

SPRINT PLANNING - HOW

Best practices for supporting agile teams to be self-managing and cross-functional.



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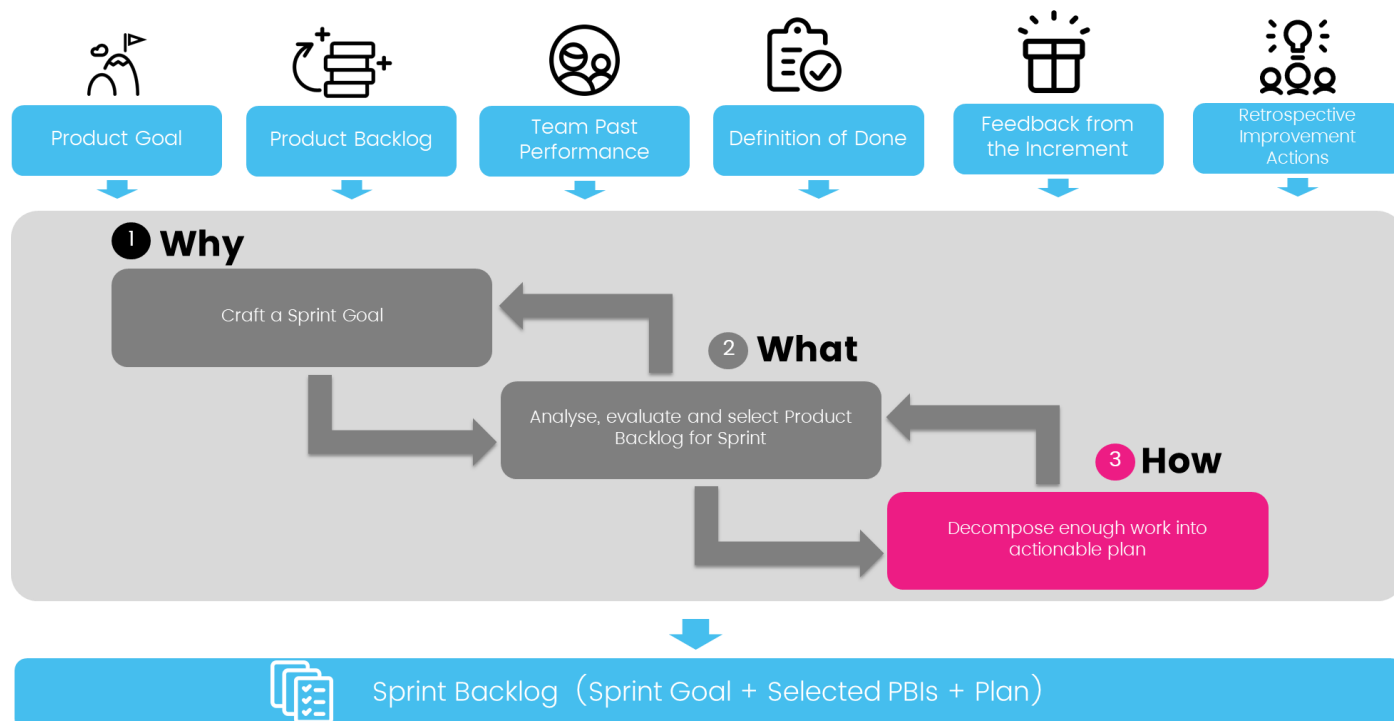


Sprint Planning initiates the Sprint by laying out the work to be performed for the Sprint. Topic three of Sprint Planning addresses how the chosen work gets done.

PURPOSE

Like every event in Scrum, Sprint Planning is all about empiricism. Its purpose is for the Scrum Team to inspect the Product Backlog and to create the Sprint Backlog. The Sprint Backlog represents the plan to achieve the Sprint Goal and to create a potentially releasable Increment of work.

Time-box: Maximum of eight hours for a one-month Sprint for Sprint Planning. For shorter Sprints, the event is usually shorter.





WHO ATTENDS?

Role

Developers (people in the team developing the product)

Scrum Master

Product Owner



KEY ARTEFACTS

- **Product Backlog** – The Product Backlog is an emergent, ordered list of what is needed to improve the product and achieve the product's goal. It is the single source of work undertaken by the Scrum Team. Product Backlog items that can be Done by the Scrum Team within one Sprint are deemed ready for selection in a Sprint Planning event.
- **Sprint Backlog** – The Sprint Backlog is composed of the Sprint Goal (why), the set of Product Backlog items selected for the Sprint (what), as well as an actionable plan for delivering the Increment (how).



AGENDA

Scrum Master

- Supports and encourages self-management within the guide rails of Scrum's rules
- Helps Developers to take account of the time-box for the Sprint and their capacity to deliver their Increment of Done, including dates, working days and holidays, leave, availability, skills and capabilities, etc.
- Reminds the Team that all work undertaken must contribute to helping the Increment achieve the Definition of Done.

Developers

- Discusses the objectives of the Product Owner.
- Discusses the Product Backlog items.
- Creates a plan for delivery of the items.
- Creates the Sprint Backlog.
- Reviews its notes regarding complexity, effort and dependencies.
- Writes sufficient tasks to remind themselves how to complete Product Backlog items so that it meets the Definition of Done.
- Assesses the skills it needs to achieve the Definition of Done for each Product Backlog item.
- Assesses any Patterns it needs to use to satisfy the Definition of Done.
- Assesses any artefacts it may need to create in order to solidify its understanding of each item's requirements.
- Stops writing tasks when it reaches a decision regarding how many items it can commit to this Sprint.
- Discusses where Pairing would be of greatest advantage to the Team.

Product Owner

- Returns when Developers have finished their plan.
- Listens to the plan and considers it in terms of value and alignment to their objectives,

Scrum Team – Product Owner, Scrum Master and Developers

- Creates a Sprint Goal for delivery to help keep the whole team focussed throughout the Sprint on what is of greatest value.



KEY OUTCOMES

- Sprint Goal is created – the single objective for the Sprint. It creates coherence and focus, encouraging the Scrum Team to work together rather than on separate initiatives.
- Sprint Backlog is created.
- Shared understanding within the Scrum Team – including Product Owner, Scrum Master – as to the direction of the Sprint, what it will deliver, and what outcome will be created by achieving the Sprint Goal.
- Confidence within the Scrum Team of the plan.



COMMITMENT

- Developers commit to conforming to the Definition of Done – the formal description of the state of the Increment when it meets the quality measures required for the product.
- Developers commit to achieving the Sprint Goal. It provides flexibility in terms of the exact work needed to achieve it, while creating focus, encouraging the Scrum Team to work together rather than on separate initiatives.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Increment** – An Increment must be created during the Sprint. It is a concrete stepping stone toward the Product Goal. Each Increment is additive to all prior Increments and thoroughly verified, ensuring that all Increments work together. In order to provide value, the Increment must be usable. Multiple Increments may be created within a Sprint. The sum of the Increments is presented at the Sprint Review thus supporting empiricism. However, an Increment may be delivered to stakeholders prior to the end of the Sprint. The Sprint Review should never be considered a gate to releasing value. Work cannot be considered part of an Increment unless it meets the Definition of Done.
- **Definition of Done** – The Definition of Done is a formal description of the state of the Increment when it meets the quality measures required for the product or service the Scrum Team delivers. The moment a Product Backlog item meets the Definition of Done, an Increment is born. The Definition of Done creates transparency by providing everyone a shared understanding of what work was completed as part of the Increment. If a Product Backlog item does not meet the Definition of Done, it cannot be released or even presented at the Sprint Review. Instead, it returns to the Product Backlog for future consideration.
- **Sustainable pace** – Developers should only take on as many items as can be produced at a pace that is sustainable throughout the Sprint. There should be no inference that any item should require 'hero work'. Working at a sustainable pace gives an improved forecast of what the Scrum Team can actually deliver within a Sprint.
- **Collaborative work** – The team's plans should reinforce the need to collaborate together on the solution, rather than work independently based exclusively on their area of expertise.
- **Pairing** – Pairing reduces defects and rework and increases the efficiency of knowledge transfer about issues and requirements, but adds an additional 10-20% to the time to complete a task. This factor is to be taken into consideration when Developers decide how much can be Done in the Sprint.

COMMON OBSTACLES TO AVOID

- The Sprint Goal is reduced to "deliver these Product Backlog items". The Goal should be a simple statement of intent – what impact will it create or outcome the work will achieve when its delivered at the end of the Sprint.
- The Sprint is "Waterfalled". The whole Sprint is broken into phases of design, development and testing and developers are left without work to do half way through the Sprint.
- The work is siloed and there is no sense of a whole "team" plan. People intend on just doing their own work and the plan reflects this. A Scrum Master will help the team self-manage by encouraging collaboration, working to remove functional silos, and helping the team focus on delivery of the Sprint Goal over individuals' tasks.
- The Team over commits itself. Use the average Velocity for the last few Sprints as an indicator of what can be achieved during the Sprint. Adjust the average velocity for any planned leave, the average unplanned leave, and any public holidays.
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