

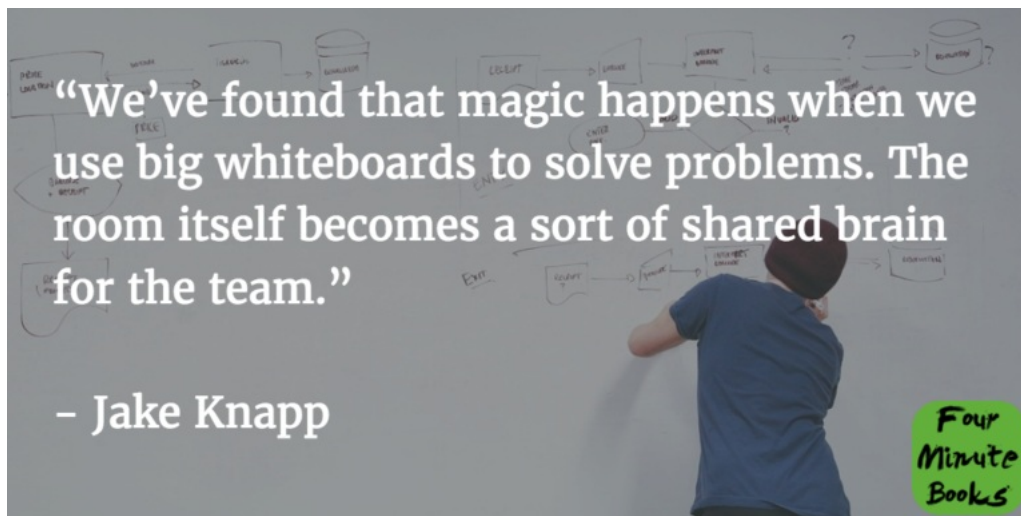
Sprint Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/sprint-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Sprint completely overhauls your project management process so it allows you to go from zero to prototype in just five days and figure out if your idea is worth creating faster than ever.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Last week, I came across a post by Jake Knapp, announcing that after ten years with Google and Google Ventures, he'd focus on writing full-time. I learned that he's already published a book called *Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days*, so when I found it on Blinkist, I dug in.

As the title suggests, a sprint is a five day process, after which you'll have critical feedback about whether your ideas for marketing, customer experience or product design will work. Jake designed this process while working on projects like Gmail or Google X, and has since run sprints with over 150 companies, ranging from Slack to Mozilla to KLM Airlines.

I can't share the whole process in detail, but here's an overview with some crucial takeaways:

1. Sprints consist of a deadline, a team in one room and a prototype.
2. Focus on the defining moment in the customer journey and work backwards.
3. Sketch out existing solutions and see how you can combine them.

I hope you know where your running shoes are, because we're about to dash off the line!

Lesson 1: The three elements of a sprint are a tight deadline, a team in one room and a good-enough prototype.

Most good things are born out of necessity. Sprints are no different. The idea came to Jake when he had to come up with an important feature for Gmail, which would automatically sort messages. With just one month left on the clock, he had to innovate. Fast.

To successfully pull it off, he designed a new process to manage the project – and it worked. He has since perfected the structure and today, it is marked by three key aspects:

1. **Have a very tight deadline.** This eliminates procrastination. Work always fills the time allotted to it per Parkinson's Law, so the shorter, the better. A sprint usually lasts for five days, from Monday to Friday.
2. **Get people with different skill sets into one room.** Engineers, marketers, designers, accountants, operators, managers, the more diverse your team's perspectives, the better. Sprints teams usually consist of seven people with different backgrounds. All hierarchy levels welcome.
3. **The result must be a concrete prototype.** Brainstorming vague ideas is easy. Having something functional you can present is hard, but it's what gets real user feedback.

These three simple rules make sure that for each sprint, people get together, see eye to eye, work and produce something of actual value. That's what makes this process perfect for startups, which have very limited resources.

Lesson 2: Reverse engineer your roadmap by focusing on the moment the user meets the product.

One of the first steps in your sprint is defining the challenge, a task whose success hinges on your ability to reverse engineer the end result. Savioke, a company who builds service robots, wanted to design a delivery robot for hotels, which could bring certain items to guests' rooms and save the staff lots of time.

Jake helped them first determine who they wanted to impact with this, by asking how and when the product would be used. After all, **the defining moment is when your (potential) customer and product first meet.** For Savioke, that target turned out to be the moment a hotel guest opens the door and is presented with a brand new item, like a toothbrush, by the robot.

Every step from then on out was in service of that moment. For example, this instantly raised concerns that some people might be scared by the robot, so it would have to look non-threatening.

I love this approach and it's already got my gears spinning about how I can improve the embedding of products like The 4 Minute Folio into your experience here on Four Minute Books.

Lesson 3: Combine sketches of existing solutions to come up with something original and break down your project.

Brainstorming alone might not be enough to succeed in a sprint, but it's definitely a crucial part of the process. To make it easy, Jake suggests so-called *lightning demos*, in which each team member gets three minutes to present existing solutions to various parts of the problem you're trying to solve.

Once all presentations are up, Jake recommends a great way of leveling the playing field: **everyone has to sketch simple visualizations of the solutions they presented**. Sure, not everyone can draw equally well, but even an absolute drawing dork like me can sketch a simple web page or app screen design.

Sketching comes with two big advantages:

1. You'll see how and if individual solutions can somehow be merged together to create what you need.
2. It breaks down your project into several, distinct stages, which you can tackle separately.

After this exercise, you'll already have a much better idea of what your solution might look like and how you can implement it. Now all you have to do is get to the finish line.

Sprint Review

Jake seems like a very good guy, and what an awesome concept he presents in *Sprint*. A month goes by really fast, but for startups and young businesses, 1/12th of a year is enough to drive the whole thing into a ditch. Imagine you did four sprints in one month instead. With feedback to four solid prototypes, you're almost bound to find something you can expand on.

It's a long shot, but I'm excited about giving this approach a spin some day. Maybe I can even be part of a sprint Jake runs. But first, like him, I have to find my way to writing full-time.

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Which common entrepreneurship pitfall sprints help prevent
- The two critical roles in your sprint team
- What the exact timeline of your sprint should be
- How a sprint group makes efficient decisions to move on quickly
- The trick to develop your prototype in a single day
- How many people you should get feedback from and in what format

Who would I recommend the Sprint summary to?

The 24 year-old coffee startup founder, who just secured the first round of funding, the 47 year old VP of product development, who needs to keep releasing features quickly, and anyone who ever wasted a month toiling away at something that didn't end up working in the real world.