



# The 2009 Agile Practitioner Salary Survey

A WHITE PAPER PRESENTED BY ASPE AND VERSION ONE

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# 2009 Agile Practitioner Salary Survey

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Presented by ASPE-SDLC and VersionOne

Developed Jointly by ASPE-SDLC and VersionOne  
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[www.ASPE-SDLC.com](http://www.ASPE-SDLC.com)  
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## Introduction

VersionOne and ASPE-SDLC are committed to providing the Agile community with need-to-know information covering both technical and professional topics. Based on the economic slowdown and the uncertainty that has transpired, both VersionOne and ASPE-SDLC felt it was time to develop a very specific/focused salary survey for use by the Agile community. We decided to publish the report because data we collected shows that the market sees Agile skills as extremely valuable, and employers are paying top dollar to get them. We wanted to show the Agile community how valuable their skill set is and how the scarcity of Agile skills is driving income potential even in a very difficult economy.

There were some surprises within the results of the survey, as well as some frustrating and disturbing results. By asking a lot of questions we were able to correlate some unique demographic and experience data against salary and bonus data to flesh out some of the more surprising conclusions. As a separate benefit, because of the work ASPE-SDLC did with the Business Analyst Salary Survey this year, we are able to compare Business Analyst salary data with the Agile data to show some distinct differences between the two professions.

Based on the success of the 2009 Agile Salary Survey, ASPE-SDLC and VersionOne will make this a yearly exercise, and hope to use data from previous years to show changes over time in Agile demographics and salary.

## Basic Demographics

This white paper documents the overall findings of the 2009 Agile Salary Survey conducted by ASPE-SDLC and VersionOne Software and opinions and interpretations of those findings. The data was collected via a web-based survey tool and respondents were recruited by a variety of websites, newsletters, and forms that had ties to the Agile community. The data analysis and reporting was conducted by Analysis.Net consulting. In the end, responses came in from over eighty-nine different countries. A total of 2,786 surveys were completed or partially completed between March 5<sup>th</sup> and June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

Chart #1 gives a detailed break out of response by worldwide geographic region. Just over half of the respondents were from the US or Canada, about a quarter from Europe, 12% from Asia, and the remaining 9% from other regions of the world. It is important to understand this breakdown and how geographic location does impact salary. There are also distinct differences in how Agile is deployed throughout the different regions, with the US and Canada having the most commonality.

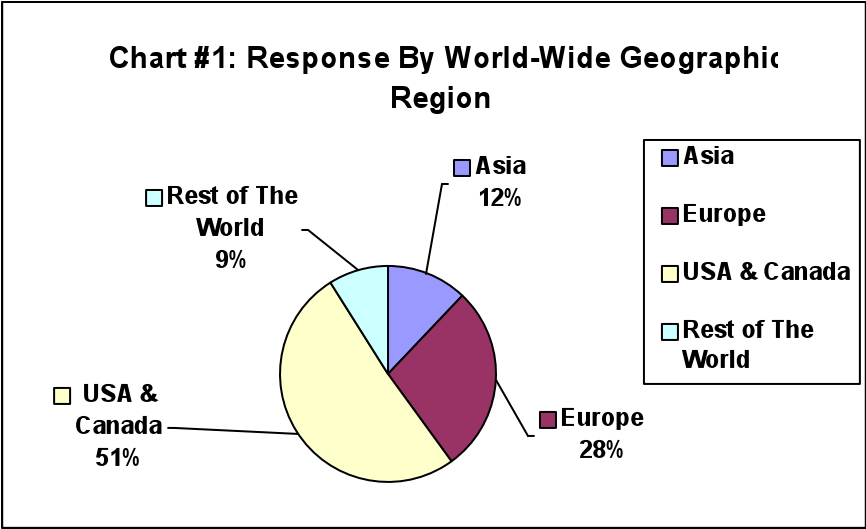


Chart #2 shows the breakout by gender of the respondents. In a number of technical professions the gender divide has been crossed, and in some cases women make up the larger population of workers. This is true with the Business Analyst position. The majority of workers doing BA work are females. However, this is NOT true for Agile practitioners. Almost 90% of the respondents were males. It is safe to say based on the data that the Agile development community is predominately made up of men. This was a very surprising result based on the inroads women have made into SDLC functions like Project Management and Business Analysis. The analysis also showed that gender plays a significant role in salary. There is no logical explanation in the data as to why this field is so male dominated.

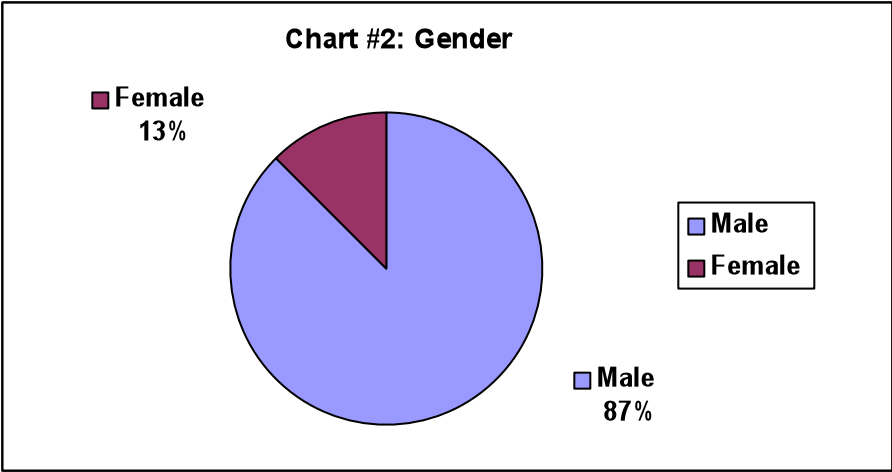
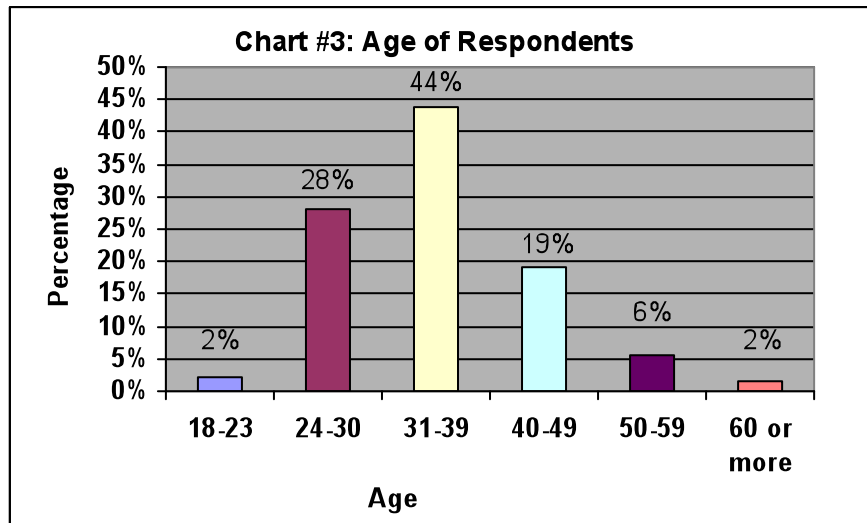
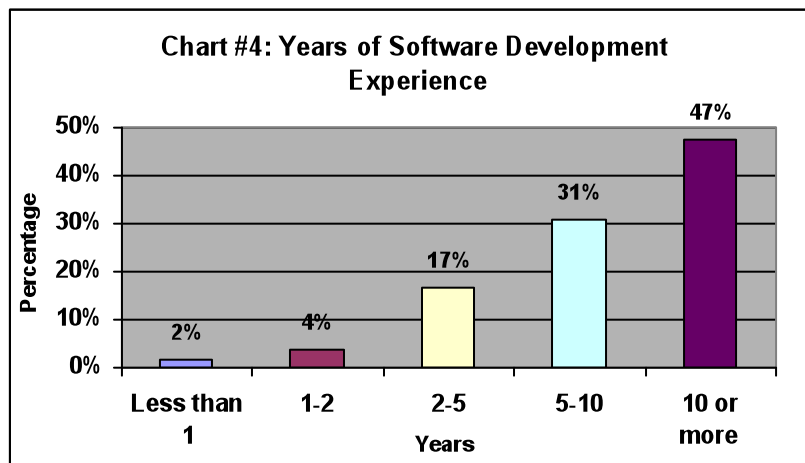


Chart #3 gives you a break out by age range of the survey respondents. Although we did not correlate age to any specific salary analysis, the age demographic gives you a basic sense of the general age dispersion of the Agile community. The results were very enlightening. The Agile community is a very young community with over 70% of respondents being 39 years old or younger. This is in direct contrast to the BA

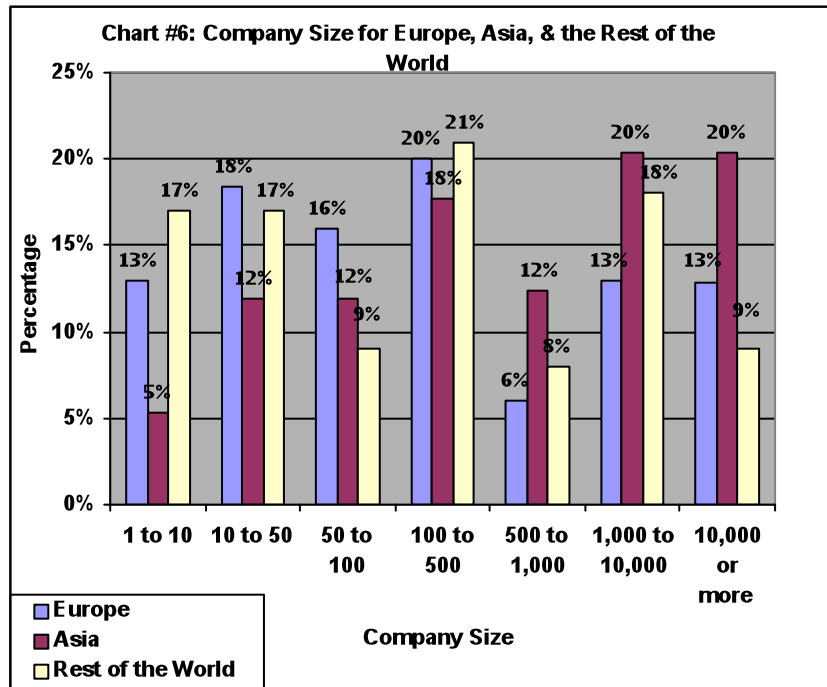
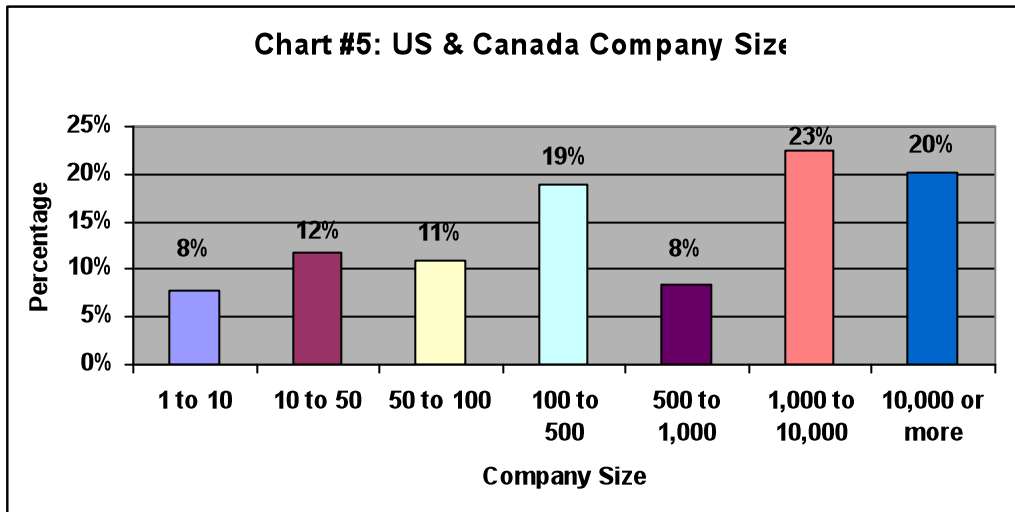
community with a median age within the 40-49 range, and with a majority of respondents between 40 and 60+ years old (over 61%).



This data by itself could lead to any number of different interpretations, so we had to be very careful in how we looked at this data. On its own, the age data has no merit to the survey and no factual interpretations can be made. The interesting inferences can be made when you combine age data with the work experience data. Chart #4 gives a detailed break out of respondents based on their software development experience. This might be a very young community, but it is a very experienced community. Over 78% of the respondents had five or more years of experience. Almost 50% of respondents had 10 or more years of experience. When tying age and experience together, a basic interpretation can be made that Agile is drawing in young, but experienced professionals. This interpretation supports a basic assumption about Agile: It is driven by folks who are most impacted by the problems of other methodologies and are hungry to make a change. They are experienced enough to lead change, and young enough to be willing to make a change. Aside from these, the data clearly shows that experience has a big correlation to salary for professionals in the Agile community.



A very basic assumption in the Agile community is that smaller companies are moving faster to Agile than larger companies, and that Agile practices are easier for smaller companies to embrace. This assumption was knocked down by the results found in this survey. According to Charts #5 and #6, (Chart #5 showing company size for US and Canada, and Chart #6 showing company size for all other regions) only Europe shows a disproportionate number of smaller companies to larger companies. In the US and Canada, over 43% of respondents work in companies with at least 1,000 employees and the same is true of 40% of professionals in Asia. Agile is just not a small company methodology, and in actuality the largest companies are showing more interest than smaller firms. Also, an unexpected outcome of the results is that company size seems to have no statistically significant impact on salary.



Over 20 industries were available for respondents to select from to show where their company falls. For data reporting purposes we broke out the top 7 industries by region. Government did not fall in the top seven in any of the regions. The government industry showed the highest percentage in the US/Canada region with just over 4% of respondents. The data shows that in Europe and Asia, Agile is still predominantly tied to software, consulting, and technology firms. Integration of Agile methods into mainstream enterprise companies is progressing, but it is still a long way off in these regions. Another interesting difference can be seen in the US and Canada region as compared to Europe and Asia. In the US and Canada, it seems software providers make up only 25% of the responders and financial services about 12%. Other industries, consulting, and healthcare are also in the top five, with government at number eight.

**Chart #7: Top 7 Industries by Region**

<i>USA/Canada</i>		<i>Europe</i>		<i>Asia</i>	
Software Provider	25.7%	Software Provider	35.4%	Software Provider	38.8%
Financial Services	12.4%	Financial Services	14.5%	Computer Technology/Manufacturer	12.3%
Other	8.8%	Business Services/Consulting	8.6%	Financial Services	9.3%
Consulting	8.5%	Computer Technology Manufacturer	8%	Telecommunications	7%
Healthcare/Health Services	7.5%	Consulting	7.3%	Consulting	6.6%
Computer Technology Manufacturer	6.3%	Telecommunications	6.7%	Business Services/Consulting	5.7%
Business Services/Consulting	5.8%	Publishing/Media	3.5%	Computer Technology/Reseller	4%

There is a definite trend developing where Agile is making its way into mainstream enterprise software development shops in the US and Canada (the Agile market is maturing in this region). This is a critical step in the long-term establishment of Agile as a legitimate choice for Application Development Directors and IT Directors. As the industry loses its reliance on consulting firms, service providers, and software vendors, there are more experienced professionals to pull from and the cost of transitioning is much lower. This can be seen in the data from the BA salary survey; consultants were not even picked up as an industry segment. The more mature a market, the less the market relies on consultants and business services.

On the flip side, the data shows the importance of software firms, consulting, and services firms in the development of an industry. Without these firms to lead the way by providing product and services, enterprise development shops would not have the resources to transition. As seen in the BA survey, as an industry matures the discrepancies between segments flatten out.

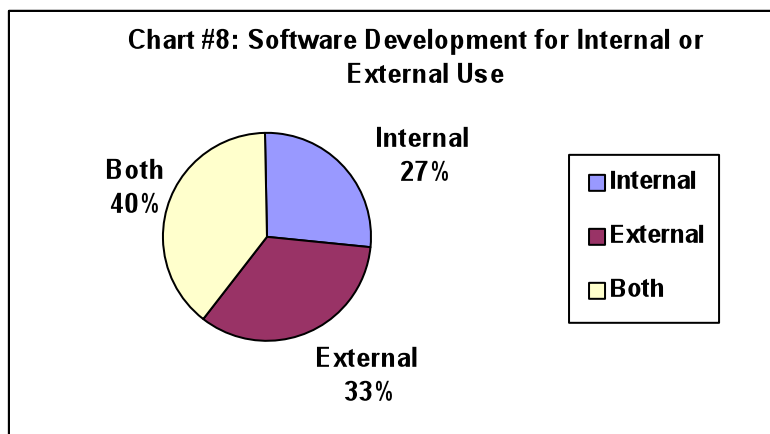
The basic demographic data presented provides a picture of the Agile community. The data has filled in some blanks for us based on what we've seen in both ASPE training classes, with software purchases, and it has also dispelled some assumptions. Two of the biggest assumptions dispelled are that small companies are moving to Agile faster than large companies, and that Agile is still a methodology just for technology companies. Before the basic demographic data can be tied into salary, we added another dimension of more detailed demographics.

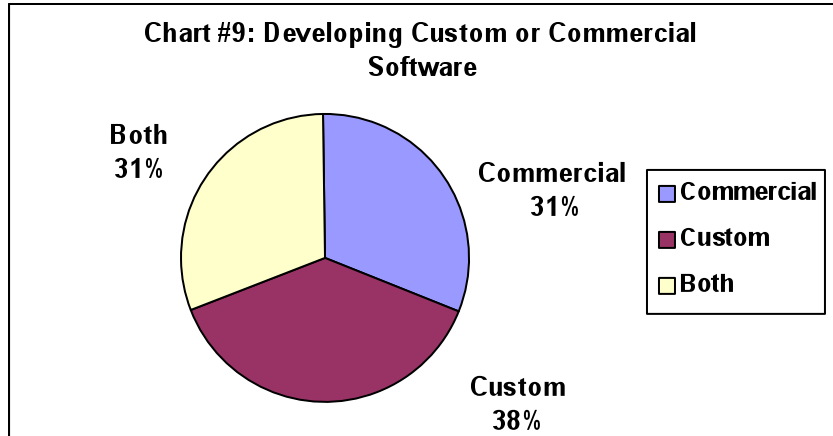
## Demographics Specific to Software Development and Agile

The data from the basic demographic reporting showed that in Europe and Asia over 30% of respondents worked in organizations providing software. It is assumed that they are providing commercial software. The data in Charts #8 and #9 provide a deeper picture of the what's and why's around respondents work with software.

From the data, 73% of respondents are developing software for use externally. In organizations that are developing for external use, a little over half have pushed the methods to their internal development team as well. This data collaborates the data on industry provided previously. Putting both together, an even stronger interpretation can be made that the majority of Agile workers are supporting external needs either within a software firm developing commercial software, or within a business services or consulting firm developing software for others. The data confirms that Agile is slowly moving into enterprise development shops, but is not there yet.

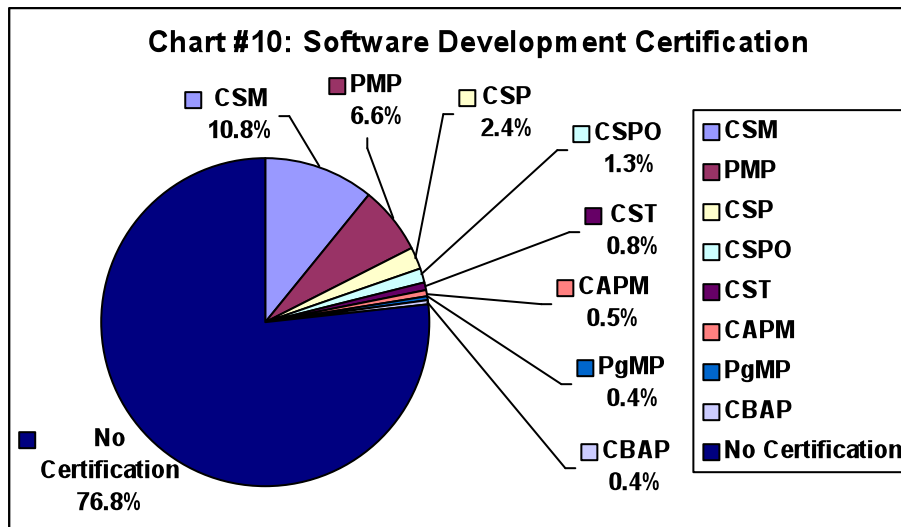
Chart #9 digs into what is more prevalent, work on commercial or work on custom software. Surprisingly, 69% of respondents are developing custom solutions and 62% of the respondents are doing commercial (this is when you include the "both" data in the numbers). The numbers are so close there is no measurable conclusion that can be drawn from the information. It is evident, however, that commercial software work does have a positive impact on salary.





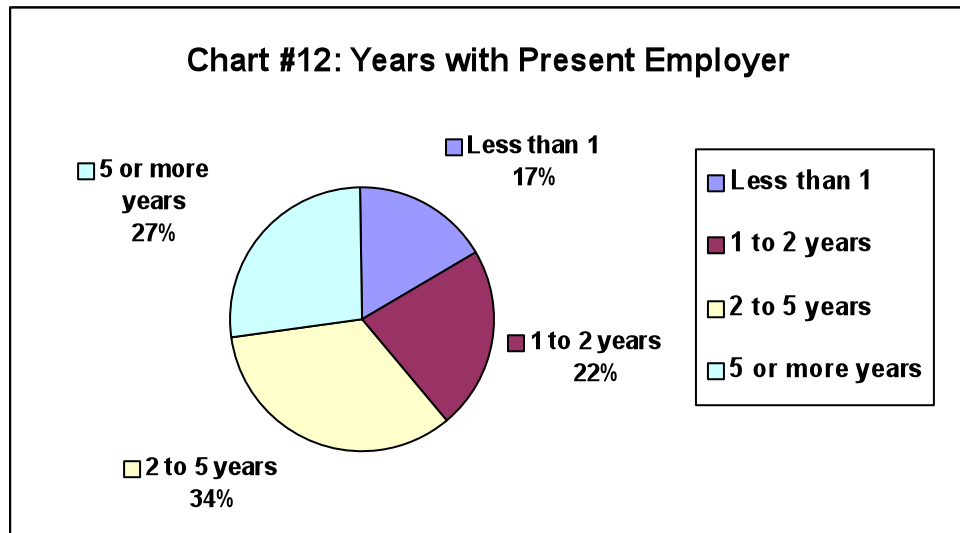
Only 20% of the respondents reported holding some type of industry certification. The data is outlined in Chart #10. This was a surprising result based on the experience of the group. It is assumed that an experienced group would be more likely to have certifications. That is not the case for the Agile community, and actually experience alone had a much bigger impact on salary than certification.

This data also makes us question the Certified ScrumMaster certification. Only 10% of the respondents holding certifications had a CSM. Why are people that are doing Agile on a day-to-day basis not interested in CSM or any of the other Scrum Alliance certifications? With over 50,000 people holding CSM certification, one might expect a higher number of people to report having a CSM. The major assumption that can be made is that the industry sees the CSM as a starter certification and not something an experienced person needs to pursue. This data shows there is room for an intermediate-level certification in Agile since the CSM is not the choice for experienced practitioners. The only certification that impacted salary with statistical significance was the PMP.

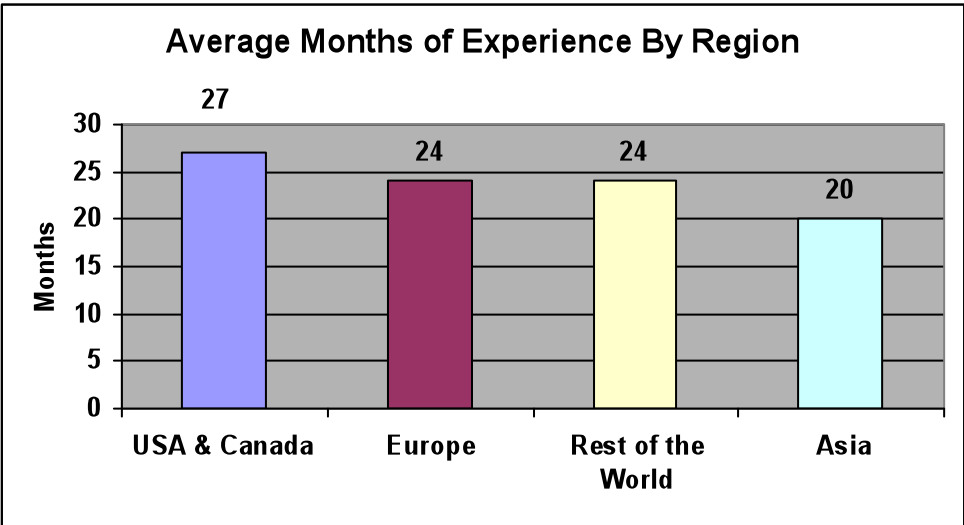
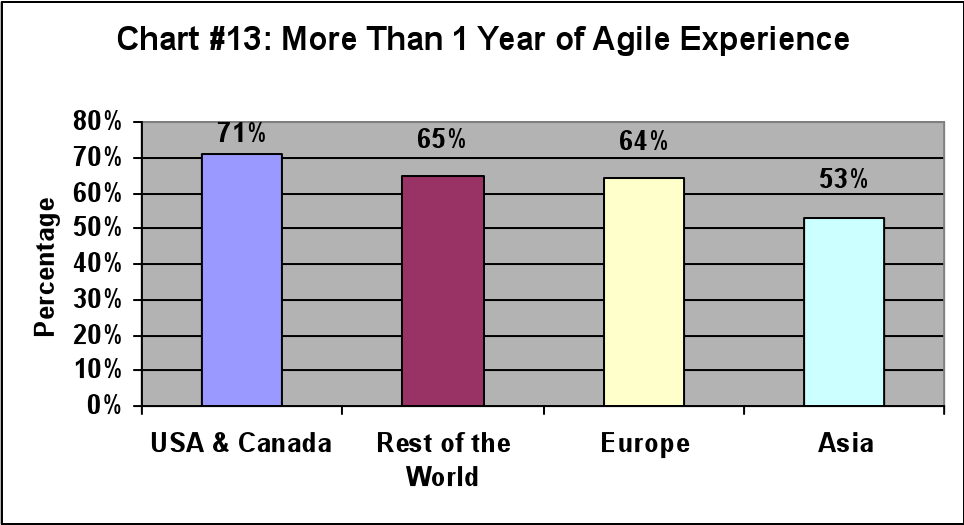




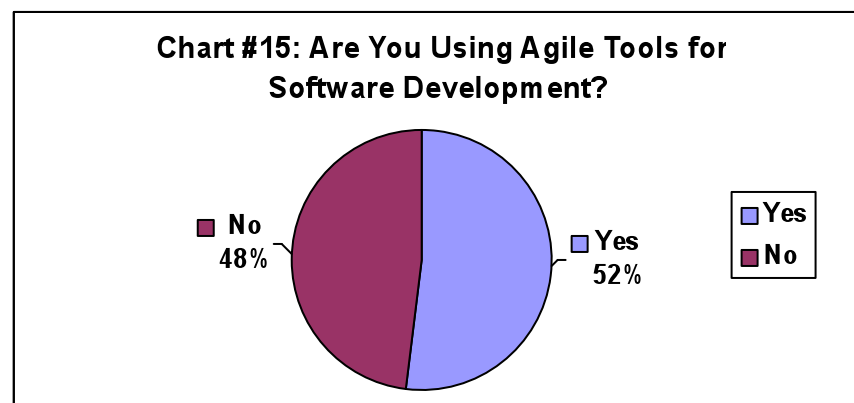
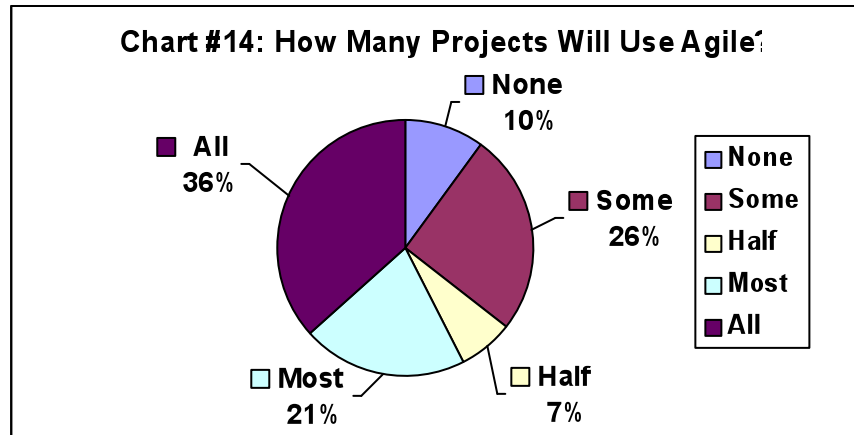
in this survey mimicked what the data showed in the BA Salary Survey. Continuous years with a company have a major impact on your salary. The type of impact will be discussed in the salary analysis portion of this paper. Also surprisingly, in Chart #12, the majority of respondents (over 60%) have been employed with their organization for two years or more, and over 27% have been with the same organization for five years or more. For a profession with a reputation for job-hopping, the data does not support the reputation.



Based on the questions asked, we were able to gather data on Agile experience and also correlate Agile experience to salary. A majority of respondents had more than a year of Agile software development experience, although the experience base was deepest in the US and Canada. This supports the interpretation made off the basic industry data that Agile is growing deeper within enterprise organizations in the US and Canada. Chart #13 shows in the US and Canada, over 71% of respondents had at least a year of experience and with an average of 27 months of experience, has the highest by far for any region. Tie this back to the data on industry of the respondents, and a much clearer picture of Agile adoption at the enterprise level can be seen in the US and Canada. Agile experience does have a positive impact on salary.



The last two pieces of specific demographic data relate to the use of Agile on projects, and the use of tools as part of the overall Agile process. The data reported back shows that the respondents definitely use Agile on a day-to-day basis. Only 10% reported back that they are not currently using Agile on any projects, so the vast majority of data in this survey is based on real-world day-to-day Agile experience. In Chart #14, overall, over 57% of respondents use Agile on most or all of their projects, a strong positive sign on the quality of data captured. As it relates to tool usage, it was basically split down the middle. In Chart #15, 52% reported that they use a tool in their Agile work, and 48% reported they do not use a tool. Tool usage and number of projects worked on seemed to have no statistically significant impact on salary.



The detailed demographic data presented provides a much clearer picture of an Agile professional, and the impacts more specific demographics have on salary. As will be shown in the salary analysis, it does not pay to stay at a job for multiple years. Also, in most cases, Agile professionals are not interested in certification, are experienced, and are at a high enough level within an organization to initiate change. Our data shows that over 90% of respondents are using Agile in some way on their projects. If you are interested in Agile or you are using it, as your Agile experience grows so will your salary. This will be shown in the salary analysis section.

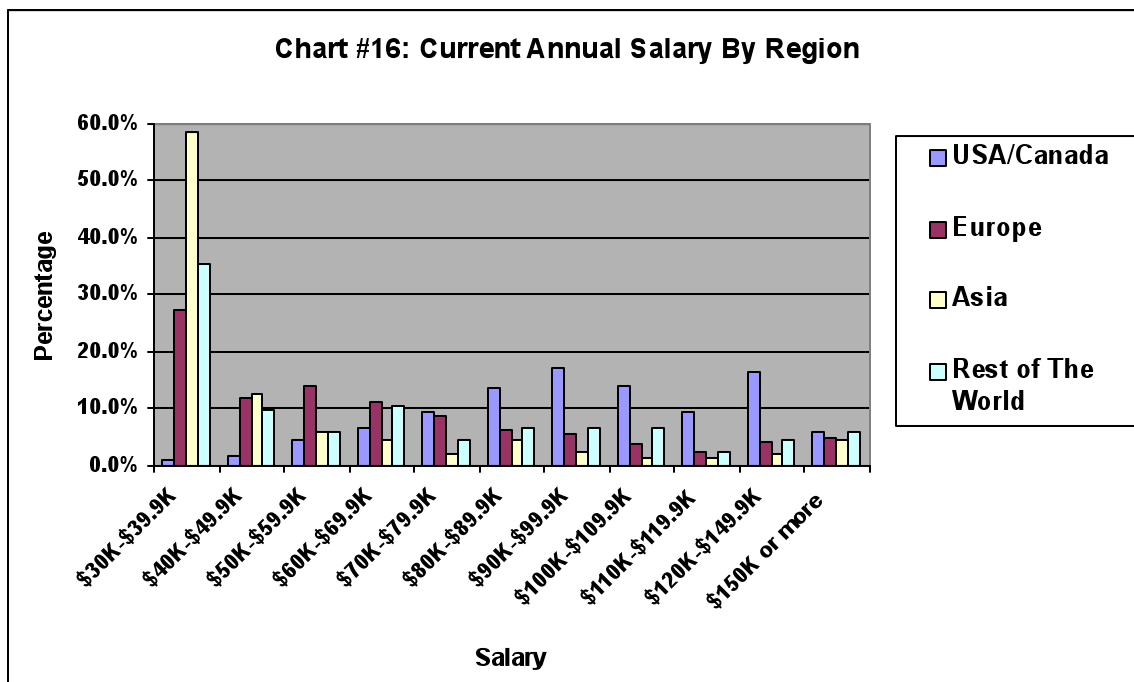
## Salary Report

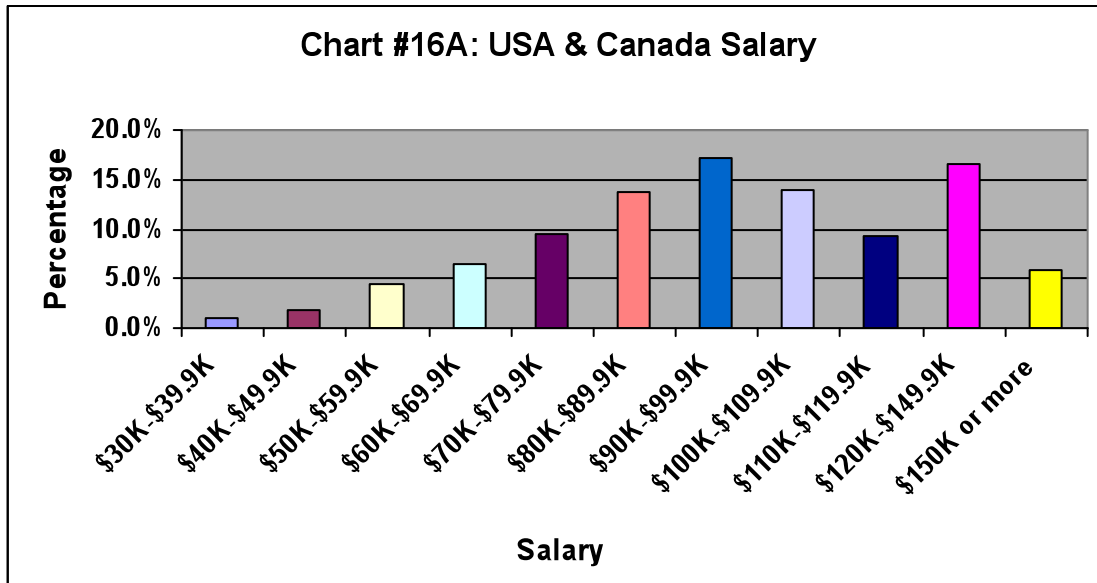
To start the salary report off on a positive note, Agile practitioners are highly paid professionals. This is a great profession to be in or to move into if you are looking for great pay. Chart #16 gives a full breakdown of salary range by region, and Chart #16A shows US and Canada salary in graph format. As you would expect, salaries differ markedly around the world. On average, salaries were highest in the USA and Canada, and lowest in Asia.

**Here are the median salaries by region:**

USA/Canada:	\$90K - \$99.9K
Europe:	\$60K - \$69.9K
Rest of World:	\$50K - \$59.9K
Asia:	\$30K - \$39.9K

In the US and Canada, Agile professionals command a premium salary. With a median salary over \$20K higher than the median salary of BA professionals (as reported in the ASPE-SDLC/Ravenflow BA Salary Survey) and over \$40K higher than the national household median income of \$48,201.00 as reported by the US Census Bureau, it pays to be an Agile professional.



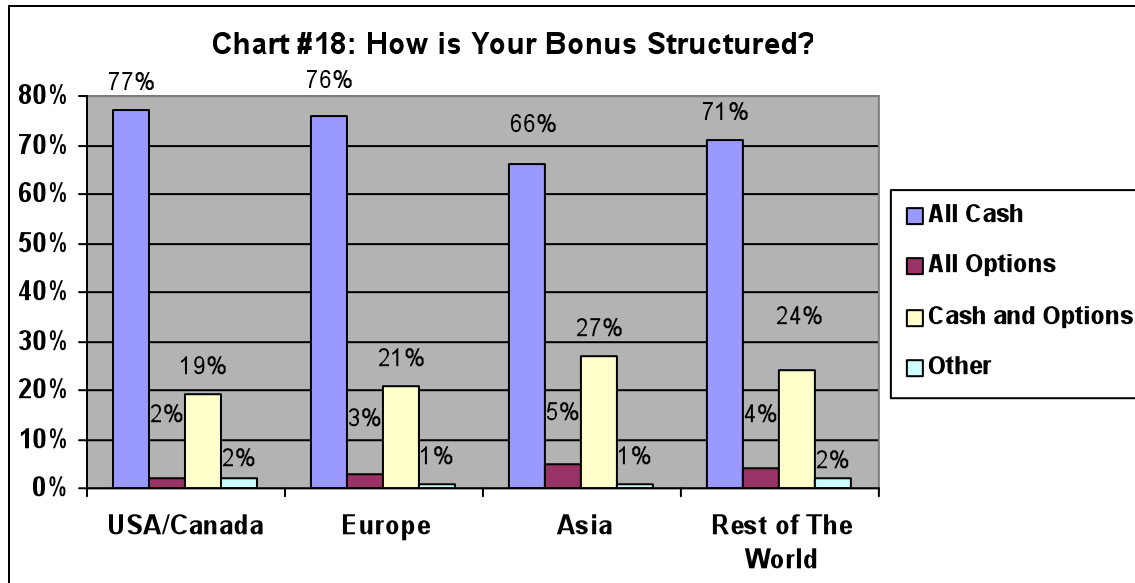


Charts #17 and #18 break down bonus numbers reported by respondents. Chart #17 provides data on whether a respondent receives a bonus. The majority of professionals (58.9%) reported receiving a bonus in the USA and Canada. In all of the other regions, a minority of respondents reported receiving a bonus. Chart #18 provides data on the type of bonus received. With Agile being a relatively new method and with the large number of respondents coming from commercial software firms and business services firms, it was assumed much of the bonus paid out would come in the form of options. The data reported back the exact opposite. In all regions, if a bonus is paid out, in the vast majority of cases (65%+) it is paid out in cash. Asia was the region with the highest amount of option only bonuses with 5.2%, and it was also the region that leads in number of cash and option bonuses at 27.3%.

Surprisingly the USA / Canada region reported the lowest number of all option (2%) or cash and option bonuses (19.2%). This data continues to support the assertion made throughout this white paper that Agile has made significantly deeper strides into enterprise software development shops in the USA / Canada region than in the others. Options are a tool most commercial or start up firms use to pay staff. It is not a tool that is used to pay internal development staff in mid-sized to large enterprise companies.

### Chart #17: Do you get a bonus?

	<i>USA &amp; Canada</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Rest of The World</i>
<b>Yes</b>	58.9%	49.5%	49.1%	38.6%
<b>None</b>	41.1%	50.5%	50.9%	61.4%



The next step in reporting salary is to look at trends and perceptions. The world economy has faced the deepest set backs since the Great Depression. There has continued to be a real sense of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. The data in Charts #19 – #22 look at how the fear and uncertainty of the current economic environment has impacted how respondents perceive their compensation for the future.

**Chart #19: Did You Get A Raise in 2008?**

	<i>USA/Canada</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Rest of The World</i>
<b>Yes</b>	63.8%	60.3%	58.9%	63.5%
<b>No</b>	36.2%	39.7%	41.1%	36.5%

**Chart #21: Do You Expect A Raise in 2009?**

	<i>USA/Canada</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Rest of The World</i>
<b>Yes</b>	51.9%	49.9%	58.7%	65.2%
<b>No</b>	48.1%	50.1%	41.3%	34.8%

Charts #19 and #21 look at data on raises. Chart #19 shows feedback on the question of getting a raise in 2008. A majority of respondents report getting a raise in 2008. The USA / Canada region had the highest positive response at 63.8%. Comparing this data to the expected raise data on Chart #21, you can see the major impact the economic uncertainty has had on perceptions of income for the future. All regions see a drop in expectations, but both the Europe and USA / Canada region have major drop offs. Europe goes from having 60.3% of respondents saying they got a raise in 2008 to 49.9%

saying they think they will get a raise in 2009. The USA / Canada region goes from having 63.8% of respondents saying they got a raise in 2008 to 51.9% saying they think they will get a raise in 2009. As for Asia and the rest of the world the numbers stay relatively the same (shows a small drop off).

The USA / Canada and Europe region have more uncertainty on salary than Asia and the rest of the world. There are two ideas that can be inferred from this data: one is that the economic pain is being felt more strongly in the USA / Canada and Europe regions than the other two, and the other being that Agile professionals in Asia and the rest of the world are in such high demand that the scarcity of the position counteracts any negative impacts a poor economy has on income. Neither inference can be fully proven with data.

Charts #21 and #22 look at data on raise amounts. In other words, if you got a raise or think you are getting a raise how much do you think you are going to get. The majority of raises in 2008 fell in the 2–5% or 5–10% category, but surprisingly in Asia, Europe and the rest of the world there was a high proportion reporting a raise of 20% or more. Again, this could be attributed to the scarcity of resources in those regions. As shown, the USA / Canada region has a deeper section of internal software development professionals who would be compensated based on traditional metrics.

Comparing Chart #20 to Chart #21 (which shows expected raise data by region) the results prove surprising. The data coming from Asia supports the assertion that there is a major scarcity of resource issue in that region. There was little to no change in expecting a raise, but those expecting a raise feel their raise was going to be bigger. 13.8% of respondents reported getting a raise of 20% or more in 2008 and in 2009, while 23.3% of respondents reported they would get a raise of 20% or more. In all the other regions the percentage of respondents expecting a raise of 20% or more fell drastically.

Raise increase data for the USA / Canada and Europe regions show a drop in expectations. Both regions report a lower number of people expecting raises of higher than 5% and an increase in people expecting a raise of 1-5%. In the rest of the world region, their expectations fell off, but not as drastically as in USA / Canada and Europe. Most respondents who received a 20% or higher real raise in 2008 were expecting either a 5-10% or 10-20% raise. Again this data reinforces the assertion that scarcity of practitioners is tempering the fear and uncertainty of the economic environment in both Asia and the rest of the world regions.

**Chart #20: How Much Was Your Raise in 2008?**

	<i>USA/Canada</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Rest of The World</i>
<b>1-2%</b>	10.5%	7.2%	2.3%	3.5%
<b>2-5%</b>	57%	34.6%	25.3%	25.6%
<b>5-10%</b>	23.1%	28.3%	37.9%	31.4%
<b>10-20%</b>	6.5%	17.7%	20.7%	25.6%
<b>20% or more</b>	3%	12.2%	13.8%	14%

**Chart #22: How Much of An Increase in 2009 Do You Expect?**

	<i>USA/Canada</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Rest of The World</i>
<b>1-2%</b>	11.3%	7.4%	3.5%	2.3%
<b>2-5%</b>	61.3%	42%	18.6%	20.7%
<b>5-10%</b>	19.8%	29.8%	24.4%	35.6%
<b>10-20%</b>	6.2%	12.8%	30.2%	32.2%
<b>20% or more</b>	1.4%	8%	23.3%	9.2%

Respondents were asked to pick from a list of possible concerns to look at what is driving their salary concerns. The data showed that in most regions (except Europe), the majority of respondents are expecting a salary increase in 2009. Still there were salary concerns. 70% are concerned that their salary will be affected by a salary freeze, layoffs, or other changes. These concerns are more acute in the USA / Canada region, but do exist in every region. Here is a breakdown of the top salary fears for 2009.

- Salary freeze
- Possible layoff
- Hiring freeze
- Salary decrease

This data exactly mimics the data pulled from the Business Analyst Salary Survey. Both BA and Agile professionals have the same salary fears for 2009 and rate those fears at the roughly the same levels.

### **Salary Analysis**

Since the survey collected a lot of data, we were able to do analysis of salary data against many variables. This analysis enabled us to gather some interesting, intriguing, and in some cases very disappointing outcomes over and above the straightforward numbers already presented. Listed below are the top nine outcomes from the analysis.

- Years in software had a major positive impact on total salary. Every year of software experience adds \$4,700 more in salary. Years of experience had the single most powerful impact on salary as seen in the data.
- Agile experience will pay you more money. Every month of Agile experience increases salary by \$227.
- Using Agile on a day-to-day basis will pay you more money. Those respondents reporting that they use Agile most or all of the time make \$2,511 more than those who use Agile only half of the time.
- As reported from the data, males dominate the Agile profession, with nearly 90% of those responding to the survey being males. This domination also impacted salary. There is a huge gender divide on salary between men and

women in the USA / Canada region. Men in Agile earn 19% more than women in Agile holding everything else equal. This is statically significant. There is no rational explanation for this.

- Working for the same employer over a lengthy period of time hurts your income. For every year of service, a respondent lost \$830 of salary holding everything else equal when they stay with the same company.
- There was no statistically significant data that showed that an industry sector paid better than any other when holding everything else equal. So industry segment had no impact on salary.
- Holding a CSM designation has no statistically significant impact on salary when holding all other variable equal, but holding a PMP designation increases the holders salary by 7% holding everything else equal.
- Working in commercial software development does pay off. In the USA and Canada region only, if you work solely in the commercial software field and you are compared to someone who only works with internal software, holding everything else equally you earn about 10% more.
- The Agile professional is a highly compensated professional compared to other industries and national averages. Also, based on past raise data and future expected raise data, there does look to be a real scarcity of resources in Asia and regions outside the US, Canada, and Europe.

The data presents a simple story: the Agile profession is a hot profession to be in right now. Even in the face of the most difficult economic climate since the Great Depression, individuals are highly compensated, expecting raises, and the amount of raise expected is higher than industry standard metrics. There is reason to believe that there is a scarcity of resources and this scarcity will continue to drive incomes up, especially in Asia and regions outside the US, Canada, and Europe. Income looks to be leveling off in the USA and Canada region as the methods spread across all industry segments. There are certainly some negative results with the biggest being the gender divide. There is no logical or empirical data to support why women make 19% less than men in this profession when everything else is held equal, or why women make up only 10% of the work force. Hopefully over time this trend changes.

## Summary

Contrary to popular opinion, Agile is not just for small companies. Large companies are now looking at Agile especially in the USA / Canada region. The Agile community is a young community of professionals (the majority 39 years old or younger), but it is a very experienced group with the vast majority (70%) having at least 5 years or more of experience. Agile is making inroads into the internal software development shops of companies in the USA and Canada region, but still is dominate in the Software Development and Business Services industries in Europe, Asia, and other regions of the world. Certification is not important in this profession with only 20% of respondents holding a certification, and only about 10% of them holding a CSM. There is a scarcity of resource issues in Asia and other regions outside of the US, Canada, and Europe. Finally and most importantly, an Agile professional is a highly compensated professional. The compensation trend even in the face of our current difficult economic environment looks very positive.

We would like to thank all the individuals who took the time to participate in the survey and we look forward to conducting this survey again next year.

## About the Sponsors of the Survey

ASPE-SDLC is the Software/Systems Development Life Cycle training brand of ASPE Inc. and is focused on providing real-world, hands-on training and coaching for professionals employed by enterprise corporations. ASPE-SDLC is the largest provider of Agile methods training and coaching in North America, and has trained over 10,000 professional on Agile topics since 2006.

VersionOne is the leading project planning and management tool designed specifically for Agile software development. VersionOne enables today's most popular Agile methodologies: Scrum, Extreme Programming, DSDM and Agile UP. VersionOne's flexible methodology templates allow Agile development teams to customize both V1: Agile Enterprise and V1: Agile Teams to match their custom or hybrid methodologies. Helping teams simplify the process of planning, tracking, and scaling Agile development since 2002, VersionOne is relied on by over 10,000 teams around the world and has more than 70,000 users.