agile Learner's Journey

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*Brantlee J. Underhill leads PMI's North America region business as well as global chapter and volunteer programs. A Certified Association Executive (CAE) and non-profit executive, Ms. Underhill aligns PMI's strategy and operational plans to serve PMI's North American market and volunteer-lead communities to empower people to make their ideas a reality.*

The concluding keynote of the conference started with a calming and restorative breathing exercise, followed by a practical guide with handy tips and recommendations on how to learn agile. Brantlee Underhill, who is also a yoga instructor, began her session with a '4-7-8' breathing exercise by Dr. Andrew Weil, a leading name in alternative medicine.

Ms. Underhill recounted her own learning journey to discover agile and get a deeper understanding of agile principles. Her aha learning moment came by way of a question someone asked at a conference she was attending. She was intrigued by the question on "little 'a' and big 'a' agile," and thus began her inquiry into all things agile.

Her first stop was the Agile Manifesto, but the words seemed superficial to her. She realized the need to work with a mentor to go beyond what's on the



surface and gain a deeper understanding of it. With that her hunger to learn grew; she was willing “to be terrible before finding greatness.” Ms. Underhill re-read many of the texts that had not made much sense to her earlier, but this time along with her mentor. One of the important learnings at this stage was to keep her mind open to and accept new challenges and concepts.

She recommended a number of books including *The Age of Agile: How Smart Companies Are Transforming the Way Work Gets Done* by Stephen Denning, *The Startup Way* by Eric Ries; *Liftoff: Launching Agile Teams & Projects* by Diana Larsen; and *An Executive’s Guide to Disciplined Agile: Winning the Race with Business Agility* by Scott W. Ambler. PMI’s podcast, *Projectified*, is another resource that she recommends.

Next, she put her learnings into action. Her team was able to see what she was working on, which helped build trust and empowerment within the team. She created a ‘vertical cake’ with new layers being added as her learning progressed, which also served as a visual reminder to her to continue on this journey. She brought in agile learning games to show the power of self-management teams, and how to pause, look back, pick learnings and incorporate them to improve outcomes.

And finally, now she understands what the “big ‘a’ and little ‘a’ agile” is all about – it’s the difference between a fixed, perfect state mindset that is not realistic versus a learning environment steeped in a growth mindset.

## Key Takeaways

- Think of how you can be a catalyst in someone else's learning journey.
- Share your experiences and help someone else grow.
- Walk the talk as a leader; show what you have done to learn something new.
- Show how you are prioritizing people over processes.
- Set a vision for your learning journey, define your journey, find coaches to help you.



Walk the talk as a leader; show what you have done to learn something new.

