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A Glossary of Scrum / Agile Terms

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SCRUM / AGILE

Acceptance Criteria Details that indicate the scope of a user story and help the team and product owner determine done-ness.

Agile the name coined for the wider set of ideas that Scrum falls within; the Agile values and principles are captured in the Agile Manifesto.

Architect there is no architect role on a Scrum team, instead all team members are responsible for emerging the architecture.

Burndown (see Sprint Burndown, Product Burndown in reports section).

Backlog Grooming (See "Story Time". Also referred to as grooming, and backlog refinement.)

Backlog Item (see Product Backlog Item)

Chicken (arch.) term for anyone not on the team, the term offended some people so is now rarely used, cf. Pig

Daily Scrum a fifteen-minute daily team meeting to share progress, report impediments and make commitments. During the Daily scrum each team member answers three questions:

1. "What have I done since the last Scrum meeting? (i.e. yesterday)"
2. "What will I do before the next Scrum meeting? (i.e. today)"
3. "What prevents me from performing my work as efficiently as possible?"

The ScrumMaster ensures that participants call sidebar meetings for any discussions that go too far outside these constraints. The Scrum literature recommends that this meeting take place first thing in the morning, as soon as all team members arrive.

Done also referred to as "Done" or "Done Done", this term is used to describe a product increment that is considered potentially releasable; it means that all design, coding, testing and documentation have been completed and the increment is fully integrated into the system.

Emergence the principle that the best designs, and the best ways of working come about over time through doing the work, rather than being defined in advance, cf. Empiricism, Self Organization.

Empiricism the principle of "inspect and adapt" which allows teams or individuals to try something out and learn from the experience by conscious reflection and change, cf. Emergence, Self Organization.

Epic a very large user story that is eventually broken down into smaller stories; epics are often used as placeholders for new ideas that have not been thought out fully. There's nothing wrong with having an epic, as long as it is not high priority.

Estimation the process of agreeing on a size measurement for the stories in a product backlog. Done by the team, usually using Planning Poker.

Fibonacci Sequence the sequence of numbers where the next number is derived by adding together the previous two (1,2,3,5,8,13,20…) ; the sequence has the quality of each interval getting larger as the numbers increase; the sequence is often used for Story Points, simply because estimates are always less accurate when dealing with epics.

How "the How" is a term used to describe the domain of the team, as distinct for the product owner, cf "What".Can also be described as tactic (i.e. how to win the battle).

Impediment anything that prevents the team from meeting their potential (e.g. chairs are uncomfortable). If organizational, it is the Scrum Master's responsibility to eliminate it. If it is internal to the team, then they themselves should do away with it.

Impediment Backlog a visible or nonvisible list of impediments in a priority order according to how seriously they are blocking the team from productivity.

Pig (arch.) term for a team member, the term offended some people so is now rarely used, cf. "Chicken".

Planning see **Sprint Planning**

Planning Poker a game used to apply estimates to stories; it uses the Delphi method of arriving at consensus.

Process simply the way someone works. Everyone has a process. It can be pre- defined, empiric or merely chaotic.

Product Backlog a prioritized list of stories that are waiting to be worked on.

Product Backlog The product backlog (or "backlog") is the requirements for a system, expressed as a prioritized list of product backlog Items. These included both functional and non-functional customer requirements, as well as technical team-generated requirements. While there are multiple inputs to the product backlog, it is the sole responsibility of the product owner to prioritize the product backlog. During a Sprint planning meeting, backlog items are moved from the product backlog into a sprint, based on the product owner's priorities.

Product Backlog Item any item that is one the backlog list, which will include user stories, epics and possibly technical stories to deal with technical debt, etc.

Product Owner person whom holds the vision for the product and is responsible for maintaining, prioritizing and updating the product backlog. In Scrum, the Product Owner has final authority representing the customer's interest in backlog prioritization and requirements questions. This person must be available to the team at any time, but especially during the sprint planning meeting and the sprint review meeting. Challenges of being a product owner:

1. Resisting the temptation to "manage" the team. The team may not self- organize in the way you would expect it to. This is especially challenging if some team members request your intervention with issues the team should sort out for itself
2. Resisting the temptation to add more important work after a Sprint is already in progress
3. Being willing to make hard choices during the sprint planning meeting
4. Balancing the interests of competing stakeholders

Relative Estimation – sizing backlog items by grouping them into relative size ranges rather than by absolute units (e.g. – hours). See Fibonacci and t-shirt sizes.

Release The transition of an increment of potentially shippable product from the development team into routine use by customers. Releases typically happen when one or more sprints has resulted in the product having enough value to outweigh the cost to deploy it.

Release Burndown Chart a visible chart to show progress towards a release.

Retrospective a session where the Team and Scrum Master reflect on the process and make commitments to improve.

Roman Vote see **Thumb Vote**

ScrumMaster Role The ScrumMaster is a facilitator for the team and product owner. Rather than manage the team, the ScrumMaster works to assist both the team and product owner in the following ways:

- Remove the barriers between the development and the product owner so that the product owner directly drives development
- Teach the product owner how to maximize return on investment (ROI), and meet his/her objectives through Scrum
- Improve the lives of the development team by facilitating creativity and empowerment.
- Improve the productivity of the development team in any way possible
- Improve the engineering practices and tools so that each increment of functionality is potentially shippable
- Keep information about the team's progress up to date and visible to all parties

Source: *Agile Project Management with Scrum*, Ken Schwaber

Scrum Meetings Story Time, Planning, Review, Retrospective, Daily Scrum.

Scrum Roles there are only three: product owner, Scrum Master, team member.

Self Organization the principle that those closest to the work best know how to do the work, so set clear goals and boundaries and let them make all tactical and implementation decisions, cf. Emergence, Empiricism.

Spike a short, time-boxed piece of research, usually technical, on a single story that is intended to provide just enough information that the team can estimate the size of the story.

Sprint a time boxed iteration.

Sprint Backlog Defines the work for a sprint, represented by the set of tasks that must be completed to realize the sprint's goals, and selected set of product backlog items.

Sprint Burndown a visible chart that indicates on a daily basis the amount of work remaining in the sprint.

Sprint Goal aka Sprint Theme, the key focus of the work for a single sprint.

Sprint Planning a meeting between the Team and the Product Owner to plan the sprint and arrive at an agreement on the commitment.

Sprint Task a single small item of work that helps one particular story reach completion.

Story a backlog item usually using the template form: as a [user] I want [function] so that [business value], cf Product Backlog Item.

Stakeholder Sometimes the following terms are used synonymously – although it should be noted that there are nuances in their definitions: story, user story, technical user story, product backlog item, PBI, and product requirement.

Story Point a unit of measurement applied to the size of a story, cf. Fibonacci Sequence T-shirt sizes, powers of 2, are other ways of assigning Story Points.

Story Time the regular work session where items on the backlog are discussed, refined and estimated and the backlog is trimmed and prioritized.

Task see Sprint Task.

Task List the tasks needed to complete the set of stories committed to a sprint.

Taskboard a wall chart with cards and sticky notes that represent all the work of a team in a given sprint; the task notes are moved across the board to show progress.

Team A team (or "Scrum development team") is optimally comprised of seven plus or minus two people and responsible for committing to work, delivering and driving the product forward from a tactical perspective.

For software development projects, the team members are usually a mix of software engineers, architects, programmers, analysts, QA experts, testers, UI designers, etc. This is often called "cross-functional project teams". Agile practices also encourage cross-functional team members.

During a sprint, the team self-organizes to meet the sprint goals. The team has autonomy to choose how to best meet the goals, and is held responsible for them. The ScrumMaster acts as a guardian to ensure that the team is insulated from the product owner. Scrum also advocates putting the entire team in one team room.

Team Member a team member is defined as anyone working on sprint tasks toward the sprint goal. In Scrum parlance, the PO and SM could also be Team Members, if they are developing.

Thumb Vote a quick pulse to get a sense of where the team are in terms of commitment, or agreement on a decision, etc. thumb up generally means agree, yes, or good, and thumb down disagree, no or bad; the analog version of this allows the thumb to be anywhere on the half circle to indicate differing degrees of agreeability.

Timeboxing setting a duration for every activity and having it last exactly that (i.e. neither meetings nor sprint are ever lengthened - ever).

Velocity the rate at which a team completes work, usually measured in story points. In Scrum, velocity is how much product backlog effort a team can handle in one sprint. This can be estimated by viewing previous sprints, assuming the team composition and sprint duration are kept constant. It can also be established on a sprint-by-sprint basis, using commitment-based planning.

Once established, velocity can be used to plan projects and forecast release and product completion dates.

How can velocity computations be meaningful when backlog item estimates are intentionally rough? The law of large numbers tends to average out the roughness of the estimates.

Vision Statement a high-level description of a product which includes who it is for, why it is necessary and what differentiates it from similar products.

What "the What" is a term used to describe the domain of the product owner, as distinct for the team, cf. How. Can also be described as strategy (i.e. what's the best order for battles).

XP Practices the set of development practices, including pair-programming, test-first, or test-driven development (TDD) and continuous refactoring, which are drawn from the XP methodology; many Scrum teams find these practices greatly improve productivity and team morale.

About CollabNet VersionOne

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