

BUILDING AN AGILE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BRIEFING TO THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NAPA History and Structure

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- ❖ Established in 1967 to assist government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations.
- ❖ Chartered by Congress in 1984 to provide non-partisan expert advice
- ❖ Unique feature is its 900+ Fellows--including former cabinet officers, Members of Congress, governors, mayors, and state legislators, as well as prominent scholars, business executives, and public administrators.
- ❖ The Academy helps government leaders at all levels address their critical management challenges through in-depth studies and analyses, advisory services and technical assistance, Congressional testimony, forums and conferences, and online stakeholder engagement.
- ❖ Under contracts with government agencies, some of which are directed by Congress, as well as grants from private foundations, the Academy provides insights on key public management issues, as well as advisory services to government agencies

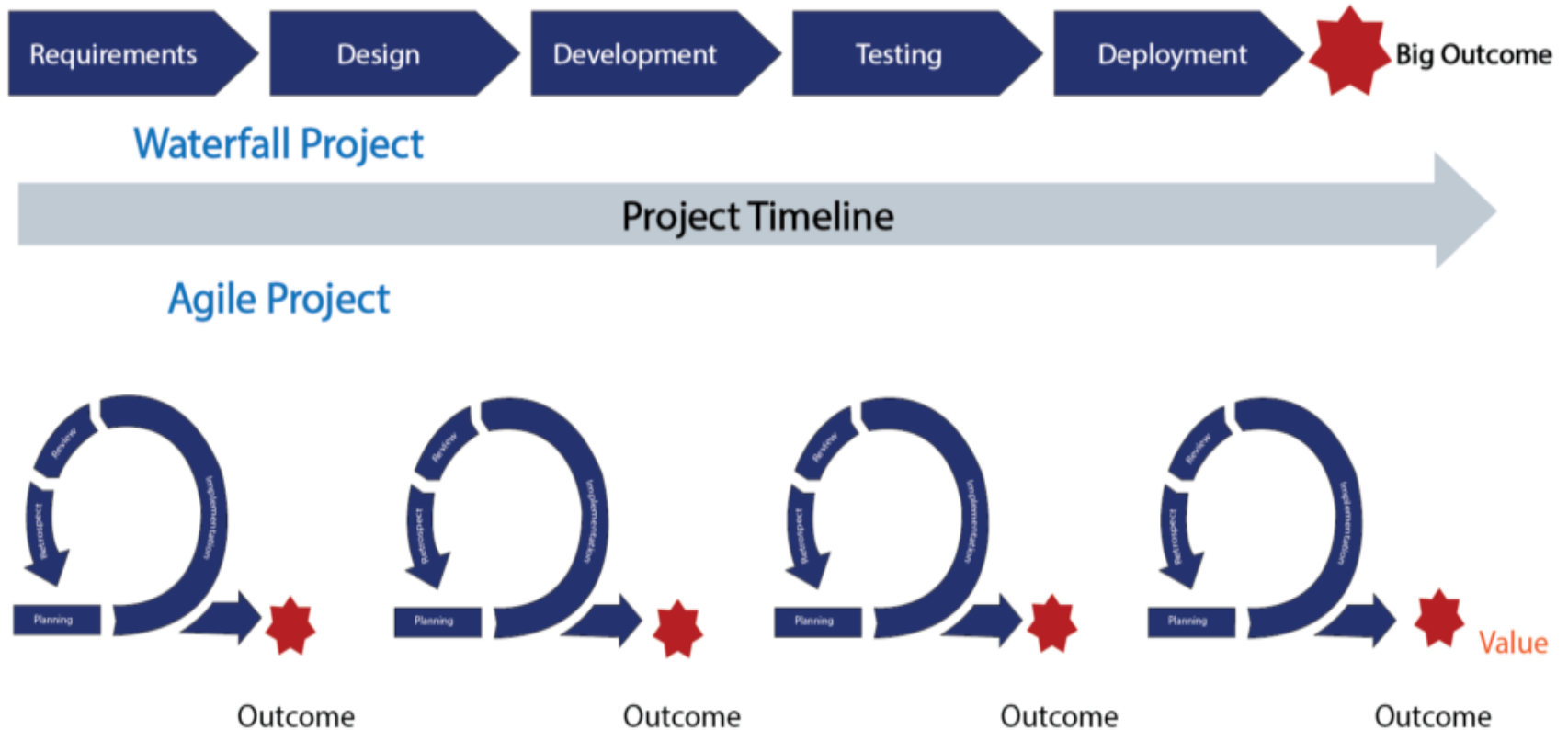
The Agile Government Center

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- ❖ Established in November 2019 when NAPA announced the Grand Challenges in Public Administration
- ❖ Joint Academy-IBM Center for the Business of Government Effort
- ❖ Intended to serve as the hub of a network bringing together governments, non-profits, foundations, academic institutions and private sector partners to assist in:
 - Developing and disseminating agile government principles
 - Developing and disseminating case studies of agile in government settings
 - Providing assistance to those who want to adopt and implement agile to provide public goods and services that fully meet customer needs and build public trust

Agile Is a New Management Paradigm

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10 Principles of Agile Government

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- ❖ **Mission** is extremely clear and widely accepted
- ❖ Top priority is “**customer**” or end-user satisfaction
- ❖ Staff members are **empowered**.
- ❖ Individuals operate within a focused **set of networks**.
- ❖ **Small teams** do work in multiple short periods of time.
- ❖ A critical focus is on **iterating** and learning.
- ❖ **Innovative** tools and working approaches that facilitate innovation and support problem solving are used.
- ❖ Solutions are designed and implemented based on **data**.
- ❖ Outcome-based **metrics** for success are established and tracked.
- ❖ **Risk** is identified and addressed early.

Implementation Issues and Challenges

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- ❖ Lack of Knowledge/Understanding of Agile
- ❖ Cultural and Behavioral Barriers to Agile Implementation
 - Lack of experience with empowered, cross-functional teams
 - Risk aversion and lack of tolerance for changes in course
- ❖ Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Agility
 - Contracting/procurement
 - Hiring
 - Oversight
 - Budgeting

Federal Agile Project

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With sponsorship from the Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust and the Project Management Institute, the Academy:

- ❖ Conducted thought leadership on how the federal government can become more agile
- ❖ Developed a white paper that is an agenda-setting document and practical guide for policymakers, including:
 - Identification of issues and challenges with agile
 - Development of innovative solutions and recommendations
 - Laying the groundwork for any needed legislative and administrative changes
 - Providing input into to the Administration in 2021 as it develops the President's Management Agenda

[https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/napa-2021/studies/increasing-the-agility-of-the-federal-government/Agile Gov whitepaper v4.pdf](https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/napa-2021/studies/increasing-the-agility-of-the-federal-government/Agile_Gov_whitepaper_v4.pdf)

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Questions/Comments

A New Paradigm--Examples

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U.S. Air Force Kessel Run

- Delivered useful combat capabilities to the military while managing and updating the Air Force software acquisition process.
- The first project (Jigsaw) saved approximately **\$12 million** a month in fuel costs.
- KR claims to save over **\$13 million and 1,100 man-hours per month** using agile methods.



United States Digital Service

- **166 successful projects** using agile over the past 6 years
- Collaborated with VA, CMS, DHS, HUD, DOJ among others
- USDS collaborated across different VA offices and collected input from service members to **increase customer satisfaction by 30%** on VA.gov



The World Bank

- **Africa/transportation pilot:** saved 27,000 hours of work producing a project appraisal document
- **South Asia/health pilot:** Reported more efficient work streams among team members
- **Europe and Central Asia pilot:** optimized time and effort of senior executives during the loan review process

10 Principles of Agile Government

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- Mission- Extremely Clear and Widely Accepted
- Metrics for Success- Outcome Focused, Evidence Based, Easily Tracked
- Customers- Participate, Design, Iterate, Continual Feedback
- Networks- Used to Leverage Customers and the Public
- Speed- Essential for Quality Outcomes, Regulatory Consistency, and Managing Risks
- Cross Functional Teams- Empowered, Highly Skilled, Diverse
- Innovation- Rewarded and Roadblocks Removed
- Persistence- Continuous Experimentation and Learning from Success and Failure
- Evidence Informed Solutions- Foundation for Designing and Implementing Policies and Programs
- Organization Leaders- Give Permission and Assume Risks

Study Recommendations

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Recommendation	Action Steps
To the maximum extent feasible, agile should become the preferred operating model across the federal government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agile should be a cornerstone of the President's Management Agenda.• Agile should be incorporated into existing Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goals to ensure that agile management is used whenever appropriate for organizations, programs, and projects.• GSA OGP should assign or establish an organizational unit designed to assist federal departments and agencies with their agile management journey.• PMC should coordinate across its member agencies to develop and facilitate the implementation of strategies for accomplishing agile-related goals.

Study Recommendations (Cont'd)

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Recommendation	Action Steps
<p>Agile methods of management and operations should be championed inside federal departments and agencies and incorporated into as many of their activities as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department and agency leaders seek out, support, and publicize agile programs, projects, and management approaches already existing within the agency. • Leaders and managers assess their organization's agile readiness & take steps to increase it. • Leaders and managers ensure that staff members assess their individual readiness for participating in an agile endeavor & take steps to increase their individual readiness. • Leaders and managers encourage and support agile management practices throughout their organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower team members; • Encourage collaboration and discouraging siloed behavior; • Provide support as leaders, managers, and staff members start down the agile management path; • Actively participate in the agile management process • Reinforce the idea that agency actions, processes, and procedures should enhance the experience of customers/end users.

Study Recommendations (Cont'd)

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Recommendation	Action Steps
<p>Key barriers to agile functioning within the federal government should be identified and appropriately addressed within the nation's checks-and-balances political system and legal framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMB, GSA, and OPM work together to identify the most significant government-wide statutory and regulatory barriers to making agile management an expected way of doing business at the agency and program levels, not just IT projects. • Departments and agencies identify the most significant organizational-specific statutory and regulatory barriers to agile functioning. • Departments and agencies take steps to remove or mitigate unnecessary non-statutory regulatory impediments to agile functioning. • President work with Congress in 1st 2 years on needed legislative reforms. • Federal leaders engage the auditing community to get as much buy-in from them as possible on new agile approaches.

Study Recommendations (Cont'd)

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Recommendation	Action Steps
<p>Agile approaches, successes, and challenges should be highlighted across the federal government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The federal management councils—with support from GSA OGP and USDS—establish agile communities of practice to support adoption, provide platforms for knowledge sharing, identify lessons learned, and publicize progress.• GSA OGP agile unit creates playbooks for departments and agencies in a variety of situations to move forward on their agile journey.• Federal leaders and managers build relationships with federal councils, including the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency and others, to encourage and help facilitate the movement toward use of agile principles.• Federal leaders and managers coordinate with “good government” organizations as resources and allies in promoting agile management, identifying lessons learned, and developing proposed solutions to issues and challenges.

Study Recommendations (Cont'd)

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Recommendation	Action Steps
<p>Department and agency leaders should ensure that readily-accessible training opportunities about agile principles and approaches, especially including management skills, are available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agile management incorporated into federal training programs and agency/department working frameworks across the federal government.• Hands-on opportunities for leaders and employees to use these new ways of working together should be provided.• Utilize existing platforms for agile training and instruction & adapt existing IT agile training for broader audiences.• Connections should be made with universities to encourage them to incorporate agile into their curricula and practical learning experiences.