

Whitepaper

Get started with SCRUM

Common Sense in Action (ref. Ken
Schwaber)

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The Philosophy of Scrum

The core of the Scrum approach is the belief that most systems development has the wrong philosophical basis. The stated, accepted philosophy is that systems development process is a well understood approach that can be planned, estimated, and successfully completed.

The failed projects, inappropriate systems, and ineffective productivity tools are seen as proof that the development process needs more rigor, that if we can get those unruly developers to actually follow it, these maladies will go away.

Scrum states that the systems development process is an unpredictable, complicated process that can only be roughly described as an overall progression. Cookbook, step-by-step approaches do not work because they aren't adequately defined and don't cope with the unpredictability of systems development.

Scrum defines the systems development process as a loose set of activities that combines known, workable tools and techniques with the best that a development team can devise to build systems. Since these activities are loose, controls to manage the process and inherent risk are used.

The following maladies occur as a result applying the wrong philosophy and techniques to systems development:

- By the time the system is delivered, it is often irrelevant or requires significant change. This occurs because environmental inputs are used only during planning.
- Management actually believes that it can predict the cost, delivery schedule, and functionality that will be delivered.
- Developers and project managers are forced to live a lie...they have to pretend that they can plan, predict and deliver, and then work the best way that they know how to deliver a system. They build one way, pretend that they build another way, and are without controls.

The approach is called Scrum.

It starts with the acceptance that this is a complicated, unpredictable world and development environment.

It also starts with the premise that you can't predict or definitively plan what you will deliver, when you will deliver it, and what the quality and cost will be.

It starts with the assumption that you can estimate these, and then negotiate them according to various risks as you proceed.

It is understood at the start that you will deliver the best possible software given the circumstances, and that following any cookbook approach won't improve the definition of "best", and will only hinder appropriate responsiveness to the complexity and unpredictability.

Scrum breaks a project into manageable 30 days sprints of work, where the most important things are dealt with first..

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Begin Using Scrum

Scrum is application of common-sense to work that uses productivity producing techniques applied to software engineering. Scrum places highest priority on doing work and producing releases.

To implement the Scrum process for a specific area of work:

- Start the Scrum Process
- Appoint a Scrum Master
- Identify Backlog
- Establish and Conduct Daily Scrum Meeting

Start the Scrum Process

Define the team consisting of pigs (people who are assigned work) and chickens (people who are interested, but are not working). Identify pigs that will compose the Scrum team:

- No more than 6-9 members per team
- If more members than manageable, break into multiple Scrums
- Each Scrum focuses on one, self-contained area of work
- All staff performing work in this area

Appoint a Scrum Master

The Scrum Master is the person who conducts the Scrum meetings, empirically measures progress, makes decisions, and gets impediments out of the way of slowing or stopping work. This is often the engineering or marketing manager for this product or system area.

- Person who asks all pigs three questions (should also be a pig)
 - What did you do since last Scrum
 - What got in your way of doing work
 - What will you do before the next Scrum
- Must be able to make immediate decisions
- Better to ask forgiveness than ask permission
- Must resolve work impediments ASAP
- Identifies initial backlog

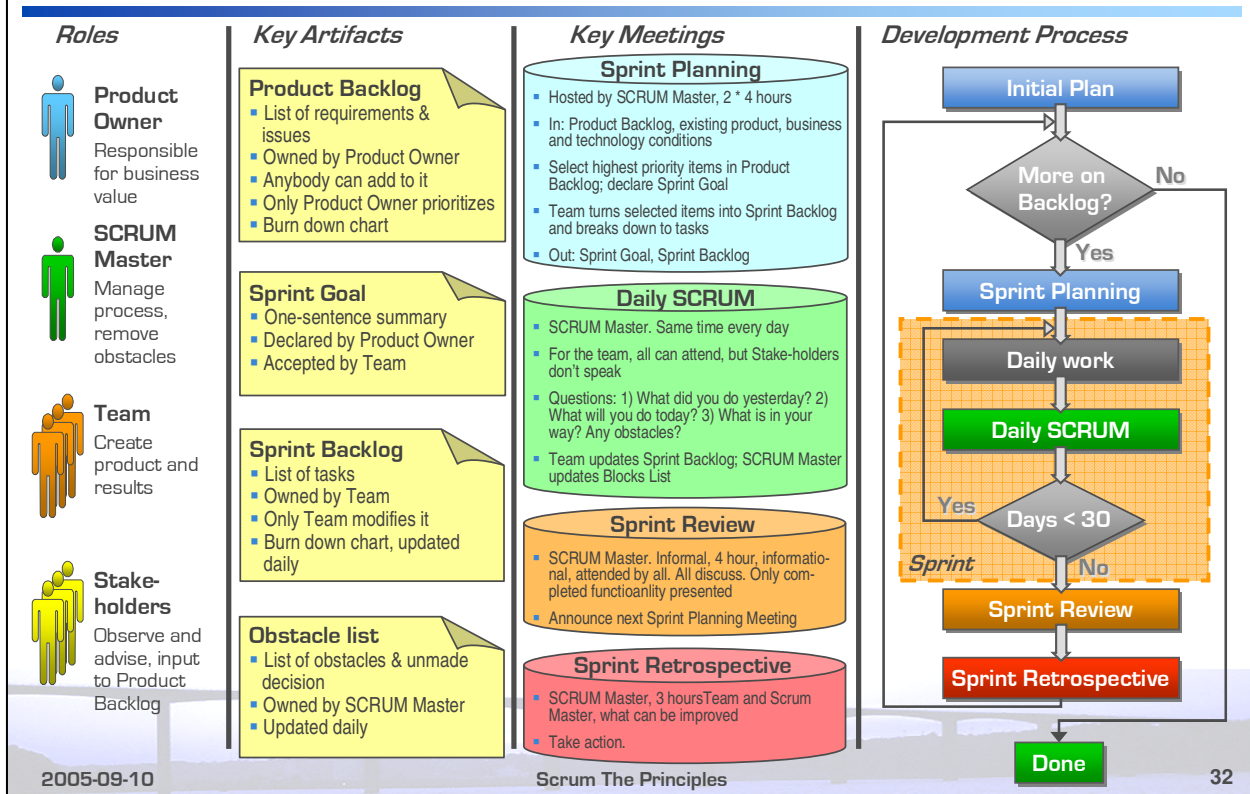
Identify Backlog

Backlog is all of the work that is outstanding for a product area, both immediate and well-defined, and long terms and visionary.

- List the known work to be done
- Group it into increments that should take no more than 30 days

- In areas where work is volatile or cannot be fully defined for up to 30 days, establish an increment for known horizon
- Lists all outstanding work to be done
- Only one person in charge of backlog prioritization
- Team chooses backlog for Sprint
 - Sprint is an increment of work that can be completed in less than 30 days and is well enough defined that it can be accurately estimated
 - Can be completed in less than 30 days
 - Can be reasonable estimated by backlog item
- Backlog is signed up for by team members
- Only this backlog is worked on during this Sprint for this area

SCRUM Development Process



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Establish and Conduct Daily Scrum Meeting

The daily Scrum meeting is a status check where the team meets and updates each other about what's going on. It provides a daily focus on the work being done:

- Same time and place
 - Avoids overhead of finding a place daily
 - Avoids overhead of team trying to figure out where and when is today's meeting
- Let's chicken's know where and when
- No more than 15 minutes
- Daily Scrum Meeting agenda: Scrum master asks pigs the 3 questions:
- Scrum master is responsible for making decisions
- Scrum master is responsible for noting and resolving work impediments
- All discussion other than replies to 3 questions deferred to later meetings

Why Scrum Is Powerful

- Focus is on team's work, and team's work only
- Daily communication of status occurs
- Enables low-overhead empirical management
- Makes roadblocks, obstacles and impediments visible
- Someone is willing to make decisions and remove impediments in real-time