



6 Agile Lean Leadership - Specifications

This course deals with the challenges of reaching common understanding of specifications and expectations when working with a high content of complex work. Different patterns are available and need to be deployed depending on context. Team members and stakeholders all need to be educated in this.

The Challenge

In most work situations today, people are requested to deliver items whose implementation resides in the Obvious, Complicated, Complex and even sometimes in the Chaotic domain. Specifications are far from trivial apart from those in the Obvious.

Projects and initiatives still deliver sub-optimal results due to misunderstanding of specifications. The challenge in reaching common understanding between stakeholders, management and those performing the work has never been greater.

The old big up-front specification and plan just cannot keep up with the demands anymore, too much goes wrong too often.

ALL Specifications, the Solution

This ALL Specifications course takes the student through the basics of producing useful specifications. This includes using advanced narrative techniques to achieve common understanding and high recall factor of facts. A balance between structure and flexibility has to be constantly upheld.

In ALL the “pull” principle is used, customers “require” something of suppliers. Specifications are the common language for these requirements.

- What outcome or impact does the customer really want?
- How can expectations be expressed so that misunderstandings are minimized?
- How can expectations be expressed so that delivery can be verified to the customer’s satisfaction?
- How can expectations be expressed so that impact or outcome can be monitored and verified as satisfactory?

Several examples and exercises take the participants through the various patterns that experience has proven are useful in communicating what should be achieved and hence be done. Special focus is devoted to visualization of the overall solution, lest people lose the overview and suboptimize in one corner.

Learning Objectives

Agile Lean Leadership context
Understanding the foundational challenge of reaching common understanding of specifications when working in the complex domain.

Foundation

Understanding how Agile Lean specifications rely on reaching common understanding through dialogue, not through detailed contracts. Have applicable knowledge of the various cognitive and psychological constraints that govern this process.

The toolbox

Apprehending a collection of patterns, tools, practices and templates that can facilitate this process. Understand the applicability of each.

Real life

Understanding how different visualization techniques can strengthen the cognitive and communicative process, and how such artifacts can keep the common understanding fixed on the same facts.



Kurt B. Nielsen

