

An approach to coexistence analysis between agility and ERP implementation

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Abstract

Business organizations tend to re-engineer their business processes by adopting Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems in order to gain a competitive advantage. ERPs offer countless benefits by enabling an enterprise to operate as an integrated, process oriented and real time enterprise. But the issue is re-engineering with ERP ranks among slow-moving, costly and challenging processes of an organization. Many ERP specialists regard agile approaches positively, to mitigate the common ERP implementation challenges. Agile implementation of ERPs is still under research area. This research discusses on the need of agile approaches in ERP implementations and how agility and ERP implementations can coexist. In this case our research question is “Can the common ERP implementation challenges be solved by using agile approaches?” and if so, “How these challenges can be solved?” This study also seeking for uplift the level of awareness on the applicability of agility for ERP implementation projects and these findings can be effectively used by ERP Implementers, Vendors, Consultants, Project Managers and Researchers in their respective projects.

Keywords: Agile approach, Coexistence, ERP implementation

Introduction

An ERP system is an integrated software system, typically offered by a vendor as a package that supports the seamless integration of all the information flowing through Business Processes, Business Intelligence, Business Integrations, Collaborations, etc. However, Many ERP implementation projects are failures (Gloger, 2008). Many ERP implementation projects are still executed adapting waterfall or similar traditional methodologies. While the usage of waterfall methodology in IT projects is diminishing, agile approaches usage is mounting (Fair, 2012). Agile movements provide proactive, active and reactive alternatives to traditional approaches by responding unpredictability and rapid volatility with well-timed, flexible and incremental iterations and empirical feedbacks. There are many approaches for agility. Among them agile process management or agile project management can be considered as a broad approach that can be adopted by engineering, information technology, and new product or service development projects (Highsmith, 2004). Agile Software development is one of its popular applications. Although agile based IT approaches are originated in the software development domain, parts of the agile may be applicable in enterprise system implementations like ERP to mitigate many of the current ERP failures.

Methodology

The research methodology consists of two main phases. During the first phase the literature survey is conducted and it is followed by conceptual model development, operationalization and questionnaire development. The second phase is data collection and analysis. It is challenging to define the agile implementation of ERP