



Where next for the agile evangelist?

An Agilesphere white paper

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Introduction

This post assumes a basic knowledge of Geoffrey Moore's Chasm Model.

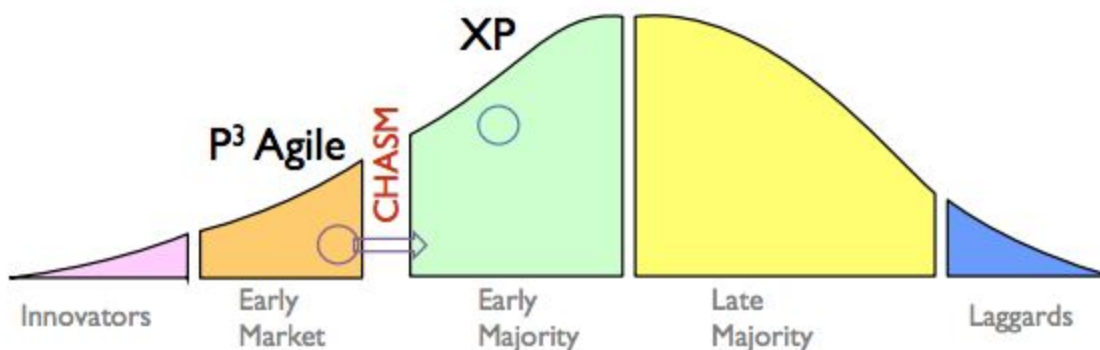
Firstly let's be clear that we believe that the Chasm Model applies because agile is a "discontinuous innovation that requires the end user and the marketplace to dramatically change their past behaviour to achieve the promise of equally dramatic new benefits".

Secondly it is worth noting that while this model is focused on technology providers such as VersionOne, Thoughtworks Studios, Atlassian and Rally (who are looking to replace products like HP Clarity and MS Project), but it also directly impacts any service providers in the market and any individuals looking to make a living in it.

Where are we?

What has puzzled us is that XP software engineering practices look as if they have already gone mainstream. However organisations that have fully switched across from waterfall to agile as their default methodology for their projects, programmes and portfolios (P3 agile) are very few and far between.

So how do we reconcile these two positions?



The key insight Moore had is that the Chasm exists between the early market and the majority market because of diametrically opposed buying behaviours:

Visionaries (Early Market)

Intuitive Analytic

Support Revolution

Contrarian

Break away from the pack

Follow their own dictates

Take risks

Motivated by future opportunities

Pragmatists (Majority Market)

Analytic

Support Evolution

Conformist

Stay with the herd

Consult with their colleagues

Manage risks

Motivated by present problems

Moore makes the point himself that visionary buyers have geeky tendencies so with XP we have geeks “selling” to geeks so it’s not surprising that it has been adopted so widely. The fact that they have not invested a significant amount, given that there are many open source tools available and Microsoft have built XP into .NET, makes adoption easier.

The problem that the development community has is that, in the main, they have not taken “the business” with them and agile has got “[stuck in the IT ghetto](#)”. The organisations where this might not be the case are those completely online e.g. social media, Internet retail and gaming where there was no existing P3 infrastructure to replace.

So our assessment is that agile as an infrastructure is in the process of crossing the chasm. The full implications of what this means can be left for other posts but there is one key point about the people involved in promoting agile...

Pragmatists “buy” from pragmatists

For agile to be successful, the people and organisations that “sell” agile have to start looking, talking and acting like pragmatists.

This has profound implications for the agile Evangelists whose visionary messages have dominated until now. They are not, and will not, listened to by majority market buyers and will often provoke an entirely negative reaction.

Their options are to either:

- 1) evolve into pragmatists
- 2) look for the next technology innovation to get excited about.

Vendors employing evangelists also have similar options; coach their evangelists into pragmatists, replace them with pragmatists or move them to roles working with innovation.

Whichever way you look at it the days of the agile evangelist are nearing the end!