



# Getting started with Scrum

Mark Thompson

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# The Agile Manifesto – What is it?

Feb 2001 - 17 Software Developers met to discuss light weight development principles. They created the Agile Manifesto.

The Agile Manifesto reads, in its entirety, as follows:

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*We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it.*

*Through this work we have come to value:*

- *Individuals and interactions over processes and tools*
- *Working software over comprehensive documentation*
- *Customer collaboration over contract negotiation*
- *Responding to change over following a plan*

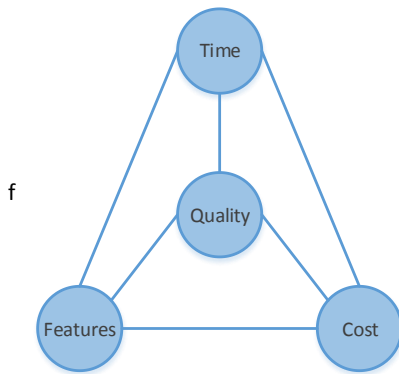
*That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.*

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## How is scrum different?

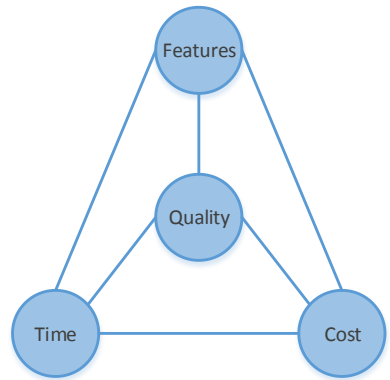
### *Traditional Approach*

FEATURES, QUALITY, COST ARE FIXED,  
ONLY TIME CAN FLEX



### *Scrum Approach*

TIME, QUALITY, COST ARE FIXED, ONLY  
FEATURES CAN FLEX



## Common Myths about Implementing Scrum

- Implementing agile is easy
- Agile is a silver bullet
- Agile means no documentation
- Agile means no planning
- Agile means poor quality

# Scrum Roles

## The Scrum Master

- Removes Noise
- Removes Impediments
- Shields the Team
- Change Agent and Coach
- Servant Leader

“

*Although a Scrum Master may not be able to say, “You’re fired,” a Scrum Master can say, “I’ve decided we’re going to try two-week sprints for the next month.” – Mike Cohen*

”

## Product Owner

- Interested in the what now how
- Maintains the Product Backlog
- Sign off
- Sells the vision to team
- Prioritises the Product Backlog
- Controversially referred to as the “Single Wringable Neck”
- Often filled by the traditional role of Product Development Manager

## The Scrum Team

The people who actually turn product backlog items into potentially shippable products. A scrum team should consist of 7 (+/- 2) people.

# The Product Backlog

A prioritised list of items requiring estimation.

The Product Owner has ultimate control of the Product backlog

It is important it is regularly maintained. Many teams do “Product Backlog Grooming” – A meeting mid sprint to maintain the backlog.

## User Stories

As a <Role>, I require that <Description>, so that <Reasoning>

For example –

“As a Customer, I require a secure login, so that my password is kept secure.”

## Acceptance Criteria

Added to a user story to set the criteria for marking a Product backlog Item done.

## Planning Poker

A Story point is a Unit of work – Relative only to other units of work. It does not translate to days, effort, risk or complexity. It does take into consideration all of these factors.

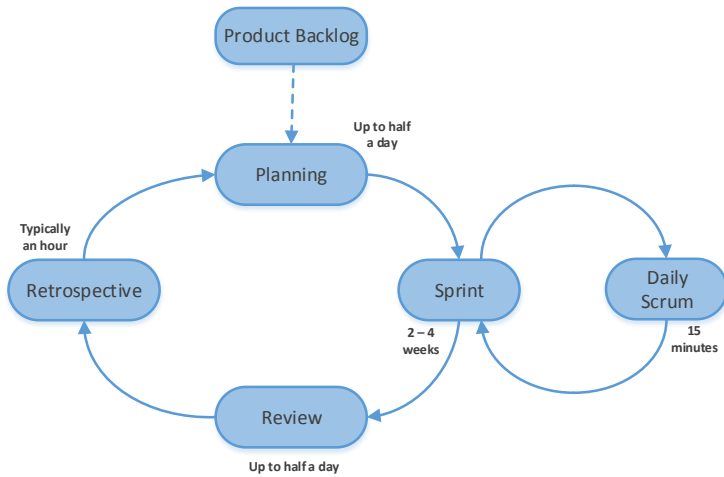


Each player selects the card that represents the closest number to their own estimate of the work. They place it face down not showing it to other members of the team.

Once everyone has selected a card, all cards are shown.

The person who gave the highest and lowest estimate then discuss why they selected their estimate. This is then repeated for a maximum of three turns.

# The Scrum Life Cycle



A sprint lasts for between 2 and 4 weeks.

Planning meetings are no more than half a day (For a 2 week sprint)

Review and Retrospective are no more than half a day (For a 2 week sprint)

Daily Scrum Stand-up lasts no longer than 15 minutes

# Planning

Usually broken into two parts, high level and detailed planning.

## High Level Planning - What work will be done?

Determine which product backlog items the team will look to take into the sprint

Each backlog item estimates using story points

Define a sprint goal (Objective for a sprint that can be met by implementing items on the product backlog).

The development team decides how much work to take in from the prioritised product backlog.

## Detailed Planning – How will we do it?

SCRUM Team only

Team agrees availability

Team breaks down each Product backlog Item (PBI) into tasks

Tasks are estimated in hours for the first time

Team checks that tasks can delivered in the sprint

Combined the planning should take no more than four hours for a two week sprint (eight for a four week sprint).



## Velocity

The number of story points a team typically achieves during a sprint.

This can allow for release planning.

## Release Planning

Long term estimation of future sprint goals based on a team's velocity.

Allows the prediction of when a point in the Product backlog will be reached.

i.e. If there is 100 Story points of work on a product backlog, and the team has a velocity of 10 story points per two week sprint then, it is likely to take them 20 weeks to complete the product backlog.

The estimate is now based on fact and actual performance rather than finger in the air estimates.

## Suggestions for the Scrum Master and Product Owner

- Keep on top of the Product Backlog, it provides your credibility to both the team and senior management.
- If possible publish your product backlog. Allow stakeholders to see and understand the priorities and why their feature is not being worked on now.

## Daily Stand Up / Scrum

Daily health check

Attended by all team members (product owner etc..)

No more than 15 minutes, led by the scrum master

Other Stakeholders may be invited to attend – but purpose is for the scrum team to give progress update.

SCRUM team only – answer three questions

- What did you do yesterday?
- What do you plan to do today?
- Is there anything blocking you making progress?

### Suggestions for Scrum Masters

Keep the meeting to 15 minutes. Discussions relevant to the work will start, the scrum master needs to stop them and either:

- If one or two people – ask them to continue it after the Stand Up.
- If there is a number of people interested then invite anyone interested to stay after the stand up and continue the discussion.

# The Review Meeting

The team reviews their work during the last sprint with stake holders.

- Attended by the SCRUM team and stakeholders
- Demonstrate the deliverables of the current sprint
- Stakeholders give feedback
- Any changes are noted for prioritisation in the next Sprint Planning meeting

## Suggestions for Scrum Masters

- Book a room in advance for next 5 or 6 sprints and send out meeting requests for them all. This helps encourage attendance.
- Invite anyone that might have an opinion or affect the work the team does. Aim high – Invite senior management.
- Let relevant team members present their work and be proud of it. The Scrum master should chair the meeting but should not seek credit for the team's work.
- Chocolate Biscuits can help ease a difficult review meeting.

The review meeting should take no more than two hours for a two week sprint and four for a for hour sprint.

## The Retrospective

- SCRUM team only
- Team reflects on the sprint it's just completed
- Ask questions
  - What went well?
  - What didn't go so well?
- Team choose which items to focus on
- Agree actions for next sprint
- 

### Suggestions for Scrum Masters

- Encourage feedback, positive and constructive.
- Be brave. In my experience the hardest part of being a scrum master is facing criticism from the team. A good scrum master needs to accept this and work with the team to bring about the changes the team need.
- Discourage names in the retrospective as they make it personal rather than for the team. By talking about actions of the team or a role (i..e Scrum Master / Product owner) rather than people it is often easier for team members to accept feedback.
- Resist the request from the business to document the retrospective and give them the Highlights / Lowlights. The retrospective will become false. If the majority of the team wants the actions to be documented then do so. This allows the team to track how things have improved. This should be internal to the team however.

The retrospective should take no more than one and a half hours for a two week sprint (three hours for a four week sprint)

# Common Problems and Suggestions

## Large Teams

### Team Size

In order to turn Product Backlog Items into “Done” product the team needs:

- The right skills, on the team, to complete the work
- A Scrum Master

A common “Definition of Done” becomes important to allow teams to synchronise.

If team A regards done as being available on the Staging Server and team B regards done as being tested problems will arise.

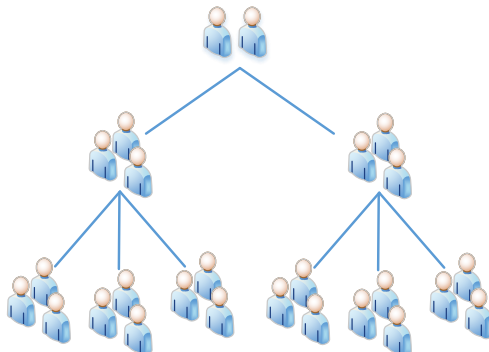
This may be further complicated by teams consuming components made by other teams. For example a platform team which produces common controls to be consumed by application teams.

### The Scrum of Scrums

Each Scrum team has their daily stand up as usual. They then send someone to represent the team to the Scrum of Scrums.

Usually attended by the Scrum Master, however some teams do take turns and send other people.

For really large teams there could be a Scrum of Scrum of Scrums



## Distributed Teams – Teams not in same location

Communication is vital to successful Scrum. Having the whole team in one location cannot be beaten.

However in reality this isn't always possible due to reasons such as:

- Specialist skills in specific locations
- Modern Working Practices such as working from home
- Out Sourcing

### Possible Solutions

- Electronic Task Board (MS Team Foundation Server / Jira)
- Skype / Lync or similar for Video Conferencing
- Skype / Mikogo / Team Viewer for Desktop sharing and code reviews
- May be worth team jumping in a car for Review / Planning sessions

## Distributed Teams - Remote Workers

Morning Stand ups become vital.

People can easily be distracted when using computer conferencing.

Ensure everyone stands up for the stand up, even if wearing headsets at their desks.

### Possible Solutions

**-Encourage social discussions.** Find a good balance between keeping the stand up to the point and allowing people to interact with each other.

I usually allow a minute or so before I start the stand up just for people to have their own personal catch ups to talk about football / weather etc.

If conversations start after the stand up, allow them to continue with an interested person able to drop out.

## The Big Bang Release

Sometimes a Product must release on a given date (Usually annually). A common myth is that Scrum does not work in this scenario.

Reasons for a big bang release may include:

- Compliance
- Financial
- Marketing

**Teams can still use Scrum**, and Scrum can greatly benefit these teams. Once a velocity is determined, much more accurate estimation can be used to ensure the compliance date can be met.

Even a big bang release can have several internal releases through the development to internal stake holders and should be built to releasable quality.

## When Priorities Change

Sprints ideally shouldn't change mid sprint. Changes should be discouraged, however when necessary should be agreed between Scrum Master and Product Owner.

If a sprint becomes meaningless, either because the items being worked on are no longer valid, or a set of items that are critical to the business are required then the sprint should be cancelled and a new sprint planned and begun with the remainder of the time. This rarely happens and should be avoided.

## If Scrum “just doesn’t work”

Scrum really does work for most teams in and outside the software industry.

I’d advise teams to carefully look at why Scrum doesn’t work for them. More often than not Scrum has highlighted existing problems rather than created them.

Sometimes scrum just doesn’t work for a team because they cannot plan two weeks of work, for example a support team that responds to whatever calls they receive by priority.

In this instance try Scrum Ban – A cross between scrum and Kanban.

### Scrum ban

Scrum ban has all of the roles and ceremonies of Scrum but no planning meeting.

The Product Backlog is the prioritised list of support calls the team must respond to. The team still has reviews and retrospectives to feed back to the business and improve themselves.



## Getting Help

Mark Thompson

Twitter: @mthompson

Email: [scrum@markthompson.me.uk](mailto:scrum@markthompson.me.uk)

Blog: [www.markthompson.me.uk](http://www.markthompson.me.uk)

Give me a shout – I'm busy, but if I can, I'll help

The Definitive Guide to Scrum, by the "Inventors" of Scrum

<http://www.scrumguides.org/docs/scrumguide/v1/scrum-guide-us.pdf>

Agile North East User Group

A get together of people implementing Agile in the North East

(Search for them on Google)

Scrum Alliance

[www.scrumalliance.org](http://www.scrumalliance.org)

The Certification Body for Scrum.

## Thanks

And thanks to Sunderland Software City and Biostore Limited for arranging and facilitating this workshop.

