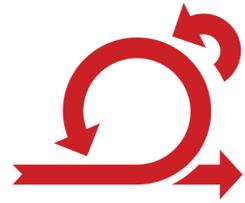


Distributed Teams: Scrum Events Checklist



The Sprint

A set period of time in which the work gets done. It removes uncertainty. It provides structure. This is when all the work and events take place.

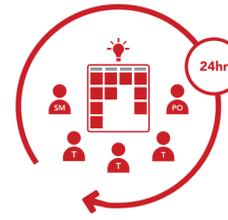
- Our Sprint has a short and set time horizon (one to four weeks)
- Events take place regularly and predictably
- Scope may be clarified and renegotiated with the Product Owner as more is learned



Sprint Planning

Alignment is critical in a distributed environment. A clear Sprint Backlog is created and the Team has an understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

- Identify Team capacity for the upcoming Sprint
- We have a Sprint Goal representing the top priority work to be completed
- Add **Kaizen** and **Buffer**
- Product Owner presents the Backlog
- As needed: reprioritize, re-estimate, split, or combine stories
- Team pulls top priority Backlog items based on **Yesterday's Weather** or select items that achieve the Sprint Goal
- Product Owner and Team agree on Sprint Goal



The Daily Scrum

The Daily Scrum is where Scrum Teams give clarity on where the work stands and to replan based on feedback, impediments, or emergent changes.

- We replan the Sprint, if needed, based on emerging conditions or work
- Lasts no more than 15-minutes
- Any needed conversations that arise from the Daily Scrum are held in a “**parking lot**” after the event concludes
- We inspect Team progress towards our Sprint Goal by answering questions like:
 - What did I do yesterday to help the team meet the Sprint Goal?
 - What will I do today to help the Team meet the Sprint Goal?
 - Do I see any impediments that may prevent the Team from meeting the Sprint Goal?



Sprint Review

This is where stakeholders and customers give feedback on what the Scrum Team has accomplished each Sprint. Feedback is always key.

- What was our Goal for the Sprint?
- Demonstrate completed work to customers and/or stakeholders
- Collect feedback from customers and/or stakeholders
- Update Product Backlog based on feedback
- Update **Release Burndown** based on completed work



Sprint Retrospective

Teams focus on the process and identify what worked, what didn't, and what we can do better. Process will need to be examined, iterated on, and improved.

- Did we meet our Sprint commitment? If not, Why?
- Gather Data:
 - A timeline of what happened & were those things good, or could have been better?
 - Track Happiness: Role, Team, Company
- Generate Insights:
 - Why did the “could have been better” items happen?
 - What could we do differently in the future, then decide on a **Kaizen**
- Closing:
 - How are we going to measure the **Kaizen**

Key Terms

Velocity - A measure of the amount of work a Team can complete during a single Sprint. It is the key metric in Scrum. Velocity is calculated at the end of the Sprint by totaling the Story Points for all fully completed work items.

Yesterday's Weather - How many Points a Team will likely complete in the upcoming Sprint based on past performance. It is calculated by the average Velocity of the past 3 Sprints adjusted for capacity.

Parking Lot - A parking lot is a conversation that takes place after the Daily Scrum. Only those that need or choose to take part in the discussion attend. The purpose is to address any problems or topics that arise in the Daily Scrum but can't be discussed inside the 15-minute time-box.

Buffer - A way to plan for unplanned work or business-critical interruptions. This is a team decision based on history and anticipated events. The buffer size should be based on the average amount of interrupt work done in the last 3 Sprints. The Product Owner must prioritize interrupts.

Release Burndown - A release burndown is a chart that uses velocity and remaining work estimates to plot an approximate release date to deliver a desired level of functionality.

Kaizen - Process Improvement is the goal of the Sprint Retrospective event. The Team should identify one process improvement as a story and backlog item when Planning their next Sprint.

Learn more about the key terms at www.scruminc.com

Distributed Teams: Picking the Right Tools

There are simply a ton of tools out there. A quick google search will bring you long lists of options. This checklist will focus on features you should consider not which tool you should pick. The key is to find a tool that works right for your team, process, or organization. Tools work for you, not the other way around. That's one reason "Individuals and interactions over processes and tools" is the first value listed in the Agile Manifesto.



Video Communication

Video services are cheap. Some are basically free. But the real reason to use them is the improved level of communication virtual face-to-face provides. An immense amount of our brain has evolved to read the emotions and thoughts visible on another human's face. Additionally, features like 'Share a Screen', easy recording of video conferences, and integration with your calendar of choice, help communication saturation.



Accessible Backlog

Backlogs are a great way to make sure a Team is aligned and focused on priority work. But they have to be transparent and accessible for that to work. The team needs to know both what the Product Owner wants, and why. This context is key for teams working remotely. Your tool should clearly show what your team needs to know, but not lock you into a format you're not comfortable with or limits your workflow.



Collaborative Workspaces

Distributed teams need a single place to create, store, and share their work. That place must also allow multiple people to work on the same thing at the same time collaboratively. You can probably name three companies right now that allow you to do this. The key here is to pick one and go with it. So long as your team members can work collaboratively and comfortably with it.



Quick Communication Tools

Emails will always have a place. But with distributed teams, emails alone won't cut it. Text-based communication tools are faster than email, can often be threaded together or sorted into channels, and best simulate the productive chat that happens in an office environment. Plus, most allow you to share files and documents quickly and integrate other systems your distributed team is using. But note - many have a limit on how long a piece of information will be stored in the system. These are good for communicating 'now' but not archiving information.



Swarming

Our final tool is really a pattern, something high performing teams do to boost their productivity. Swarming is when multiple team members work collaboratively (usually over a video conference link) on a single work item until it is done. Data shows this is a huge driver of productivity. But it also is a great way for newly launched distributed teams to fine-tune a new way of working together.