Purpose and Agenda

Purpose

The purpose of the iteration review is to review the outcome of the closing iteration by showing working stories to the product owner (PO) and other stakeholders to get their feedback on progress toward the product goal.

The iteration review is typically facilitated by the scrum master or team coach, with team members presenting their own work in the demo. The iteration review serves four important functions:

1) It closes the iteration timebox

2) It gives team members the chance to demonstrate the contributions they made and to take some satisfaction and pride in their work

3) It provides an opportunity for the team to receive feedback to improve the solution under development

4) It shows the results of the latest system increment to help determine future work

Agenda

The iteration review follows a clear process and routine. This event is cadence-based and should happen at the end of each iteration.

Review team goals
Discuss the status of each iteration goal. Teams may also review PI objectives for a larger context.

Demo completed stories
The review proceeds with a walkthrough and demonstration of each completed story (spikes, NFRs, and any other work completed by the team). Demos should share progress towards iteration goals, product changes, test scenarios, or a prototype that represents the user's environment. Spikes can be demoed as a presentation of finding or learning. The team and stakeholders present should ask questions and provide feedback.

Reflect on any uncompleted stories
Next, the team should reflect on missed iteration goals and stories that were not completed to identify opportunities for future improvement. This discussion usually results in the discovery of impediments or risks, false assumptions, changing priorities, estimating inaccuracies, or over-commitment.

Refine the team backlog if needed
Using feedback, the team can refine their backlog to reflect any adjustments so that the backlog is up-to-date before the next iteration planning event.

→ **Learn more: https://www.scaledagileframework.com/iteration-review/**

Preparation Checklist

Pre-planning

- [ ] **If you are planning a specific theme or goal,** be sure to gather your images, set up your tools, and prepare any other props to support this early

- [ ] **Share updates to iteration goals**

- [ ] **Work with your team to build a plan** for demoing work from the iteration

- [ ] **Determine the order of demos for the team**

- [ ] **Invite any stakeholders** the team has been working with to the demo in the iteration review

- [ ] **If the team collaborated with others on this work,** agree ahead of time who will demo and how the demo will be shared

Post-event actions

- [ ] **Update the team backlog** based on feedback from the demo.

- [ ] **Reflect on the unfinished stories and record what happened.** Considering unfinished work often reveals impediments or risks, false assumptions, changing priorities, estimating inaccuracies, or over-commitment.

- [ ] **Move these findings into the iteration retrospective** and consider how future iterations can be better planned and executed.

- [ ] **Identify opportunities to show integrated work** at the system demo.

- [ ] **Move the work not completed to the team backlog** for consideration in future iterations.

Tips and Tricks

Facilitating remotely

Share what tool will be used ahead of time so everyone can download or update their tool.

Teams may benefit from receiving pre-work so they can focus on sharing via the tool and remote meeting. Consider asking them to think about or write down the answers to questions ahead of time.

Update the progress of iteration goals both on a presented screen and out loud so that the remote team can visualize the goals and participate in discussion of their status.

Agree on who is presenting, and in what order, ahead of time. You may share this in a team communication and/or at the top of the meeting.

Make sure someone is collecting the questions and feedback on each demo so that the team backlog can be updated as needed. A tool for distributed team communication may help.

Ask everyone to turn their video on so that discussions about goals or feedback on demos offer some personal connection as well.

Create a remote demo prep zone, with the recommendation to limit demo preparation to one to two hours. Invite everyone to the video meeting, display a timer, and turn on some music. Everyone can join by video but be "focusing together" on preparation.

Iteration review and demo is a time to give and accept compliments and celebrate accomplishments. Your team may choose some video-friendly sounds, big visual clapping, or other ways to notice and appreciate great work.

Using this meeting creatively

Timebox each demo and set a timer. You can do fun or silly introductions of people and their demos or add a fun song to signal the end of time.

Support one another to demo working products rather than pretty slides by declaring one demo a "slide-free zone."

Create a culture of celebrating team accomplishments and quality work. Give and receive compliments, plan other small and fun ways for the team to celebrate, or to give virtual (or actual) high fives.

Overcoming Challenges

Let's face it; not everything goes perfectly all the time. In a fast-paced business environment, change is the only constant. It can be difficult to move your team forward when disagreements or conflicts occur. Below are some common areas where scrum masters or team coaches can succeed in the face of adversity.

POTENTIAL ISSUES

The team says they have nothing to share at demo

Ways to overcome:

Encourage the team to demo work in progress and remind them that demos are about sharing work to get feedback, not about perfect slides or polished products. You might also work with individual team members to prepare and practice demos so they feel comfortable to share their work.

One other suggestion is to ask the team to designate what they might demo at the start of the iteration in the iteration planning meeting; this way, asking them to demo that work at the end of the iteration is not a surprise.

The team is routinely not meeting iteration goals

Ways to overcome:

This doesn't necessarily mean the team isn't productive or delivering value. Instead, it may mean that the team isn't writing iteration goals that capture the work they are doing and the value they are delivering.

Make a list of the value delivered. If it isn't captured in the iteration goals, coach the team in their next iteration planning to write their iteration goals in a way that speaks to the value they plan to deliver and release.