

Poker planning

What is poker planning?

Poker planning is a cost estimation technique which uses the combined knowledge of a group of people working together to generate estimates. It is commonly used by Agile developers and SCRUM teams. Each member of development team given pack of cards with numbers on, (sometimes playing cards are used) . Then project manager explains the project and the team can then ask questions to clarify and assumptions with the project and discuss any possible risks. Then each member picks a card from their pack as their estimate and puts it face down, then all members show their cards at the same time. The members with the lowest and highest estimation members are then given a chance to justify their decision to the whole group. The whole process continues until a consensus is reached, typically the developer(s) who will be responsible for the project, will get a larger share of the vote than others.

Benefits and anchoring

Planning poker has been found to help avoid problem called anchoring. Anchoring is where in an open discussion some members of the team may strongly advocate a particular time estimate and this persuades other team members to follow their lead. Low anchors i.e. low estimations will generally come from sales marketing or other product owners. High anchors (sometimes overly pessimistic) will generally come from development team members. A study on planning poker [K. Molokken-Ostvold and N.C. Haugen] has found that estimates were less optimistic and more accurate than ones obtained through the simple combination of individual estimates for the same tasks.