



Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors deploy the Agile Toolkit

Key Points:

Nature of the work:

- Agile Mentoring & Training

Mentoring Provided:

- Agile Practitioner
- Modeling
- Facilitation & Workshops
- Prototyping
- Process Definition

Background

RICS – The Royal Institution of Chartered surveyors – is one of the most respected and high profile global organisations for professionals involved in land, property, construction and environmental issues.

RICS were facing a period characterised by several changes in their approach to technical development and organisation processes, and as a consequence the staff were waking up to the potential of what RICS could really deliver, given the right approach. This resulted in a lot of new projects and a lot of people trying to articulate what they wanted. The requirements gathering stage is always the toughest and most critical part of the development cycle. *“It is never easy for people to articulate what they want, and in some cases people are not sure what they really need. The traditional approach would have made it all too long winded”* commented Howells, Director of Programme Management and Technology at RICS.

Howells was keen to explore the Agile Methodology and Mindset as he felt that the pragmatic approach would fit perfectly with the mindset at RICS. RICS’ project managers are Prince 2 certified and whilst the methodology is robust and provides a number of techniques and good practices, Howells felt that it tends to fit better with the traditional Waterfall approach.

In 2007, Steve Howells and Dave Milne, Head of Application Development and Architecture at RICS, attended one of the regular Agile Executive Information Sessions hosted by 6pm in Malta.

“All the larger projects that I have been involved in the past and that have turned out to be highly successful had all used a more pragmatic approach. Agile seemed to promote those attributes and the 6pm Session in Malta confirmed that!” says Howells.

Howells and Milne immediately saw the potential in the methodology and the benefits it could bring. RICS engaged 6pm to deliver a three day Agile practitioner course to their project managers and stakeholders to try and achieve ‘buy-in’ amongst the team. This was an essential step in ensuring a successful roll-out of the methodology within RICS. The course instantly struck a chord with the challenges and issues that RICS were facing and clearly highlighted how the Agile Toolbox would strengthen the way that they delivered projects.

The Solution

Following the success of the Agile Seminar delivered to RICS’ stakeholders, 6pm was brought in to deliver Agile mentoring and training. RICS effectively appointed an internal Executive Sponsor that focused on the strategy and indoctrination of the philosophy.

Over the last year RICS have successfully adopted the Agile Toolbox and have



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effectively implemented elements of Agile to successfully deliver projects as opposed to the complete shift to an Agile paradigm.

This approach has made the transition completely transparent to the business and made it seem as though they were simply applying ‘common sense’ to the delivery of their projects. *“The organisation bought in without it being a really obvious and painful change.”* says Howells, *“It was a relatively inexpensive process that has now enabled us to adopt a consistent approach that allows us to be more flexible in our approach to project delivery.”*

Moreover, the methodology in itself sits nicely within the Prince 2 framework and there was, therefore, no need to replace the skilled resources that RICS had, but simply introduce new techniques that complemented the skill set.

Although certain projects may not be suited to the pure Agile development framework, the ‘common sense’ principles that underpin the methodology can be implemented in some way or form across any project. 6pm have successfully implemented this approach on several occasions and have helped organisations to deliver the ‘right’ solution, on time and to budget, allowing them to derive immediate

business benefit through increased productivity, improved quality and reduced cost.

The Agile methodology quickly became the ‘RICS approach to delivery’ and this new ‘way of thinking’ has been implemented and embraced across various areas of the business at RICS including IT, Information Management, Application Development, as well as overall Programme Management.

RICS now pick and choose the elements of Agile that work for them. Their rollout was successful in that they didn’t need to convince the organisation that this was the best way to do things. They didn’t need to prove that this was the right approach to avoiding stumbling blocks. They didn’t rub their people’s noses in ‘Agile’ but simply asked them to turn up at workshops.

The RICS Royal Crest





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“People saw the common sense in it and began to use elements of it. They were happy to do it, and once they had a successful project under their belts they did not want to reverse to the old ways!” commented Howells.

Whilst people did not really talk about Agile itself, they were actually championing elements of the Agile toolbox

such as working in groups, managing scope creep and workshops.

“Using a waterfall approach, I do not think we would have really delivered anything that worked or that was fit for purpose! Moreover it would have definitely created and ‘us and them’ culture” concluded Howells.

6pm

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About RICS

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is an International organisation which now has over 140,000 members in 17 faculties delivering services in 120 countries. They are a global governing and accreditation body whose main roles are to regulate and promote the surveying profession, to maintain the highest educational and professional standards. Their ultimate goal is that of protecting the public interest and that of their clients and consumers through a strict code of ethics and to provide impartial advice, analysis and guidance on a diverse range of issues.

www.rics.org

About 6pm

Established in 1996, 6pm employs over 100 technology consultants in Malta and the UK. Our staff are committed to exceeding client expectations and their enthusiasm coupled with their “can do” attitude is the envy of many competitors.

We offer a wide variety of technology services ranging from, Resourcing, Bespoke Development and Business Intelligence to Testing and Support & Maintenance. Our Clients include Capgemini, Conchango, Leicester City Council, Focus Solutions, Novacraft, Fujitsu and BT.

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