SCRUM Reading Summary

Scrum is a framework for developing and sustaining complex products developed by Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland. The process framework is lightweight and simple to understand, but difficult to master. Also, the framework consists of Scrum Teams with their respective roles, events, artifacts, and rules.

To start, there are three recognized roles in the Scrum framework. First, the Product Owner is responsible for maximizing the value of the product and the work of the Development Team. He or she clearly expresses Product Backlog items, orders the items as necessary, and ensures the Product Backlog is visible, transparent, and clear to all. The Product Owner is only one person and the entire organization must respect his or her decisions. Second, the Development Team is a group of professionals who do the work of delivering a potentially releasable Increment at the end of each Sprint. The Team is self-organized and cross-functional, which means no one tells them how to operate and they possess the necessary skills to do the work. Additionally, Scrum recognizes no titles nor sub-teams in the Development Team and the entire group is accountable for all work need to be accomplished. For optimal teamwork, group sizes of three to nine members are necessary to avoid small productivity gains and increased risk. Third, the Scrum Master is responsible for ensuring Scrum is understood and performed appropriately by the Product Owner, the Development Team, and the Organization. The Scrum Master serves the Product Owner by finding techniques for effective Product Backlog management, facilitating Scrum events as requested or needed, and ensuring the Product Owner knows how to arrange the Product Backlog to maximize value. Next, the Scrum Master serves the Development Team by coaching in self-organization and cross-functionality, helping create high-value products, and removing impediments to the Team’s progress. Last, the Scrum Master serves the Organization by leading and coaching the organization in its Scrum adoption, planning Scrum implementations within the organization, and helping employees as well as stakeholder understand and utilize Scrum.

Next, the Scrum framework provides Scrum events to allow the Scrum roles organize their work. First, the Sprint is a time-box of one month or less in which a “Done” and potentially releasable product Increment is created. At the end of a Sprint a new Sprint is immediately started. A Sprint consists of Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, the development work, the Sprint Review, and the Sprint Retrospective. The Sprint planning is time-boxed meeting for a one-month Sprint and answers what can be delivered in the Increment resulting from the upcoming Sprint and how will the needed work be achieve. The Daily Scrum is a 15-minute time-boxed event for the Development Team to synchronize activities and create a plan for the next 24 hours. Team members will discuss what was accomplished yesterday, what will be done today, and any impediments that prevent him or her or the Team from finishing the Sprint Goal. The Sprint Review is an event held at the end of a Sprint to inspect the Increment and adapt the Product Backlog if needed. This event is intended to gain feedback and foster collaboration between the Scrum Team and stakeholders. The Sprint Retrospective is an opportunity for the Scrum Team to assess how the last Sprint went, identify and order the major items that went well and potential improvements, and create a plan for implementing those improvements. This three-hour time-boxed meeting occurs after the Sprint Review and prior to the next Sprint Planning.

Last, the Scrum framework provides Scrum artifacts to aid in accomplishing a project. First, the Product Backlog is an ordered list of everything that might be needed in the product and is the single source of requirements for any changes to be made to the product. Only the Product Owner is responsible for maintaining this list and the Development team is responsible for using this list to achieve the Sprint Goal. The Sprint Backlog is the set of Product Backlog items selected for the Sprint along with a plan for delivering the product Increment and realizing the Sprint Goal. The Development Team is solely responsible for maintaining this list through the duration of the Sprint and must remain transparent for the whole group. Using these artifacts, everyone must be able to define the definition of “Done”. If a definition is determined, all Scrum Teams must follow it as a minimum, if not, the Team must define an appropriate one before the termination of the Sprint.