

Lunch & Learn

All About Scrum

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“Thanks for joining” then announce start of session recording.

The intention of this lunch and learn is to provide an overview of the general foundation of the Scrum framework, how each piece impacts the team, and summarize key benefits and aspects of scrum.

The Basics of Scrum

Agenda

- What is Scrum
- Three Pillars
- Scrum Values
- Team
- Events
- Artifacts
- Value of Scrum
- Important Aspects of Scrum

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This presentation is based on the Scrum Guide (last revised in 2020) and even laid out in the order it is presented in the guide. I encourage each of you to read the guide when you have a free hour - only 14 pages total, including cover, content, and end notes pages. I'll make the PDF version of this presentation and the Scrum Guide available on SharePoint along with the recording.

Scrum

- By definition
 - A lightweight framework that helps people, teams and organizations generate value through adaptive solutions for complex problems (Scrum Guide 2020).
- What does this mean
 - Scrum provides proven guidelines to help teams build processes, practices, or techniques that fit within their organization, giving the power of decision and control of the work to the team itself.
- Scrum Goal = deliver value early and often
- Scrum Theory
 - Empiricism and lean thinking
 - Iterative, incremental approach
 - Combines four formal events that support the three pillars

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Keywords in that definition:

- Lightweight framework: it does not provide the “how to” to complete something.
- Team driven: the specifics of how scrum is applied is left up to the team, so long as they follow the main framework.
- Complex problems: scrum thrives in complex environments.

What does this mean point.

Theory:

Empirical based approach, that is, making decisions based on knowledge from past experiences; what has worked and what hasn't worked. Applied with lean thinking, keep things simple and not overburdensome i.e. “lightweight” as stated in definition, thus allowing the team to be agile in their decision making.

Iteration, incremental approach is a way to always make progress in the short term to achieve overall goals in the long term. Team doesn't have to make it perfect the first time. Value is placed on the team providing a functioning piece of work that can be improved upon over time.

Scrum must be viewed at as a wholistic approach. Implementing a limited set of the Scrum framework will result in team not realizing full potential and value of Scrum. Doing so lacks the full transparency and ability to inspect and adapt on the team's output.

Three Pillars of Scrum

1. Transparency

- Process and work are required to be as visible to those performing the work (scrum team) as it is to those receiving the work (business/IT stakeholders)

2. Inspection

- Team frequently and openly inspects their work, processes, practices, tools, etc. to identify inefficiencies, problems, or risks

3. Adaptation

- Team is self-managing and empowered to make necessary changes to improve process, practice, tools, and ultimately, the product

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Transparency = full transparency

- Both inside and outside of the team
 - Important for everyone on the team to be on the same page with what work is important and what others are working on. We see this all the time, one person makes a change here and it affects 3 other people in 3 different ways.
 - Important for stakeholders outside the team to understand what work is being done and planning to be done.
- At all levels
 - Backlog
 - Priority = knowing what must be released, what should be released and so on
 - Order of priority = within what should be released, where do we start?
 - Sprint backlog,
 - Sprint goal = what is the team aiming to achieve this iteration/sprint
 - What progress is being made
 - Or what blockers exist
 - Process and practices

Inspection and Adaptation

- About being honest with ourselves on what is working and what is not working
- Not about placing blame, but finding a better path forward from past experiences (empiricism)
- Setting realistic expectations; both within the team and with stakeholders outside the team
- Relies on the team being committed to the values of Scrum (more on next slide)

Values of Scrum

- Commitment: to achieving the sprint goal and supporting one another
- Focus: primary focus is the work in the sprint and progress to the sprint goal
- Openness: Scrum team and stakeholders are open about the work and challenges
- Respect: each team member respects one another to be capable, independent workers
- Courage: each team member has courage to do the right thing and work through difficult problems

These values help foster a true team environment; provide each member ownership and control, with the support of all other members in order to achieve the team goal.

Scrum Team

- About the team
 - Scrum team is cross-functional, composed of various skill sets to create value each sprint
 - Self managing, empowered to decide who, when and how work is completed
 - Small enough to remain nimble, while large enough to complete significant work
- Developers (Dev, BA, QA)
 - Create the sprint backlog (what gets done)
 - Adapting their plan each day to progress to the sprint goal
 - Holding each other accountable
- Product Owner
 - Responsible for maximizing the value of the overall product and represents the needs of all stakeholders
 - Managing product backlog; setting product backlog priority order, ensuring it transparent, visible, and easily understood
- Scrum Master
 - Responsible for establishing Scrum within the team
 - Servant leader; while accountable for the team's effectiveness, Scrum master leads team by serving the teams needs
 - Responsible for coaching team to help them achieve higher value, removing blockers, and ensuring Scrum aspects are met

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About the team

- Team is self-contained meaning it consists of members with all the necessary skills to achieve the product goal

Developers = not strictly developers, but includes all members of the team beside PO and Scrum Master (single individual roles)

Product Owner

- Owns the backlog and is the voice of the customer
- All scrum team members respect the directive of the PO regarding the backlog

Scrum Master

- From my own experience:
 - I try to give team freedom to drive conversations and make decisions within the framework of Scrum. While also recognizing I have responsibilities as a release manager as well
 - Try to foster openness and encourage discussions that lead to improvements
 - Also challenge people to try new things and promote change

Scrum Events

1. Sprint (not an event, but all events take place within the sprint)
 - Fixed length with no breaks
 - Provide a level of predictability: what will the team accomplish (sprint goal)
 - Short enough to allow team to adapt to changes
 - Timeboxed = no more than a month
2. Sprint Planning
 - Product Owner prepares items that can increase value of product
 - Team decides what can be accomplish (sprint goal)
 - Developers determine how to achieves the sprint goal - identifies small bodies of work
 - Timeboxed to a max of 8 hrs for a one month sprint
3. Daily Scrum
 - Inspect progress to the sprint goal; what's been completed since last scrum, objectives until next scrum, ID blockers
 - Improves communication among the team
 - Reduce complexity: same time, same place
 - Timeboxed to a max of 15 mins

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Sprint - is what we refer to as an iteration

Sprint planning - we have moved closer to a true sprint planning by combining grooming and planning into one call

Daily scrum - we're all very familiar with this one

Scrum Events Con't.

4. Sprint Review (not practice by our team)
 - Review what was accomplished with key stakeholders
 - Determine if any adjustments need to be made
 - Each developer previews what they have completed
 - Timeboxed to a max of 4 hours for a one month sprint
5. Sprint Retrospective
 - Team self reflects on results of previous sprint
 - Identifies ways to increase quality and effectiveness; individuals, interactions, processes, tools, etc.
 - Prioritizes changes based on impact and effectiveness
 - Timeboxed to a max of 3 hrs for a one month sprint

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Sprint Review - while not formally or consistently practiced, customer demos can be considered a form of a review. Though these are done typically towards the end of a release cycle and not each iteration/sprint

Sprint retrospectives - we've adapted to having monthly retrospectives for the sake of reducing # of meetings team participants in

Scrum Artifacts

Artifacts represent the work or value and each has a commitment aimed to increase transparency

1. Product Backlog

- What is it: ordered list of what is needed to improve the product
- Items that are refined and can be executed in one sprint are ready for sprint planning
- Commitment: Product Goal = future state of the product, long term goal of the Scrum team

2. Sprint Backlog

- What is it: collection of items committed to the sprint by and for the developers*, includes why and how
- Highly visible, real-time picture of the work developers plan to accomplish during the sprint
- Commitment: Sprint Goal = single objective for the sprint to create coherence and focus

3. Increment

- What is it: completion of work that moves team closer to achieve the product goal
- Each increment builds upon prior increments to ensure cohesive functionality and therefore provides value. Increment must be usable and allows for frequent testing
- Commitment: Definition of Done = formal description of the state of an increment that meets the quality required to be a usable product. Scrum team determines what the 'Definition of Done' is

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Product backlog - PO/BAs do a good job of maintaining backlog and priority

Sprint backlog - we come up short on meeting this commitment as we often commit many PBIs/Bugs to a sprint that are unrelated. This causing the sprint goal to be to have a large scope.

*developers = reminder: inclusive of entire team aside from PO/Scrum Master

Benefits of a sprint goal =

- Helps the team stay on track by defining what needs to be accomplished in the short term.
- This is done during sprint planning and can help keep a narrower scope of work (prevents team from spreading themselves too thin by assigning too many unrelated items).
- Allows the team to continue to deliver value and build upon previous iterations.
- Helps to flatten out the curve of work, ensuring things are done timely and as expected.

Tips and examples of sprint goals

- Start off generic and move to more specific goals as team becomes familiar with practice and moves to more microservices work
- Examples (in today's R2D2 terms)
 - Beginning of release cycle:
 - BAs goal is to complete requirements in beginning sprints
 - Dev focuses on larger/more complex items that we would expect more bugs to be found
 - QA is able to write as many test cases as possible
 - Middle of release cycle:

- BA is finalizing requirements or refining requirements based on Dev/QA questions and takes those to business
- Dev is looking to complete large/complex items, including bugs found during first round of testing, begins lesser complex items
- QA has started testing, finalizing test case creation
- End of release cycle:
 - BA is completing BA reviews, release notes, user stories
 - Dev is working on refining previous dev work complete, small items/bugs
 - QA is focused on testing

Increment = result of a sprint. Used to measure if team met the sprint goal. We often fall short due to how thin we are spread within a sprint and the fact that our release cycles are so long that we can afford to have incomplete work (to a point). That incomplete work is what we refer to as carry over and we don't necessarily plan to have a functioning increment at the end of a sprint.

As we transition to microservices we will have to become accustomed to operating in much shorter cycles. Thus increasing the importance of all of these artifacts. The best way for us to achieve that is through setting and meeting sprint goals and providing working increments.

I view the period of time we have to transition from monolithic to microservices as an opportunity for us to refine these practices so we are operating successfully once we are fully in a microservices world.

Value of Scrum

- Brings agile planning practices to complex work while remaining light enough to be suited to any team/environment
- Gives power and control to the Scrum Team over process, practices, work decisions (when/how), and tools
- Provides visibility, transparency, and understanding to what the team goals are
- Does not burden team with overhead
- Allows team to remain agile in order to keep up with evolving/changing business needs

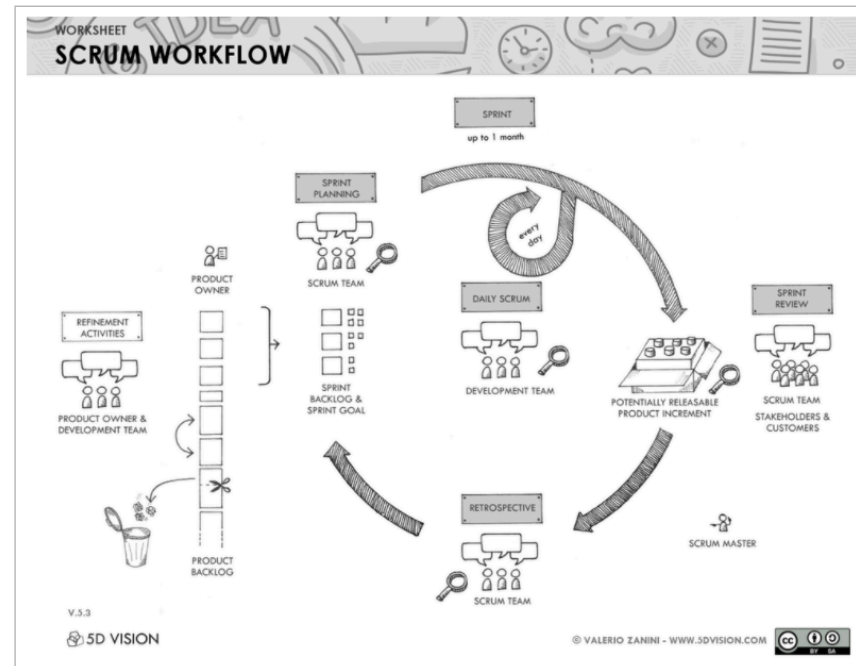
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Power to the team within a framework designed to maximize value while completing complex work.

Agile enough to keep up with evolving/changing business needs - realize this more when we move to microservices. How many items do we have in backlog that have simply become outdated/not needed because they weren't high enough priority for us to get to before business needs changed.

Important Aspect of Scrum

- Scrum must be applied holistically to realize fullest potential and value
- Each part of scrum supports the three pillars; transparency, inspection, adaptation
- Scrum values allow team members to thrive by making their own decisions that are best for the team in order to deliver value
- Scrum theory supports continual improvements in short periods over achieving large bodies of work over long durations of time
- Scrum itself is iterative, meaning, team continuously looks for ways to improve upon how they implement Scrum



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Complete lifecycle view of scrum events and artifacts

Events are encased in boxes;

- Sprint planning
- Sprint
- Daily Scrum
- Sprint Review
- Sprint Retrospective

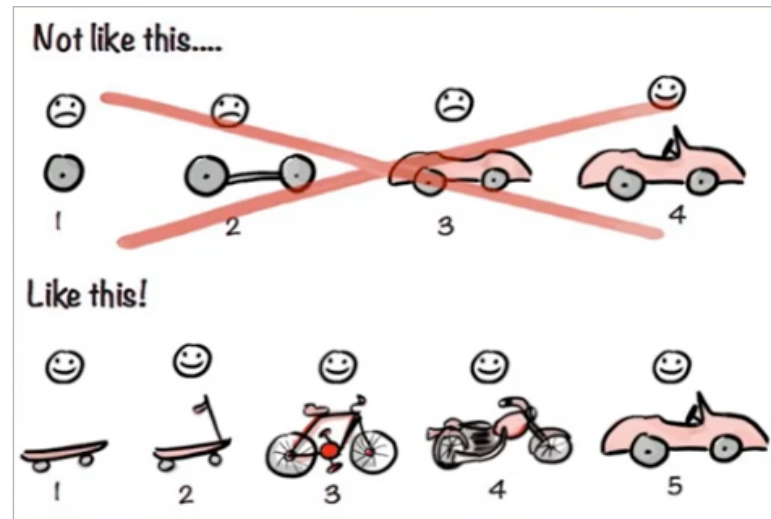
Artifacts;

Product Backlog

Sprint Backlog

Increment

Iterative Approach



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Top sequence = waterfall model (milestone based)

- Takes a long time to realize value
- By the time product is complete it may be outdated or no longer needed by the business
- Customer is not happy until the end

Bottom sequence = scrum (incremental approach)

- Customer realizes some level of value immediately
- Builds upon previous increments
- Adaptive, allowing team to be agile and meet changing customer needs