CARD
SCRUM
GAME

SCRUM CARD GAME

The Manual

(c) Timofey (Tim) Yevgrashyn, 2010
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See http://scrumcardgame.com for updates and additional materials.

(c) review / correction / completion, Oliver Merkel, November 2016

What is SCRUM CARD GAME?

SCRUM CARD GAME is a simple game, which lets players experience work in Scrum sprints and brings to discussion many questions and topics that happen in real life while working in a Scrum team. Even the discussion on the table will be very close to the real-life experience of the work in a scrum team. This game is usually played during a training or workshop. Participants must already have an understanding of the Scrum framework. Or you should introduce them to the framework right before the game. They can learn more while playing this game. It might also be a useful method to make an experienced team reflect on their established scrum rituals and rules.

Split the audience into teams of 4-5-6 people, equally if possible. No more than six players per team.

Set the Goal: You are competitive development centers aimed to deliver a new application to the market. The most productive team wins :-)

Game Set

- Set of cards: Stories, Events, Problems, and Solutions (see printable version below)
- Two six-sided dice (per each team)
- Flip chart
- Markers or post-its

Preparation

- Provide each team with a set of **Story** cards
  - Cards with stories forming the "Backlog" deck
  - Backlog is prioritized (sequence number in top corner) and estimated (hours in bottom corner)
  - **3** days per iteration (there will be maximum **3** iterations)
  - Every iteration consists of:
    - Planning and commitment
    - Work within iteration
    - Sprint Review + Retrospective
- Make the group arrange a simple Task Board by marking TODO, IN PROGRESS, DONE columns with simple sticky notes to visualize their state.
- Prepare a flip chart list with visualization of PLAN and ACTUAL columns for each team in play.

Planning

- Ask teams "how many features do you believe you can deliver in the next iteration?"
    - In the first round let every team calculate their number of man-hours per iteration as they would like to do. Allow them to make even optimistic commitment :)
    - To perform 2nd and 3rd planning you ask teams to use historical data.
- Put selected cards from "Backlog" into TODO column.
- Write down commitment as the total number of estimates and numbers of Stories of every team on a fip chart into *"Plan"* column.

Work each Day within iteration

Each iteration consists of three days. Each day consists of every team-member working on the sprint.
It starts with player 1 "working" on the sprint. If the last member of the team "worked" the first day has ended. Now the same for day two and three starts. "Working" in the sprint is described below. Every team member in their turn should:

- Select a Story to work on (it should appear in "IN PROGRESS") and make this choice visible by pointing on the card with the finger.
- Roll two **dice** to determine the number of productive hours of this team-member on this day
    - *Hand over two dices on the first round right after explaining this step*
- *Deduct number on the dice* from remaining hours on the card (s)he "works on"
    - *Advise players to calculate remaining as it helps to avoid mistakes*
    - *To simplify tracking participants can stick a post-it on a card and write remaining time there*
- Pull the card from the "Chance" deck
    - *Hand over the "Chance" deck on the first round right after explaining this step*
- Do whatever the card says. There are three possible types of cards:
    - **Event** - a one-time action, that affects immediately and discarded after the play
    - **Problem** - these sticky issues are blocking the Story that the player was "working on". Each problem is a case taken from the real life, a team could bring examples or details into each Problem from their experience.
        - *Blocking means the team can't move the story into DONE state, they have to find a Solution for the kind of problems stated on a card.*
        - *Blocking doesn't prevent from continue work on a Story (deducting hours until zero).*

- - *Sometimes, positive Events could also help with Problems :-)*
  - ○ **Solutions** - A solution is a team's asset or action which can be applied at any time to solve a problem and unblock a Story. Once Solution applied the Problem and Solution cards are discarded.
    - *Solutions could be collected by the team if there are no appropriate Problems - they are collected from iteration to iteration and belong to the whole team.*
- If User Story is done (0 hours remaining and noblockers) - move it to DONE column.
- DONE criteria for a Story:
  - ○ Team members delivered the number of hours equal or greater than estimate for a Story
  - ○ A Story is not blocked with a Problem.

Once again, at every "day" each player does follow:
- Choose a card to "work on"
- Throw two dices
- Pick a Chance card

Sprint Review + Retrospective
- After each player has passed 3 turns - the Sprint is over.
- Each team should present Stories accomplished (i.e. only stories in DONE column) and calculate the actual result as the total of DONE Stories.
- Compare Actual result with initial Plan.
- Review undone work and discuss the reason, also discuss how to account these undone Stories in next Sprint to make sure we maintain the total number from the original estimations.
- Retrospect on how to perform in next Sprint to achieve more.

Debriefing
To start debriefing you should bring in front of the audience the flip chart(s) with visualizing all Planned and Actual data for each of three sprints.

Here are some topics to
- Planned vs Actual
- Velocity variations
- Hours Estimate vs Size (Original Estimate)
- Major risks happened (Technical, People, Unplanned Events)
- What are the hardest types of risks to take?
- Could we forecast bad events?
- and etc...

About Timofey Yevgrashyn

I'm an experienced Agile Manager with consulting, coaching and training expertise. My personal experience in IT industry starts back at 1998, from which more than 12 years I had been managing effective software teams and most of the time with Agile methods. Over last eight years, I am sharing the knowledge and experience as a Trainer, Agile Coach, and Consultant.

I have proven track record of launching and leading Agile/Lean transformations that lead to aligning delivery with business goals. By 2016 I have helped to more than 50 teams from over 10 countries, done about 3000 hours of Agile training for over 4000 people.

My specialties: Agile and Lean based processes, Agile Product Management, Organizational Culture transformation, Leadership Coaching.

My work is always pragmatic and practical and training is more an interactive workshop than just a theory. I'm a big fan of education with games and is the author of several Agile games.

Since 2009, I write for my Russian-speaking blog "The Improved Methods" (http://tim.com.ua) to popularize Agile/Lean mindset and methods on Eastern Europe. Also, I'm an experienced public speaker participated in international and local conferences. You can find the archive of slides on my site. Or simply invite me to your conference for the talk or a workshop :-)

About Oliver Merkel

I am an Electrical Engineer and Computer Science guy. Currently not really in need for any more sophisticated advertising. Still if you appreciate my work then tell me or better tell others about it. All hands person. Actively developing in embedded systems writing boot scripts, boot loaders, hardware abstraction, driver development, up to application development and architectural stuff in various team sizes and set ups. Doing stuff professionally like holding training sessions, consulting, live agile methods, doing management, project and team leads, and developing long enough so to know what I am doing. There might be ways to bribe me.
Be creative... :-)

#1 STORY

Users can exchange emails securely with predefined recipients.

24

#2 STORY

Users can send large files securely.

21

#3 STORY

Users can set time limits on emails for reading.

27

#4 STORY

Users can send emails securely to unspecified recipients.

30

#5 STORY

Administrators of organizations can monitor emails.

16

#6 STORY

Each organization can set security policy and define recipients groups.

24

#7 STORY

Users can manage their emails effectively.

43

#8 STORY

Users and administrators can backup emails securely.

23

#9 STORY

Users and administrators can delete emails completely.

36

#10 STORY

Users can access emails from mobile.

68

#11 STORY

Users can send short messages securely to each other.

28

EVENT
HEALTH PROBLEM

Health problem.
Skip your next turn.

EVENT
GURU

A guru visited your office. You may immediately remove one problem card from the current story.

EVENT
EMERGENCY CALL

An emergency call.
Everyone skips next turn.

EVENT
FAIRY

A fairy helped you.
A card in progress is instantly finished.

#12 STORY

Users don't want to receive spam-letters.

24

EVENT
GOOD RECRUIT

New recruit is good.
You may roll 2 dice now and add these to the last roll.

EVENT
VISIBLE EFFORT

The boss acknowledges your effort. You may add 3 points to the previous result.

EVENT
HOME OFFICE

You worked well at home. Add 2 points to the last roll.

EVENT
DOING WELL

Things are going incredibly well.
Add 4 to the last roll.

EVENT
REQUIREMENTS CHANGE
PO decided to make changes to the project. So this story will take 4 hours more.

EVENT
OVERTIME
You worked overtime. Draw another card and follow its instruction.

EVENT
BIRTHDAY
It's your birthday today. Subtract 1 point from everybody's next result.

EVENT
HARD DRIVE CRASHED
Hard drive crashed. Remove all progress from a card in progress.

EVENT
BUSINESS TRIP
You are sent on a business trip. Skip next turn.

EVENT
EXTRA COST
Your work costs more than planned. Add 6 hours to the story estimation.

PROBLEM
TECHNICAL OBSTACLE
Your work is blocked by a technical obstacle.

PROBLEM
UNCLEAR SPEC
The specification is not clear enough for you.

PROBLEM
BAD QUALITY
You cannot finish the story because the quality is inadequate.

PROBLEM
UNSATISFIED USERS
You feel that users are not satisfied.

⚠ PROBLEM
BAD MOOD
Today you are upset. So you are too lazy to work.

⚠ PROBLEM
DATA IS MISSING
You can't work with the story, as you don't have important data from PO.

⚠ PROBLEM
BAD COMMUNICATION
You cannot communicate well with other team members. They just don't get you.

⚠ PROBLEM
POOR SKILLS
You are not skilled enough to finish the work.

⚠ PROBLEM
UNSTABLE SYSTEM
System is very unstable. You test with major difficulties.

⚠ PROBLEM
INTEGRATION ISSUES
Your colleague provided you with the component, which is different from what you expected. You can't proceed.

💡 SOLUTION
GET SOME REST
Get some rest to refresh your mind.

💡 SOLUTION
EXTRA MEMBER
Add another member to the team. Throw dice at any moment you want.

💡 SOLUTION
SPECIALIST
Engage a specialist.

💡 SOLUTION
INSIGHT
Apply your insight.

SOLUTION
AUTOMATED TESTING

Introduce automated testing.

SOLUTION
SKILLED MEMBER

Involve skilled team member from other team.

SOLUTION
COMMUNICATION

Enhance communication.

SOLUTION
COLLABORATION

Get the team together with PO and exchange important information.

SOLUTION
SHARE GOALS

Get the team together and share the key project goals.

SOLUTION
INVOLVE BOSS

Your boss is ready to take a part of the work.

SOLUTION
ENHANCE SKILLS

Training for raising the level of your skill.

SOLUTION
PAIR PROGRAMMING

Apply pair programming.

EVENT
BROWN BAG MEETING

Discussion during lunch time led to a splendid idea. Work on the current card is instantly resolved.

add-on