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# The Agile Samurai: How Agile Masters Deliver Great Software



## The Agile Samurai

How Agile Masters  
Deliver  
Great Software



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Edited by Martin Fowler



## Synopsis

Faced with a software project of epic proportions? Tired of over-committing and under-delivering? Enter the dojo of the agile samurai, where agile expert Jonathan Rasmusson shows you how to kick-start, execute, and deliver your agile projects. Combining cutting-edge tools with classic agile practices, *The Agile Samurai* gives you everything you need to deliver something of value every week and make rolling your software into production a non-event. Get ready to kick some software project butt. *The Agile Samurai* slices away the fluff and theory that make other books less-than-agile. It's packed with best practices, war stories, plenty of humor, and hands-on tutorial exercises that will get you doing the right things, the right way.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 4 hours and 54 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Pragmatic Bookshelf

Audible.com Release Date: October 20, 2014

Language: English

ASIN: B00OPAJSYA

Best Sellers Rank: #20 in Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Software Design, Testing & Engineering > Testing #53 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Computers

## Customer Reviews

Over the last ten years, I've been working with teams with different degrees of commitment to the agile process, ranging from non-existing to quite strong. I was looking for a text that summarises agile methodology to help me formalise and articulate my own experiences, and of course to enhance my knowledge of some of the finer points of agile practices. I have to admit that this book did not meet my expectations. The first eighty pages up to chapter six are mostly about project inception and read like a prolonged introduction. From chapter six onwards, the author finally comes to the point and discusses the core concepts of agile processes, so the book does get better with increasing page numbers. Unfortunately, Scrum isn't discussed at all, instead Kanban is introduced in chapter eight. The discussion of typical technical processes, such as refactoring, TDD, and continuous integration is compacted into several brief chapters at the end of the book. The writing style is very informal; the author uses a conversational tone throughout the book. Almost every

page contains illustrations, which makes it an easy and quick read. The style of the book is comparable to the Head First books. It left me with the impression that I sat in an all-day meeting where someone said a lot of intelligent things to which everyone else agreed. Unfortunately, not many of these things seemed radically new or thought-provoking, so I fear I won't remember many of them next month. Of course, this may be entirely my own fault. I prefer a more formal, concise, old-school language. I also prefer dense and meaty text books with lots of diagrams, numbers and formulas. In return, I can dispense with stick figures, pictograms, and even with Master Sensei (a guru character used in the book). I feel that a lot of the deeper and more complex issues of agile project management have simply been left out. To be fair, it must be mentioned that I probably do not fall into the target group for which this book was written. It is more appropriate as an introductory text for people who are new to agile project management, or even new to the entire business of project management. Think "trial lesson" and "starter course".

I knew I was going to like The Agile Samurai from the first page: "Agile is a way of developing software that reminds us that although computers run the code, it's people who create and maintain it." Jonathan Rasmussen, the Other JR, has written a great, short, to-the-point book about how to move a project to agile. From the beginning "Deliver something of value every week" to the Agile Principles sprinkled throughout the book, such as "The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams" to the conversations between the student and the Sensei, you can learn how to move your project from where it is to agile. Some pieces I particularly like are: 1. All of Chapter 4, Seeing the Big Picture, where Jonathan suggests we need an elevator pitch for our project. I'm stealing this idea right away. 2. Chapter 8: Agile Planning, Dealing with Reality. After a humorous side trip with Murphy and his Law, Jonathan introduces us to burndown, burnup, and team velocity charts. 3. Chapter 15: Continuous Integration: Making it Production-Ready. What if you only had one hour to deploy your product. Could you? Jonathan walks you through what you need to do to make the code production ready. Jonathan has great advice about how to know how agile you are: "And don't forget. It's not about "being" agile. It's about building great products and delivering world class service to your customers." This is a great book. If you are thinking of starting an agile journey, do yourself a favor and get this book. You will not be sorry.

What this book isn't: boring theory about agile methodology and history of "how did it all start". This book is neither source of THE secret of agile software development. What this book is: a great and

valuable source of reality connected simple facts that would allow you to re-evaluate how you build your software. Inception Deck is a great tool to kick off a project. Project planning and execution from agile point of view and with developers in mind are chapters that logically explain how to address everyday issues on traditional projects. This book is about achieving targets by going with simplicity.

This is an excellent book for those who are unfamiliar with agile concepts. The author provides very practical advice on general best practices. This book is focused on "agile" (lowercase "a") rather than "Agile" (uppercase "A"), i.e., instead of prescribing a particular methodology, the author describes different possible approaches, but advocates doing whatever appears to make the most sense from an agile perspective given the particulars of a team's work. The author's style of writing is more enjoyable than other books on agile because he presents the material from several angles, provides nice visuals, and writes in a lighthearted manner. The Audible version is great. I liked it so much that I purchased the book. I've re-read it several times. I'm not a software developer, but I am able to apply the concepts from the first 3/4 of the book to most of my project-related work.

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