SCRUM & SCRUM MASTER
A Comprehensive Study Guide for 2021

This Scrum and Scrum Master Guide is a free, quick reference material designed to help aspiring scrum masters discover the ins and outs of Scrum. It throws light on the fundamental principles of the scrum, scrum terminologies, Agile Manifesto, scrum theories, scrum tools, different roles, responsibilities, and more.

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Who Is a Scrum Master?

The role of a Scrum Master is rooted in leadership. He or she is responsible for facilitating a true scrum process for the product owner, scrum team, and the organization during the course of a project. Scrum Masters are considered as servant leaders as they attempt to offer holistic leadership and support shared decision-making power. They play a key role in preventing the project from failing with their comprehensive understanding of theories, practices, values, and rules of scrum.

Why Do Organizations Use Scrum?

If you are wondering why organizations use Scrum, the answer is that Scrum principles help them generate value through adaptable solutions and motivates them to consistently improve by keeping track of their wins and losses.

From the IT industry, the application of Scrum extends to food and beverage, education, customer support, insurance, automotive, manufacturing, and healthcare among many others. Various sectors have started implementing Scrum practices to accomplish complex projects on time without compromising on quality and to handle development teams seamlessly for improved Agile project management.

From Fortune 500 organizations to small businesses and traditional industries, the majority use the Scrum framework. Here's a list of prominent brands that have embraced Scrum and Agile practices to make their development teams self-organized and capable of delivering the highest business value within the deadlines:

SIEMENS   yahoo!   Google   NETFLIX

ZURICH   Bank of Ireland   airbnb   facebook

HSBC   Deloitte.   IBM

salesforce   RYANAIR   sage   3M

amazon   LEGO

Lean, Agile, Scrum
Terminologies and the Intersection

Apart from Scrum, Lean and Agile are the two trending frameworks. If you are in the project management space or interested in building a career in this high demand field, you must've heard of these terms.
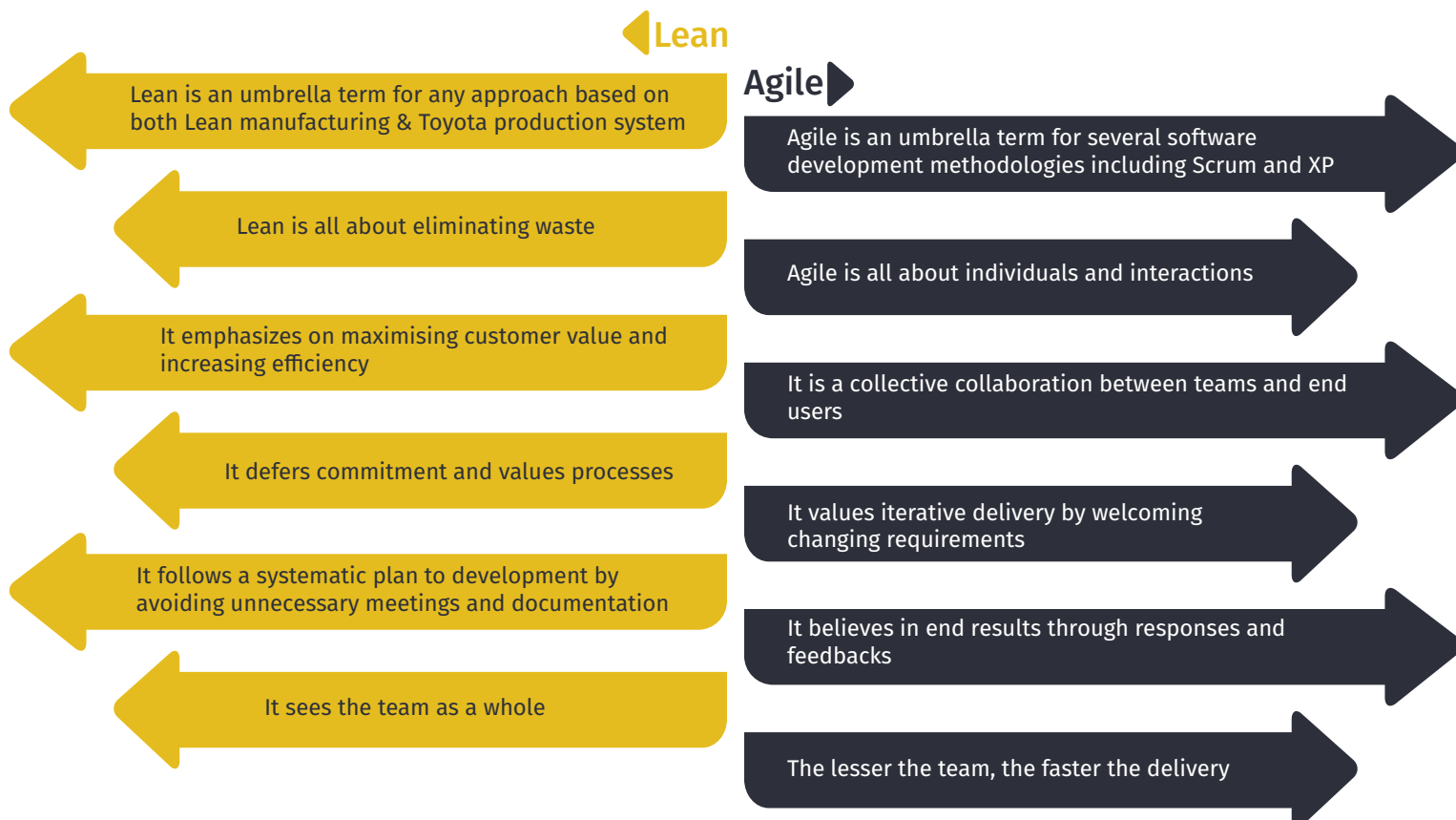
However, before diving deep into the Scrum Master Study Guide, it's crucial to understand the difference between Agile and Scrum and where Lean fits in. The reason is, these three concepts are closely interrelated in project management.

Agile and Lean are technically different but both are iterative and experimental project management approaches that aim to deliver faster and more sustainable results. Both of these approaches have emerged to fill the gaps of the waterfall project management process.

Scrum is a sprint-driven Agile implementation framework, which is a shorter and more adaptive approach for seamless project planning and production. The goal of Scrum is to build an end product that is delivered faster and is completely aligned with specific user requirements, with minimal fluff.

Lean, Agile, and Scrum are closely interconnected as they focus on the target users and provide them with an end product as efficiently as possible. Furthermore, the key to a successful project is not just choosing the right methodology by executing it in a skilled way.

◀ Lean

Agile ▶

- Lean is an umbrella term for any approach based on both Lean manufacturing & Toyota production system
- Lean is all about eliminating waste
- It emphasizes on maximising customer value and increasing efficiency
- It defers commitment and values processes
- It follows a systematic plan to development by avoiding unnecessary meetings and documentation
- It sees the team as a whole

- Agile is an umbrella term for several software development methodologies including Scrum and XP
- Agile is all about individuals and interactions
- It is a collective collaboration between teams and end users
- It values iterative delivery by welcoming changing requirements
- It believes in end results through responses and feedbacks
- The lesser the team, the faster the delivery

What is the Scrum Alliance?

Scrum Alliance is a non-profit and the largest professional membership and certification body in the Agile community, established in 2001. The benefits of joining the Scrum Alliance include getting to be a part of the largest Scrum community. What's better than gaining expert advice and having a chance to share knowledge with others!

Scrum Alliance steers your professional life in the right direction through a wide range of jobs and volunteer opportunities.

Why become a Certified Scrum Master?

Benefits of having a **Scrum Alliance Membership**

Connect   Community   Career   Callibrate   Collaborate

Getting Scrum certified is instrumental to becoming an efficient Scrum Master. It helps you enter the elite group of Scrum professionals capable of guiding their teams and leading them toward success. Becoming a certified Scrum Master sets you apart from other non-certified project managers as you gain comprehensive knowledge of the best Agile practices and learn ways to implement them.

Organizations prefer hiring certified professionals over known certified candidates, as the credential validates your knowledge of the Scrum principles over a non-certified candidate.

The demand for Scrum professionals is increasing, and getting certified in such a time expands your career opportunities. At the same time, it gives you an edge over job seekers competing for the same position who are not certified.

Getting a Scrum Master certification helps you with various aspects such as:

- Becoming efficient in running and performing complex Agile projects.
- Improving team management and collaboration to facilitate the team members to work together coherently.
- Enabling the seamless implementation of the best Scrum principles to optimize the value created by the development team and foster a high-performance work culture.
- Protecting the team from external or internal hindrances, so they can focus on delivering the best end product that's aligned with target user requirements.

Who is a good **Scrum Master?**

Facilitates the organization of ceremonies

Acts as a bridge between the PO and the team.

Takes care of bottlenecks

Guarantees smooth project management

Supports the team and encourages them.

Protects the team from the outside world

Fundamentals of Scrum

This Scrum Master Study Guide covers the Scrum fundamentals that are developed to assist new Agile teams to optimize their performance and help the old teams keep on track.

The six crucial principles that lay the foundation of the Scrum framework include:

- Regulation of the empirical processes by establishing transparency, adaptation, and evaluation.
- Self-organization to optimize the level of independence in a team.
- Seamless collaboration by encouraging awareness, clarity, and proper distribution of tasks in a team.
- Value-based prioritization based on task's value and significance for the end-users.
- Timeboxing that helps in allocating specific amounts of time for certain crucial activities.
- Iterative development by adjusting and revising project requirements regularly and repeating, revisiting, and reworking software development activities for designing the best end product.

12 Principles and 4 Values of Agile

The Agile manifesto is the underlying principle behind modern project development frameworks, including Scrum. The manifesto has 4 crucial values and 12 principles that help in delivering quality products by staying within the constraints of the project
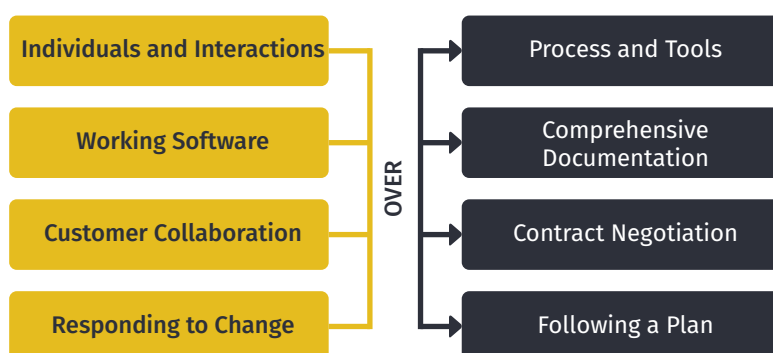
The 12 Principles of Agile Manifesto

1. Attain customer satisfaction with the help of continuous delivery of the product.

2. For quicker completion and seamless integration, larger chunks of work can be divided into smaller achievable segments.

3. Stick to the decided deadline for the delivery of the end product.

4. Seamless stakeholders' collaboration to ensure that the project is going in the right direction.

5. Foster a supportive environment to keep team members motivated.

6. Prioritize in-person communication over other techniques.

7. Working products are the principal measure of progress.

8. Maintain a consistent pace of development.

9. Focus on technical details for maintaining the quality of the end product.

10. Sustain clarity in everything.

11. Encourage self-organization within the Agile team.

12. Evaluate performance regularly for continuous improvement.

The 4 Values of the Agile Manifesto

1. Interactions and individuals are given importance over tools and processes to ensure that all concerns of the clients are properly dealt with.

2. Functioning products are more important than comprehensive documentation, so that the development team can focus on accomplishing the final deliverables.

3. Customer collaboration is given priority over contract negotiations, because customers are actively involved during all the project phases.

4. Responding to any change is more crucial than sticking to the plan, so that teams can adapt quickly to deliver an extraordinary end product aligned with specific customer requirements.
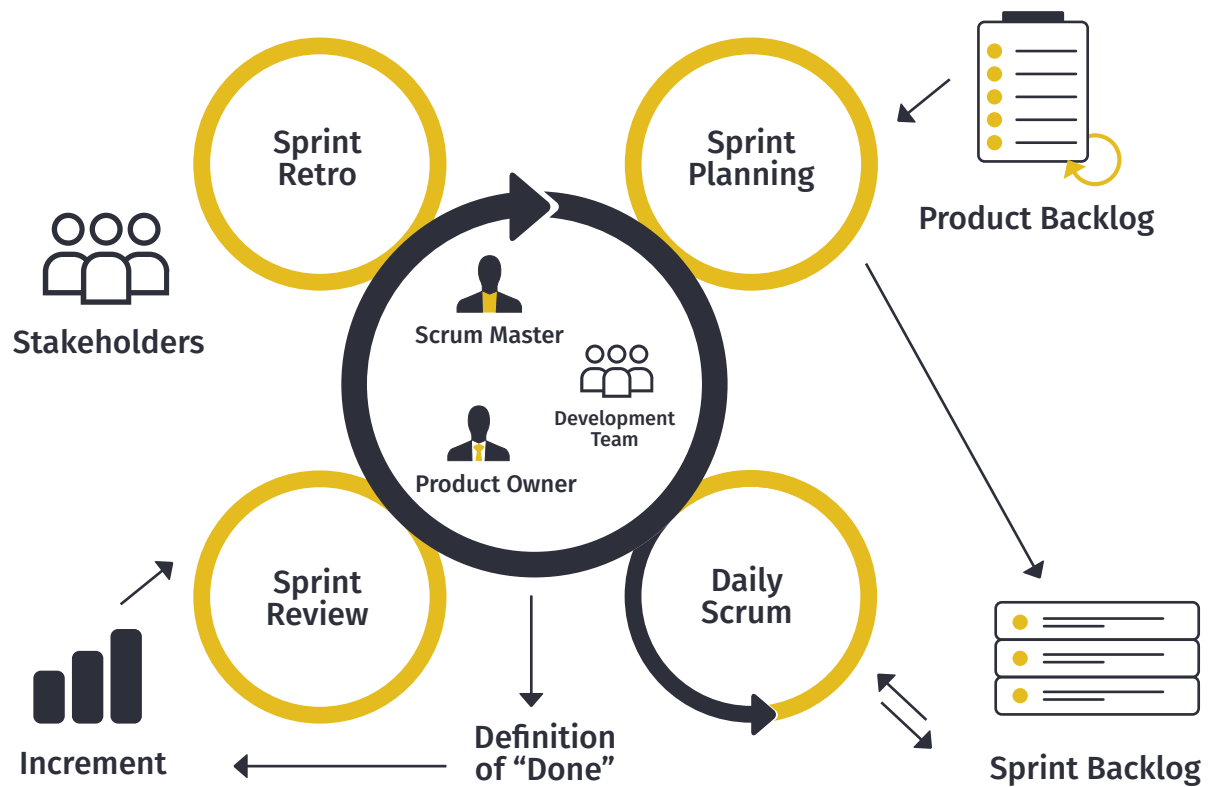
Agile Project Management Methodology

What is the Agile Manifesto?

Individuals and Interactions	OVER	Process and Tools
Working Software		Comprehensive Documentation
Customer Collaboration		Contract Negotiation
Responding to Change		Following a Plan

Why Is Scrum a Framework and Not a Methodology?

Scrum is not a methodology because it does not have any exhaustive guidelines on how to plan and design the actions, behavior, and work of the team members involved in product development.

Methodologies are usually composed of a strict and mandatory series of procedures and processes that impose predefined algorithms.

In the place of programmed algorithms, Scrum implements an empirical one that gives liberty to the people to self organize and deal with the uncertainties of Agile projects to solve complex issues.

Scrum is not a commanding or a repeatable methodology because it doesn't enforce top-down control or impose repeatable actions and algorithmically predictable steps. Rather, it helps streamline daily development processes and structures the way of working for Agile teams.

Scrum is more about behavior than it is about the processes as it helps development teams create a flexible framework capable of regular adaptations and inspections.

In simple terms, Scrum emphasizes more on "what's" involved in building complex end products rather than instructing on "how" to do it.
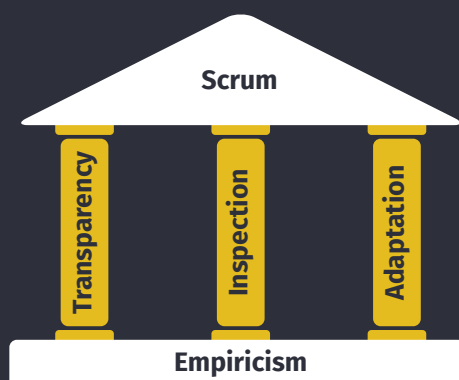
Scrum Principles and Theories

In the Scrum Master Study Guide, you will understand the Scrum theory that is based on empiricism or empirical process control theory. That is, Scrum works on the concept that knowledge comes from experience and that decisions based on what is already known. Scrum implements an incremental and iterative approach to maximize predictability and keep risks in control.

Empiricism works on transparency, inspection, and adaptation. Scrum teams operate in transparency because it develops trust between the team members. Every member must be honest and transparent in what they do. The processes must be visible to those who are responsible for creating the outcome.
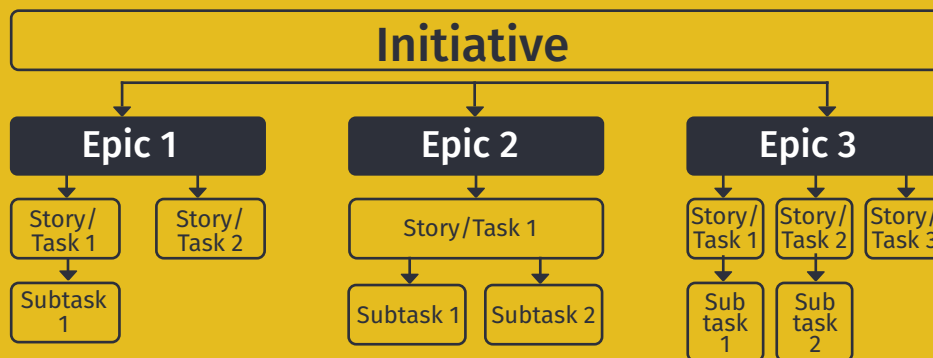
Scrum teams consistently check on progress, which is the idea behind inspection. The Scrum team examines the progress towards the sprint goal to identify undesirable variances and make enhancements based on what they have found, which is adaptation.

The ability to regularly inspect and adapt is extremely crucial in the contemporary business economy because it helps in consistently improving the product before, during, and after its release.

Scrum

Transparency | Inspection | Adaptation

Empiricism

How would you define User stories and Epics?

User stories and Epics are simple structures that help Agile teams smoothly organize work and manage scope. User stories and epics in a Scrum or Agile environment are similar to epics in literature or movies whereas stories are narratives and a series of interrelated stories from an epic.

User Stories

User stories or stories are small requests or requirements designed from the perspective of the end customers. User stories are customer-focused lines of description of the work the Agile development team should take care of.

Epics

Epics are larger bodies or chunks of work that can be divided into several smaller tasks known as user stories. They are larger user stories that cannot be delivered within a single iteration.

Epics allow you to monitor large or loosely defined ideas in your backlog and establish a hierarchy of backlog items without overpopulating them.

The development team can commit to accomplishing user stories within a one or two-week sprint. However, there are usually fewer epics that take longer to finish. Scrum teams usually complete two or three epics each quarter.

What does a Scrum Team look like?

A scrum team is a group of individuals, usually five to nine, operating in harmony to deliver the end product that meets the target audience's specific requirements. The members of a Scrum team share different roles and responsibilities wherein the roles are closely related to each other. Let's understand the responsibilities of Scrum team members.

A. Who is a Product Owner?

The product owner is a member of the Scrum team who is responsible for maximizing the value of the end product, which is the outcome of the development team's efforts. Product owners must have a comprehensive understanding of the end-user requirements and business case for the product.

The key roles of a product owner in Scrum, along with their responsibilities, include:

- Maximizing the value of work done by the Agile development team.
- Building a robust market strategy and product vision that meets the specific requirements of the end customers.
- Ordering, managing, and expressing the product backlog items clearly.
- Verifying transparency, visibility, and clarity of the product backlog items to everyone involved in the project.
- Having an eye for any potential opportunity to optimize the workflow.
- Analyzing the ROI and responding proactively to the potential risks and threats that might hamper the seamless operating of the project.
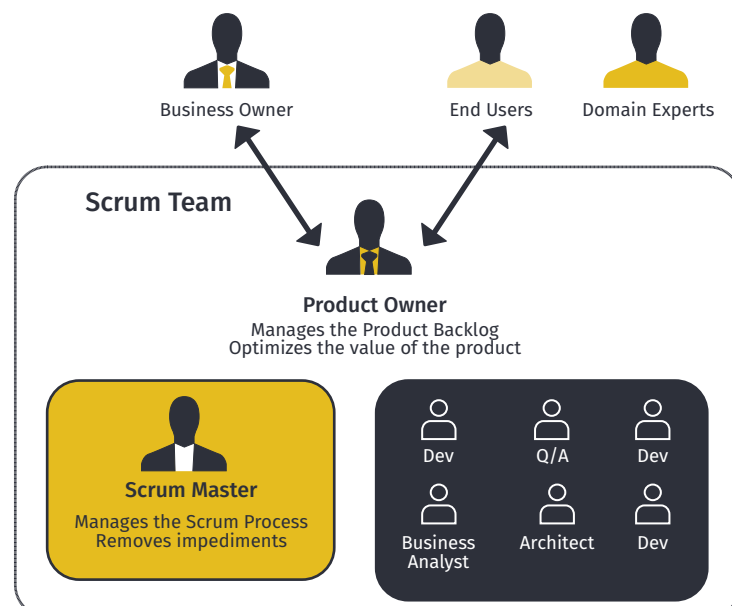
B. Who is a Scrum Master?

Initially, the term Scrum Master was used to depict a professional with in-depth expertise in implementing the Scrum framework, so that they can mentor the Agile team efficiently. A Scrum Master, ideally, is the servant-leader of the Scrum team who is responsible for ensuring that the team is following the Scrum rules, theory, and best practices.

Rather than imposing the Scrum rules on the team members, a Scrum Master makes sure that everyone involved in the project understands their respective responsibilities, methods, and principles.

Establishing a smooth process flow and enabling continuous improvement are the two crucial responsibilities of a Scrum Master. The Scrum master role and duties extend to:

- Organizing critical events and meetings.
- Eliminating obstacles that might hamper the smooth functioning of the team.
- Keeping in touch with the team to monitor work deliverables.
- Acting as a bridge between team members and stakeholders, so that there is no communication gap.
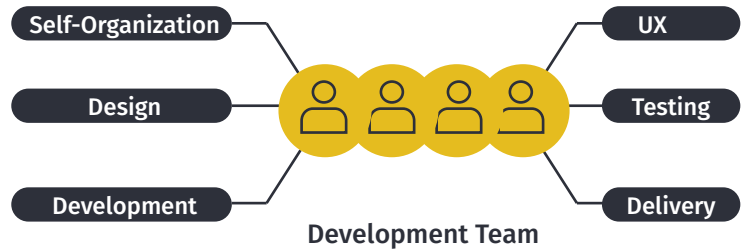- Protecting the team from external hindrances, so that the professionals can work seamlessly.

Business Owner   End Users   Domain Experts

Scrum Team

Product Owner
Manages the Product Backlog
Optimizes the value of the product

Scrum Master
Manages the Scrum Process
Removes impediments

Dev   Q/A   Dev

Business Analyst   Architect   Dev

C. **What Kind of Team Members Are Part of a Development Team?**

The development team includes various professionals, such as developers, testers, UX designers, DevOps engineers, development managers, programmers, and business analysts, among many others. They work in cohesion to deliver a potentially releasable increment of the product at the end of every sprint.

The development team is empowered and structured by companies to self-organize and manage their tasks, and the members are collectively responsible for delivering the best outcomes.

Members of the development team who are experts in one domain but rarely contribute outside of that domain are known as "I-shaped people". Besides these members, there are a few "T-shaped people" in development teams who contribute to one area broadly but also support associated tasks.

The development team has expertise in turning product backlog items into practical solutions. The team works cross-functionally to build the desired end product. In a successful organization, the team as a whole is accountable for the success or failure of any project, not the individuals.
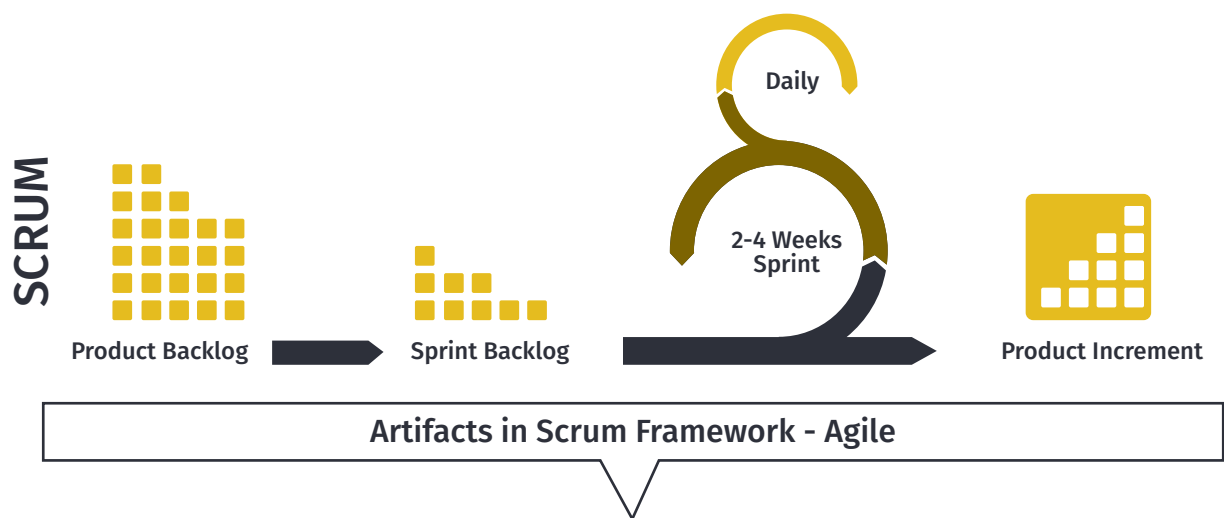

Development Team

	Analyst	Programmer	Test Engineer	Web Designer	System Engineer
Broad	Wire Executable Documents	Write Unit Test Code (xUnit)	Wire Automated Tests	UX Design	DevOps
	Requirements Engineering	Write Production Code	Functional Testing	JAVA Script, HTML, CSS, Less	Python, Perl, Go, Shell
	Write User Manuals	Design System Architecture, DB	Write Test Plan	Image, Icon, Logo Design	System and OS
	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .

Deep

Scrum Artifacts

Scrum artifacts play a crucial role in leading a Scrum team toward success by providing key information that stakeholders and Scrum team members need to be aware of. This knowledge helps them understand the specific requirements of developing the end product as well as planned and completed activities.

SCRUM

Daily

2-4 Weeks Sprint

Product Backlog → Sprint Backlog

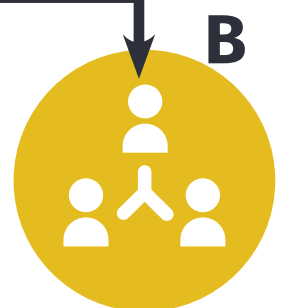Product Increment

Artifacts in Scrum Framework - Agile

A PRODUCT BACKLOG

A list of all the essential items required in the product, such as requirements, specifications, user stories, new features, bug fixes, changes to existing features, and infrastructure activities make up a product backlog. The product backlog is owned by the product owner and acts as a single authoritative resource for all items an Agile team will work on.

SPRINT BACKLOG B

The sprint backlog constitutes a list of all the product backlog items identified by the Scrum team to be accomplished during the Scrum sprint. A Scrum backlog is owned by the development team, and the team only decides whether new items should be added or old items should be removed. This helps them concentrate on a clear scope for the sprint duration.

C PRODUCT INCREMENT

The increment is the sum of all product backlog items accomplished during the current sprint and all old sprints. The new increment at the end of every sprint must be "Done," which means it should fulfill all the criteria of "Done" (as listed below) and is usable irrespective of whether the product owner decided to release it or not.
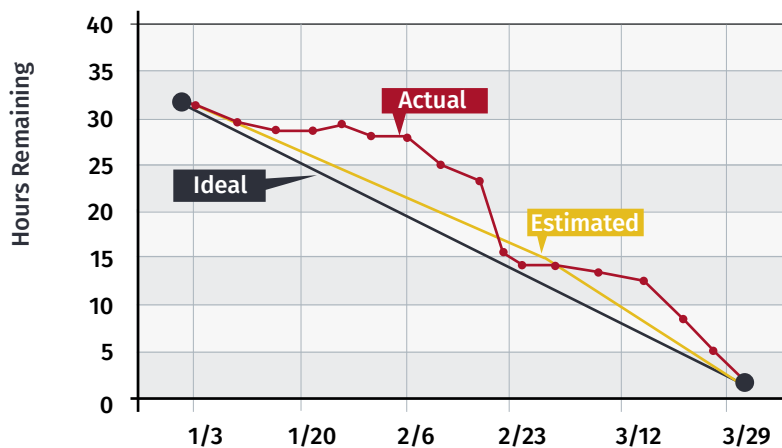
THE BURNDOWN CHART D

Burndown charts can be called graphs that provide an overview of progress over time while accomplishing an Agile project. As tasks start getting completed, the burndown chart eventually "burns down" to zero. A burndown chart guides the development team toward successful completion of the sprint within its deadline, along with a functioning end product.

Burndown Chart

What are the Scrum Ceremonies?

Scrum ceremonies are one of the integral Scrum rituals and a significant element of the Agile software development process.

Scrum ceremonies are not meetings just for the sake of it. These ceremonies provide the framework to Scrum teams, so that they can:

- Operate in a structured and organized manner.
- Establish realistic expectations.
- Collaborate seamlessly to deliver desired outcomes.

Optimizing Scrum meetings or ceremonies is the best way to optimize your Agile approach. Usually, when Agile teams give up certain Scrum ceremonies, because they don't see value in them anymore; they may also abandon the Scrum principles.

Let's explore different Scrum ceremonies in detail.

A. Sprint Planning

Sprint planning is developed to make sure that the Scrum team is ready to get the right things done in every sprint. The aim is to prepare the entire team to achieve success.

Sprint planning takes place at the start of every sprint, so that the development team, Scrum Master, and product owner can analyze the prioritized items in the product backlog. With the help of negotiations and discussions, the participants in Sprint planning design a Sprint backlog that constitutes the items they have decided to complete at the end of the sprint, which is called the sprint goal.

The product owner must have the sprint backlog ready for analysis before every sprint planning. That involves the acceptance criteria, essential details, and requirements, so that the development team can prepare for the anticipated level of effort. The product owner should tackle the assumptions and doubts of the development team, so they can precisely predict the amount of work they can complete during the sprint.

B. Daily Scrum (Daily Standup)

The daily Scrum or daily standup is the opportunity for the team to get together, plan for the day and figure out how to overcome obstacles. The Scrum Master can clarify these obstacles for the development team, so they can focus on accomplishing the work described in sprint preparation.

Daily standups give organizations a chance to come together regularly and talk about individual accomplishments toward the sprint goal.

During the daily Scrum every member of the development team has to answer questions like the following:

What did you do yesterday?
What are you going to do today?
Are there any obstacles in your path?

All daily Scrum meeting members must listen to each other and stay active throughout the session. Usually, based on the daily standup commentary, the development team finds opportunities to work together and plan their day.

C. Sprint Review

During the sprint review, all work accomplished during the sprint is showcased for the stakeholders, which happen at the end of every sprint. Sprint reviews focus on the product being made, and the increment of the product is usually generated during the sprint, theoretically.

Sprint reviews allow stakeholders to evaluate the product when it is getting built through sprint analysis. Based on the feedback, the development team can customize the product backlog. The software owner has a choice to launch all the product features that are finished.

D. Sprint Retrospective

Sprint retrospective is the concluding Scrum ceremony that lets teams assess the completed work and figure out items that could be upgraded. Sprint retrospective is also known as Agile retrospective; and it happens after the sprint analysis and before the next sprint, where the team concentrates on their operation.

The Scrum Master is present during the sprint retrospective and makes sure that all the team members are available. It allows the Scrum team to talk about things that are going well, things that need improvement, and tips for changes. The key purpose of a sprint retrospective is to strengthen team processes.
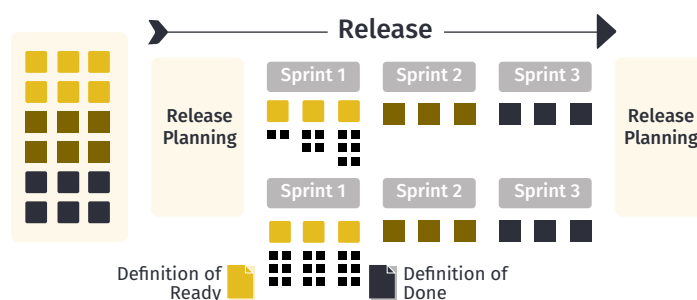
What is Release Planning?

Release planning is the guideline that reflects upon the expectations about the specific features to be incorporated and the timeline for accomplishing them. Release planning keeps track of when different sets of usable products would be delivered to the customers, so the Scrum team can have a big picture of the releases and delivery schedule of product development.

It is a collaborative effort of the entire team, but primarily the product owner is accountable for ensuring that the right decisions are made. Every Agile organization has its pattern for releasing features to customers. While some decide to release every sprint, others choose to group the results of various sprints into one sprint as exhibited below.

Three crucial questions that a scrum team needs to answer dring release planning are:

- When will it be done?
- Which features will be accomplished by the end of the sprint?
- How much will this cost?

Done or DoD is the shared understanding between the Scrum team members on what it could take to make the product increment releasable. In other words, "Done" = "Releasable".

Why Does the Scrum Master Study Guide Describe the Scrum Master as a Servant-Leader?

The role of a Scrum Master is extremely diverse as they have wide-ranging duties. An efficient Scrum Master knows about different stances and applies them based on the context and situation.

A Scrum Master acts as a servant-leader for the Scrum team. Ideally, a Scrum Master doesn't act as the master of the Scrum team but their primary responsibility is to encourage, enable, and energize team members to get along with each other and realize their full potential.

As a servant-leader, a Scrum Master has crucial responsibilities, such as:

- Mentoring the development team to be self-organized.
- Establishing Scrum as a servant process rather than a commanding process.
- Fostering a collaborative culture within the development team.
- Building transparency by conducting regular Scrum reviews and developing a visible work culture.
- Supporting the team in removing and preventing hindrances.
- Guarding the team against external or internal distractions.
- Guiding the team through healthy debate, so every team member can raise their opinions.

The 10 Stances of a Scrum Master

Process Owner
Mentor
Conflict Navigator
Manager
Change Agent
Facilitator
Unblocker
Servant-Leader
Teacher
Coach

How Would You Define Product Backlog Refinement?

What is Agile Estimation?

Product backlog refinement or grooming is the process of incorporating estimates, details, new user stories and epics, and orders to product backlog items for keeping it orderly and clean. It is an ongoing process where the development team, Scrum Master, and product owner collaborate on the product backlog item details.

Backlog grooming ensures that the backlog is populated with well-documented, relevant, and prioritized initiatives aligned with the specific requirements of the organization and customers.

If left unattended, the list of product backlog items can become quite overwhelming to the Agile team. Sometimes, individual user stories might get unclear, which can cause the team to lose focus on crucial tasks. As a result, they might face difficulty in anticipating the time and resources required to accomplish tasks, which can delay the project completion.

Proper backlog refinement helps keep user stories refined and accurate. These can be then tested and implemented more precisely to minimize uncertainties and accelerate product development.
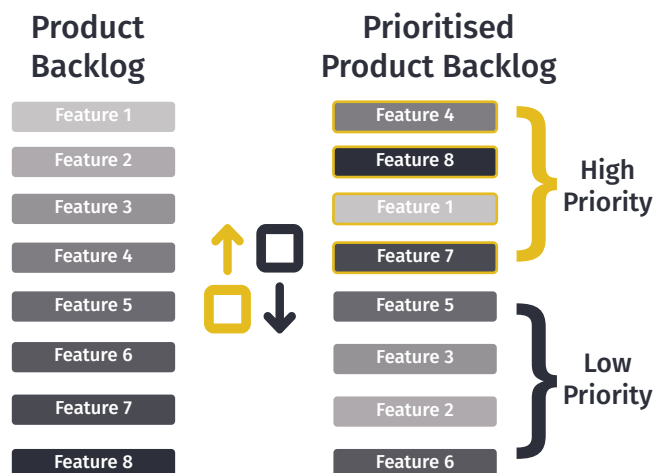
Agile estimations are plain estimates or approximations for any Agile project. Conventional estimations leverage time but Agile estimates usually make use of story points. It lets the Agile team keep track of other tasks they have to accomplish concurrently in their estimations, along with the skills of the team relative to each task.

Story points calculate problem-solving abilities and not efficiency. Agile estimations make use of a 'top-down' process that motivates the team to propose a ground-level approximation of the following:

- How long should the project take?
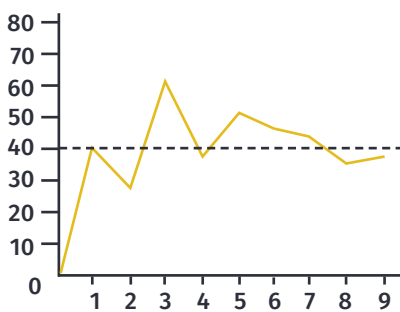- How much effort will it require?

Planning poker is one of the most commonly used consensus-based Agile estimation techniques. It makes use of story points to calculate the difficulty level of the task and is usually used to estimate the effort or relative size of Scrum user stories.

Product Backlog	Prioritised Product Backlog	
Feature 1	Feature 4	High Priority
Feature 2	Feature 8	
Feature 3	Feature 1	
Feature 4	Feature 7	
Feature 5	Feature 5	Low Priority
Feature 6	Feature 3	
Feature 7	Feature 2	
Feature 8	Feature 6	

How Is Data Collection Done in Scrum?

There are two methods or charts for data collection in Scrum, named Velocity and Burndown charts, which help Agile teams keep track of their progress. Let's look at these charts in detail.

Velocity Chart

A. What Is Velocity in Scrum?

Velocity is the process through which scrum teams calculate the amount of work they can accomplish in a sprint, which is computed historically from one sprint to the next. By tracking the number of story points the Agile team can accomplish, based on their definition of "Done", they can estimate how long it will take to complete new stories depending on their relative point value.

B. What Is a Burndown chart?

We have already discussed that a Burndown chart exhibits the Scrum team's progress toward all the tasks they've committed to accomplish in a sprint. It begins with the total number of points the team has considered for the sprint and tracks regularly how many of those points have been accomplished and are prepared for the sprint demo.

What Are the Best Tips and Tricks for Each Scrum Ceremony?

Scrum ceremonies help Agile teams design a cadence, so that the team can promote collaboration, optimize productivity, foster transparency, and adapt on their way to learning and improving throughout the project lifecycle.

Let's explore some of the best tips and tricks for making these ceremonies even more effective:

I. Sprint Planning

For an ideal sprint planning, user stories can be broken down into smaller tasks and allocated to team members, so that everyone is aware of their responsibilities. It should be a collaborative ceremony where team members can figure out any bugs or items required during this scrum meeting.

Before sprint planning starts, it is advised to calculate the team's velocity and keep all the vacations and time-off in mind to determine the accurate amount of work that can be accomplished.

Sprint planning ceremony enables the team to set up for the coming sprint by creating a smooth pathway for a successful sprint. Of course, sprint planning requires the involvement of all Scrum roles, such as the development team, Scrum Master, and product owner. The planning, prior to the sprint, typically lasts 1 to 2 hours.

The role of the product owner is to come up with the prioritized list of product backlog items. Called user stories, these items are discussed with the development team and, together, they estimate the time it would take to complete them. Based on this information, the development team creates a sprint forecast that outlines the work the team can complete from the product backlog.

Sprint planning ceremonies that flesh out details of every user story make sure that everyone in the team understands the scope of work. However, many tasks may require a separate story refinement meeting or sprint planning ceremony. This helps because the actual sprint planning ceremony is shorter.

II. Daily Scrum (Daily Standup)

For in-person daily Scrum meetings, you can consider throwing a ball around the room for highlighting which member should be speaking at a particular time.

If your Scrum team is working remotely, leveraging a video conferencing platform could be the best way to conduct daily

standups. Slack integrations like Geekbot are quite useful in conducting daily standups.

The tone of daily Scrum meetings should be fun and light but the focus must be on gathering and disseminating crucial project-related information. These meetings are short, around 15 minutes, which is why it is called daily standup.

The best thing about daily Scrum is that it requires accountability. The team members have to be honest in reporting what they did, what they plan to do, and what challenges they face, all in front of their peers.

III. Sprint Review

After the sprint is complete, the team gets together to showcase their work. This is where each team member reviews the newly developed features or whatever they have worked on in the sprint. Sprint review is important for morale, it is an opportunity to demonstrate the finished work and get feedback from the team and project stakeholders.

This Scrum ceremony takes longer, as the demo is a full review of the work. The participants are Scrum Master, product owner, development team, stakeholders, and others involved in the project.

For smooth sprint reviews, the Scrum Master must ensure that all presentation aids, like flip charts or whiteboards, and meeting rooms are available. Spontaneous feedback gathered during a sprint review should be turned into product backlog items, on which discussion can take place later.

Product owners must talk with stakeholders during a sprint review and collect their inputs by asking questions and also resolving their concerns.

IV. Sprint Retrospective

During sprint retrospective, the Agile team should concentrate on continuous improvement and collecting information based on facts and not gut feelings. Different ways can be used to make the interaction more delightful, such as colorful markers or sticky notes to foster team engagement.

Generating meaningful insights should be the key aim of any sprint retrospective and the team members should be encouraged to discuss their thoughts or doubts in detail. The last scrum ceremony called the sprint retrospective has a duration of an hour and is attended by the development team, Scrum Master, and product owner.

Scrum is an integral part of the Agile process, which includes change, receiving feedback, and acting quickly on it. As Scrum seeks continuous improvement, retrospective makes sure that the product and development process is continuously improving.

The goal of the retrospective is to understand what worked well for the team and what didn't come together. This post-mortem of sorts exposes the challenges and failure lines to spot the weaknesses and approach the next sprint in a stronger way.

A means to identify and rectify the issues that came up in the sprint, the retrospective is not a blame game. Think of it as an instrument to congratulate the team, seek ways to improve, and provide retrospection.
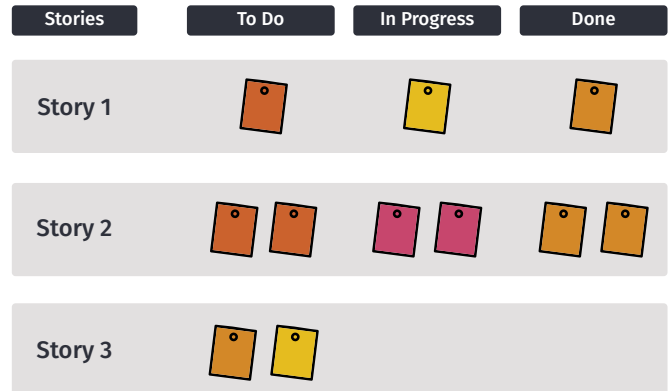
Scrum tools comprise basic Scrum elements and help in running sprints by allowing development teams to regulate the backlog as required, dividing epics into easy-to-work on user stories, promoting retrospectives, and tracking project progress. Here are the 3 most widely used Scrum tools.

1. Scrum Board

A Scrum Board is a Scrum tool that supports Agile teams in making product backlog items visible. It might take different virtual or physical forms but the board will perform in a similar fashion irrespective of how it appears.

The Scrum Board is updated by the team regularly and showcases all the items required to be accomplished in the current sprint.

Stories	To Do	In Progress	Done
Story 1	▪	▪	▪
Story 2	▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪
Story 3	▪ ▪		

2. Whiteboard

Scrum professionals will agree that if the development team is new to the Scrum framework, a physical whiteboard is the best tool to start for a variety of reasons. One of the key reasons is whiteboards are pocket-friendly and easy to configure.

A whiteboard acts as the meeting point for the Agile team, as all members involved in the project get together for the daily standup and keep track of the iteration.
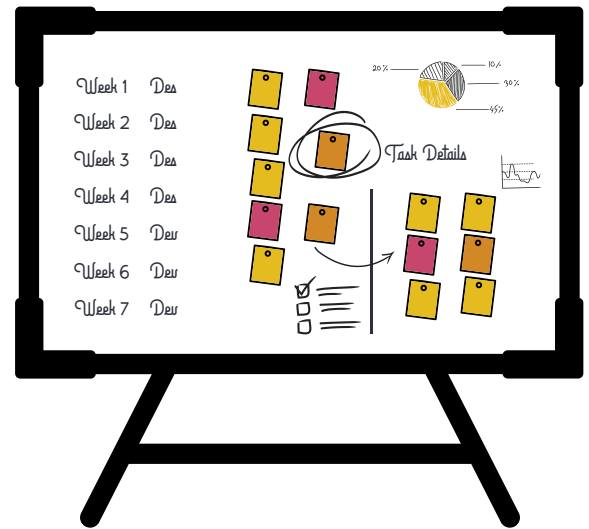
What are Scrum Tools?

Whiteboards require insights from all team members and facilitate seamless communication, because it allows team members to observe things on the whiteboard and talk about them with their fellow teammates.
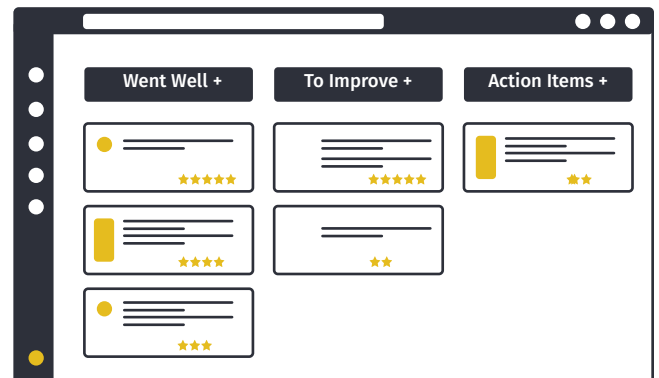
3. Retrospective Tools

The Agile framework favors collected teams, but distributed Scrum teams became popular during the pandemic as organizations transitioned to working virtually. Retrospective tools are online solutions that facilitate retrospectives for remote Scrum teams. These tools provide the right direction to Scrum Masters and help them in planning complex Agile projects cautiously.

Online retrospective tools provide a well-structured framework to Agile teams and assist them in consistently improving and refining their daily Scrum meetings. This assists in moving toward building the end product which is aligned with the specific requirements of the customers.

Whiteboard

Retrospective Tools

General FAQs

1. Who is a Scrum Master?

A Scrum Master is an integral member of an Agile team who is responsible for facilitating Scrum to the larger development team. They are committed to the Scrum best practices and principles, but at the same time remain flexible to grab opportunities for improving team performance.

2. Who is a Certified Scrum Master?

A Certified Scrum Master is a trained professional capable of managing Agile projects seamlessly. They figure out what needs to be considered and which ones should be skipped based on the specific requirements. Becoming a certified Scrum Master allows the professional to understand Scrum fundamentals and best practices along with gaining the acumen to implement them efficiently.

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of a Scrum Master?

A Scrum Master has various roles and responsibilities, such as creating and onboarding Agile project teams, mingling these teams within the organization, and giving them a clear vision of the end product. They are responsible for facilitating seamless communication transfer between the external groups, stakeholders, and Agile project teams.

4. What are the important skills a Scrum Master should possess?

Ideally, the Scrum Master must have a blend of hard and soft skills, wherein the hard skills encompass robust Agile and Scrum training, organizational skills, and knowledge of technical processes and teams. Soft skills include impeccable communication skills, good listening capability, teaching and coaching capabilities, and the ability to handle and resolve conflicts within teams.

5. What is next after working as a CSM?

After working as a Certified Scrum Master (CSM), there are various career paths that a professional may pursue. Certified Scrum Masters often choose to become product owners, mentors, coaches, managers, or continue as Scrum Masters in more taxing environments.

Many times, development managers and quality assurance directors with technical knowledge switch to the role of a Scrum Master as a lucrative professional decision.

6. How to prepare for the CSM exam?

The CSM exam will not be tough if learners prepare in the right manner, starting with familiarizing themselves with Scrum principles, practices, and theory concepts. Attending an in-person CSM course taught by a Certified Scrum expert can help in preparing for the CSM exam.

Watching the Scrum Foundation eLearning series, which comprises videos that elaborates on concepts like Scrum events, Scrum artifacts, Scrum theory, and Scrum roles is one of the best ways to prepare for taking the CSM exam.

Why GreyCampus?

We hope that this Scrum Master Study Guide has helped you get a thorough understanding of the Scrum framework and the advantages of Scrum Master certification.

The certification camp can open the doors for a lucrative career, because the majority of companies are looking to hire trained Scrum professionals. With so many Scrum certification providers around, choosing the best Scrum training partner could be a tedious task. But GreyCampus, a leading provider of Certified Scrum Master training, can be your go-to option if you want to kick start your Scrum Master journey.

Signing up for the bootcamp with GreyCampus will not only help you become an expert in implementing Scrum practices, but also gain expertise in creating a product vision, handling stakeholders, and selling Scrum to your organization. The holistic Scrum training will prepare you to crack Scrum interviews easily and get rewarding Scrum jobs for a lucrative career.

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