

# Starting Scrum project

with Sprint Zero

# Definition

**Sprint Zero** is a popular concept which some Scrum Teams utilise. Basically, it is an additional Sprint before the official start of the Project in Sprint #1.

During **Sprint Zero** the Team and interested stakeholders make all necessary preparations, e.g. finish assembling the team, prepare project infrastructure, refine Product vision, organize trainings, etc.

**How do we start with it?**

# Step One: assessment checklist

## Development Team

- Completely new Team? Already worked together? For how long and how well?
- Full Team already hired? Anyone missing? Key people in place?

## Project Domain

- Completely new for the Team/Organization? Related risks identified/managed? Domain experts needed/hired/missing?
- What is Team's general attitude towards the domain? Interested? Bored? Eager to learn?

## Scrum/Agile

- How familiar is the Team with Scrum/Agile? Good/bad experiences? Attitude?
- Ready to work in cross-functional Team?

## Technical knowledge

- Tech knowledge level of the Team is appropriate?
- Senior Team members in place?
- Any tech trainings needed?

## Product

- Green field development? Maintenance?
- Completely new product? Prototype exists? Architecture already in place?
- Product vision/roadmap available? Status of Product backlog?

## Infrastructure

- Infrastructure fully in place? Furniture, office supplies, hardware and software, licenses, dev/test/uat/prod environments, etc?

# Note

Depending on project's specifics  
assessment checklists may vary  
and need to be modified accordingly.

# Scrum rule:

**every sprint should deliver usable value**

- potentially-shippable
- product increment
- no matter how small

# Should Sprint Zero be any different?

Does it make sense?

# Two general directions:

- 1) Organize **Sprint Zero** in form of “Project Before project”. This will free you from the need to deliver any formal “potential increment”.
- 2) Make it as close to normal Sprint as you envision it: kind of **rehearsal of Sprint One**.



# Good prerequisites:

- **The Team** almost assembled
- **Product Vision** is formulated
- **Product Backlog** draft is in OK state
- **Product Roadmap** first version ready
- **Infrastructure** more ready than not

# Form:

- **Full Sprint structure:** Planning, Daily Scrum, Retrospective and (some sort of) Demo.
- **Elements:** Scrum board, appropriate metrics, etc.
- All tasks prioritised so that **on Sprint 1 there are minimum impediments.**

# What's next?

## the planning meeting

# Checklist for planning (part 1) :

Have we **already** done these?

If not -> to the Plan.

- **Formal introduction:** the Team, Scrum Master, Product Owner, other stakeholders
- **Product Vision Presentation:** Roadmap, Personas, several top Epics/User Stories from Product Backlog
- **Trainings:** technical/domain/methodology
- **Minimal designs up front:** initial Architecture/Design/UX meetings
- **General planning:** list of all tasks to be completed for successful Sprint One ⇒ **into Sprint Zero Backlog**

# Checklist for planning (part 2):

**Also into Sprint Zero Backlog:** couple of critical User Stories from Product Backlog.

In the process of developing these User Stories the Team figures out technical details:

- **Dev and Test environments** and CI servers set up
- **DevOps tools** and processes
- **team wiki** set up
- mechanisms for chosen **Agile metrics**
- set up for **XP practices** and other **techniques/standards** to follow
- **DoD** creation and commitment
- **coding standards** & processes
- **automation testing** framework
- **QA plan** and **issue management** tools

# Planning meeting

- 1) Use the **checklist** from previous slide and the **assessment** of the current situation from slide #4.
- 2) Determine which items from checklist are **still missing**. **Define priorities** and must-have items for **Sprint 1** - they are your goals .
- 3) Include most critical items into **Sprint Zero Backlog**, break down to tasks and roughly estimate.
- 4) If any planned items need calendar planning (meetings, trainings) - do it **ASAP**.
- 5) Move items to Scrum Board.
- 6) **Follow the implementation** of Sprint Zero, especially must-have items. **Escalate if needed**.
- 7) Concentrate on making **Sprint 1** as smooth as possible.

# Notes

1. In **Sprint Zero** tasks have to be performed **not only by the Team, but by other stakeholders and administrative employees** of Organization. So the concept of cross functional Team will not work here. That's OK. You will go back to traditional Scrum in **Sprint 1**.
2. For now you should project the velocity of the actual Team and prepare their part of **Sprint Zero Backlog**. Remember to include time for planned meetings and trainings.
3. Other tasks will be performed by non-Team members, **so they have to account for their availability and commitments**. Here **the support of Project's sponsor** will come in handy.

# During Sprint Zero:

- Keep the target goals in sight.
- See where the process is lagging. Flag it. Discuss and fix.
- Get real experience of working with this team, in this domain, on this project. So that Sprint 1 you'll have a real basis to build on.



**retrospective**

**meeting**

# Checklist for retrospective

**First of all** - have it. Discuss everything that went down during Sprint Zero. Try out how the retrospective works to make it more effective for Sprint 1.

- **Review status of all planned tasks:** which ones are done/not done and why?
- **Review major goals:** did you remove all significant impediments for Sprint 1? If not - what can you do, whom should you inform and how should you escalate?
- **Check all the tasks assigned not to core Team's members:** escalate if anything is not completed/resolved.
- **Use one of the popular Retrospective templates** (e.g. "glad, sad, mad") to express other important things about this Sprint.

# End of Sprint Demo:

- **If the Team worked on the User Stories in backlog and finished any of them** – **by all means show it!** This will serve as a rehearsal of Demo's for Sprint 1.
- **If Sprint Zero included only preparational activities** – a good idea would be to present all successes and fails with analysis of reasons to **Project's Sponsor** and interested stakeholders. Discussions afterwards are welcome!

# Starting with metrics

# Measure the progress

During Sprint Zero the Team can **start measuring some Agile metrics**. Some obvious suggestions would be:

- **Velocity** (even with yet incomplete Team)
- **User Story Points** committed vs. completed
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- **Burndown chart** for the tasks assigned to core Team members

# The end :)

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