

12 Common Agile Buy-in Scenarios

Prescriptive Product Owner

Your Product Owner is highly prescriptive and likes to define every detail up-front leaving little room for experimentation and learning in the team, let alone from users. When challenged, she tells you that it is your job to deliver, hers to define.

Unresponsive IT Infrastructure

You cannot properly automate your builds and deployments because your IT infrastructure group can't support that way of working. When you discuss it with the Head of Infrastructure, he tells you: "We don't work like that and I don't have enough people to change it."

Waterfall Wrapper Process

You're running Agile within a waterfall software development lifecycle and its demands (like up-front requirements and design) are causing problems. You try to point this out to the SDLC owner and he tells you: "This is how we've always run projects. You can use Agile if you want to but must comply."

Inspection & Audit Insanity

Your team have been successful with several Agile releases but that has attracted the attention of the internal auditors. They audit your project and give you a Red "Fail" rating - stating that the project is: "missing basic controls and documentation that are necessary for good governance."

Micro-management Nightmare

You're attempting to use Agile but unfortunately you are forced to have a Project Manager, Release Manager and Team Manager. Each of them want to micro-manage your team, insisting on lots of reports, meetings and Gantt charts. They make conflicting decisions.

Facilities Prominently Absent

You need to co-locate people to work in an Agile way and introduce some open space and whiteboard into the office. Your boss is supportive but as soon as you order the whiteboards, the Facilities Manager vetoes the request because it creates a lower-density floorplan."

HR Robotised & Slow

You're attempting to quickly staff your new Agile team but HR insist that you can't just hire great people - you need detailed job-specifications for Agile roles that need approval, taking weeks. You try to explain to your HR rep that Agile roles are flexible but she simply doesn't get it.

Finance

You need to establish a new Agile team but Finance won't approve the budget unless you can demonstrate return on investment for a fixed feature list. You spoke to the Finance Director about using Agile but he said: "Don't tell me how to budget - I've been doing this job for 20 years."

Architecture Police

Your team have had a successful release with Agile but it has attracted the attention of the Architecture group. They swoop down and declare several key technologies "unapproved" and insist the project pause to complete a full technical architecture specification.

Release Management Mayhem

Your Agile team are doing great work but you find you cannot get your releases into Production because the Release Manager insists on batching up releases from different teams into a handful of quarterly deliveries. There's a wall of documentation and the release process seems chaotic."

Designers Disconnected

You are supposed to implement visuals from your design group who produce photo-realistic screen shots. They haven't heard of UX and what you get obviously won't work for real users. When you run a "brown-bag" session on UX, the design manager complains to your boss.

Analysts AWOL

You're trying to run your Agile project but are being forced to use specifications written by the analyst team. These are typically 100-page impenetrable docs that are useful only as door-stops. But when you try to avoid using them, your project is flagged as "non-conforming".