# Framework Vs Methodology

## Idea In Short

Most professionals, consultants included, use the terms - framework and methodology - interchangeably. Unfortunately, these two terms are very different. Methodologies are prescriptive and entail defined steps to be taken, why the steps are essential, and how they should accomplish each step. A framework, on the other hand, is not very prescriptive and is intended to be adapted to fit the problem. Methodology refers to solving problems systematically, whereas framework refers to a skeletal structure around which solutions are built.

> It is shocking that intelligent, well educated people don't know the difference between a framework and a methodology. It's also shocking that prominent and respected organizations display this same ignorance. Who cares? Is this a semantic argument? No, this isn't a semantic argument and the difference between the two is an important distinction. It's important because a framework allows you to be loose and flexible; to have 'poetic license'. A methodology is much more prescriptive. Both can be handy at different times. Anthony Draffin, Methodology vs. Framework – why waterfall and agile are not methodologies

Anthony Draffin is not alone in his frustration. Many consultants, including experienced ones, still confuse these terminologies. So, let's clarify the differences between frameworks and Methodologies. Frameworks and Methodologies are among the most commonly used and equally misunderstood consulting terminologies.

## Frameworks

According to Stackexchange:

> A framework is a loose but incomplete structure which leaves room for other

> practices and tools to be included but provides much of the process required...where a methodology is set of principles, tools and practices which can be used to guide processes to achieve a particular goal.

Along the same lines, the Federal Enterprise Architecture Framework defines a framework as:

> A logical structure for classifying and organizing complex information

A framework is a picture or a model that guides you to understand which artifacts you should produce when. It doesn't tell you what to do though. In other words, a framework is a structured problem-solving approach. In many ways, it helps focus your attention on certain aspects of a problem. A framework is a general guideline that an organization can adopt. It could include many components. For example, in Project Management, the PMBOK guide presents processes and knowledge areas and offers guidelines on how to develop a scope statement, communication plan, etc. But, you do not have to do everything mentioned in the PMBOK for each project. A framework is like a guideline for you to select only those parts that you feel will help you to manage your client engagement. Among consultants, frameworks are more popular than methodologies because they allow a far greater deal of leeway how they apply the individual components of a framework. However, this approach come risks and issues. Process defects may occur. Inconsistent outcomes are likely. And, you may find that performance and compliance metrics are difficult to enforce. However, frameworks provide the structure and guidance that consultants need to achieve superior client outcomes.

## Methodologies

Methodologies, on the other hand, are stringent practices for accomplishing an outcome. While frameworks are more fluid, allowing consultants to pick and choose according to their needs, methodologies are rather stringent. The Treasury Enterprise Architecture Framework defines a methodology as:

> A documented approach for performing activities in a coherent, consistent, accountable, and repeatable manner

As the name signifies, a method is more of a particular solution or approach to achieve something. A method is, more or less, systematic. In abstract terms, a methodology is a concept that needs to be defined, systematic, and structured to particular client situations. Put differently, a method is a way of accomplishing something in a structured, systematic way. A methodology strongly links to the desired client outcome. A methodology not only describes the steps that you need to follow to achieve a desired outcome, but also the logic behind those steps. The word methodology comes from modern Latin methodologia or French méthodologie in early 19$^{th}$ century. The definition of methodology in Oxford dictionary is:

> A system of methods used in a particular area of study or activity

According to the Cambridge dictionary, a methodology is:

> a system of ways of doing, teaching, or studying something

In other words, it means that a methodology is a systematic way of doing something. The term, methodology, is made of two parts, namely - Method and ology. Any word ends with ology means a subject of study or; a branch of knowledge. Therefore, by knowing the meaning of method we can easily understand term methodology.

## Methodology Vs Framework

A methodology is a way to systematically solve a problem. It is a combination of two things together – the methods you've chosen to get to a desired outcome and the logic behind those methods. On the other hand, a framework is a structured approach to problem solving. Frameworks provide the structural components you need to implement a model. It is a skeletal structure around which something can be built. A framework is a collection of reusable components that offer a consultant shortcuts to avoid developing a structure from scratch, each time they start an engagement. Some frameworks take a more rigid approach to consulting, while others are more lenient throughout the engagement lifecycle. Such frameworks provide enough room for creativity, allowing consultants to cherry pick components according to their clients' needs or style of work. Methodology, on the other

hand, has its limitations in terms of creativity because it is based on a set of pre-defined rules.

## Summary

In a nutshell, methodology is a way to solve a problem systematically, whereas a framework is a skeletal structure around which something can be built. Methodology is strongly linked to the desired outcome of a field of study, whereas a framework is a structured approach to a problem that is needed to implement a model or at least, part of a model. A framework is a loose but inconsistent structure which provides enough room for other processes and tools to be included, whereas methodology has its limitations when it comes to flexibility.