

# Manage Your Move From Waterfall to Agile

The IT PMO Toolkit  
Emerson Human Capital Consulting



## BUDGETING CHALLENGES IN AGILE

Executives are used to funding projects with a finite start, end, and clear ROI. Agile does not work that way.

People love safety and familiarity. The powerful urge to stay with Waterfall practices can get companies stuck in a “Wagile” way of working, where Initiatives are funded in a traditional Waterfall project way and executed in Agile. This can be a recipe for disappointment. Priorities might change, or the original scope is no longer viable, in which case the budget doesn’t match the work.

Agile teams should be **funded by product**. *Examples:* A product might be a particular platform, or a set of processes tied to customer experience.

Funding by product allows companies to quickly shift funds between opportunities within a product without a heavy administrative burden. And resources often have more flexibility to move from one scrum team to another, or work across teams within the product.



## MISALIGNED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The business naturally wants ALL the functionality...not an initial minimum viable product.

**Be clear** with the business on what to expect. Describe the difference between Agile -- giving them a workable product up front (with incremental adds in functionality) and Waterfall -- a long project with one big product at the end.

**ACTIVATE CHANGE!**

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## GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON THE TEAM

All Agile Scrum Team roles are important. However, having the right **Product Owner** is critical.

The Product Owner must have their finger on the pulse of the business and serve as an accurate voice of the customer. The Product Owner clarifies what is most valuable and provides direction to the scrum team.

Without the right Product Owner, product releases may fall short of expectations and the business may lose patience with the product. Then, it is only a matter of time before product funding is at risk.



## RESISTANCE TO THE RELEASE PROCESS SECTION

Resistance to change is common, no matter what the change is. In the case of Agile projects, stakeholders must adopt both a new product and a new go-live experience.

Make the change feel Familiar, Controlled, and Successful.

While Agile may be new, the concept of a product improving and gaining functionality over time will be **familiar**. Remind users that they have seen this before. *Example: The iPhone.* The original iPhone had only 16 GB of storage, had no GPS sensor, and did not have apps! Compare that to what the current iPhone can do.

Give stakeholders a sense of **control**. Explain the Agile process in a simple way; that will make it feel predictable. Make sure the business knows that they will make choices on product backlog prioritization.

Highlight signs of **success**. *Example:* Tell stories about how a particular user or persona got value from an early release. Engineer momentum for the product by creating and talking about small wins.



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