

Preface to The Business Agility Manifesto

by Roger T. Burlton, Ronald G. Ross &
John A. Zachman¹

It is clear that we are on the journey from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age.

The implications of information technology for business in this new age have been predicted and discussed for some time by notable prognosticators. Perhaps the most distinguished was Peter Drucker who in 1998 said: “The next ... information revolution is well underway. But it is not happening where information scientists, information executives, and the information industry in general are looking for it. It is not a revolution in technology, machinery, techniques, software, or speed. It is a revolution in CONCEPTS.”²

In spite of the length and substance of the discussion, and many substantial innovations in technology itself, what has actually changed? We are still focused on technology, machinery, techniques (e.g. lean, agile, capabilities), speed, software ... we are still writing code. We now have billions of lines of code. Is it flexible? No. Is it integrated? No. Is it reusable? No. Is it

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² Peter Drucker. *Forbes ASAP*, August 24, 1998

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interoperable? No. Is it aligned with business strategies? No. Is it secure? No. Is it meeting expectations? No.

What is the problem?

Drucker’s observation is that the historical pattern of previous revolutions shows that it is not the technology itself that will realize the revolution; it is the owner and beneficiary of the CONTENT, who in our case is the BUSINESS.

The Principles in this Manifesto are not technology “more of the same.” These Principles are DIFFERENT. They are BUSINESS Principles.

The technologists correctly argue that we must keep current systems, the billions of lines of code, running. OUR assertion, however, is that every new implementation opportunity must aggressively embrace and tenaciously commit to the Manifesto Principles if we are ever to change the CONCEPTS of our practices. The change has to take place deliberately, iteratively and incrementally. It’s urgent that we do it. The time to undertake it is NOW.

Agricultural Age companies couldn’t compete in the Industrial Age. Industrial Age companies cannot compete in the Knowledge Age. The question is not whether a revolution is happening. It IS happening. The question is, what are you going to do about it? Providing the pathway forward is the purpose of this Manifesto.

This is what you DO.