

# **SCRUM CARD GAME**

## **The Manual**

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# SCRUM CARD GAME: The Manual

by Timofey (Tim) Yevgrashyn and Oliver Merkel

Version 3.1, July 2016, see <http://scrumcardgame.com> for updates and additional materials.

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# Chapter 1. SCRUM CARD GAME rules

## 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.

## Objective

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

## Game Material



The main Scrum Card Game components.

The game set consists of

- Set of cards: Stories, Events, Problems, and Solutions (see printable version below)
- Two six-sided dice (per each team)
- Flipchart
- 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:
    - a. Planning and commitment
    - b. Work within iteration
    - c. 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 flipchart 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 flip chart into “Plan” column.

## Daily Work within an 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 dice 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 is discarded after being played.
- **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 :-)
- **Solution** - 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 a Solution is applied the Problem and Solution card are both 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 no blockers) - move it to DONE column.
- DONE criteria for a Story:
  - Team members delivered the number of hours equal or greater than the estimate of the Story.
  - A Story must not be blocked by a Problem.

Once again, at every “day” each player does follow:

- Choose a card to “work on”
- Throw two dice
- Pick a Chance card

## Sprint Review + Retrospective

- After each player's 3rd turn 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 remaining work and discuss the reason, also discuss how to account these remaining 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 the flipchart(s) in front of the audience to visualize all Planned and Actual data for each of the three sprints. Here are some topics to adress

- 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?
- etc...

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# Chapter 2. Get the Game Materials

## Order Printed Set

At time of writing you can order the already printed game cards and other related material by visiting and shopping on <http://scrumcardgame.com>.

## Print and Play

This definitively is the more creative approach to get the game material. The card designs of the Scrum Card Game are available in PDF or even the source format to generate the PDF files on your own. If you can get blank business cards available as office supplies then you can print the PDF onto the blank cards. Another option is to print the cards on normal paper and then cut the cards manually. Heavy weight paper shall be used for enhanced durability. For better protection the cards could be laminated. The lamination foil should be non glare if possible and available. In case you plan to create own card texts or modify the existing ones you should go for an alternative approach like putting the cards into business card pouches for single cards. The cards are kept in the protecting pouches while playing and the cards can be easily removed from the pouch as intended, be modified and placed back.



Using card size of standard business cards (85mm x 54mm) will allow to use business card pouches for card protection.

Instead of searching for business card pouches in office supplies you could find similar articles in game stores stocking Trading Card Games (TCGs). TCG players often protect their cards with card sleeves or card protectors. The ones that match the business cards in size are called Standard American Board Game Sleeves (56mm x 87mm).

More common and popular for TCGs is a so called Standard Card Size (88mm x 63mm) with sleeve protectors a bit bigger than that (91mm x 66mm). In case you can get these in different variants then non glare sleeves are recommended.



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# Chapter 3. About the Authors

## 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. :-)

## 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 trainings, 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... :-)