Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Agile is the new normal

Adopting Agile project management

About this research

We interviewed 601 development and IT professionals using a 15-minute online survey.

Profile of respondents

- Position: 401 professional developers and 200 IT professionals recruited from a panel of IT B2B employees

- Size of business: 32 percent SORG (10 to 99 employees), 31 percent MORG (100 to 999), and 37 percent LORG (1,000+)

- Age range: 24 to 65

Key topic areas

- Primary development methodology used in organization and most recent project

- Time frame for Agile adoption (among those using Agile)

- Perceptions/beliefs about Agile development

The rise of Agile

Agile project management and software development entered the scene over 15 years ago as a reaction to traditional approaches to software development projects. Agile was originally promoted as a "movement" and viewed as a challenger to entrenched practices like Waterfall.

Driven by a belief among adopters that Agile development is more customer-centric and enhances team collaboration, Agile was slow to start and quick to dominate, with most growth occurring in just the past five years.

Based on research conducted with 601 development and IT professionals, it's clear that today Agile is the new norm. Agile development methods are embraced by a majority of development teams and projects, and pure Waterfall approaches are now in the minority.

Today, most organizations use Agile methods across projects

The vast majority of organizations we surveyed reported that today they primarily use Agile methods. In fact, two-thirds described their company as either Pure Agile or Leaning toward Agile (see Figure 1 below).
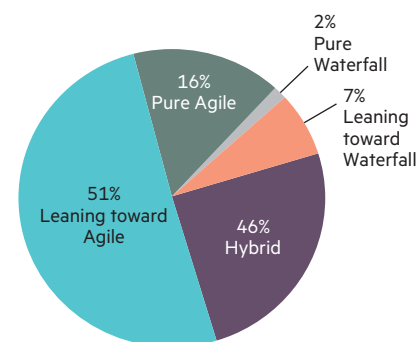

Figure 1. Primary development method used in organization across projects (601 respondents)
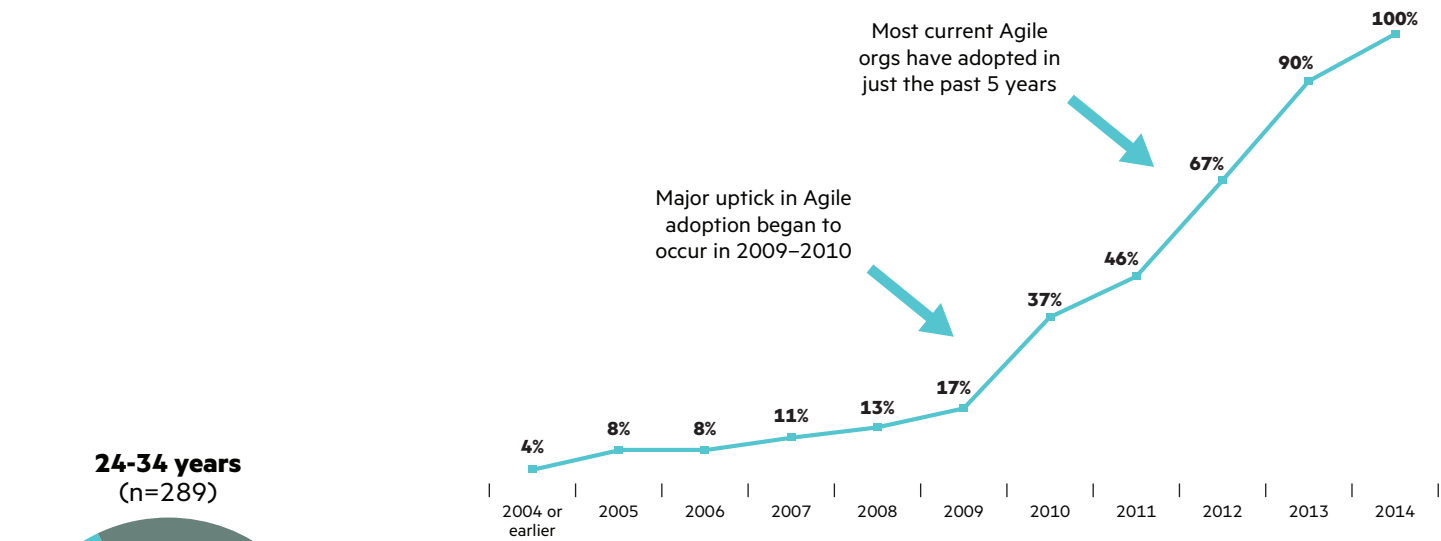
Most current Agile orgs have adopted in just the past 5 years

Major uptick in Agile adoption began to occur in 2009–2010

100%

90%

67%

46%

37%

17%

13%

11%

8%

8%

4%

| 2004 or earlier | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |

Figure 2. Agile adoption over time (number=475 firms with some adoption of Agile methods)

24-34 years
(n=289)

18%

5%

22%

55%

35-49 years
(n=238)

2%

16%

8%

50%

24%

50+ years
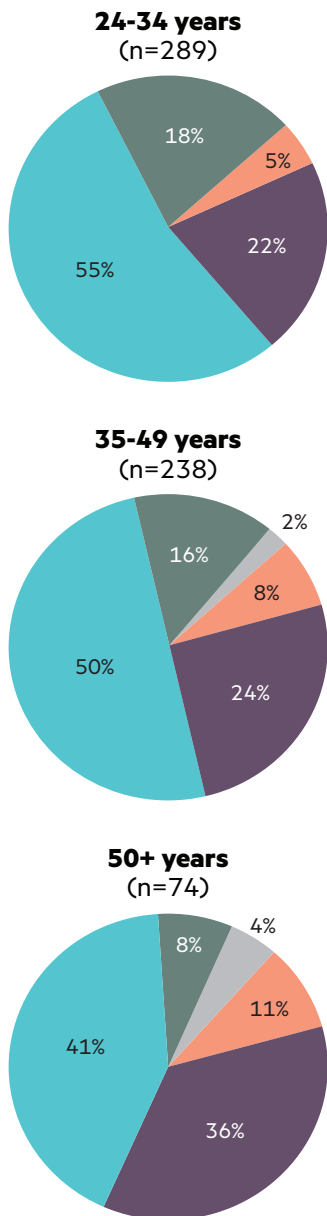(n=74)

4%

8%

11%

41%

36%

Figure 3. Primary development method used in organization across projects—by age group

Notice that even among the remaining one-third of organizations, the influence of Agile solutions and methods can be felt. Another 24 percent indicate that they use a "hybrid" approach, meaning that they incorporate at least some Agile solutions and principles into the management of their software development projects.

At 9 percent, only a small minority describe themselves as pure Waterfall or Leaning toward Waterfall.

It is possible that some respondents are reacting to social pressure when reporting on their use of Agile project management methods. But even if this is the case, it only provides further evidence of the ascension of Agile solutions. Adopting Agile methods is now a normative expectation and signals to others that issues such as team collaboration, efficiency, and customer satisfaction are taken seriously.

When did this all happen?

Although Agile solutions were first introduced well over 15 years ago, most organizations that use Agile project management report adopting the practice in only the past five years.

Based on this information, we see a significant inflection point in Agile tools adoption occurring during 2009 and 2010. The adoption of Agile software development seems to follow the typical diffusion of innovation into a marketplace. Agile showed slow incremental growth through 2008 and then sharply accelerated growth once it began to gain traction in the market.

Driven by the young, but felt by all

It might be expected that Agile development adoption would be most prevalent among younger developers—and this research does support that conclusion. Respondents between the ages of 24 and 34 are more likely to report using Agile solutions than those in older age groups. A full three-fourths of respondents in the younger group are Pure Agile or Leaning toward Agile.

However, it would be misleading to consider Agile project management simply a movement of the young. Half of those in the oldest age bracket of respondents classify their organization as either Pure Agile or Leaning toward Agile. Younger developers may be the most avid adopters, but the Agile movement is pervasive across all types of organizations.

Motivated by a belief in better collaboration and customer experience

Why have so many organizations moved to Agile project management? To answer this question, we asked Agile adopters to tell us what beliefs they have about Agile adoption and its consequences. See Figure 4 for the full list of statements respondents were asked to respond to.

We believe these responses reveal that the primary motivators for Agile adoption are associated with improving team collaboration and increasing software quality and customer satisfaction. These factors, more so than efficiency gains, are the strongest benefits associated with Agile.
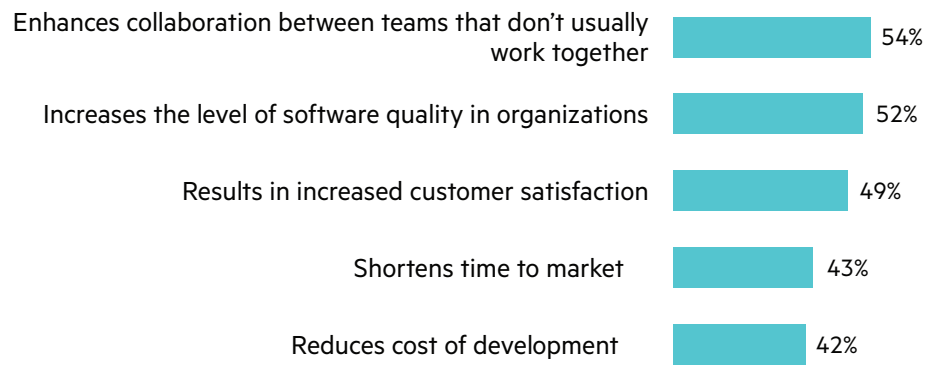
Learn more at
hpe.com/software/agile

Enhances collaboration between teams that don't usually work together — 54%

Increases the level of software quality in organizations — 52%

Results in increased customer satisfaction — 49%

Shortens time to market — 43%

Reduces cost of development — 42%

Figure 4. Percent of respondents agreeing with statement about Agile development (number=403 organizations that have primarily adopted Agile)

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