

IMPLEMENTING SCRUM

GUIDE

How-to Articles for Agile Dev Teams



Designed by Axosoft, creators of the #1 selling Scrum software,
in collaboration with writer and coach, Tirrell Payton.

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED



WHY DID WE CREATE THIS GUIDE?

Implementing Scrum in your software development team is easier said than done. That's why we put together this comprehensive guide to help your transition from start to finish!



WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDE?

If you're championing the transition to Scrum within your organization, consider this your holy grail. In each article, you'll find useful tips to share with team members in every role.



THE BEST WAY TO USE THIS GUIDE.

If this is your first time implementing Scrum, start at the beginning. If you're already in the process of transitioning, skip to the sections that align with where you're at.

IMPLEMENTING SCRUM GUIDE: 5 ARTICLES

1

PART 1: KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

Are you wondering if the Scrum framework can help your team be more efficient and cohesive? In this section, we'll help you understand what it takes to make a successful transition.

2

PART 2: HOW TO GET TEAM BUY-IN

Once you've decided to transition to Scrum, you'll need to get your team on board. Find out how to gain support and begin implementation.

3

PART 3: TRAINING YOUR NEW SCRUM TEAM

To implement Scrum, you'll need to coach everyone in your organization. We've identified the best training methods to help you get started!

4

PART 4: OVERCOMING COMMON HURDLES

Change can be hard. That's why we've identified the most common obstacles that arise when transitioning to Scrum and provided solutions for each situation.

5

PART 5: SCRUM SUCCESS METRICS

You did it; you're a Scrum team! Now, how can you prove your success? Use these metrics to measure your team's progress.

IMPLEMENTING SCRUM

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PART 1 of 5: KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL CHANGE



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A STORY ABOUT NIC AND SKIP

I don't understand why Scrum isn't sticking. We do sprints and retrospectives, but the team hasn't delivered like we expected. What are we supposed to do now?

SKIP WAS OUTWARDLY FRUSTRATED. They had been implementing Scrum for about six weeks, and after the third sprint, things didn't really appear to be getting better.



I really expected to see some progress by now... Based on everything I've read, our team should already be making dramatic improvements.

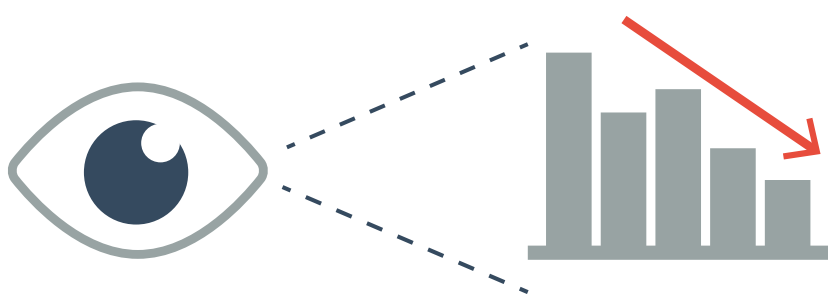
UNFORTUNATELY, NIC, THE SCRUM MASTER, DIDN'T HAVE ANY ANSWERS FOR HIM. Nic is still technically the project manager and he was the one who suggested their company start moving in the direction of Agile, with Scrum as their chosen framework.

There was no budget for training or coaching, so Nic ramped himself up by reading some information on the internet, asking questions in forums, and using those suggestions with his team. Nic was sure they would see an immediate improvement, but instead there's been nothing but confusion. Now the team doesn't get time for a full

requirements analysis, QA is often asked to test stuff that is not done, and Nic is acting as project manager, Scrum Master, and Product Owner. Meanwhile, Skip, the guy who sponsors the projects, is frustrated and ready to end the whole experiment.

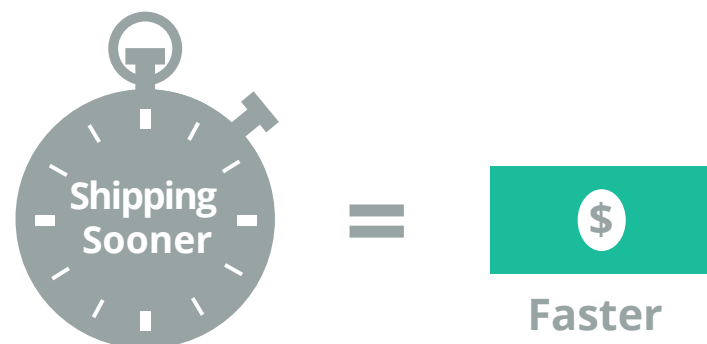
UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM YOU ARE TRYING TO SOLVE

The first key to a successful organizational change is: Understand the problem you're trying to solve.



Without a clear vision for the desired future state, you can't set goals or measure results. Scrum is great at solving specific problems and generating certain benefits, but teams need to ensure that these gains fit their objectives.

When using the methodology effectively, your team will be focused on small iterations and a prioritized feature list...

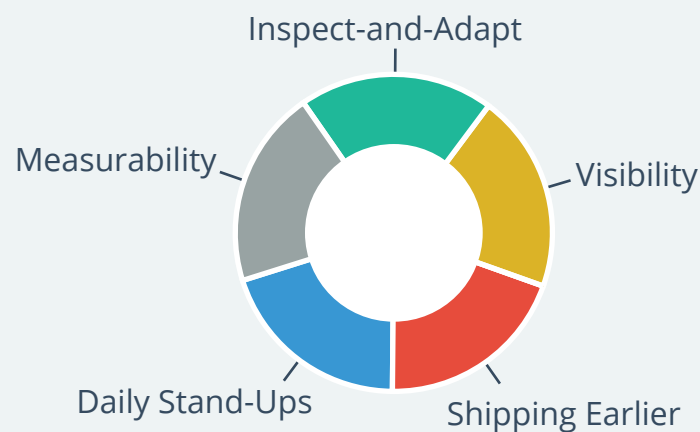


so you can release what's most valuable to the customer early, receive feedback, **get to market faster**, and make money sooner.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM *cont.*

Scrum also increases project visibility and enhances the quality of your products thanks to the iterative “inspect and adapt” nature of the framework. Often times project leaders aren't aware of the obstacles that keep team members from completing tasks, but Scrum, which involves daily standup meetings, removes the mystery and keeps everyone on track. That means the feedback cycle is no

more than 24 hours long! In addition, Scrum use can reduce your risk of project failure and improve your ability to manage change, because working software is the primary indicator of progress, not milestones in a certain “phase”. Scrum welcomes new changes and integrates them as quickly as possible, so there's an opportunity to improve software in real time, rather than at the end.



Key Scrum Features



Key Scrum Benefits

WHAT SCRUM WON'T FIX

As great a framework as Scrum is, there are certain kinds of problems Scrum will not solve.

X UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Unrealistic expectations are a common issue that often manifest as a desire for overnight success and instant, exponential productivity improvements. While these benefits will eventually come, progress is hindered by people who demand dramatic results NOW. Another ill Scrum can't cure is an unsupportive leadership team.

X UNSUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

Sometimes executives take a “wait and see” approach, only participating in the implementation if success seems well on its way. However, a successful Scrum adoption requires leaders who lead from the front, and become the primary cheerleaders for the transformation.

X LACK OF STRATEGY/VISION

Similarly, a lack of strategy or vision cannot be fixed by Scrum (though it can help teams rapidly iterate through ideas to find the right concept).

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

✓ OPENNESS TO CHANGE

Scrum, at its core, is a framework that elicits change, and sometimes that change can be painful. Unfortunately, many companies recognize their problems, but don't want to experience the uncomfortable shifts needed to make things better. If an organization is in that situation, they shouldn't be looking at Scrum as an option because the transition is bound to be unsuccessful.

✓ HONEST EVALUATION



Lastly, and probably most important, is the concept of honesty. A company has to relentlessly self-reflect and be honest with itself, warts and all, for the most effective Scrum transition.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR TRANSFORMATION



WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

There are a few key factors that will improve your chances of success during a Scrum transformation. **First, you've got to have team members who already know each other.** Scrum will put a new set of pressures on the team to perform, and existing work relationships make the transition easier by allowing them to focus on Scrum, not group ice-breakers. This doesn't mean you can't have success with newly-formed teams, it just means the process may take a bit longer than a team that already gels.



CO-LOCATION

Since Scrum is optimized by face-to-face communication, it's also better if the team is co-located. **This will make it easier to connect, receive feedback, and enjoy the serendipitous innovation that comes from water cooler conversations or impromptu whiteboard sessions.** That's not to say Scrum doesn't work for distributed teams, it just adds one communication barrier.



CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

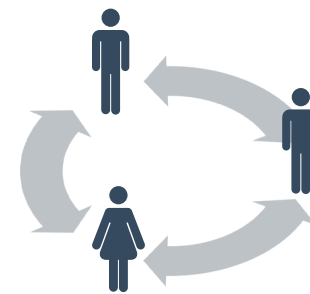
Success also depends on cross-functional team members who have a willingness to help each other. While specialists are always needed, **teams that capitalize on each member's strengths and build general skills will achieve more of their goals each sprint.**

For instance, if Tom can help Sally with the web copy once he's done coding, and Jeff can help Bill with testing, we get a more effective team. When the whole team participates, it eliminates the assembly line environment, so everyone is responsible for the entire product's creation (full dash) soup to nuts.

TWO TYPES OF TEAMS



1) **Product-focused teams** (cross-functional) - These groups are truly invested in the overall success of your product development AND they get really good at learning from each other. Their end goal is to create a complete, high-quality product.



2) **Component-focused teams** (functional) - Here teams are broken into sub-groups, so the software development team only codes, QA only tests, etc. These teams independently focus on completing one component of a product and have less ownership of the finished product.



THE ROLE OF PRODUCT OWNER

Companies tend to think of Scrum as a "software development method," and assume it only requires development and QA input to be successful. Instead, Scrum is actually a "product development framework" that relies heavily on the "business side" and key stakeholder involvement. To that end, having the right Product Owner on the team is

essential. This role connects the dots between your team, stakeholders, and executives, so everyone is on the same page. He or she also creates, clarifies, and guides the product/feature vision through the product backlog where user stories are prioritized to align with business goals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENCE



A Scrum transformation, just like any other change, is difficult and often unsuccessful. Large-scale culture shifts can be challenging for many reasons, but the length of time it takes to see significant results is usually a primary issue. Your company's culture didn't become what it is overnight, therefore it would be unreasonable to expect it to change overnight.

Make sure your leadership knows there will be a short term hit to productivity and output as the team learns the process. **Additionally, try to communicate that it takes about a year for a team to become truly productive with Scrum, and around three years to achieve hyperproductivity.** You will be investing lots of time, and patience is the essential factor that allows your investment to pay off.



ONGOING INVESTMENTS IN TRAINING AND COACHING

Once the initial Scrum coaching is complete, it's important to facilitate ongoing training for existing employees and new team members who need to learn the ropes. Not only will your team benefit from an exposure to the Scrum

community's cutting-edge techniques, this refresher can also stimulate conversation about original ways to work with the methodology on a day-to-day basis.

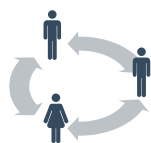
HERE ARE SOME TAKEAWAYS



Make sure Scrum is able to solve the kind of problems your team is focused on, and know that a methodology can't fix everything.



Figure out which parts of your vision or strategy need clarity before implementing the Scrum framework.



Get a clear understanding of your team's skillsets, makeup, and geographic distribution to create reasonable expectations around those constraints.



Obtain executive buy-in and ensure that the business/product side of your organization is fully on-board



Have patience and be willing to make ongoing investments.

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PART 2 of 5: HOW TO GET TEAM BUY-IN

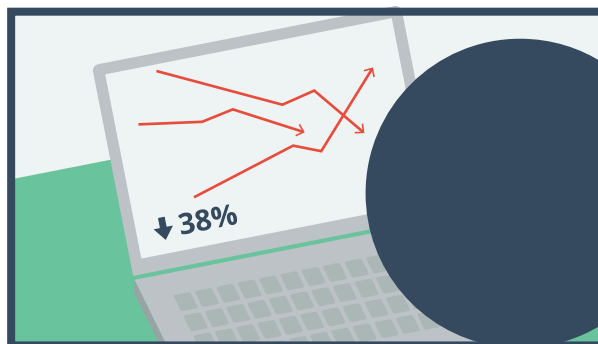


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THE SITUATION



Max was named VP of Software Engineering for a mid-sized company, and although he was excited for the new challenge, he saw a lot of problems in the company's future. Problems he was tasked to solve.



The industry was moving faster than ever, and there was a danger that his company could fall seriously behind its competitors.



In the past, Max had used his ability to drive new initiatives as a problem-solving tool, so he suggested a transition to Scrum as a way to help the company react to market changes more quickly and maintain its competitive edge.



Two years later, all Max could do was watch, horrified, as the initiative died, despite his "carrot and stick" approach. Even in the pilot phase, changes took so long to implement, their effectiveness was constantly questioned.



He had a hard time getting the proper funding for coaching and training; and eventually his own staff became impediments to progress.



There was no urgency, no support from staff and colleagues (because they didn't know what was in it for them), and no communication about why this initiative was important or necessary.

CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY

Without a sense of urgency, it's difficult to get your team to support the Scrum effort. That's why it's important to start by setting company benchmarks based on industry competitors. Honestly assessing where you are versus where

you want to be by using customer data and potential missed market opportunities creates concrete numbers that can help set obtainable goals and light the fire of urgency.



Look for areas of weakness and underperformance that seem like they correspond with the kinds of problems Scrum solves well.



Talk to your customers as a way to discover core improvement metrics. What do your customers say you aren't good at? Better yet, where do they say you could get better? These points should reinforce the importance of swift, corrective action.



Point to something a competitor is doing that you are unable to do, or call attention to market opportunities that you are unable to take advantage of in your current state.



BUILD YOUR GRASS ROOTS CAMPAIGN

Whether you're talking to the team, managers, or executives, no one will get on board with your initiative unless you can explain what's in it for them. A grassroots campaign... grassroots campaign should be targeted at people in every level of the organization, toward anyone who can

help anchor your buy-in efforts. You are going to need support from all areas of the company to avoid some of the same mistakes Max made in the opening paragraphs; and people are much more likely to endorse your initiative if it appears to have traction within their peer group.

Find Contributors who are already interested in Scrum. They can be recent hires who come from a more agile environment, or people who know a little about Scrum and are excited to try it. Either way, convert these contributors into evangelists by giving them responsibilities and decision-making ability on your transformation team.

Developers love Scrum because it allows them to circumvent heavyweight processes and use working software as the primary measure of progress. Rather than relying on half-baked specs that have been "tossed over the wall," developers should now act as technical advisors who collaborate to meet goals, determine how work gets done, and devise solutions to business problems with outside stakeholders.



Managers on a Scrum team get to focus on finding new ways to empower their teammates. In this new role, they have the opportunity to create a strategic vision for talent development and an environment that encourages team members to excel.

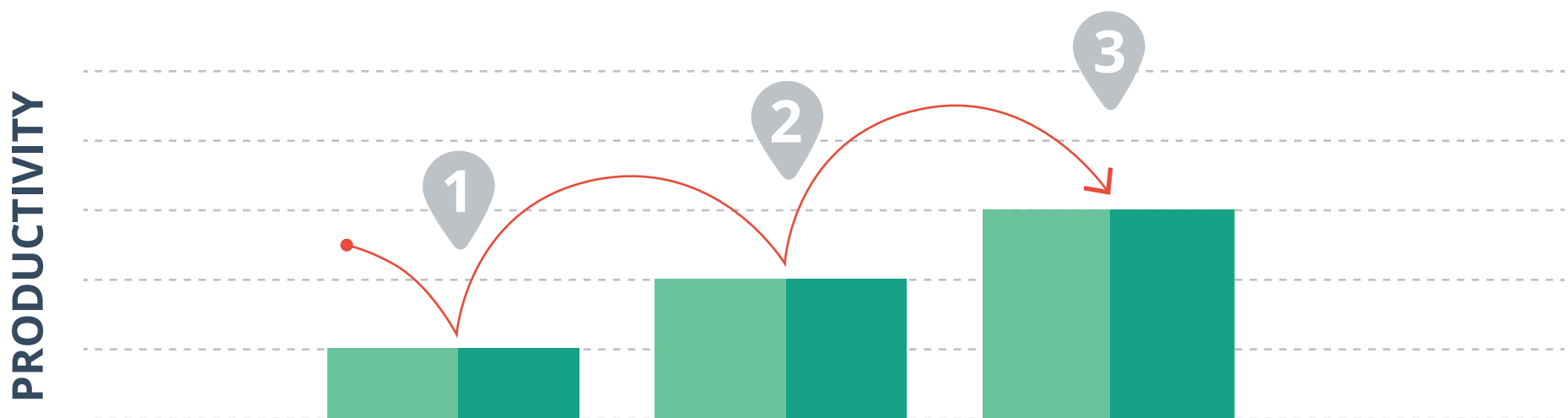
Scrum gives Executives the ability to get their product to market more quickly, manage changing priorities, and receive better project visibility. All of these factors directly affect the bottom line, and executives like to focus on tangible, measurable outcomes like this key number.

IF YOU WORK WITH YOUR EVANGELISTS, THESE TALKING POINTS WILL HELP SOCIALIZE THE TRANSITION WITHIN THE COMPANY COMMUNITY.

JUMP IN: GENERATE SHORT-TERM WINS

Because Scrum focuses on quick iterations and constant improvement, look for short-term wins throughout the implementation process. The achievement of these micro-goals generates evidence that can help justify the cost and pain of adoption. You should also find use-cases

from similar companies that show how Scrum adoption has “increased ROI by X%” or “improved efficiencies by Y.” Don’t be afraid to run a pilot program yourself because the team can use positive outcomes to gain support.



These efforts provide positive reinforcement for individuals who endorse the Scrum initiative, and give them reason to further support you. **Short-term wins also help fine-tune the vision and strategy of Scrum within your organization.** Implementation is a “hands-on” process that will require constant tweaking while your team figures things out. When teammates see the success of your first Scrum project, it’s easier to influence others to buy-in. Be

available and be involved. Inspect and adapt. **Generating positive outcomes from your first Scrum project undermines the power of naysayers and shows them how the methodology can help your company.** The quick turnaround of beneficial results can keep management engaged, build momentum for buy-in, and eliminate months of negative feedback while things get going.

EMBRACE CHANGE AND LEARNING

As you get buy-in for your Scrum initiative, make sure to emphasize the importance of change.

That being said, feel free to take some risks in pursuit of quick wins, even if your strategy isn’t perfected.



There’s a lot of potential for mistakes when your team first jumps in, but failure can present a huge learning opportunity.

When you embrace a mindset of change, you open up the team environment to a variety of new improvements.

USE EVERY STEP, SUCCESSFUL OR OTHERWISE, AS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!



The ability to communicate your vision is another essential skill for teams who want company-wide buy-in. Keep your vision simple by using minimal jargon, and try to explain it with a metaphor or analogy. These verbal pictures are a

much better way to illustrate your goals than a long, technical description. Startups use this tactic all the time when explaining what they do: "Airbnb for boats," "Netflix for College Books," "Birchbox for Dogs."

COMMUNICATE IN MULTIPLE FORMS:



big meetings



small meetings



email



formal



informal

Leverage your grassroots evangelists to help deliver the message in multiple formats, and be willing to explain the mission over and over. People will need to hear your vision many, many times before it starts to sink in. But communication is more than what you say - make sure you're also leading by example, because how you act is just as important as verbal reinforcement. Lastly, be aware of any incon-

sistencies. If you talk about being nimble and agile; yet demand requirements that are exhaustive and unchanging, you need to address why this specific situation runs counter to the vision. Don't forget communication is a two-way street, so these types of conversations should be receptive to your teammates' positive and negative feedback.

HERE ARE SOME TAKEAWAYS



Getting buy-in can be the most difficult and overlooked part of a Scrum implementation.



Create a sense of urgency in the organization, so people start looking for solutions that can solve the current problems.



Build your grass roots campaign at all levels of the organization to ensure you have anchors of support throughout.



Jump in and **generate short term wins** to prove that Scrum can work for your organization.

CHANGE



Embrace the changes that come with a transition and don't be discouraged by any bumps in the road.



Communicate, communicate, communicate!



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PART 3 of 5: TRAINING YOUR NEW SCRUM TEAM



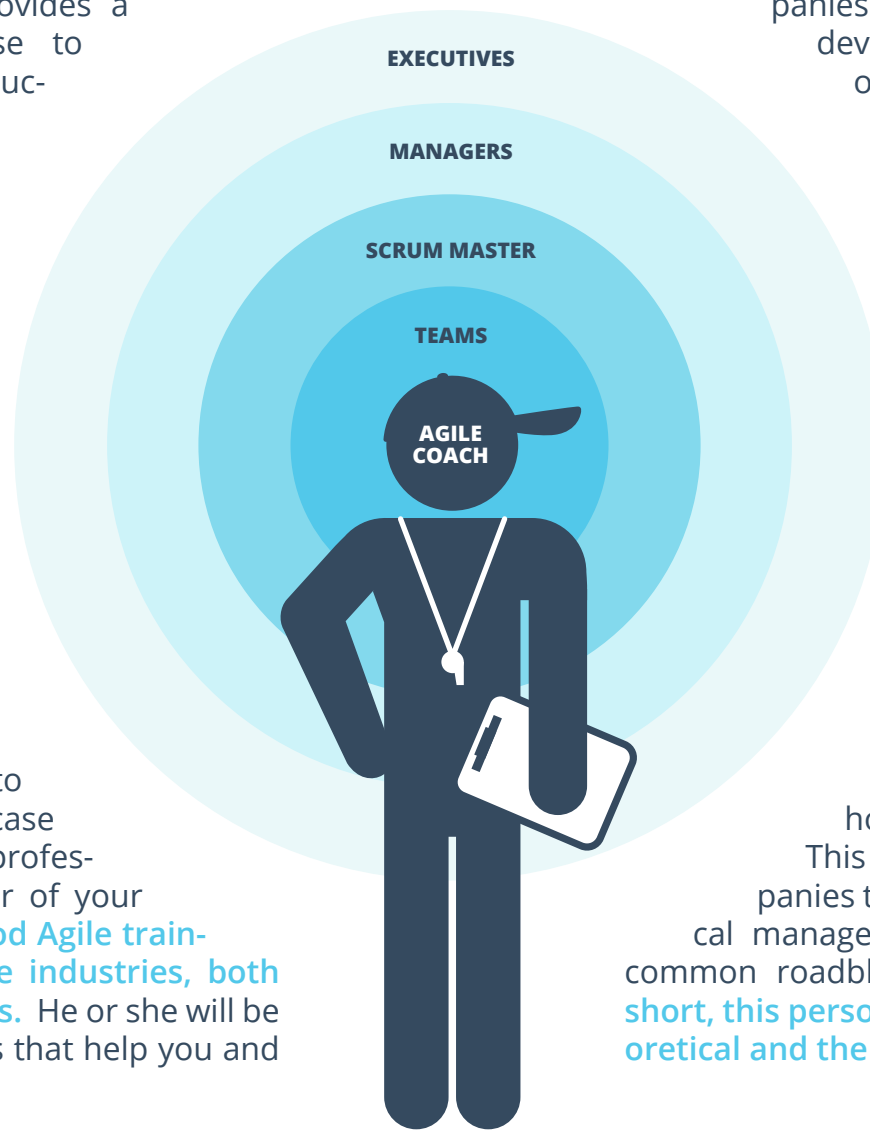
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TRAINING YOUR ORGANIZATION

Implementing Scrum at an organization isn't easy, and levels of success (or failure) have a broad spectrum of variation. **Although Scrum is a simple concept, the tactics to execute it aren't straightforward.** That's why this article provides a high-level formula you can use to increase your team's chances of success.

A successful agile implementation is only possible when teams take the time to train themselves and their greater organization on the tenets of Scrum.

This may sound simple enough, but many companies mistakenly reserve instruction for developers and QA when several layers of training are necessary for each department.



your company understand what's possible, what's reasonable, and how the journey will look over time. This person also knows how to help companies transition away from strict, hierarchical management structures while overcoming common roadblocks that often slow progress. **In short, this person bridges the gap between the theoretical and the practical.**

PRE-PLANNING

Before you begin training, you will need to choose the right person to help guide your team. In a best-case scenario, this person will be a professional agile coach, not a member of your organization. That's because **a good Agile trainer/coach has worked in multiple industries, both training and running Scrum teams.** He or she will be able to cite real world experiences that help you and

ROI CALCULATION

Professional Scrum trainers have an outside perspective that can potentially hone-in on weak areas your team wouldn't otherwise be aware of. This unique viewpoint can help tailor the Scrum implementation process to your needs, and may carry more weight with executives. To persuade the leadership team a trainer could be beneficial, try reworking our Return On Investment (ROI) calculation for your own situation.

If an Agile Coach were to increase the team's productivity by 5%, in the first year, this coach could lower costs by as much as \$100,000 and could impact revenues by as much as \$200,000.

Let's say we have a team of 10 that consists of...

- 1 PRODUCT OWNER
- 1 SCRUM MASTER
- 6 DEVELOPERS
- 2 TESTERS

Coach = + 5% Productivity = \$4,200,000 Revenue*

So long as the coach costs less than \$100,000, executives may consider it a worthy investment!

\$4,200,000 - Cost of Team = \$2,200,000

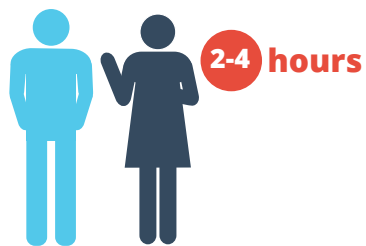
From here, let's also assume that the fully-loaded cost of this team is about \$2,000,000 a year and that this team creates \$4,000,000 in revenue per year for the company.

Although ROI can be a good general measuring stick for cost and value, not every company optimizes for dollar value. If your team is working to decrease risk or achieve other goals, start with a measurement baseline and check results against that metric as you roll out Scrum.

*Assuming a 5% increase in productivity increases revenues by 5%.

STEP 1: BEGIN TRAINING

Whether or not you decide to employ the services of a Scrum trainer, your whole team will still need some form of education. At this point, it's time to determine which groups of people need training and identify their specific needs:



EXECUTIVES

Though you might not think executives need training, they do require a high-level understanding of agile as it pertains to your organization, and require problem-solving resources for lean thinking. This group will need to focus on organizational, cultural, and communication problems endemic to the company, while receiving training that covers agile topics in broad strokes, rather than execution-oriented specifics. Remember: Executives are busy. You'll likely only get two to four hours of their time, so make it count.



MANAGERS

These teammates should receive high-level training that's paired with hands-on exposure to the nuts and bolts of a Scrum process. The transition to self-organizing teams will change management positions quite a bit, so prepare them for their new roles with training in lean thinking, facilitation, and coaching. Make sure the change is presented as an opportunity for managers to renew their purpose, and provide a clear list of duties they should shift toward.



DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Last, but not least, we can't forget the educational needs of your development team. Because the team will be participating in Scrum implementation on a day-to-day basis, it's essential to provide all the training necessary to solidify their understanding of the Scrum methodology. Fortunately, your team also has the most time to dedicate to training, so don't short-change them by rushing the process. Feel free to spend a few days on up-front instruction and hands-on exercises, then encourage ongoing learning with follow-up coaching.

STEP 2: BUILD YOUR FIRST SCRUM TEAM(S)

At first, it may seem like you should build your Scrum teams like you would build any other project team: "Let's add 3 developers, 2 testers, etc..." But what you should really do is to strike a balance between the people who are most interested in Scrum, and people with required, specialized skillsets. The last thing your team needs is some-

one who is dead set against the initiative- only team members who are excited about these changes will deal with the bumps and bruises of the learning curve. Finding the right people for a team is always a delicate balancing act, so be sure to include your coaches, trainers and managers in the process.

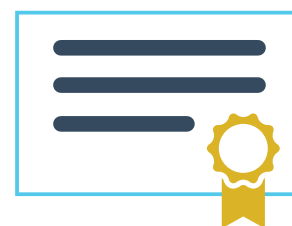
THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING TEAM MEMBERS:



Breadth
(Can play multiple roles)



Curiosity



Depth
(At least 1 area of specialty)



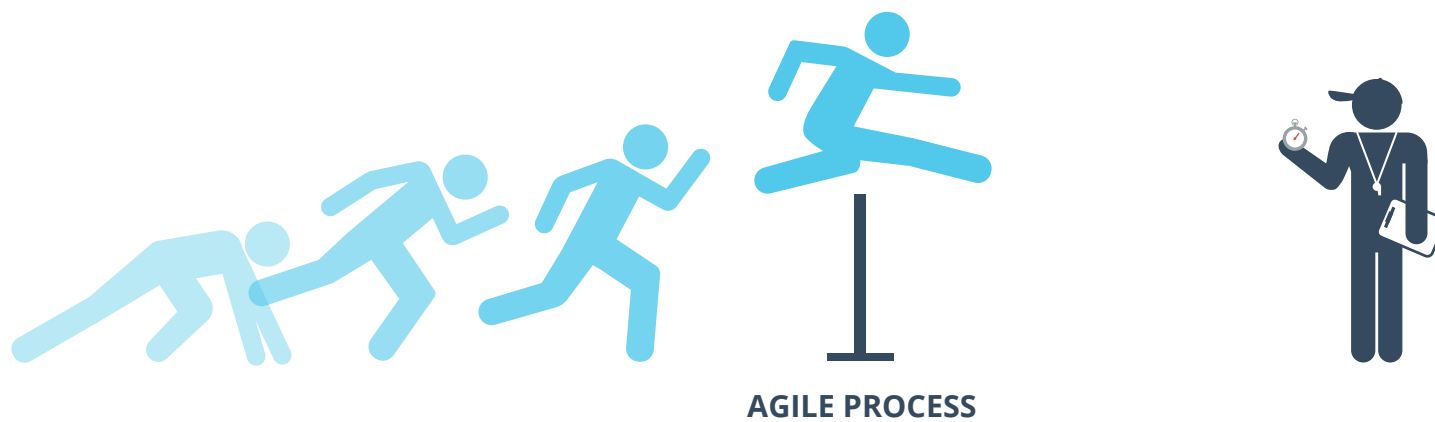
Open to change

IT'S GREAT IF YOU CAN FIND PEOPLE WHO HAVE USED SCRUM BEFORE, BUT IT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO CHOOSE PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.

STEP 3: TRAIN YOUR PRODUCT OWNER

Obviously, you'll need to determine who the Product Owner is before you begin this step. Usually this individual will come from the product management department, but a project manager, business analyst or involved stakeholder can assume this role. Whomever you choose, it's important for this person to have a keen understanding of the product's business value, so they can prioritize and drive results effectively. The Product Owner has the most

important role in the Scrum process. This person will be the ultimate content authority, so the development team can rely on a single source for direction. Since he or she is responsible for the ROI of the project, the product owner balances competing stakeholder interests, determines the most important items, and prioritizes user stories. Without this key role, many teams become distracted and unproductive over time because they're trying to manage too



AGILE PROCESS

many stakeholder requests. Product owner training should ensure he or she is fully comfortable with the Scrum process and knows how to best support the team. That doesn't mean this person needs to micromanage, or

even project manage. It just means he or she should be able to provide the proper input to the team, and verify the output quality.

STEP 4: CHOOSE A SCRUM MASTER

The Scrum Master is the person responsible for helping your team and organization follow the Scrum framework. Preferably this person will have their Certified Scrum Master credential, but if they are untrained and/or inexperienced, then he or she will need to spend extra time researching and working closely with the agile coach. **When a Scrum Master is being chosen, a candidate's leadership style and personality are what determine their effectiveness.** Initially, many companies select project managers to fill the Scrum Master role due to their pre-

vious experience, but these individuals aren't always a good fit. Traditional project managers are often used to "driving" teams by assigning tasks and making executive decisions. While this is necessary in a waterfall setting, such an autocratic approach would short-circuit a team's ability to self-manage in an agile environment. That's why the choice of Scrum Master is more a function of personality rather than (previous) job title. **Any person who has a facilitative/diplomatic personality and can act as a "servant leader" will make a good scrum master.**

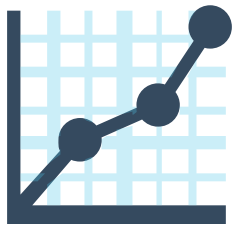


STEP 5: MEASURE YOUR LEARNING

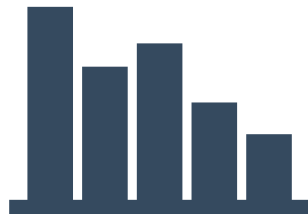
All that training and coaching is for naught if you don't measure results. For newly agile teams, the best indicator of value is how much team members learned. This is because learning increases ROI and decreases the risk of

adopting a new process. Of course, there are more things you could measure, but in the first 3 months of a new adoption, those other measurements are not very valuable.

KEY METRICS FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS:



A stabilized measurement of what the team gets completed every 2 weeks



A regular cadence of delivering working product



Increased satisfaction from stakeholders

HERE ARE SOME TAKEAWAYS

There is no such thing as a cookie-cutter process for implementing Scrum. There are tactics that work well for some companies, but don't work well for others. The key is to keep an eye on what you're trying to accomplish, and ensure the team is meeting benchmarks.



Pre-Planning - Don't be afraid to hire short or long-term help from an agile coach and make sure you have executive buy-in.



Step 1: Time to Begin Training - Recognize that every department will need to have its own unique training and be sensitive to the time-commitment each group can make.



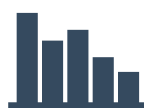
Step 2: Build Your First Scrum Team(s) - Strike a balance between the people most interested in Scrum and people with the specialized skill sets you need.



Step 3: Train Your Product Owner - Ensure he or she is fully comfortable with the Agile process, knows how to best support the team, and is able to verify the output quality of the team.



Step 4: Choose a Scrum Master - It's easier to teach Scrum skills to someone with the right personality, than it is to change the personality of an experienced, authoritarian manager.



Step 5: Measure Your Learning - The best indicator of value is learning because it increases ROI and decreases the risk of adopting a new process.



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PART 4 of 5: OVERCOMING COMMON HURDLES



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OVERCOMING COMMON HURDLES IN IMPLEMENTING SCRUM

As with any large, organizational change, implementing Scrum will have its challenges. While there may be some issues that are specific to your organization, plenty more are consistent across

all transformations. That's why it's important to understand the common challenges, common causes, and common solutions.



Issue 1: You haven't clearly identified the problems you want to solve.

In some cases, adopting organizations have fundamental issues Scrum can't fix. Most often these obstacles manifest as software delivery-related problems, but the root cause can lie elsewhere.

In these situations, Scrum will still help highlight bottlenecks and process roadblocks, but teams that want to be successful must find their core dysfunctions and resolve them first. Remember: Crap in, crap out. If you start with a fractured company, you won't get the results you want with Scrum.

The Solution: Try to identify any underlying problems before adopting Scrum. This will clarify the organization's focus and prime your team to tackle these obstacles with Scrum. During the training process you should also make it clear that Scrum is not going to fix things, in fact, it will probably expose more issues.

Issue 2: You have unrealistic expectations.

Your team isn't looking for a new process because of circumstances that were created overnight, so don't expect resolutions overnight either. Though it's natural to seek immediate affirmation, try not to skip crucial, intermediary steps in an attempt to create faster results. After all, the primary goal of implementation should be constant development and learning that reinforces key Scrum concepts. That being said, organizations that learn the fastest, adapt the fastest; and create their own market advantage.

The Solution: Know what you're in for. Teams must overcome a significant learning curve when they begin the transition, so make sure to set reasonable expectations up-front for your team, your execs, and even yourself.

To do this, try discussing your situation with other businesses that have successfully implemented Scrum, and consult your Scrum coach regularly. Then, allow your team to learn this new way of working by providing the time and space necessary to adopt foreign processes.

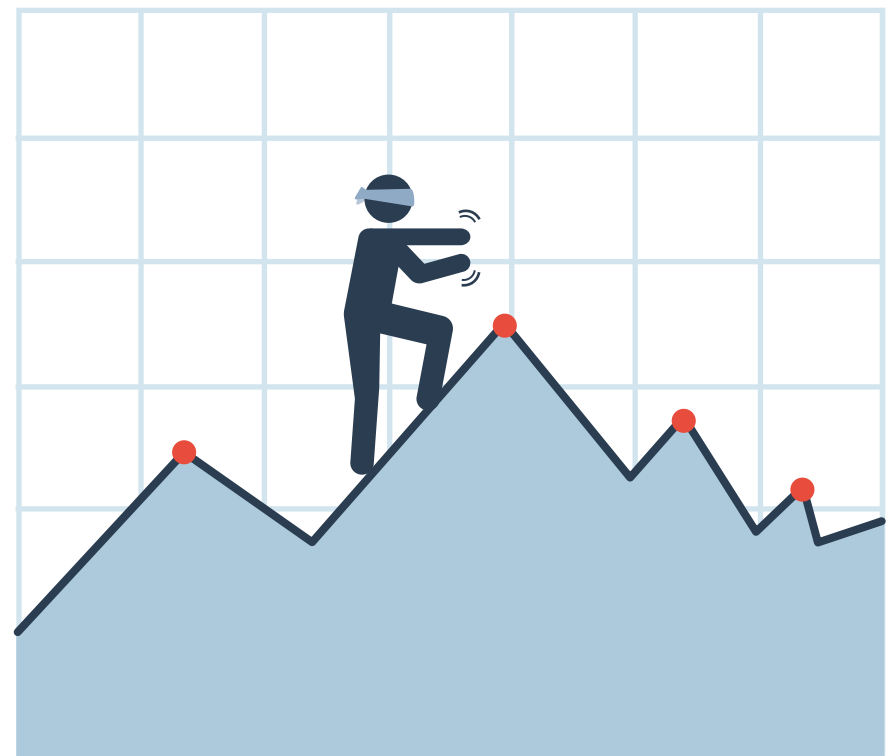


DON'T EXPECT TO GET THE RESULTS YOU WANT WITHOUT PUTTING IN THE WORK.

Issue 3: You lack a definitive strategy and vision.

The Scrum framework will not help your organization achieve its goals if you don't have a clear vision or strategy. Without those crucial components to guide the team, your adoption attempt will be an exercise in frustration and probably deemed a failure.

The Solution: Determine your vision and strategy beforehand. These two elements are essential to the success of your Scrum implementation because they remind the team why they're making these changes, what the long-term goals are, and how to judge their success.



Issue 4: Your leadership isn't supportive.

Maybe executive management can't justify an investment in "some new project management trend." Perhaps they don't want to upheave the existing structure. No matter the reason, it's hard to get people excited about the sweeping changes Scrum requires. Despite the difficulties, this will be a necessary fight for teams that are passionate about making agile a part of their organization.

The Solution: Instead of framing Scrum as a process change, frame it as a culture change. Executives are more likely to become Scrum evangelists when it's tied to an initiative they usually champion. Fostering the necessary leadership support will take time and generate a number of ongoing discussions, but it's at the core of a smooth transition.

Issue 5: You're not willing to change.

It's easy for companies to slip back into old ways when process philosophies have been treated like a flavor-of-the-month, and teams see few results. These frustrations can make organizations reticent for change, but in the technology industry stagnation means extinction.

The Solution: You wouldn't be considering Scrum if change wasn't needed; and improvement is, inherently, change. In order to improve, you have to be willing to change. If you are not willing to change, then you can't improve. Accepting this truth will go a long way when your team hits roadblocks and issues come up.

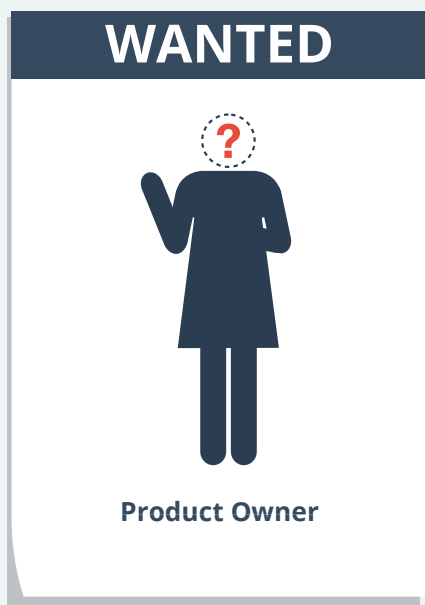
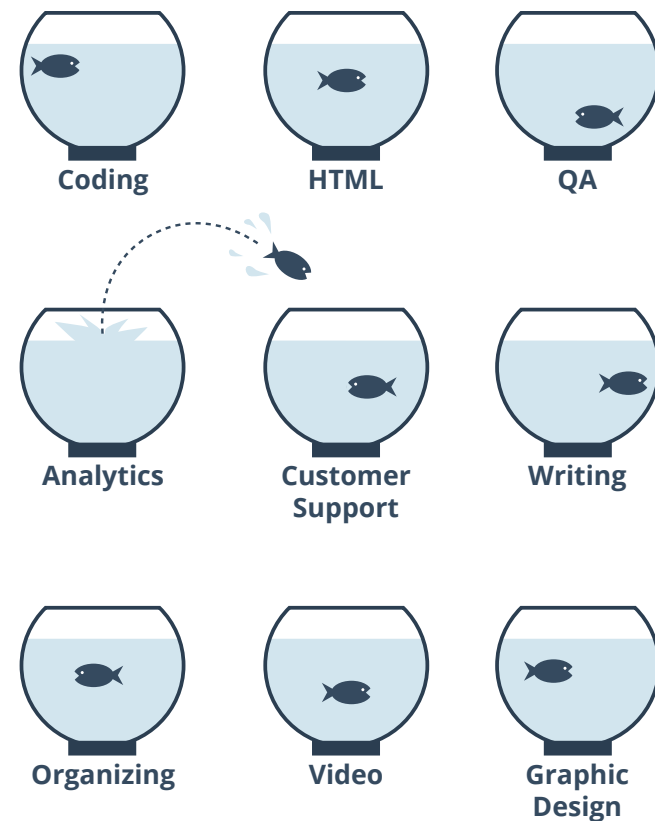


Issue 6: Your teams are siloed, and don't want to work cross-functionally.

Everyone has pride in their area of expertise, and no one wants to go back to the drawing board to learn “unnecessary” skills. Even so, Scrum adoption relies heavily on cross-functionality, and this is a mental obstacle that your team will have to overcome.

The Solution: It all comes down to how your team communicates. If communication is based on hand-offs and documentation, there will be ongoing productivity issues; but teams that work cooperatively (even with members who still have a deep area of expertise) as a cross-functional unit, increase throughput.

That's why you need to highlight the way cross-functional teams eliminate roadblocks when they help each other with tasks outside their job descriptions. Feel free to showcase companies that have successfully implemented Scrum, and emphasize team members who became more valuable assets to the organization as they learned additional skills. You can also use cross-training as an inexpensive form of professional development and risk mitigation.



Issue 7: There's no product owner.

The product owner is arguably the most important role in the Scrum framework. However, many companies see Scrum as a software development methodology and fail to incorporate business elements into the process— a mistake that can cause serious problems. If your team lacks this critical role, the gap will prevent a successful adoption.

The Solution: Choose a product owner. Your product owner is a project's key stakeholder and he or she will be in charge of communicating the product vision to the team. This person is also responsible for prioritizing the team's workload, so stakeholder value is always at the forefront.

Issue 8: You have no patience.

This goes back to #2 on our list. Expectations manage patience, so if you want it done NOW, your expectations are out of whack. Be honest here: If you became accustomed to past projects taking longer than they should, why would you expect Scrum to be an instant cure? When your projects start finishing on time it will be new and exciting, but you've got to give the process time to work.

The Solution: Invest in the resources to have your team properly trained, so they can adapt more quickly. Even the most successful and aggressive companies have about a one-year learning curve before they've fully adopted Scrum. Organizations that expect drastic change overnight can also expect to be disappointed. Patience is a necessary ingredient for a successful transition.



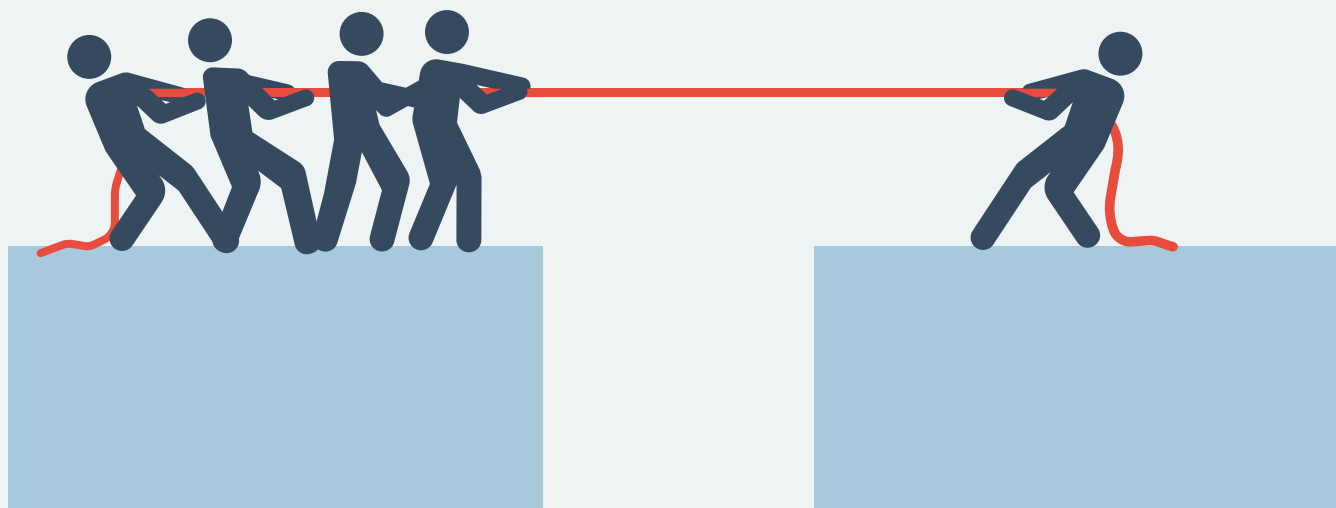
Issue 9: You want to do it all yourself.

We all know it's tough to learn something new without guidance, so why do companies often introduce this transformational framework without investing in training resources? Too many unfortunate project managers have been asked to begin the Scrum transition only armed with Google results and forum posts.

The Solution: The most successful Scrum adoption combines training, coaching, and a relentless pursuit of improvement (kaizen). Untrained teams can struggle with

adoption for years before finally giving up or accepting lackluster results. On the other hand, plenty of transformations have been kick-started in a few months thanks to a small cadre of on-site coaches who interact with the whole team.

Help your leadership understand that hiring a coach isn't failure. Instead, it lets your team get an outsider's viewpoint and discover your blind spots. After all, "it takes a village," and you *shouldn't* try to implement Scrum on your own.



HERE ARE SOME TAKEAWAYS



#1- Figure out where your company's problems lie *before* adopting Scrum.



#2- Set reasonable expectations up-front for your team, your execs, and yourself.



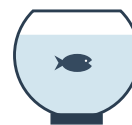
#3- Determine your vision and strategy beforehand to remind the team why they're making these changes.



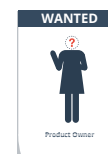
#4- Help your team learn this new work style by providing the time and space necessary to adopt foreign processes.



#5- Frame Scrum as a "culture shift" to make evangelists of the executive team.



#6- Accept that you and your team will need to change in order to improve.



#7- Choose a product owner who can prioritize the team's workload, so stakeholder value is always at the forefront.



#8- Invest the resources to have your team properly trained, and be patient with the process.



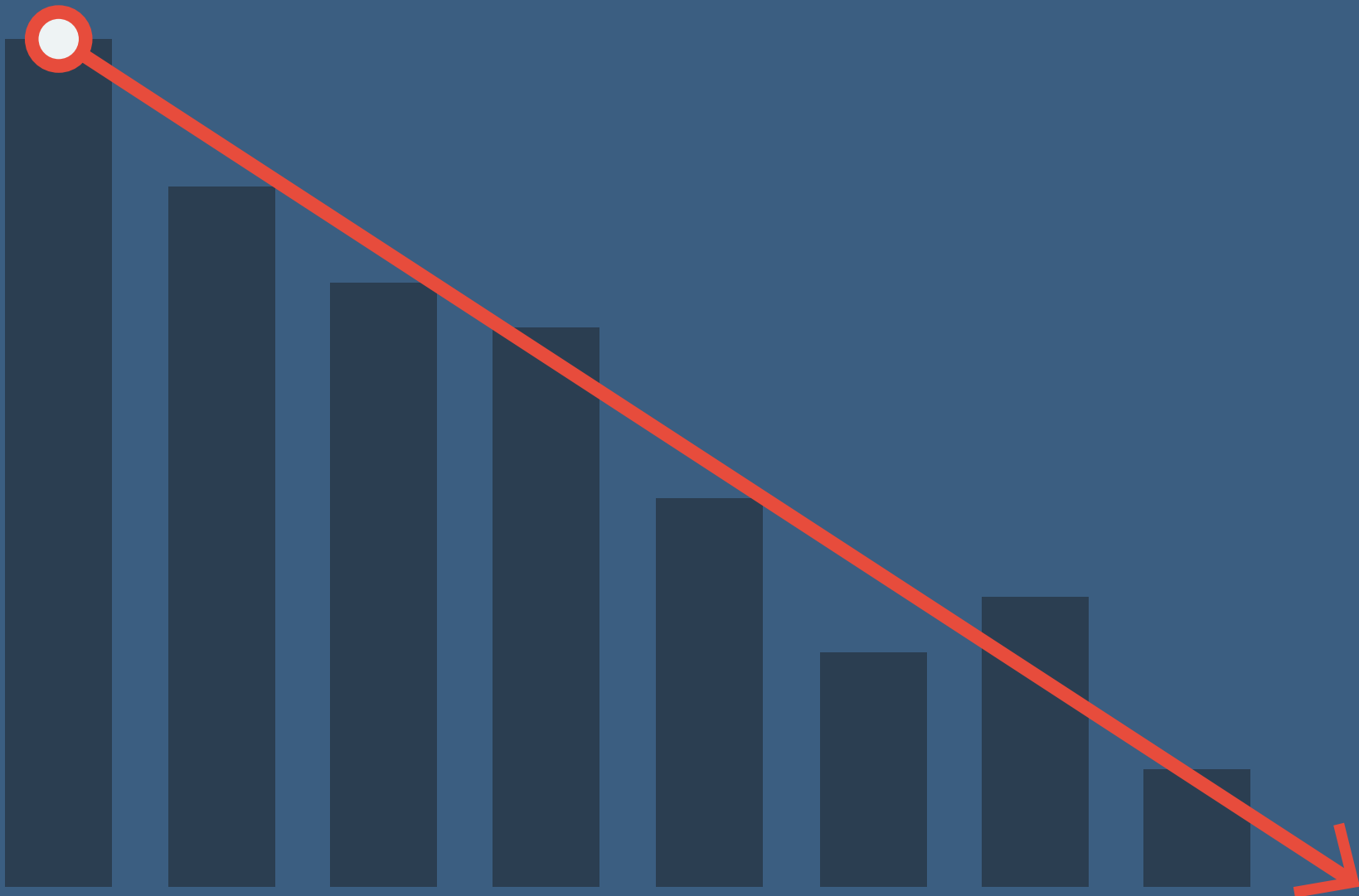
#9- Enlist help and don't try to go it alone!



IMPLEMENTING SCRUM

GUIDE

PART 5 of 5: SCRUM SUCCESS METRICS



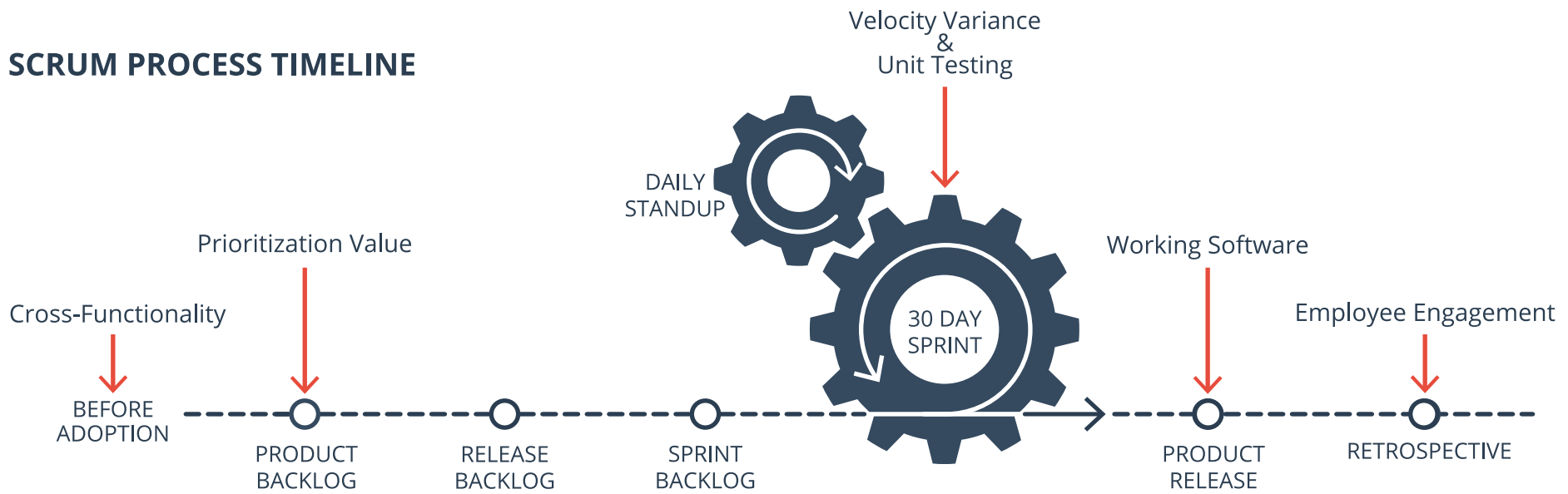
Created by Axosoft, makers of the #1 Scrum software,
in collaboration with writer and coach, Tirrell Payton.

WHEN AND WHAT TO MEASURE

At times Scrum transitions can be chaotic, and there may be a day or two when it seems like the team is moving backward instead of forward! When that happens, you can use this guide to understand how well they're doing by

focusing on the core metric that corresponds with your team's phase in the Scrum adoption process (indicated by the red leader lines below):

SCRUM PROCESS TIMELINE



As it says above, every metric does not need to be measured at every interval. You want to give changes the opportunity to take root, which is why this guide shows you how to score your team against metrics that are measured over time. This process will help you understand where you were when you started, where you are today,

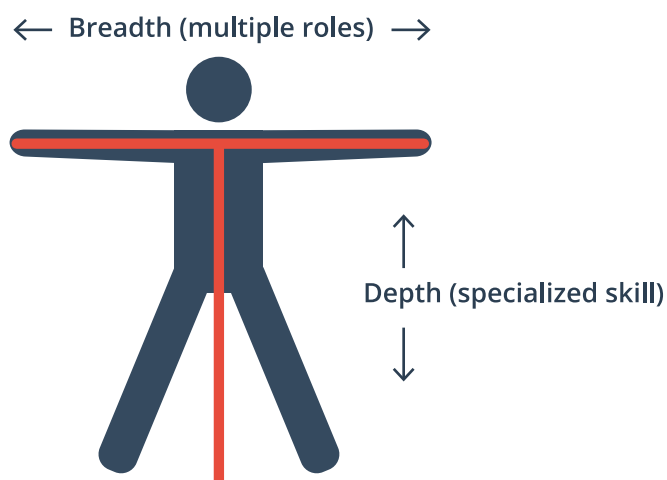
and what you should aim for in the future. Just add up your section points at the end of the article to determine which areas of your Scrum adoption need improvement; then make it part of your "organizational backlog" to strive for a higher score!

TEAM CROSS-FUNCTIONALITY

When you have a cross-functional team, your Scrum unit will work together more fluidly and negate any issues caused by the inflexibility of siloed skillsets. Sounds great, right? Sure, but first you have to figure out how cross-functional your team is to begin with. Cross-functional team members will regularly take on tasks that are not specific

to their role, demonstrating the breadth and depth of their skill. These two factors are also known as "T-Shaped Talent," a metric that allows you to assess each team member's cross-functionality. You can measure Cross-Functionality before adoption and after every project by having team members rate each other on a scale of one to five:

T-SHAPED TALENT



CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TYPES



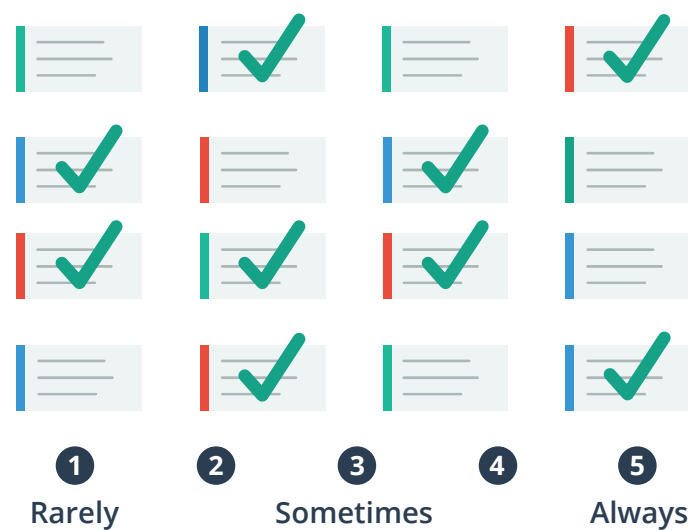
Write the average team member score here:

BUSINESS VALUE PRIORITIZATION

Though every team member will think the backlog should be prioritized differently, a mature Scrum team knows they must sacrifice some personal bias to prioritize items with the most business value. To help them do this, the Product Owner is responsible for separating the important incoming requests from the less important, and prioritizing accordingly. If your Product Owner has effective prioritization skills, the business value that's delivered

should be in-line with the most important items in your strategic portfolio. On the other hand, if the stakeholders are regularly left wondering why a certain set of features were worked on and delivered, there is probably a prioritization issue. **Measure this by asking team members to informally score, between one and five, the question, "How often does the product owner deliver a fully-prioritized backlog that satisfies your stakeholders?"**

FULLY PRIORITIZED PRODUCT BACKLOG



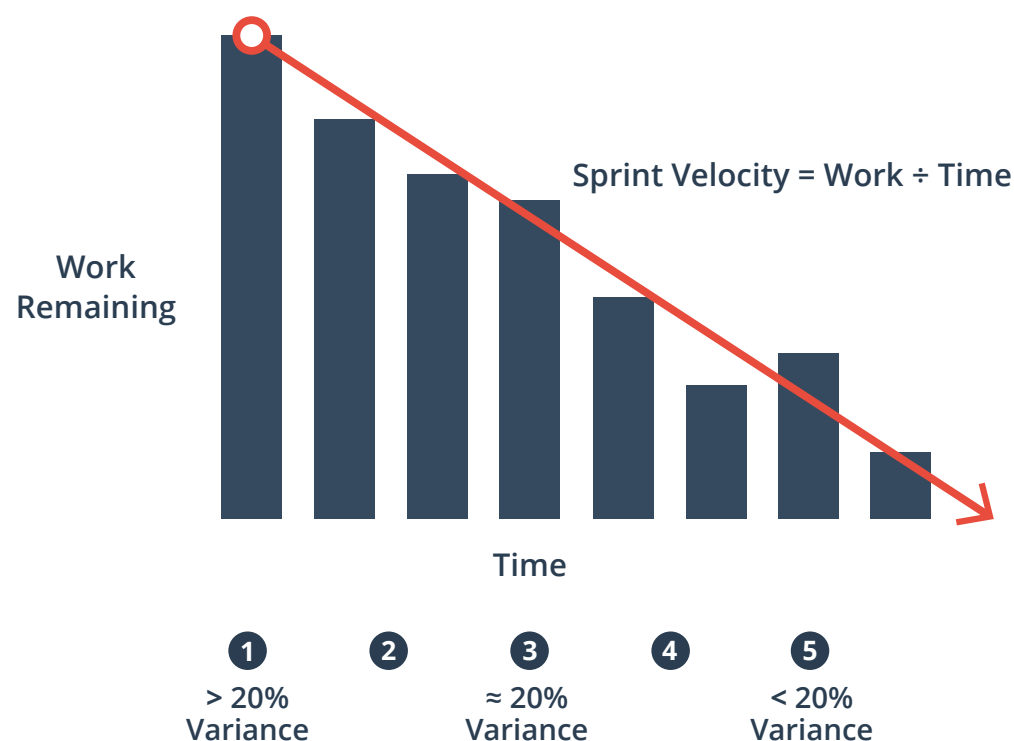
Backlog delivery score:

VELOCITY VARIANCE

Velocity measures how quickly your team accomplishes work that's assigned during a given time period (usually a sprint or release). Over time, teams get better at performing and the velocity increases, then normalizes toward a consistent rate. Due to this trend, one way to measure the

maturity of your team is to measure the variation in velocity from one sprint to the next. **On a sprint-by-sprint basis, compare your velocities against a 20% variance. Score the results between one and five using the following example as a guide:**

BURNDOWN CHART WITH VELOCITY SLOPE



Velocity variance score:

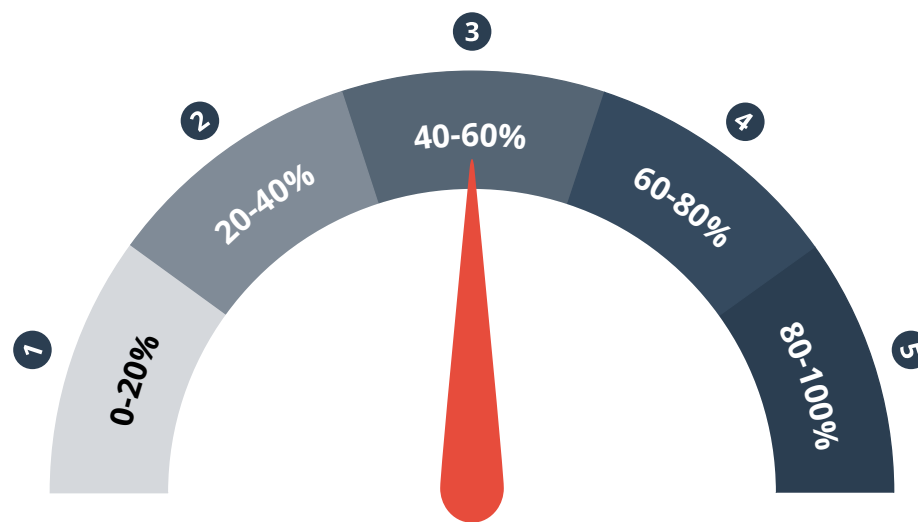
AUTOMATED UNIT TEST COVERAGE

Why spend money to hire software testers, when you could have software that tests itself? Though it sounds too good to be true, the most high-performing software teams don't separate QA and development - they simply have "engineers." This system is possible for two reasons:

1. High-performing team members own the quality of their own software.
2. Automated unit testing allows engineers to easily test software at the time it's built, rather than "throwing it over the wall" to a separate group.

Fortunately, neither tactic is reserved for the elite, and it's very easy to measure how much unit testing is already being done. Most unit testing frameworks have a way to measure the amount of code that "touches" a test, so you can rate your unit test code coverage from one to five, by using the following percentage meter after each sprint:

CODE COVERAGE METER:

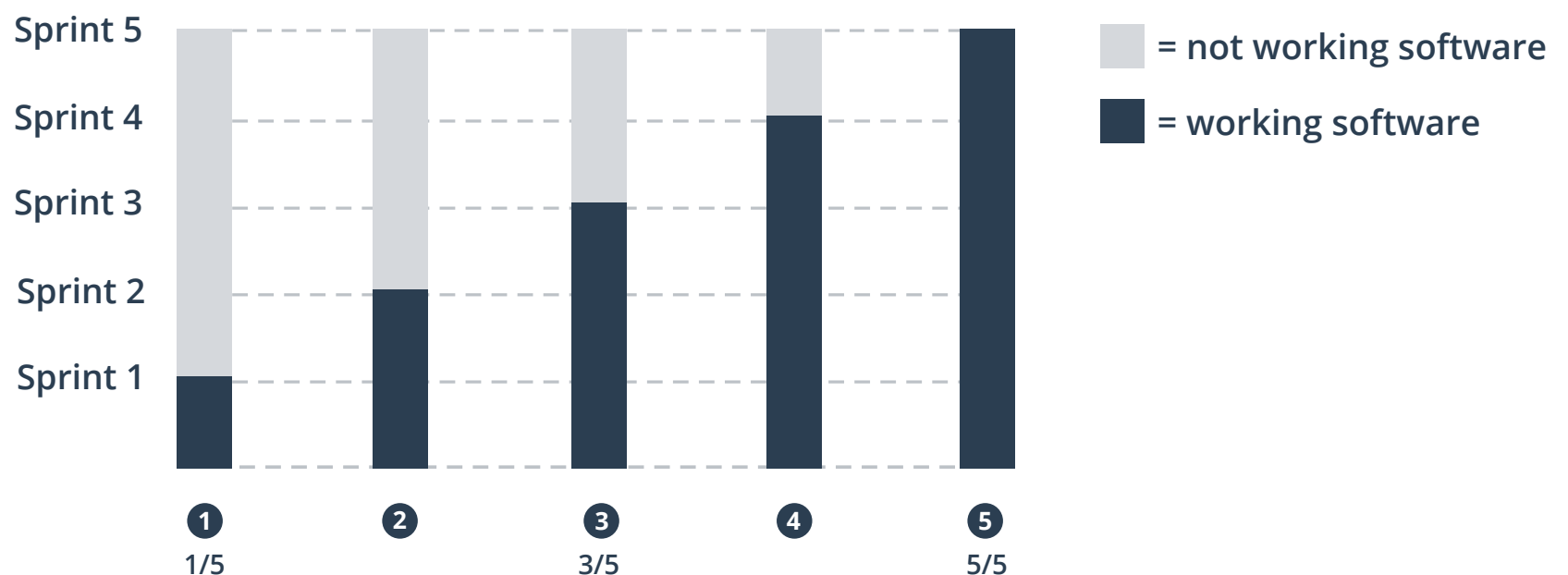


Code coverage score:

SOFTWARE DELIVERY

The ultimate metric for a successful Scrum adoption is the consistent, predictable delivery of working software. Analyze the end-result of five sprints, then score the team's delivery on the following chart between one and five:

WORKING SOFTWARE CHART:



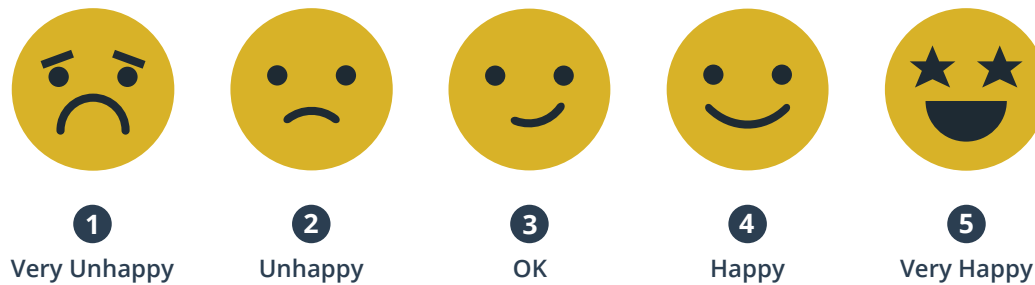
Working software score:

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND HAPPINESS

Employee performance is directly related to employee engagement and happiness because these factors affect the attitudes and focus it takes to be self-motivated. To determine how your team is feeling about the Scrum pro-

cess, you will want to use a survey or game to ask simple, straightforward questions at each sprint retrospective. **Have your team self-evaluate their happiness with the Scrum process on a scale of one to five:**

HAPPINESS SCALE:



Average of all team member scores:

HOW SUCCESSFUL IS YOUR SCRUM ADOPTION?

Now that you have scored your team against these six key Scrum metrics, you need to assess which areas performed high and low. From there, you can build your backlog of organizational improvements and monitor those items in every release to ensure your team is heading in the right

direction. **In the following tally, fill in the corresponding circle for each metric and write the scores in the boxes to the right. Then, add the numbers to determine your overall Scrum Success Score!**

	1	2	3	4	5	
TEAM CROSS-FUNCTIONALISM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
BACKLOG DELIVERY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
VELOCITY VARIANCE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
UNIT TEST COVERAGE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
WORKING SOFTWARE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
						<input type="text"/> SCRUM SUCCESS SCORE*

*** If you scored between 6 to 12:** The process isn't going so well, Grasshopper. You must embrace the Scrum within.

If you scored between 13 to 18: While the process may not be going as smooth as you'd like, you have stepped into the Scrum zone.

If you scored between 19 to 24: Your Scrum-ness is strong, but there is more to learn.

If you scored between 25 to 30: Congratulations, you're a model of Scrum awesomeness- You have become the Scrum!

WE HOPE THIS GUIDE HELPS YOU BECOME A MORE AWESOME COMPANY - GOOD LUCK!