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Planning the work Project Management

KPI® created a great resource outlining these three main project management approaches: Waterfall, Agile and Lean Project Management

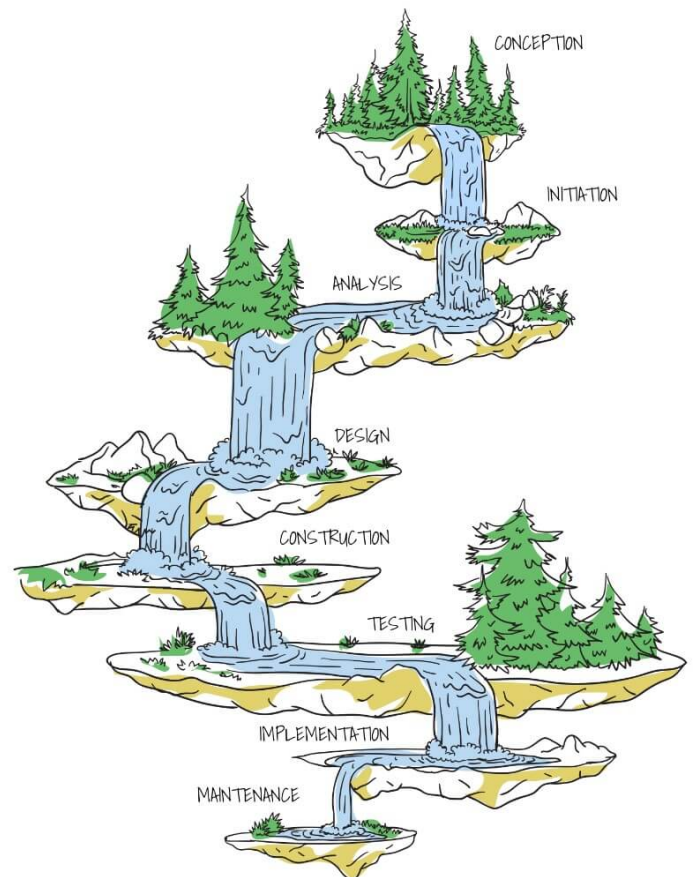
Waterfall

This philosophy started in manufacturing, but has been used in many different industries, including services and software development. The philosophy is much more linear than the other, focused on eight different phases of work. You can't move on to the next phase until everything within the previous stage is completed. This creates a "waterfall" effect as the work flows from one to the next.

The eight phases are:

- Conception
- Initiation
- Analysis
- Design
- Construction
- Testing
- Implementation
- Maintenance

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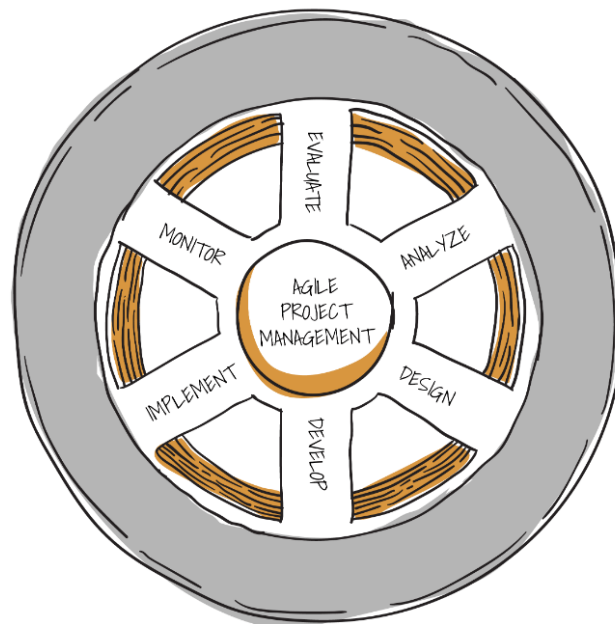
Agile

This philosophy was developed by the software industry as an alternative to the Waterfall approach. Instead of a linear model, Agile breaks work into smaller chunks and relies on more iterative feedback and process.

KPI® outlines the Agile strategy using three components:

- Work (relating to the smaller modules) is completed in “sprints.” The sprints may last a week or a month.
- Once the sprint has been completed, evaluation and testing phases are used to identify faults, gain feedback, and make any necessary changes.
- The next sprint is completed to see further progress on the modules before the testing phase is repeated.

Each of the sprints develops some kind of product or output that can be reviewed and feedback can be sourced. This allows team members to identify issues early and often, and course-correct as needed. However, even though each “sprint” has a deadline, because of the iterative process there is not necessarily an overall clear timeline. An Agile process can also easily become unwieldy if the team leader does not keep everyone focused and aligned on the bigger picture.



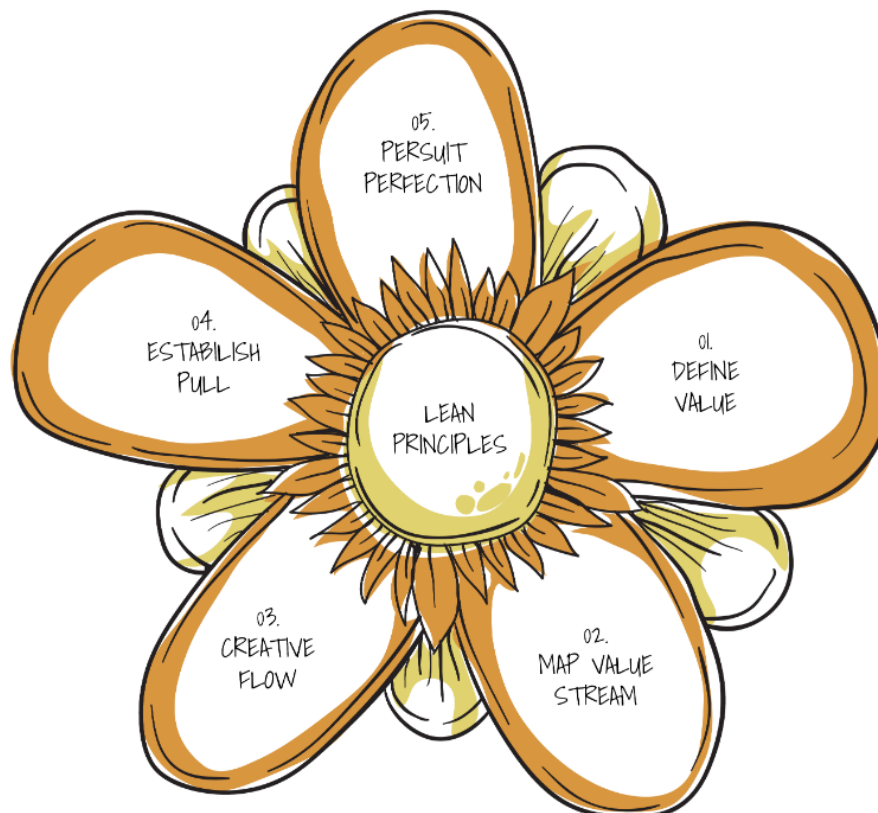
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Lean

You may have heard of the “Lean” methodology from Eric Ries’ Lean Startup book. Lean is similar to Agile in that it is iterative and focused on quick action and feedback. Core to Lean is the concept of the “Minimal Viable Product” or “MVP”, where your team figures out the quickest and easiest way to deliver on your team goals. This allows your team, like with Agile, to identify issues and course correct as needed.

You should know that the emphasis on speed can also rush your team and lead to poor results. By focusing on the short-term, you can lose sight of the long-term needs of the project or team or company. Lean is also specifically designed for products and so a more service-oriented team may have trouble adapting this methodology.



To learn more about these and other project management techniques, visit: <https://www.kpi.com/en/overview-of-leading-project-management-philosophies-and-methodologies/>

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