Pioneering the combined use of agile and stage-gate models in new product development–cases from the manufacturing industry.

Stage gate models have long been the norm in manufacturing industries. Whereas agile models, such as scrum, are standard amongst software industries. These two models have been traditionally been pitted against one another, each with its own advantages and limitations. A new trend is being observed, where gated models are becoming more agile, and agile models more gated. This trend indicates a need to combine the models, recognizing the limitations of both. We explore a number of cases where the models have been combined, very much based on trial and error, with adaptations being made as needed. The findings are relevant to product- and engineering design theory and education as stage gate models are commonly seen as the basis for modeling and teaching design. Certain qualities of agile are expected to be integrated into stage gate models, from which new process models might emerge. Such processes are expected to integrate more interdisciplinary collaboration along different stages of product development, facilitate more flexibility in setting requirements and allowing change. This article offers managers the possibility to understand how to combine stage gate and agile models and why, based upon cross company learning, hence fast tracking this process.

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