The Agile PMO

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Introduction

- Brief background

- Why DSDM?

Some Definitions

- The P in Agile PMO stands for Projects

- Three scenarios where Agile PMOs are needed:

  1. Agile approaches are the norm – the PMO is new

  2. The PMO is being pushed by the use of Agile approaches

  3. The PMO is promoting Agile approaches

Questions to answer

PMO specialists ask:

1. How do we cope with less precise business cases?
2. How do we prioritise projects against each other if you can't tell in advance what the benefits are?
3. How can this work in our regulated industry?
4. How do we recognise and report that an Agile project is going wrong?
5. How do we align seemingly ad hoc Agile project reporting with our time-based governance?

We would add:

6. How could we make the life of Agile project easier and quicker while also serving the needs of the organisation?

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# Some answers to…

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Gated Review Processes

Typical Gates

1. Permission to investigate an idea
2. Permission to build a Business Case
3. Business Case approval – go ahead
4. Permission to test deliverables
5. Permission to deliver
6. Project closure
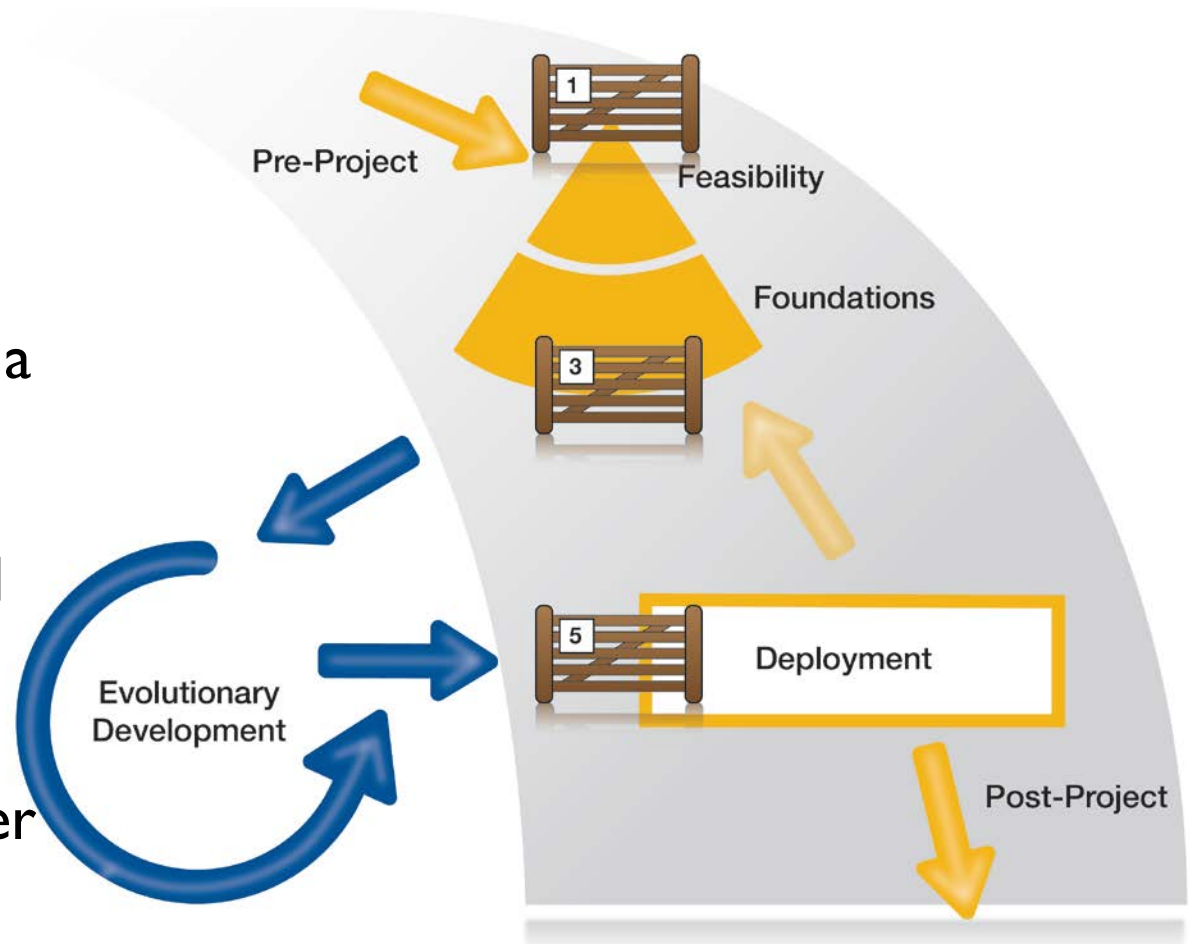
Annual vs. Agile Portfolio Management

Factor	Annual	Agile
Basis for funding decisions	The known state of the organisation at the end of the financial year and the prediction for the next year	The known state of the organisation at any point during the financial year
Capacity for change	Limited by the allocated budget	Enabled through continuous monitoring
Commitment to spend	"Once and for all" decisions made annually	Discretionary funding decisions enabled throughout the year
Use of funding	Potential for holding back on using resources early in the financial year, because "they might be needed later"	Funding used to the full when allocated to move the organisation forward
Exceeding budgets	Reported at fixed points, e.g. quarterly – leading to disaster recovery	Reported at the time when it becomes apparent - enabling better control of financial risks
Benefits delivery	May well be aligned to the annual cycle for ease of measurement and overall governance	Aligned to the ability to deliver
Risk assessment	Based on the known state at the start of the financial year	Based on the state of the portfolio in its incremental delivery

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Portfolio Prioritisation

- Portfolio-level MoSCoW rules

  - **Must have** – at the core of business change
  - **Should have** – would be must have if there were no issues with resourcing, etc. (will be a Must Have soon!)
  - **Could have** – icing on the organisational cake
  - **Won't have this time** – accepted as valid Business Cases but for later consideration

- Assessing individual project's suitability to Agile approaches
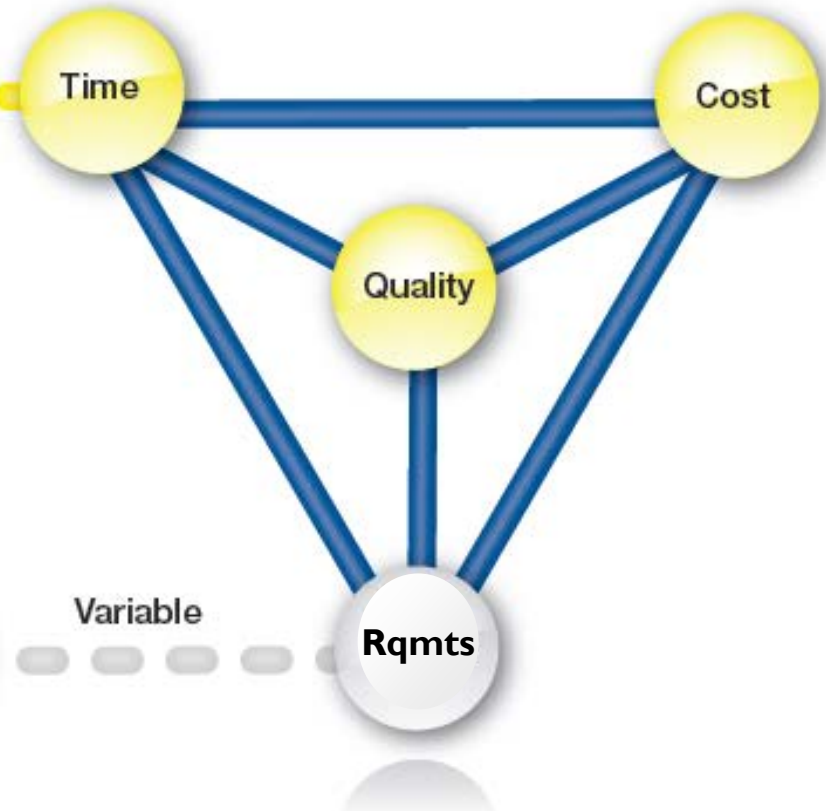
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Change Control of Requirements - 1
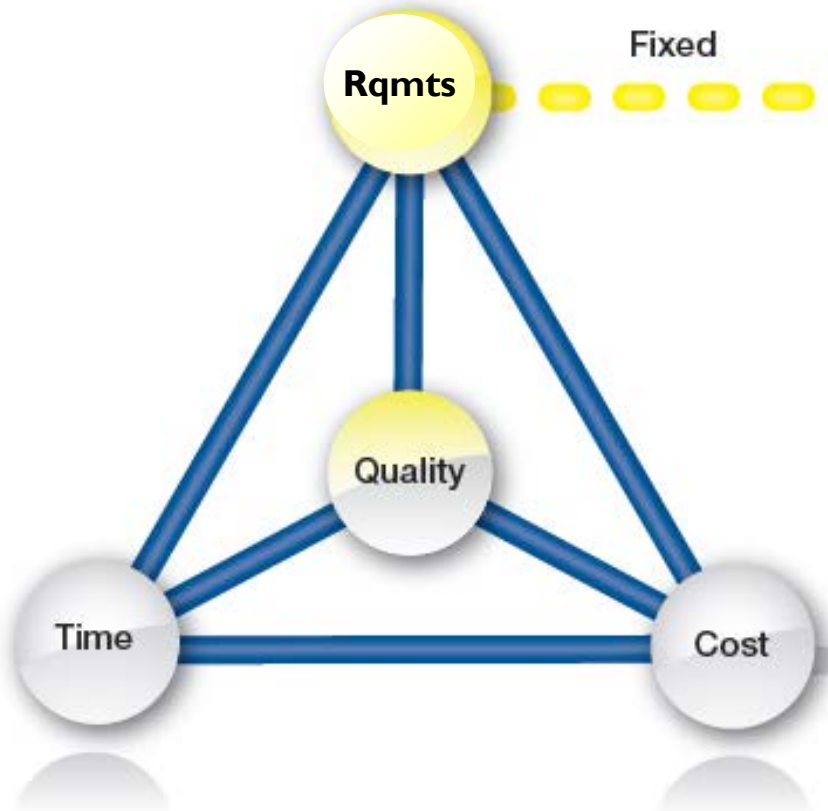
Traditional Approach   DSDM Approach

Change Control of Requirements - 2

- Control changes to the breadth of requirements – not the depth

- Consider how to achieve
  - Reduction of current procedures
  - Elimination of as many approvals as possible
  - The lightest possible Change Control Form
  - Stakeholders involved throughout the project

- Monitor external dependencies

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KPIs for Agile work

- **Velocity** – one team's productivity
- **Cycle time** –
  from customer request received to solution delivered
- **Boomerangs** –
  things that bounce back from delivered solutions
- **Customer involvement** –
  time spent working on the project
- **Customer satisfaction** –
  captured during the project, e.g. at Timebox Reviews

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Quality Management

- PMO needs to ascertain how the Agile quality principles below fit with corporate procedures, etc.
  - Excellent requirements evolved through facilitated workshops, etc.
  - Fitness for business purpose through continuous, consistent and focused customer involvement
  - Continuous review of the evolving solution and supporting documentation
  - Continuous validation and verification of the evolving and delivered solution through testing
  - Preservation of built-in quality through rigorous configuration management

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Project Planning and Monitoring

- Gantt charts only go so far

- Need visible statement of what each timebox will deliver (using MoSCoW rules)

- Project information is on walls, whiteboards, cards…

- PMO can track what has/has not been delivered

- Tools used to store information on walls can help the PMO – but should not replace the walls

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PMO Support for Estimating: points to consider

- Historic data must be from Agile projects because
  - Project phases/activities will be different (especially evolutionary development)
  - Length of time on tasks different because of different communications
  - Level of customer involvement will be different (undertaking tasks not traditionally included in project plans)
- The horizon for estimates is much nearer than traditionally
- The accuracy of estimates improves as the detailed requirements emerge

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Increasing accuracy of estimates
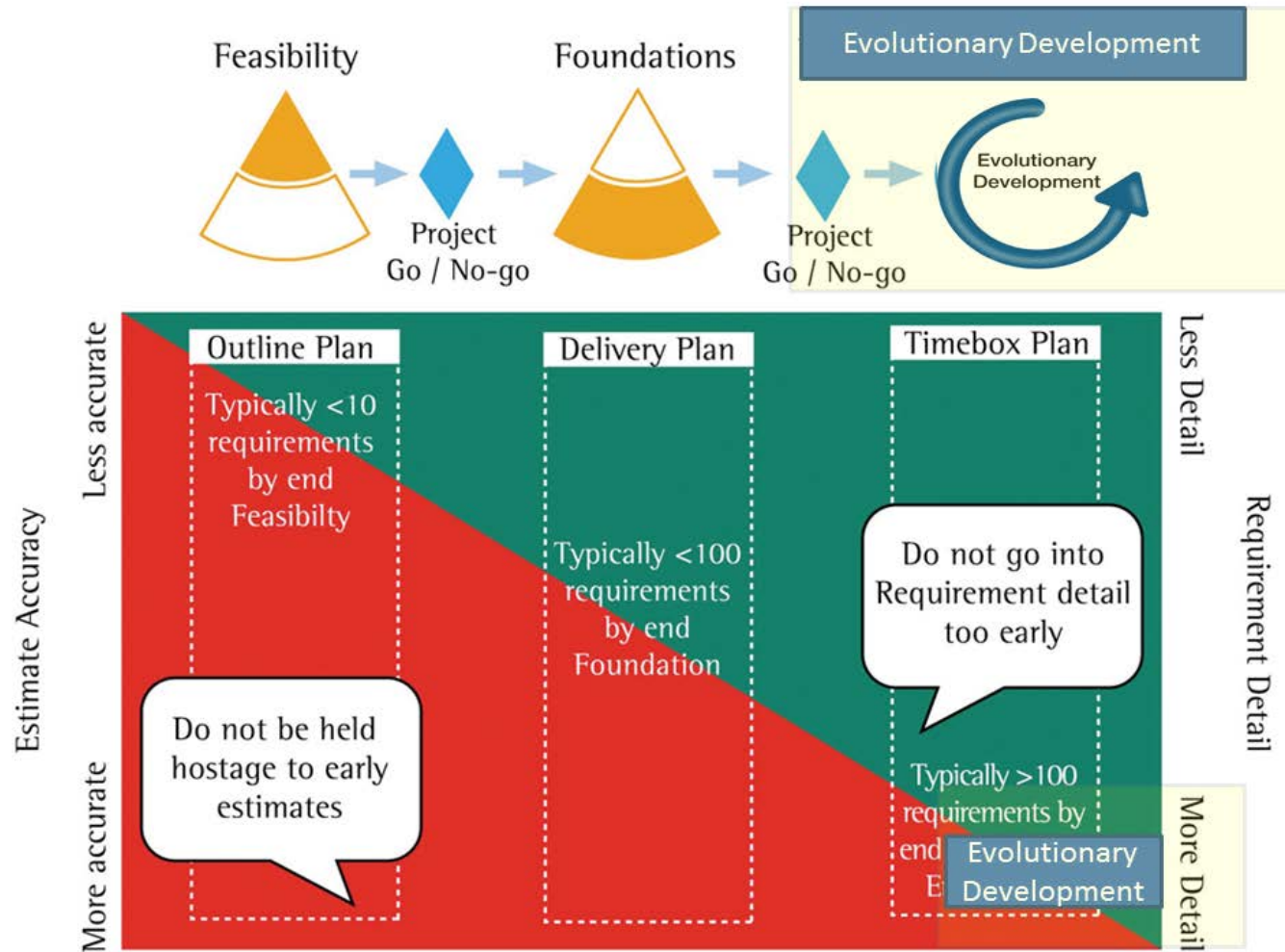
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Resource Management

- Fine-tuned processes for acquiring resources swiftly (not just people)

- Efficient HR systems (timely training, keeping skills up to date, employing contractors, etc.)

- Avoid context-switching for scarce human resource

- Include appropriate levels of customer participation in human resource plans

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Stakeholder Engagement

- PMO BAU, e.g. monitoring which projects/programmes dealing with whom

- PMO <u>not</u> part of the close engagement

- Potential PMO activities:
    - Supporting efficient procedures for meeting rooms
    - Briefing stakeholders
    - Workshop kits
    - Facilitation

Standards for methods and tools

- Tailoring guidelines – processes, products and roles

- Pocketbook lists criteria for tools to be selected for use in Agile projects

Knowledge management

- Agile knowledge may not be documented so remains local

- PMO could
  - Manage a central Agile library or wiki or…

  - Provide fast-track project mobilisation service

  - Manage a pool of Agile coaches

  - Facilitate knowledge sharing,
    e.g. through COPs, brown-bag lunches, …

The Place to Go

focus on compliance
focus on assurance
collaborative
close to the business and projects
dictatorial
clerical
facilitative
distant from business or projects
reactive
proactive
responsive to business change
avoiding change to projects
bureaucrat
responsive
rule-based administrators
empowered experts / advisors
ensuring incremental delivery
staid and traditional
periodic spikes of demand on projects
continuous support & monitoring
encouraging small chunks of work
championing "big bang"
measures a significant overhead for projects
measures arising from projects
respecting resource constraints
doing it all (context-switching for people, pet projects, etc.)

The Place to Avoid

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