Mixing Agile and Waterfall.

How to get more work done
with a hybrid approach.
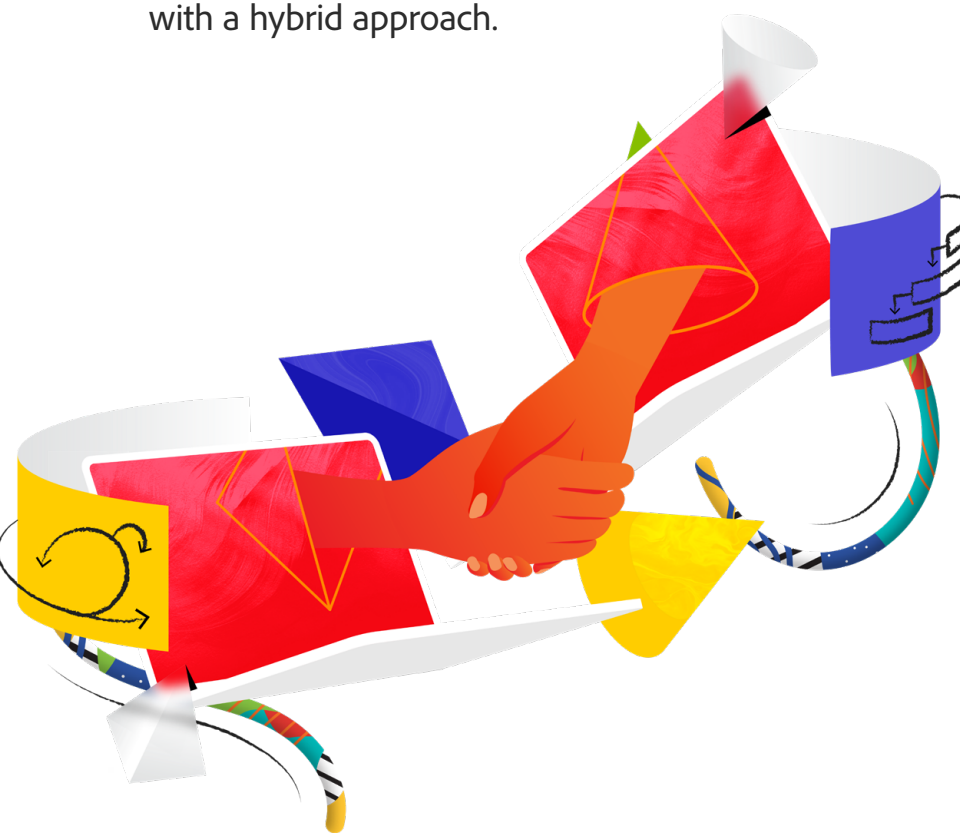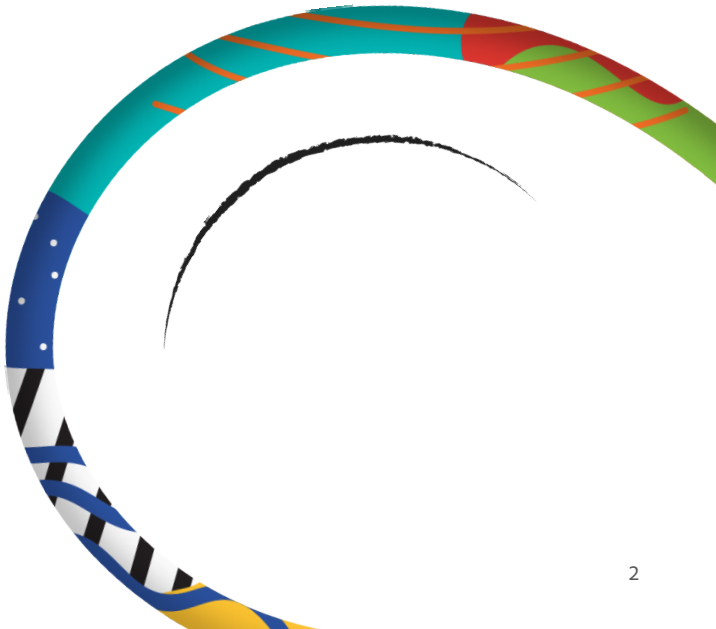
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Work is shifting. Businesses are investing in solutions that bridge team silos, increase collaboration, and provide visibility across strategic investments and value streams. To increase efficiency and productivity, organizations are adopting the latest operational philosophies and work methodologies. For some teams, this means an Agile approach, for others Waterfall or some other framework is best. Whatever the choice, it's clear that enterprises are now faced with the challenge of simultaneously managing teams with vastly different work styles. The hybrid Agile environment is here, and this guide will help you navigate this mixed-methodology landscape.
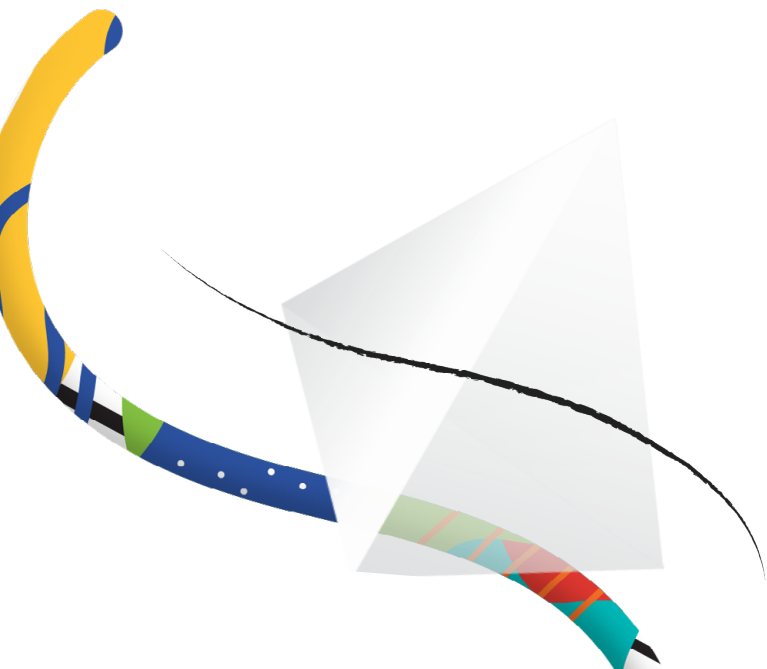
Staying flexible with the Agile model.

Agile methodology encourages flexible, rapid progress using iterative effort—delivering pieces of the project along the way to ensure customer needs are met. The methodology breaks down large tasks into smaller parts to be completed in specific time frames. The typical timebox for an Agile team (known as a sprint or iteration) spans one to four weeks, and each team member can contribute in parallel. At the end of each timebox, the team delivers a tested, working concept, content, campaign, or product. Sharing the project in smaller chunks allows the customer to provide constant feedback, increasing the likelihood of a higher quality deliverable.
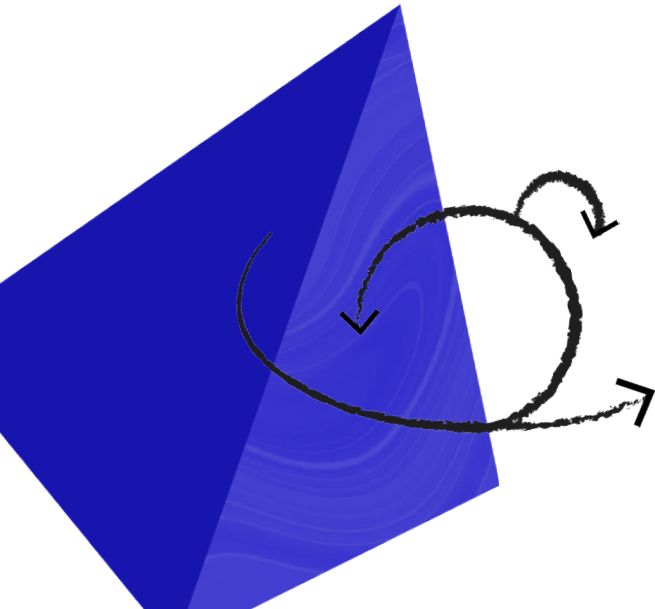
When to use Agile.

Agile methodology is best suited for projects that demand speed over comprehensive detail and that allow teams to self-organize. Agile supports collaboration among independent workers and makes it easy for clients to change project requirements along the way.

The 12 principles of Agile.

While Agile was originally developed for software development, these 12 principles can easily be applied to other endeavors, such as creative production, marketing, shared services, and more.

1. Satisfy customers through continuous software delivery

2. Welcome changing requirements and needs

3. Deliver working software frequently

4. Encourage daily communication between business people and developers

5. Trust individuals to get work done

6. Communicate as a team with face-to-face collaboration

7. Measure progress by working software

8. Maintain a constant development pace

9. Emphasize good design practices and technical excellence

10. Keep it simple

11. Allow teams to self-organize for better productivity

12. Adapt the process as needed

The pros and cons of Agile.

Pros	Cons
Iterate and learn. Teams aren't pressured to be perfect. They can work in cycles to deliver a high-quality deliverable that meets customer requirements.	**Don't expect a set schedule.** Agile projects don't start with a strict schedule. While this allows for quick transitions, it doesn't work when customers need a specific deliverable on a tight deadline.
Revisit, revisit, revisit. Teams can revisit steps and rewrite as needed. The customer can maintain a dialogue with the delivery team to achieve the desired results.	**Never get attached to an outcome.** Project requirements may change. This works for projects that need agility but may cause problems for other areas of the organization.
Get it out, get it tested. The project is broken into manageable tasks, with the spotlight on creating and testing deliverables. Frequent testing promotes faster delivery and a better product.	**Be comfortable relying on others.** Agile principles are based on employing good, trustworthy team members. A management or development link could result in incomplete work or wasted time and money.
Focus on the customer. By utilizing acceptance criteria, the team understands what the customer wants. Frequent delivery caters to abrupt changes in project direction without costing much money or hours.	**Translate the work into measurable metrics.** Agile teams often speak in terms of sprints and points. Leadership needs that translated into dates and dollars.

Staying on task with the Waterfall model.

Waterfall is still a widely used project management style. This top-down, classic approach works well in several areas: construction, manufacturing, and repeatable services and products.

The core of the Waterfall methodology is a detailed set of requirements scheduled from beginning to end and executed sequentially to a final resolution. Waterfall is concerned with deadlines and record-keeping. It moves from one step to the next with little room for deviation. If one step is held up, the costs and time added to the project can derail the success of the entire operation. Waterfall is built on dependencies—step A must be complete before step B can begin.
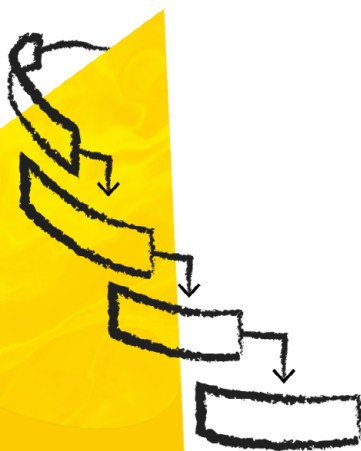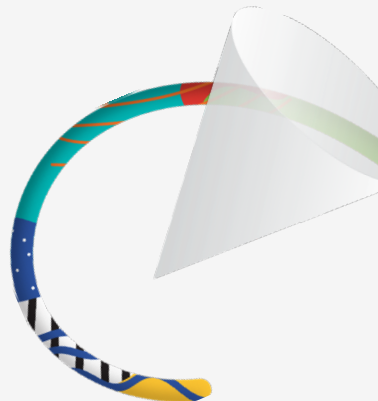
When to use Waterfall.

This strict, deadline-driven methodology is best suited for projects that have a clear picture of the final product and that are dependent on the completion of specific tasks before next tasks begin. It only works if clients don't expect to make changes to the scope of the project once it's commenced. Deliverables are given to the client when complete, not as they are generated.

Waterfall is often used at the management level when leadership owns initiatives and requires beginning-to-end visibility. This approach lets management view progress in terms of dates and dollars and helps them understand how new projects and priorities can impact resources, start dates, deadlines, etc.

The phases of Waterfall.

In today's work environment, work groups may be asked to follow a Waterfall approach to match the rest of the organization. Knowledge workers must follow specific steps. Each time a phase ends, it triggers the start of the next. The phases are:

1. Requirements

2. Design

3. Implementation

4. Testing

5. Deployment

6. Maintenance

The pros and cons of Waterfall.

| Pros	Cons
It's all about the detail. The greatest advantage of Waterfall is its meticulous preparation, resulting in a detailed project plan. Keeping project notes benefits future projects.	**Don't think about going back.** Waterfall follows a strict blueprint, making departure from the original plan difficult. If the initial requirements are faulty or don't reflect reality as execution progresses, the team may need to start again.
You get what you ask for. Clients know what will be delivered by the end of the project. The project size, cost, and timeline are clearly outlined and delivered to the customer before the first project steps are assigned.	**Wait until the end for testing.** Testing concepts in a Waterfall project is completed at the end. As deliverables are completed, they are set aside for final QA—a phase that budgets in significant time.
Doesn't skip a beat. The documentation and expectations are so clear that even if the delivery team experiences turnover, project hand-off is seamless. A new team member can step in and contribute without derailing the timeline.	**Stick to the plan.** The client's needs may evolve after a project is underway. With a Waterfall project, the strict step-by-step process doesn't allow for these emerging needs to be addressed.

Mixing Agile and Waterfall.

Most organizations find that it's not a question of one methodology being better than the other—Agile and Waterfall both offer great benefits and can be used together with success. Some projects need the rigidity of a Waterfall model combined with the responsiveness of an Agile approach. And virtually all enterprises have pockets of both methodologies, along with variations of other work styles and frameworks. When mixing the two, communication and well-defined expectations lead to positive outcomes.

44% of project leaders say they must support a mix of Agile and Waterfall methodologies.

Source: Adobe Workfront

44%
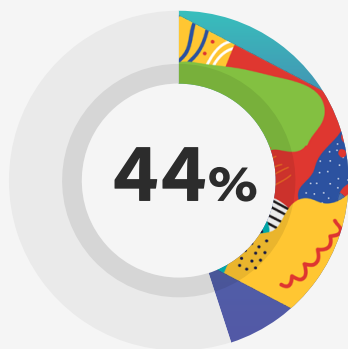
The benefits of a mixed-methodology approach.

Mixing methodologies isn't about pigeonholing one methodology into another or forcing one group to adopt a solution that won't work for them. A great mix should benefit all groups and the overall business by increasing visibility and productivity.

Increased visibility

With proper planning, training, and benchmarks, mixing methodologies provides complete visibility into what work is in the queue, what work is in progress, and what work will be completed in the future.

Increased productivity

Software teams, creative teams, and others may choose Agile to increase production, while project managers may choose Waterfall for project control and end-to-end visibility of planned deadlines and dependencies. Allowing teams to choose their work methodology increases productivity.
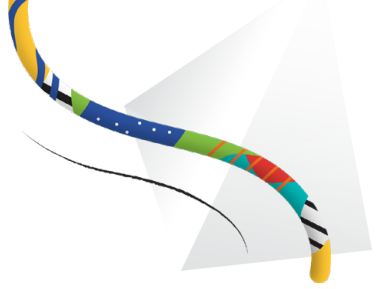
Solutions to help.

The right work management solution allows teams to work in their preferred methodology and supports enterprise-wide transparency. Leave it to technology to roll up the Agile team's data into Waterfall-like dashboards, reporting on the progress of all teams, all work, and all methodologies. A unified reporting cadence and a common set of metrics facilitates good communication and better connects the two sides of the business. And a best-in-class work management solution makes it possible.

What works for one, works for all.

You don't have to continue down the path of disjointed methodologies that distance departments and create reporting chaos. With the right technology, mixing methodologies out-of-the-box is simple. You'll have a clear line of sight into both Agile work and Waterfall projects, making it easy to prove the value of your work to your organization.
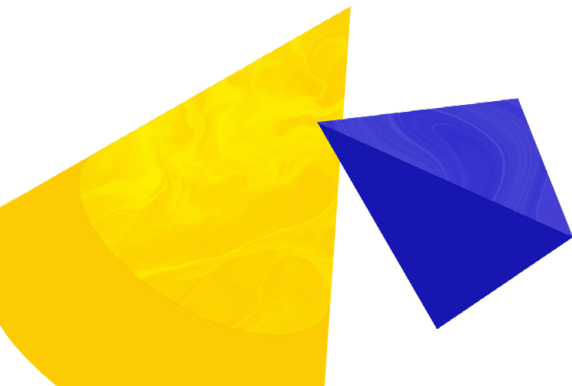
Adobe Workfront

**No matter how you work, Workfront can help.**

Adobe Workfront is an application platform for enterprise work management that can help you manage a mix of Agile, Waterfall, and other work styles that are best for your teams.

With Workfront, your organization can leverage:

- Support for both Agile and Waterfall, right out of the box
- An intuitive, scalable application
- Collaboration in the context of work
- Real-time visibility into all types of work
- Customized reports and dashboards
- Automations for projects, approvals, and processes

To learn more about how Workfront can help you mix methodologies effortlessly, see it in action.

Take a tour
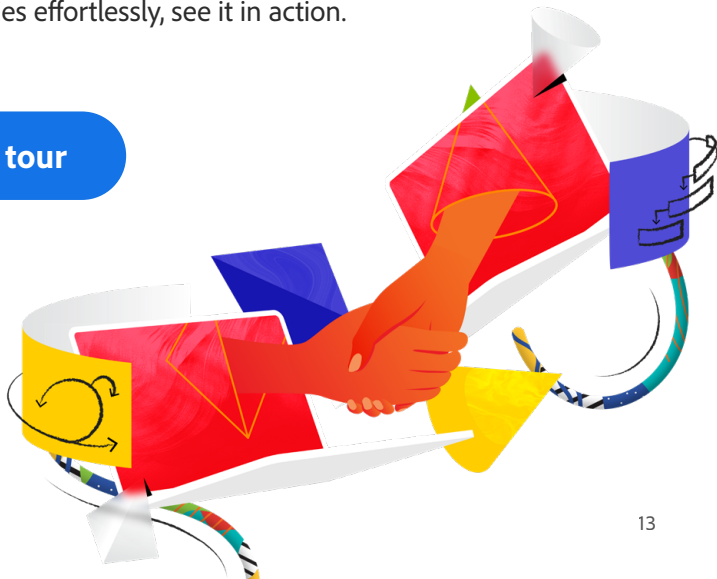
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