Shay Walker

Christine James

Agile Project Management

12 February 2020

Scrum Planning Principles

Many people believe that Agile project management styles such as Scrum begin with no planning. However, this is not true, there simply are multiple stages, phases, or levels to planning within Scrum. Scrum focuses on sustainability upfront rather than up-front planning and thus adopts the just-in-time method for planning. In fact, there may even be more time spent planning within Scrum than with traditional project management and this planning can be seen in the Scrum planning principles.

# Scrum Planning Principles

The first of the Scrum planning principles is to not assume that all the plans are ready or available upfront. With Scrum planning is developed through inspection and adaptation (Rubin, Chp.14). Instead of developing an entire plan before development begins like in Traditional methods, Scrum does not try to produce all of the planning artifacts upfront (Rubin, Chp.14). However, some of the planning artifacts are created in order to create a balance between upfront and just-in-time planning (Rubin, Chp.14). This principle allows for less time to be essentially wasted during what would be normally considered just planning. Instead with a little ahead planning, the project can begin, and less time is wasted waiting for the entire project to be planned.

Another Scrum planning principle is to keep planning options open until the last responsible moment. In order to achieve the balance necessary between upfront planning and just-in-time planning, options need to stay open and available for change until it would be considered irresponsible business-wise to do so. This provides an advantage to traditional planning methods because decisions can be based on new information. In traditional planning, decisions could be made up to a year prior based on old or poor information, and there is little that can be changed at that point. Just-in-time planning can help save on cost and allows for changes to be made up to the last responsible moment thus providing less risk to the project (Rubin, Chp.14).

Scrum also places heavy emphasis on adapting and replanning rather than conforming to one plan. With the use of just-in-time planning, there is greater flexibility in Scrum managed projects. This allows for projects to be change respondent rather than being forced into plan that does not fit. In traditional project management, a plan is developed upfront and then the project is started. If any changes come up there is no room or time to re-plan and shift the rest of the project into a better direction, the project is forced into conforming. However, in Scrum, the project itself holds more importance than the plan (Thorgren, 2019). Thus, frequent replanning is established to verify and validate assumptions concerning the project. This factor along with working in sprints (2-4 weeks) allows for errors to be corrected and for the flexibility of change (Novac, 2018).

Scrum also favors smaller and more frequent releases (Rubin, Chp.14). Scrum has customer feedback as a part of the planning and adapting phases. With small and frequent releases feedback is provided faster and thus can help to improve the product’s or project’s return on investment. There is almost always room for improvement and thus there is also always ways to improve a product’s lifecycle profits. This can occur through incremental development and multiple releases of smaller marketable subsets of features(Rubin, Chp.14). By using these methods of release and feedback the point at which a project or product reaches self-funding, breakeven, and profitability occurs sooner than with one large release without feedback. It is also important to keep in mind that this method is not always the best choice depending on the product or project, however, if your marketplace is open to receiving partial value sooner, then delivering smaller more frequent releases is an important principle to follow.

Another Scrum planning principle states plan to learn fast and pivot when necessary (Rubin, Chp.14). Pivoting means to change directions while staying grounded in what has been learned (Rubin, Chp.14). With the Scrum method, there needs to be preparations to pivot quickly when learning that the current plan is no longer valid. The goal is to learn quickly and economically with structure leading to the key goal. With fast feedback in Scrum one can determine if the plan is moving in a viable direction and if it is not then redirection can occur to re-plan and move in a new direction (Thorgen, 2019).

# CONCLUSION

Many individuals struggle with Agile project management styles, like Scrum, due to what seemingly is a lack of planning. However, Scrum planning principles enable project management teams to create an economically sensible plan. There is a helpful amount of upfront planning, balanced with more detailed just-in-time planning as the team learns what they are creating and how it can and should be built. These planning principles allow for flexibility through fast feedback and the opportunity to be unconformed and pivot into a new more profitable plan. However, not every principle can be applied to every product or project and therefore, should be considered carefully. Overall, the planning in Scrum can be considered more efficient and effective.

Works Cited

“Chapter 14.” Essential Scrum: a Practical Guide to the Most Popular Agile Process, by Kenneth S. Rubin, Addison-Wesley, 2013, pp. 247-255.

Law, Effie Lai-Chong, and Marta Kristín Lárusdóttir. “Whose Experience Do We Care About? Analysis of the Fitness of Scrum and Kanban to User Experience.” *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, vol. 31, no. 9, 2015, pp. 584–602., doi:10.1080/10447318.2015.1065693.

Novac, Carmen, and Raluca-Silvia Ciochina. "Challenges of Applying Agile Principles and Values to IT Project Management." *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2018, p. 43+. *Gale OneFile: Economics and Theory*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A569457146/PPBE?u=philbibu&sid=PPBE&xid=a8d88277. Accessed 8 Feb. 2020.

Thorgren, Sara, and Elin Caiman. "The Role of Psychological Safety in Implementing Agile Methods across Cultures: A psychological safety framework can help illuminate cultural challenges that occur when implementing Agile methods across different cultures." *Research-Technology Management*, Mar.-Apr. 2019, p. 31+. *Gale OneFile: Business*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A583487003/ITBC?u=philbibu&sid=ITBC&xid=ffdace8e. Accessed 8 Feb. 2020.