

# Project Management Methodology Cheat Sheet

A quick-reference guide to the main project management methodologies: what each one is, who it fits, and where it falls short. For the full explanations, see the complete guide linked at the bottom.

## The Three Families

| Family                   | Assumes                                                                       | Includes                                                              |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traditional / Predictive | Requirements are fixed before work starts; changes go through formal approval | Waterfall, PRINCE2, Critical Path Method (CPM), Critical Chain (CCPM) |
| Agile / Adaptive         | Requirements will change; the process should absorb that, not resist it       | Scrum, Kanban, Extreme Programming (XP)                               |
| Hybrid                   | Different parts of the project need different levels of structure             | Traditional governance + Agile delivery, combined                     |

## Methodology Comparison

| Methodology | Best For                                                                     | Limitations                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Waterfall   | Stable requirements, high cost of late changes (construction, manufacturing) | Slow and costly to change once a phase is signed off             |
| PRINCE2     | Formal governance across many projects; UK public sector                     | Heavier documentation than most small projects need              |
| Scrum       | Software/product teams adapting to feedback often                            | Needs a disciplined team and steady stakeholder involvement      |
| Kanban      | Continuous-flow work with no fixed end date                                  | Less structure for one-off projects with a hard deadline         |
| Lean        | Cutting waste from an existing process                                       | Not a full methodology on its own; pairs with Agile or Waterfall |
| Six Sigma   | Reducing defects in high-volume, repeatable processes                        | Needs statistical training; overkill for one-off creative work   |
| CCPM        | Multiple projects competing for the same people/equipment                    | Needs accurate resource and duration estimates                   |

## How to Choose: 5 Questions

- How stable are the requirements? Fixed → traditional. Likely to shift → Agile.
- How large and distributed is the team? Small/co-located can run lightweight Agile; large/multi-vendor often needs more governance.
- What compliance or regulatory demands apply? Regulated work usually needs a documented audit trail.
- How involved does the client or stakeholder need to be? Frequent input → Agile. Periodic reports → traditional.
- How mature is the team's own process? Newer teams often do better starting simple (Kanban) before adopting something that needs more discipline (Scrum, Six Sigma).