



THE CHARTERED BODY FOR THE PROJECT PROFESSION

'Delivering Change in Waterfall and Agile' event outputs

19 October 2021

APM Enabling Change SIG

APM People SIG

Change Management Institute UK



APM at 50:
Better projects for
a better future

Question for discussion:

From your professional experience would you facilitate a change initiative differently when using a waterfall or incremental (agile) approach? If so, what are the differences?

General points for discussion:

- Bandwidth of those living the change may dictate the approach.
- Clarity of the benefits and the end goal will influence the type of delivery.
- Nature and level of support and BAU concerns are important to understand in order to ensure everyone is on board with both approaches.
- Size of the project will influence the approach taken.
- Team organisation would be different.
- Approach is affected by industry /sector e.g. oil & gas, defence, FMCG tend to be more defined processes with legacy learning (more likely Waterfall), IT sector more Incremental/Agile focused.
- The different methods would involve different communications, budgeting, change request process, benefit realisation.
- Priority of work different – profile different and the risk spread differently across the different change styles.

Time and governance:

Incremental

- Time is of the essence.
- Shorten the early stages (analysis and data capture) and generally 'get on with it' sooner.

Waterfall

- Would want more time for piloting/testing
- Approach could be viewed as being more rigid from a governance perspective, therefore supports embedment of processes and key documentation to support delivering the change.

Communications:

Incremental

- Need to keep communication channels open.
- Different changes might affect different groups of people, comms to be targeted to specific audiences.
- More bespoke comms with different channels.
- May support communications effort, providing information to secure buy-in to change and informing stakeholders through iterative approach during each deployment phase.
- User communications: little and often providing a format for individuals to feedback into the process.

Waterfall

- One big comms plan.
- User communications: more structured and planned over the whole rollout.

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Stakeholders: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing stakeholders through iterative approach during each deployment phase.
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be more suitable where accessibility or availability to key stakeholders is extremely limited to provide inputs into the change, rather than continuing to engage with key stakeholders at each increment.
Solutions & Benefits: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much more interaction with end user, fail fast / learn fast approach, therefore able to reduce threats to the final outputs. Benefits may need to be articulated more as they are delivered in a dispersed way. Potential for the emergence of (dis)benefits, outcomes that had not been anticipated and may be adverse (unintended consequences). Highest priority work first/quick wins. Short benefits, deliver change quicker/quick wins. Be more impact focused, delivering smaller changes but more often to reduce 'dip anxiety'. Be more benefits and value focused earlier as there is an incremental expectation – this would keep confidence high in investing in the initiative. Requires a lot of work arounds (part solutions) ahead of the distant final solution.
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits management is likely to show strong business benefit, supported by senior management.
Budgeting: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting will change depending on what you are going to deliver.
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget will be worked out from the outset.
Testing: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptance testing/assurance: set sprint objectives and acceptance for that sprint.
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With big bang you would have done a lot more research and testing upfront to mitigate potential downsides.

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Buy-in: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the evolutionary incremental approach – led by users/customers – better chance of ‘buy-in’
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs early top-down buy in and backing.
Resource: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ a change manager earlier. Can result in much more fatigue as process is much more drawn out is less evident – particularly for those stakeholders on the edges
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should consider the role of a Change Manager & early engagement.
Lessons/Learning: <i>Incremental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be more lesson driven by wider involvement in the delivery Learning dip would be reduced Can learn lesson as you go along, making changes as you go.
<i>Waterfall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires taking much learning as the risk for big bang events is significant.