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What are Scrum Activities?

Scrum is an Agile project management framework for organizing and managing work. The Scrum framework is based on a set of values, principles, and practices that provide the foundation to which an organization can add its own unique implementation, thus making each framework specialized to each organization. However, Scrum features some universal activities that must happen in a cycle together in order to provide effective results. These include sprints, sprint planning, daily scrum, scrum execution, sprint review, sprint retrospective, and product backlog grooming.

# Scrum Activities

Scrum is completed in iterations that span from about two weeks to one calendar month. Each iteration is called a sprint. The end goal of each sprint is to provide the product owner and item with tangible value that their customers or users desire and place value in. Every sprint is to be the same length to time (timeboxed), and a new sprint immediately follows after the completed (Rubin, chp.2). A rule for each sprint is to not allow any goal-altering changes in scope or personnel during that time. After the sprint length has been established a product backlog follows and the sprint planning can begin.

Spring planning is done in order to establish the most important subset of product backlog items to be completed during that specific sprint. This process is the first part of every sprint cycle or iteration. During this process, the product owner meets with the development team under the sight of the Scrum Master and they agree on a sprint goal. This defines what is to be accomplished during the sprint. The development team reviews the product backlog and determines the highest priority tasks that the team can accomplish while working at a sustainable pace (da Silva, 2016). The targeted items are then broken down into a set of tasks, thus the sprint backlog is created. The development team will also provide a time estimate for how long each task will take to complete (Rubin, chp.2). Once the sprint planning finishes and they agree on the content of the sprint, the development team gets to work on the tasks also known as sprint execution. The development team members are not told how or in what order they must accomplish tasks, team members self-organize in the manner they see fit is best for achieving the sprint goal.

A daily scrum is completed each day of a sprint. They are ideally at the same time of day and are only 15 to 20 minutes in length, on-site, and everyone stands during the entirety of the meeting (Rubin, chp.2). Not all members of the development team are invited, particularly heads of the departments. The goal of the meeting is to inspect-and-adapt, commonly known as the daily stand-up(Rubin, chp.2). The Scrum Master will manage and run this meeting and will commonly ask members to answer three questions: First, what did I accomplish since the last daily scrum? Second, What do I plan to work on by the next daily scrum? Third, what are the obstacles or impediments that are preventing me from making progress? The answers should be brief and can be addressed by the Scrum Master if necessary at a later time, as it is not a problem-solving activity (Rubin, chp.2). By answering these questions, everyone understands the big picture of what is occurring, how they are progressing toward the sprint goal, any modifications they want to make to their plans for the upcoming day, and what issues need to be addressed.

At the end of each sprint there are two inspect-and-adapt activities, one is the sprint review. The goal of the sprint review is to inspect and adapt the product that is being built. The conversation between participants, scrum team, stakeholders, sponsors, customers, and interested members of other teams is crucial (de Borba, 2019). This conversation is focused on the just-completed features in the context of the overall development. This allows for the most business-appropriate solutions to be created (Rubin, chp.2). Everyone can sync up on the development effort to help guide its direction and all members involved gain a deeper appreciation for the business and marketing side of their product by receiving frequent feedback (Rubin, chp.2).

The second inspect-and-adapt activity at the end of each sprint is the sprint retrospective. This activity is focused on inspecting and adapting the process rather than the product itself. The development team, Scrum Master, and product owner come together and discuss what is and is not working with Scrum. The focus is on continuous process improvement to help a good scrum team become great. At the end of this activity, the Scrum team should have recognized and committed to a practical number of process improvements that will be undertaken in the next sprint (Rubin, chp.2). Once the sprint retrospective is completed the whole cycle is repeated, starting with sprint planning.

A product backlog is created at the beginning of the project. This backlog needs to be reviewed and refined over the course of the entire project. This maintains that the product backlog items are correctly being estimated and prioritized for each upcoming sprint within the project. Ultimately the product owner is the one grooming the backlog; however, the stakeholders, Scrum Master, and development team are included significantly in order to ensure collaboration, collective intelligence, and diverse perspectives are leveraged to benefit the project (da Silva, 2016). The process occurs during the entire project to maintain flexibility and ensure that the sprint goals and eventually the completed project is to the product owner’s satisfaction (Rubin, chp.2).

# CONCLUSION

Scrum is an Agile project management framework that has many individual parts in order to provide each and every project with a unique approach. Within this specialization there are sprints, sprint planning, daily scrum, sprint execution, sprint review, sprint retrospective, and product backlog grooming that are all essential to the Scrum framework. All of which occur within a cycle to ensure the best use of time and resources. The value that these universal activities cycle helps to ensure that the eventual end product fits customers and the project owners’ expectations.

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