Sprint Planning

Overview

Use this template for a more structured approach to Sprint Planning, covering the relevant subjects step by step.

For every step use whatever approach fits your team to craft the item. This could just be an open discussion, but you could also use a Liberating Structure like 1-2-4-all. The goal is to collect the insights of the whole team and create something the whole team will commit to.

Before getting started with the Sprint Planning you may want to ensure you have a Product Goal and that the whole team is aware of it. This will make your Sprint Planning more effective.









let's get started - with the Sprint Goal

Step 1

Discuss a Sprint Goal and note it as a post-it in the blue area. Don't worry if it is not perfect - you will be coming back to it throughout the Sprint Planning.

Document any insights about what is NOT part of the Sprint Goal in the out-of-scope red area.

Step 2

Clarify why the sprint is valuable in the green-blue area. This will not only help you to improve the phrasing of the Sprint Goal, but will also give you insights for the next step.

Step 3

Find a way to measure when the Sprint Goal has been achieved and document it in the yellow area. The goal is to have a clearcut measure, similar to how the Definition of Done clarifies whether a work item is Done.

Try to stick to one measurement, but don' worry if you have 2 or 3. If you have more, keep the best one(s) and see if you can use the rest as Sprint Backlog items.

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With these three steps to clarify the Sprint Goal, we now proceed to look at the actual work needed to achieve it.

Step 4

Think about anything that needs to be done to achieve the Sprint Goal. These are the tasks, research, brainstorm sessions, Q&A with another team, PoCs - basically any activities you think are necessary. Note them on post-its and add them to the green area.

Don't worry about what types of work they are for now - this is a creative step in which we just want to collect us many ideas as you can as a team.

While thinking about these, there is a good chance you will think of challenges that might get in the way. Things that may block your progress or make life difficult. Add these to the purple area.

Step 5

Have a look in your backlog and add any tasks to the green area you feel are relevant to achieve the Sprint Goal. The reason we do this now, is so that it does not interfere with the creative process of the previous step.

Step 6

Having collected all the necessary tasks, take a moment to think about any blockers that may hinder you in achieving the Sprint Goal. Add them to the red area.

Once you've run out of ideas, one by one find ways to resolve them. This may be by creating specific tasks to address them. These you can add to the green area.

Leave anything you can't resolve - these are valuable things to take into account during the sprint.

Step 7

Discuss all the tasks in the green area. This is the moment to determine what kind of work they are. This of course depends very much on your own process, but the goal is to separate them into:

- Product backlog items (PBIs) you want to add to your Sprint Backlog.
- Remaining tasks that are not proper backlog items but that you do want to plan anyway. For example, a brainstorm session, or a milestone.

This discussion may also reveal more blockers or things that are out of scope, which you can add to the repespective areas.



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the timeline

The Sprint Backlog is the most popular way to manage a sprint, and in fact, that is the way most teams do it, often without using anything else.

What is important to realise is that the goal of the Sprint Planning is to create an effective plan to achieve the Sprint Goal, not just a list of items to deliver. In that sense, a timeline may help to make plans over time clearer and easier to manage.

Think for example of dependencies. What if you can only start working on a bunch of issues after other issues are delivered? Or perhaps you need to start on a given task before a specific date in order to be able to deliver it on time? What about important milestones. Or perhaps a holiday, or someone's vacation. It is difficult to make these things clear in a Sprint backlog.

The timeline will help you to track these things and make it easier to judge whether you are on track or not. Just keep in mind you are not trying to create a binding, perfect plan. Instead you are creating checks in your plan, ways to track your progress more effectively, so that you can make any changes easier and faster.

Step 8

Take any tasks, both from the PBIs and the remaining tasks which you think are handy to plan over time and add them to the timeline.

As you can see in the example above, you can also add bands to cover a period of time.