Getting Started with Scrum 1.0

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Introduction

With the ever chaging requirements in today's software development industry, software providers must adapt and respond. Gone is the days of rigid process. Defining everything, down to the nitty gritty details even before the development process begins is a thing of past nowadays we must focus on feedback and communication.

Agile is a development process focused on responding to changes, tight feedback loop, open communication and being receptive of stakeholder feedbacks. In the real world requirements constantly change what you conceptualized several months ago might not be exactly reflect your requirements now.

Scrum is an Agile framework with a focus on management structure rather than engineering. It gives you significant leeway to apply it on concert with several engineering practices like pair programming, Test Drive Development, Automated Testing, etc as it doesn't explicitly require a specific engineering approach.

What is Scrum?

Scrum is an iterative and incremental approach in product, project and/or product development. These iterations are called **sprints**, usually done between 1 - 4 weeks time. At the start of the sprint the **scrum team** selects from the list of requirements from a prioritized list. Each item is accompanied by the story pThe selected items are expected to be delivered by the end of the sprint. Every end of the sprint the team should, at the very least, deliver the potentially shippable or a working increment of the product.

However, it is encouraged that you tweak scrum to better fit your scenario. Since it is a management practice you are not bound by industry specific restrictions. As a matter of fact, Scrum is practiced in different industries.

User Story

User stories is the form where requirements are written in Scrum. They are written from the perspective of the user of that feature.

Example:

```
As a user, I want to be able to register into the site using my email address
```

Each user story is accompanied with a size(estimate) indicating the effort required to accomplish it.

Sizing and Estimation

User stories need have a indicator with them to determine(guess) the effort required to accomplish them. Estimates need not to be accurate, just consistent all throughout the project.

You can just write stories and provide the later this helps us in avoiding arbitrarily sizing stories that we dont understand quite well yet.

The canon sizing method is with planning poker cards. However, there is no strict rule prohibiting you from adopting a different sizing method. Often times, teams devise their own sizing strategy what is important is you have a great knowledge and understading of Scrum to effectively modify it without losing its core principles.

Methods

Five Fingers

```
1, 2, 3, 4, 5
```

Powers of 2

```
1, 2, 4, 8, 16
```

Fibonacci Sequence

```
1, 2, 3, 5, 8
```

Shirt Sizes

```
S, M, L, XL
```

Artifacts

Product Backlog

The master list of all project/product requirements, managed by the Product Owner. The product owner is also responsible in prioritizing the items, high priority items should be placed on top.

Sprint Backlog

List of items to completed in a sprint, the items placed in this list is taken from the ***Product Backlog***.

Burndown Chart

Graph of the user story points completed by the team. This is a negative graph where the points accomplished are deducted to the total points in the sprint. The aim is to show ***0(zero)*** points remaining at the end or before the end of the sprint.

Roles

Scrum Team

The scrum team consists of members of varying capabilities, from an app development perspective it is composed of developers, designers, testers, etc. The recommended size of a scrum team is 7+/-2. However, in large and complex projects what is usually done is you have **scrum of scrums** wherein you have a large team subvided to multiple smaller teams each tasked in delivering a certain component of the project.

Product Owner

Product Owner represents external stakeholders for the project. He/She acts as the point-of-contact of stakeholders(users, managers, executive team, etc) to relay their feedback to the development team. This is done to limit the noise in conversation and have a directly responsible individual in mapping out deliverables, timeline and expectations regarding the project. He/She is ultimately responsible on what goes into the **product backlog**

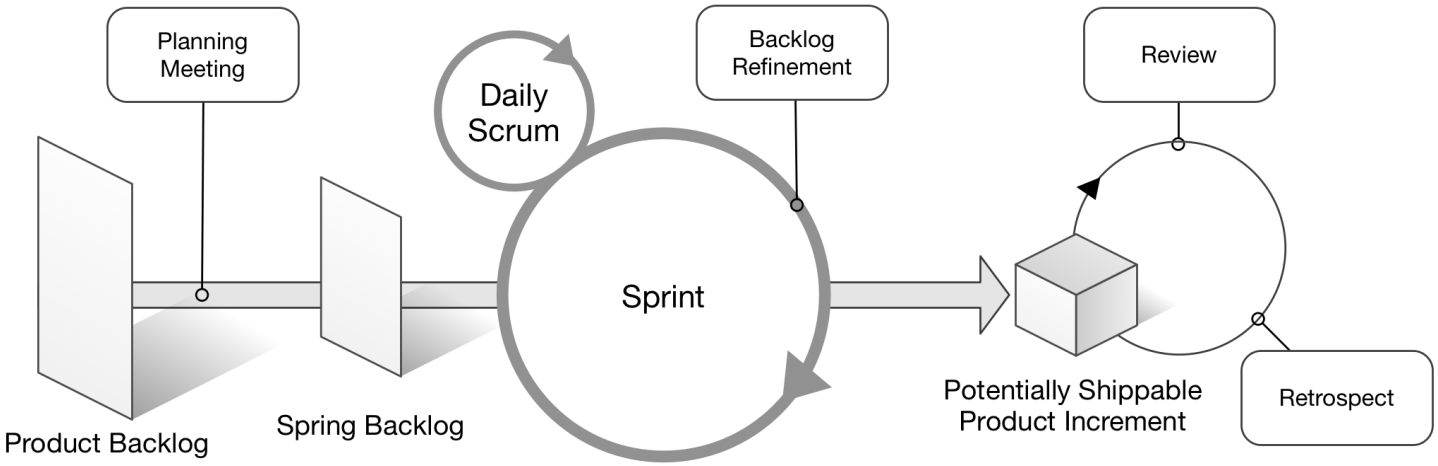
Scrum Master

The primary function of the Scrum Master is to facilitate the Scrum process and ensure it is religiously followed. Guiding the team, product owner and upper management in navigating their way into Scrum is an essential

part in the role of being the Scrum Master. Contrary to popular notion, Scrum Master is not responsible for the project deliverables his responsiblity primarily lies on making sure that the process is followed along with transparency and tight feedbac loop.

Process

Scrum revolves around sprints. An entire development process is encapsulated in a sprint, with each sprint having a defined deliverable. The premise of scrum is to provide a consistent and predictable stream of output.



Sprint Planing Meeting

Before the start of each sprint the scrum team together with the product owner and scrum master discuss on what items to prioritize, brief the team of the goal of the sprint and set the mindset to achieve the deliverable expected by the stakeholders. This meeting revolves around the Product Owner talking about the priorities and expected deliverable. Defining the sprint deliverable is a collegiate process setting a realistic expectation is key. Based heavily on the track record and skill level of the team. At the end of the meeting there should be sprint backlog for the team to follow in the sprint.

Sprint

This is the actual development process. Where the product is done, tested and sent for acceptance. The key in doing sprints is to set a consistent, predictable and sustainable pace for your development. We dont want to burnout our team by having to many.

No changes to the sprint backlog maybe done once the sprint has started. If there is a great need to change the sprint backlog you may abort the current sprint and start a new one with the appropriate changes.

Daily Scrum

In the duration of the sprint, everyday the entire team meets for 15-minutes. During the 15-minute meeting each and everyone answers three questions. Those questions are:

1. What did I do yesterday?
2. What will I do today?
3. Is/Are there anything that impedes me from accomplishing my task(s)?

The goal of the Daily Scrum is to inform the entire team of the each members tasks and current status. Discussions on issues is not encouraged during Daily Scrum, a separate meeting composing only those involved should be set.

Product Backlog Refinement Meeting

Towards the end of the sprint the entire team together with the Product Owner to better structure and estimate remaining items in the Product Backlog, this is done before ending the sprint so the learnings of the current sprint can be applied prior to starting a new one.

The goal is to have a clear understading of the stories and tasks associated with it.

Sprint Review Meeting

At the end of the sprint we will reveiew the deliverable, this is best done in demo form wherein the scrum team would go through what was accomplished by through a demo.

In this meeting, stakeholders(management, users, etc) can be invited but they only watch. If they have comments and/or feedback it is best coursed through the Product Owner so he/she can consolidate them and present them to the team in a structured form.

The goal of the Sprint Review Meeting is to provide a first hand insight on what was accomplished and also learn the perspective of the time on how they see the product taking shape. This can also be consider a Release meeting where all of those involved in the project are present to see each iteration of the product/project.

Sprint Retrospective Meeting

While the Sprint Review Meeting focuses on the ***what***(deliverable) the Sprint Retrospective Meeting focuses on the ***how***(process). The goal of this meeting is to improve productivity of the team and making them work together more seamlessly.

During the retrospect meeting each member of the team would answer these questions:

1. What works?
2. What we should stop doing?
3. What we should start doing?

How to improve estimates and maximing work during sprints should also be tackled in this meeting.

Updating the Product Backlog

The Product Owner is free to add, remove and change items in the Product Backlog at anytime. It is important that the Product Owner regularly communicates with the Stakeholders so he/she can accurately and timely adjust the Product Backlog.

Dealing with Bugs/Defects

When a bug is encountered during the development of a user story it is best resolve the bug within the development effort of that story without adding an entry into the backlog. However if a bug takes more than a day to resolve it is recommended to have a backlog entry due to the effort required to finish it.

References

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