

SCRUM MASTER

Certification Guide

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Chapter 11

The Daily Scrum

Some frameworks and methodologies have a Daily Standup.

We don't have Daily Standups in Scrum.

First of all, the term is ableist, as not everyone can stand.

Secondly, the idea behind a 'Daily *Standup*' is that it won't last long because people will eventually get tired of standing.

Scrum practitioners don't believe the infliction of pain is the proper way to motivate people.

The Daily Scrum is a 15-minute event for the Developers of the Scrum Team.

The purpose of the Daily Scrum is to inspect progress toward the Sprint Goal and adapt the Sprint Backlog as necessary, adjusting the upcoming planned work.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

Adapting to Change

Things change from day to day, and changes can mess up your plans.

That's why developers get together everyday for a Daily Scrum so they can talk about anything that is impeding or accelerating their progress towards the Sprint Goal.

If things are going sideways, the developers adapt. If things are going better than expected, the developers adapt.

The goal of the Daily Scrum is for developers to talk, discuss progress, and quickly solve any problems that have arisen since they last spoke.

The Daily Scrum is time-boxed to 15 minutes.

Keep the Time and Location Consistent

To reduce complexity, it is held at the same time and place every working day of the Sprint.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

All Scrum events are supposed to be held at the same time and in the same location. This applies to the Daily Scrum as well.

The Daily Scrum is for the Developers

Let's get real about the Daily Scrum for a minute.

People always complain that Scrum has too many time wasting meetings. When they say that, they're usually talking about the Daily Scrum.

If your Daily Scrum feels like a waste of time, you're doing the Daily Scrum wrong.

The Daily Scrum shouldn't feel like a formal, highly structured meeting. The Daily Scrum should feel casual and natural.

Scrum doesn't try to put an overwhelming amount of structure and ceremony around the development process. At its heart, Scrum just says:

- Plan your work before you start. That's why we have the Sprint Planning meeting
- Regularly review your work with stakeholders. That's why we have the Sprint Review.
- Regularly talk about how you can improve things. That's why we have the Sprint Retrospective.

It's hard to think anyone could argue that any of those suggestions are bad. If anything, those activities just naturally elude from any team that's serious about software development.

Furthermore, Scrum also says that every workday the developers should talk to each other about what they're doing. That hardly seems unreasonable either.

And again, Scrum isn't some framework that *demand*s developers use some crazy set of new and revolutionary techniques. All Scrum really does is document the practices good development teams already do.

Did you ever work on a school project in High School or College? One where you had to meet up with five friends in the library or a Zoom call three or four times to get the project finished?

What was the first thing you all did for the first 15 minutes when you got together?

- You bitched about your prof
- You talked about what other teams were doing
- You discussed what you managed to get done
- You talked about what you didn't get done
- You asked your friends how much work they got done
- You talked about things that were blocking your progress
- You tried to help each other figure out quick solutions to their problems

You'd have a pretty dysfunctional team if people didn't chat casually about these types of things when they all get together.

The Daily Scrum is simply trying to capture that natural energy and enthusiasm that highly motivated teams should already have when working collaboratively on a project.

The Daily Scrum simply puts a little bit of ceremony and formality around the natural fact that developers generally talk to each other when they get together at the start of the workday, but even then, the formality is minor.

- The Daily Scrum should take place at the same time every workday
- The Daily Scrum should take place in the same location every day

- During the Daily Scrum developers talk about their work, not yesterday's Joe Rogan podcast

When I think about developers chatting about their work, their progress and their blockers, I envision them doing that when they all get into the office in the morning. However, the Daily Scrum doesn't have to take place in the morning. It can take place at lunch-hour or even at the end of the day.

In fact, with offshore teams and modern teams distributed across the globe, what might be the start of the day for some members of the team might be the afternoon for others. So the Scrum Guide doesn't say what time the Daily Scrum needs to take place, only that it should take place every workday - not every day, just every *workday*.

When people say Scrum has too many meetings, I ask them which ones they think should be removed?

- Should there be no planning?
- No review with the clients?
- No retrospective once a month?

Or is the Daily Scrum the problem? Do they think having developers talking to each other in the Daily Scrum for a few minutes every day is too much.

If a team of six or seven developers is working on a project that burns through \$250,000 of budget money a month, I'd say it was a problem if those developers didn't talk to each other for a few minutes every day.

Scrum doesn't have too many meetings. Scrum actually gets it just about right.

Test Yourself

Which of the following is the responsibility of the Scrum Master regarding the Daily Scrum?

- ☐ The Scrum Master should coach the developers about keeping the Daily Scrum timeboxed to 15 minutes
- ☐ The Scrum Master should ensure each developer gets a chance to speak
- ☐ The Scrum Master starts the Daily Scrum by asking the 3 standard Daily Scrum questions
- ☐ The Scrum Master starts the Daily Scrum by asking every developer to stand up.

The only correct option here is A.

The Daily Scrum is for the developers. It is run by developers and managed by developers.

The only role the Scrum Master in the Daily Scrum is ensuring it is run in such a way that complies with the rules of Scrum. With regards to this quiz question, that means the only correct option is keeping the Daily Scrum to less than 15 minutes.

Past Scrum Guides mentioned the 3 Daily Scrum questions:

Be @Scrumtuuous.

- What did you do yesterday?
- What do you plan to do today?
- Is anything impeding your progress?

These questions were removed from the 2020 Scrum Guide.

They can be asked if the developers find them helpful, but they are certainly not a requirement of the Daily Scrum.

Test Yourself

The development team has decided to only work one day a week and will only hold the Daily Scrum on Mondays. How do you react as a Scrum Master?

- ☐ Inform the team Scrum development cannot happen only one day a week
- ☐ Have Human Resources talk to the development lead about their proposed work schedule
- ☐ Cancel the Sprint and consult the Product Owner
- ☐ Inform the team this is fine so long as the work takes place on Monday

There's nothing in the Scrum Guide that forbids a team from working once a week.

The only requirement is that the Daily Scrum happens every workday. So if the one day a week the team works is Monday, then the Daily Scrum should take place on a Monday.

Test Yourself

The Scrum team wants to move the Daily Scrum to the atrium on Fridays to help them wind down after a busy workweek. How do you, as a Scrum Master, respond?

- ☐ Explain to them that the Daily Scrum must take place at the same time and place
- ☐ Allow the developers to be self-managed and hold their Daily Scrum in the Atrium on Fridays
- ☐ Confirm with the Product Owner that it is okay to change the Daily Scrum location on Fridays
- ☐ As the Scrum Master, work to remove any impediments standing in the way of running the Friday Scrum in the atrium

Option A is correct.

The Scrum Guide says the Daily Scrum must take place, each workday, at the same time and place.

When Scrum Masters and POs do Development

Have you ever seen a Scrum Master or Product Owner do some work that becomes part of a usable Increment? If they do, they become developers themselves.

If the Product Owner or Scrum Master is actively working on items in the Sprint Backlog, they participate as Developers.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

This is an interesting statement that answers several questions about how Scrum works.

People often wonder if a Scrum Master or Product Owner is allowed to actively do development. Of course, they can!

If a Scrum Team of five people is cast away on a desert island and scrambling to build a shelter before a storm comes, everyone on that Scrum Team going to pitch in. If your life is on the line, you're not going to refuse to help build a shelter just because you've accepted the designation of Scrum Master.

On small teams and startups, the Scrum Master might also be the Product Owner and they might be a developer as well. It might not be a best practice, but there's nothing that forbids it. And more to the point, it might make a lot of sense in a really small development firm.

So yes, a developer can also be a Scrum Master or a Product Owner or vice versa.

The only requirement is that if a Scrum Master or Product Owner does development, they are expected to attend the Daily Scrum and participate as though they were a developer, not the Scrum Master or PO. They relinquish their Scrum Master or Product Owner accountabilities while the Daily Scrum takes place.

Who participates in the Daily Scrum?

The Developers can select whatever structure and techniques they want, as long as their Daily Scrum focuses on progress toward the Sprint Goal and produces an actionable plan for the next day of work. This creates focus and improves self-management.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

The Daily Scrum is for the developers. It should be run by the developers, organized by developers, and managed by the developers. How they manage or organize it is up to them.

Anyone can attend the daily Scrum. If the developers want to hire a circus clown to create balloon animals while the Daily Scrum proceeds, then all the power to them. But only the developers are supposed to participate.

Now that's not to say the developers can't ask the Scrum Master or Product Owner a question during the Daily Scrum. That may be necessary to properly adapt their plan towards the sprint goal. But the Scrum Master, Product Owners, and stakeholders shouldn't be active participants driving the meeting. The meeting should be driven by the developers.

Purpose of the Daily Scrum

Daily Scrums improve communications, identify impediments, promote quick decision-making, and consequently eliminate the need for other meetings.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

Things change from day to day. The Daily Scrum is a time for developers to deal with issues that have arisen that may delay their progress and put the Sprint Goal in jeopardy.

Hopefully having the whole team of developers together in Scrum will help to bring about quick solutions to problems the team might face.

Also, note that the goal of the Daily Scrum is to reduce the need for other meetings.

One complaint I often hear about Scrum is that there are too many meetings. That shouldn't be the case. The Daily Scrum should eliminate the need for other meetings.

Meetings Don't Replace Pragmatic Communication

The Daily Scrum is not the only time Developers are allowed to adjust their plans. They often meet throughout the day for more detailed discussions about adapting or re-planning the rest of Sprint's work.

— 2020 Scrum Guide page 9

Don't ever think that the Daily Scrum is the only time developers are allowed to talk about their work, or that it's the only time to change the Sprint plan.

If a team of construction workers was putting up a roof, and a wind gust blew all their shingles away, would they wait until the next day's Scrum to form a new plan, or would they reformulate their plans right away?

Developers can meet with each other any time they like. They can schedule additional meetings as a group. They can meet one on one at each other's desks. They can have dinner together after work.

There's nothing in the Scrum Guide that restricts communication between developers, stakeholders, product owners, scrum masters, or anyone else. The only thing the Scrum Guide provides is a few time-boxed events that guarantee opportunities for communication, transparency, and adaptation to take place.

Test Yourself

A critical bug has appeared in your code that may put the Sprint Goal at risk. What should you, as a developer, do?

- ☐ Speak to your fellow developers as soon as possible to find a way to adapt the Sprint plan
- ☐ Bring the issue up in the next day's Daily Scrum meeting
- ☐ Inform the Scrum Master and have the Scrum Master remove the impediment

- ☐ Pass the issue to the Quality Assurance team and continue working on Product Backlog items

Any time an issue comes up it should be addressed as soon as possible.

If a critical bug appears in your code, and you think it will impact the Sprint Goal, then meet with your fellow developers and see if you can adapt by adjusting the Sprint plan.

Don't ever let the Scrum Guide and the various Scrum events and artifacts impede pragmatic thinking. If a problem arises that needs to be taken care of immediately, take care of it immediately. Don't wait for the next Scrum event to adapt.
