

The waves of Agile

A great condensed book that makes you feel as if you're having a conversation with Derk-Jan. Based on his wide expertise on the matter, he shares a lot of insights and gives recommendations on how to build quality systems and surf the three waves of Agile. Reading this book, you'll find a comprehensive overview on how you, as a manager, Agile coach or team member, can be a part of the Agile journey.

Claudia Badell, Agile enthusiast, independent consultant and organizer of the TestingUy conference, Uruguay

If you've been part of or are in the middle of an organizational transformation, you know how hard it is to be successful. Many organizations focus on changing processes and the way of working. Even though it brings good results quickly, it's often a short-term change. There's more to changing your organization and this book shows you all of it. With the focus on the relationship between leadership and coaches – in my eyes, a key relationship to make change happen. The practical tools, real-life experience and business cases – this book gives you everything you need to know to start making the change needed. A must read for all coaches and leaders.

Marcella Koopman, Head of Agile at Navico, New Zealand

You've enjoyed Agile when you first started with like-minded colleagues. But as Agile grows into organizations and companies, you'll feel like it doesn't work well. If you want to give up Agile, read this book. It will be very helpful to you.

Murian Song, Agile & Software Testing Evangelist, Senior Consultant at STA Consulting, Korea

Transformation is defined as a "thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance." Other definitional terms include "a metamorphosis" or a "spontaneous change." In simple terms, Agile transformations are about broad and deep change both at an organizational and a personal level. As we've all experienced, change is hard, and to be brutally honest, you need all of the experienced help you can get to navigate these harsh waters. This book provides practical, seasoned, thoughtful real-world advice to help make your journey easier and your outcomes transformational. I also truly appreciate the quality focus that Derk-Jan brings to the table. It's often a forgotten focus in effective transformation that nicely rounds the book out. I can't recommend the book highly enough. Read it once. Reflect. Then read it again. Then transform!

Bob Galen, Director of Agile Practices at Zenerey Technologies, USA

The BIQ circle as presented in this book very nicely visualizes the various possible levels of maturity in IT delivery teams. By describing how quality measures can be practically implemented in various stages of maturity, this book is a valuable addition and extension to the vision of delivering business value using IT.

Rik Marselis, principal quality consultant at Sogeti and fellow in the research network SogetiLabs, the Netherlands. He has contributed to a variety of papers, articles and books on quality and testing. He co-authored the 2020 TMAP book "Quality for DevOps teams."

Agile, with Scrum as the most adopted Agile framework, crossed the chasm around 2005- 2006. Around that time, Agile became an accepted way of working and started gradually replacing the old, waterfall way of working. As the adoption of Agile kept steadily increasing, more and more large organizations felt the need and the urgency to become more agile. Derk-Jan has supported several large organizations in achieving that purpose. He has collected his experience and observations in his book to help such large organizations embark on the journey of becoming more agile too. Derk-Jan hasn't just summarized the nature of Agile but has listed and described what might happen along the road, what challenges might emerge and what are potential ways to tackle those events and challenges.

Gunther Verheyen, independent Scrum Caretaker and author of "Scrum – A pocket guide," Belgium

Energy, energy, energy and the talent to engage you. Derk-Jan has continued his coaching style on paper. A story in which Agile theory and his personal experiences are supplemented with concrete practices. A valuable handbook for me as an organizational coach. It's not a script to follow from A to Z but offers hundreds of practices and insights that I can apply to improve my work.

Gijs Scheepers, transformation consultant and coach at Randstad Groep, the Netherlands

Derk-Jan de Grood has written an important book for anyone who's serious about aligning organizational agility to the delivery process of software-based products and services. He connects the rapidly changing consumer demands to the use of innovative development and testing practices. The book offers guidance for leadership and other organizational actors to take on their roles as the organization fast forwards into its future. At the core of his book is the recognition that agility comes in three waves. In whatever wave your organization finds itself, you'll find practical tools and encouraging stories to facilitate the transition to the next wave.

Mariëlle Roozmond, chair of Agile MarCom Consortium and co-author of "Scrum in actie," the Netherlands

All kinds of common and persistent Agile transition pitfalls pass by express train. This practical book is highly recommended for any manager or consultant about to embark on an Agile journey!

Han Niessing, scrum master and Agile coach, the Netherlands

One of the ideas that Derk-Jan has captured well in this book is that context is very important. Large organizations have different challenges than small co-located teams. It can be a long journey to transform these large organizations, and in his "three-waves" concept, Derk-Jan has captured how as coaches, we need to look at what the teams need in their journey and adjust our approach accordingly. I started with Chapter 4 and the three waves, but I think Part 6 might be the most important chapter in my mind – building in quality.

Janet Gregory, Agile testing coach and process consultant with DragonFire and author of, a.o., "More Agile testing: learning journeys for the whole team," Canada

SURFING
THE WAVES
OF AGILE

Value delivery in medium
and large organizations

Derk-Jan de Groot

First printing 2021

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Editor: Nieke Roos

Cover, layout and illustrations: Justin López, Nieke Roos

Figures: Derk-Jan de Grood

Printing: GPS Group

ISBN: 978-90-827074-6-5

techwatchbooks.nl

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Preface by Wilco Dona



In my work, I have the opportunity to interact daily with a great team that's constantly evolving our products through a permanent interaction with our customers. Our mindset is one of adaptivity, co-creation and experimentation. UX research sessions drive the analysis of operational data, deepening our understanding of our customers every day. We conduct experiments to learn what they need and understand what we should offer more to them. With Videoland, we experimented by varying the subscription model. We understood that giving customers the choice to receive advertisements in exchange for a lower monthly price made the customer appreciate those ads more.

I promote a culture that invites team members to be curious, passionate and entrepreneurial. A mindset geared to adapting towards changing circumstances and driving a permanent learning cycle. Ideally, we want our customers to drive our roadmap, based on the data they provide us.

Growing this necessary Agile mindset across the company is a long and arduous journey. I've been involved firsthand with transformations in telecom, e-commerce, banking and staffing companies. From this experience, I learned that each company needs to go through its own specific journey. Through trial and error, organizations find an outcome that fits their people, their culture and the market they're in. The talks I had with Derk-Jan and his work in our teams have helped me numerous times with my journey. I'm glad he shared his ideas and experiences in this book.

Being Agile is rewarding, compelling and even necessary. But to make the Agile journey a success, it's important to understand the factors impacting it and, by consequence, to oversee the transformation. In large organizations, this can be a significant challenge. This book explains the dynamics of organizations and recognizes how these relate to the ambition of keeping the customer happy. Understanding is the first step in changing for the better.

Wilco Dona

Head of consumer products at RTL/Videoland

Preface by Arie van Bennekum



Agile is hot and hip. The risk that comes with this is dogmatism. In today's Agile world, dogmatism is often seen to overpower the principles of Agile and it smothers the benefits Agile stands for. Good coaches are needed, now more than ever, to help organizations focus on their value delivery. Key questions are what makes a good coach and what should a good coach (not) do?

Coaches aren't just needed in the Agile world. They're needed everywhere, all the time. In soccer, we see the best professionals in the world team up with highly skilled coaches. A lot of managers and professionals in business should take this as an example.

In this book, Derk-Jan shares his vision on coaching. I like his ambition to stand above the methodologies. The focus on mindset and value is spot on. Scaling this up to a larger group or even to corporate level isn't an easy task. Paradigms aren't easily shifted, and organizational structures get in the way.

I'm not going into the details here. You can do that for yourself by reading this book. It holds answers to both key questions. Read it with the aim to understand. Too often I see dogmatists reading (or listening) to criticize. I recommend you get above this level and use this work to your benefit. It has a lot to offer.

Arie van Bennekum

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Introduction

If you're working in a medium or large organization that's in an Agile transformation or is thinking about starting an Agile journey, this book is for you. It helps you to deliver valuable, high-quality solutions using Agile and Scrum.

As an Agile coach, I've experienced that the uncluttered Agile theory doesn't hold if we try to apply it in larger organizations. Agile transformations are challenging and certainly not always as successful as we want them to be. I've also noticed that it's difficult to lead an Agile transformation in a running organization and, at the same time, keep the business outcome priority number one with everything we do.

In this book, I share my knowledge and opinions to help you maximize the value you deliver to your customer. We want to offer the customer the right solution with sufficient quality at the right moment. If this is also your goal, this book is for you. Whether you're a manager, an agile leader who needs to run a business, an Agile coach who's convinced that Agile will help optimize the organization or an Agile practitioner who wants to maximize his/her impact for the organization.

Agile is a versatile domain. I've noticed this in practice and while writing this book. With every topic I selected for the book, I had to exclude two or more other topics. So, this book is not a complete guide. But it tells an important story that's consistent and provides useful insights. The topics discussed are derived from daily practice. A lot of them pop up during the meetings and discussions I attend. This convinces me that they're relevant. I don't have a solution for every situation, and even when I have a clear vision of the solution, it needs to be tailored to the context. But every step forward starts with observing and recognizing the problems and challenges. With this book, I aim to contribute to just that.

The first part of the book explains how a customer focus impacts the way we develop our solutions. I introduce the three waves of Agile and use this model throughout the book. It helps to prioritize the challenges and measures we take and puts them in the context of the Agile journey. In the second half of the book, we take a more practical approach and I explain how to get role clarity, how to organize the change process and how to build in quality. Throughout the book, I give practical examples and I'm proud of the contribution of other practitioners who wanted to share their experiences. It makes the book more versatile and better to read. I hope you enjoy

doing that, and that the book provides you with enough examples to get you thinking, enough ideas to get you inspired and enough handles to get you started.

Derk-Jan de Groot

June 2021

Who is this book for?

I've written this book to help and inspire people who are in an Agile transformation or responsible for its success and progress. In fact, that can be anyone. If you want to be engaged and if you're looking for insights and tips, I'm sure this book delivers value to you.

The book focuses primarily on Agile coaches and members of the leadership team. The content is part of my personal Agile journey. I've worked with many organizations and have learned why Agile transformations are hard and challenging. If you're an Agile coach, you'll surely recognize a lot of the things discussed in this book. I trust the book helps to put things into perspective and address the relationship between the various aspects of agile working, so it will contribute to a better understanding. The book provides a lot of ideas, checklists and tips to get you on the way. Agile coaches might also recognize that the role of leadership is crucial. Therefore, I address leaders of the organization and the Agile transformation as a second target group.

Throughout the book, I discuss the role of leadership. So, if you're part of the leadership team, you'll find a lot of tips and advice. You can use those to determine what your own role is in the transformation. In chapter 7.4, I conclude that Agile coaches and the leadership team need to collaborate in making it work. So, the chapter on the role of the Agile coach is as important for leadership as the leadership parts are for Agile coaches. Mutual understanding of each other's role is key to making it work.

The book is also written with product owners and scrum masters in mind. The section on the change process and the roles might be most beneficial for you. It describes how ideas are translated into effective user stories and what to expect from the role. Quality is a topic that concerns everyone, and if you're a test or quality manager, you might be extra motivated to read the section on built-in quality.