

## CONTEMPORARY's Agile Business Intelligence (CABI) Delivery Methodology

Delivering high quality functionality in accordance with user requirements

Designing any complex technology solution can be difficult. Each one is a unique entity and there are usually no 'master blueprints' to refer to.

### Traditionally

Over the years a number of methodologies have been developed and utilised to manage these projects. Traditionally the most widely utilised solution is a waterfall approach of extensively specifying and prescribing the functionality required upfront and then making formal change requests the only mechanism to alter it.

The functional specification describes in the smallest detail exactly how everything should look and feel. This forms the basis of a rigid project delivery plan which the developers then adhere to and create the solution's capabilities in accordance with. At the end of the project the completed solution is tested and integrated. In theory this ensures the project is delivered to time and budget and performs exactly as the business specified. **In practice this never happens.**

In today's fast paced world it is impossible to accurately specify what a business will require in a few months time, never mind by the time by the project is delivered, potentially many months later. Market conditions change overnight and in order to compete effectively businesses cannot afford to be tied down as to what they can and can't do. It's often the case that even by the time the functional spec is

completed the business needs have already changed, resulting in never ending changes to the functional specification. Some businesses get into a cycle of perpetual specification rewriting and find it impossible even getting to the starting line.

### The Reality

If you take a step back though, the question has to be asked – 'Do we have to document the finest minutia of an entire system upfront?' The only reason it is needed is because traditionally the requirements phase is not allowed to overlap with the design or development phases. In reality users don't really have all the answers about how a system should operate until they can start to see it operating. As such they will they will hopelessly over specify every scenario in an attempt to get a finished solution that works.

What quite often also happens is that errors or ambiguity in the functional specification are often not discovered until completion. Sometimes misunderstandings can be baked into the very core of a system leading to massive implementation problems and cost overruns.

### About CONTEMPORARY

CONTEMPORARY has a comprehensive portfolio of technical training and education services designed for individuals, companies and public organisations to acquire, maintain and optimise their Business Objects and Microsoft skills.

Ask about our 'quick start' courses which are ideal for people who have attended training before but are upgrading to a new product version and need to get quickly up to speed with the latest features.

If you would like additional information about CONTEMPORARY and the products we offer:

Call us on 0845 345 6848 or email [info@contemporary.co.uk](mailto:info@contemporary.co.uk)

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## The Agile Solution

In order to avoid these pitfalls, lightweight iterative methodologies were formed which have since become known as Agile. They don't require an upfront detailed functional specification and engage the customer in the full product development lifecycle. This ensures that businesses are delivered with the functionality they actually need that works the way they want.

Whereas a traditional 'waterfall' delivery approach relies heavily on the up front documentation fixed deliverables and contract based acceptance terms, 'Agile' development puts the delivery of early and frequent business value at the centre of the development process.

An agile approach segments the overall requirement into a series of relatively brief 'sprints' which seek to deliver prioritised functional increments within a fixed time scale. While each sprint must work within the context of the overall scope, its discrete objectives are governed by what is achievable within the time box allowed. At the end of each sprint, progress towards the overall goal is assessed and any feedback from that sprint is then used to help guide the next sprint.

## Why CONTEMPORARY CABI?

Agile projects offer businesses the ability to shorten the return on investment cycle, whilst reducing the risks of investment. An Agile project offers the ability to commence return on investment sooner and base further investment decisions on the impact the early deliverables are making.

As an Agile approach is ideally suited to the transfer of new skills from expert consultants to internal staff it can be reasonably expected that your reliance on an external partner will diminish on successive sprints as internal resources become more experienced with the technologies and techniques being used. It is therefore possible to agree a maximum potential spend for using their skills and experience.

In essence, the CONTEMPORARY CABI agile approach is designed to support flexibility and change within the life of a project while ensuring that the overall business requirement is met.

If you are interested in our coaching service please contact us to discuss your requirements.

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Email: [info@contemporary.co.uk](mailto:info@contemporary.co.uk)

CONTEMPORARY has worked with a wide range of organisations throughout the UK to successfully deliver business intelligence consulting, training and products that have helped to drastically improve business performance.

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