
"Utilizing agile was a game changer! It allowed us to deliver on-going value and create predictable cycles for on-going improvements while meeting business cycles."
Meloney Linder, Agile project sponsor and former Associate Dean, School of Business, UW-Madison

What are the lasting benefits of Agile?

1. Improves the culture of collaboration between technical, administrative and academic people.
2. Creates predictable processes and cycles for on-going improvements and maintenance updates.

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Agile: An Overview for Sponsors



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About This Document

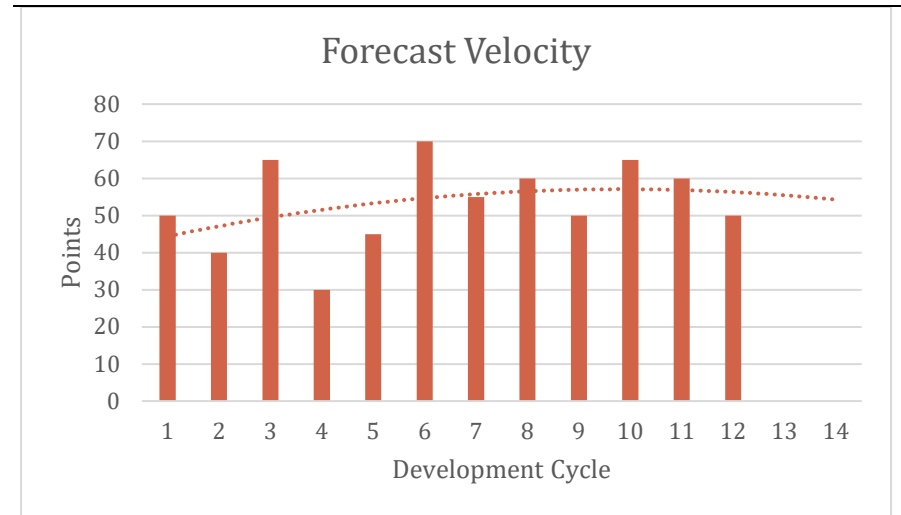
As the move to project management using agile methods spreads, we're finding that many project sponsors have similar questions. This document is meant to help start a good conversation.

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When will the project end?

How long will it take?



Early estimates are based on initial scoping and comparable projects. We adjust based on the measured rate of progress (velocity) against the scope (measured in “points” – points being the metric to track velocity). Remaining scope is continuously re-prioritized to ensure the most valuable features get delivered.

What if we're behind?

Velocity becomes more predictable after several development cycles. At that point, we can forecast how much of the scope can be delivered in the remaining time. Because the scope is prioritized, the least valuable features are those that may not get done. There is little waste in reducing scope since we haven't even fully specified the low priority needs yet.

How do you keep track of what's going on?

What are we creating?

Less formal requirements, continuously re-evaluated and refined right before work begins.

What if we change our minds when we see results?

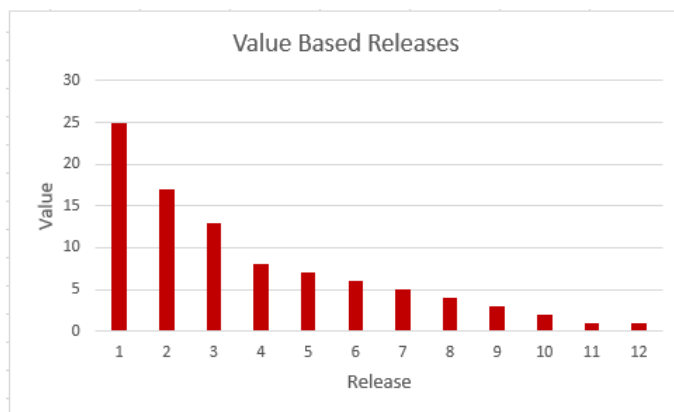
Agile acknowledges that change is inevitable. We'll adjust.

Where's the accountability for results?

You'll see running software, not documents, plans, and status reports, every two weeks, face-to-face with the development team. You are encouraged to observe planning activities and the daily stand-up.

How do we know if we're done with the project?

The idea is to focus on building the core and highest-value needs sufficient to deploy the product, and no more. After that, it's up to you to decide how much you want to invest to deliver more value.



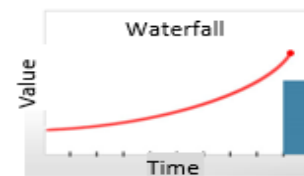
What is Agile?

Software projects are notorious for over-optimistic schedules and delivering solutions mismatched to the needs, despite rigorous approaches to up-front requirements definition and planning.

Agile is an iterative development process that is conducted via time-boxed, 2 to 4 week cycles, where requirements evolve and solutions are built through collaboration between the team and stakeholders.

Why Agile?

Why should we use Agile and Scrum?



Early & maximum value - Delivering as early as possible and focusing on highest value.

Increased adaptability - Rapid response to change.

Increased visibility - Makes the product development process and status transparent.

Clear accountability - It's clear who is responsible for delivering the vision and producing the work.

Constant feedback - Constant feedback from sponsors and other stakeholders ensure whatever is being built to meet actual needs.

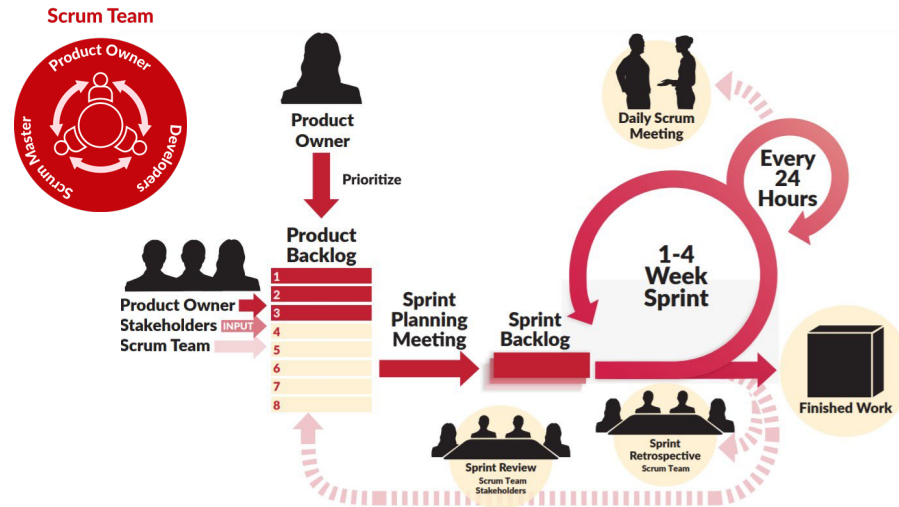
Reduced risk - Constant feedback and early value delivery help to manage risk.

How does it work?

What is Scrum?

Scrum is the most widely-used lightweight process framework for Agile development.

How does Scrum work?



Scrum has specific activities to enable the smooth running of the project:

1. Create and continuously update a list of development needs for the system (Product Backlog)
2. Prioritize needs (Product Owner)
3. During regularly scheduled planning (Sprint Planning Meeting), pick the highest priority items to complete over the 1 to 4 week development cycle (Sprint)
4. During reviews (Sprint Review) at the end of the development cycles, demonstrate completed work to stakeholders and get their feedback
5. The team then discusses how to improve performance in the next development cycle (Sprint Retrospective)
6. Repeat

At the end of each development cycle the goal is to have code that's built, tested and ready to release to production.

What are the roles?

What's my role as a sponsor?

Sponsors provide and own the high-level project vision and often delegate the implementation of that vision to a Product Owner. You will also serve as the campus level interface with peers and higher-level executives. Finally – you provide funds for project.

What is a Product Owner?

The Product Owner understands the sponsor's vision and is entrusted with the responsibilities and authority to make daily project decisions. Product Owners prioritize the work and dedicate an hour or two a day to the team to provide much-needed feedback and guidance on active development. More information at <http://bit.ly/ProductOwnerVideo>.

Who is the Scrum Master?

The Scrum Master acts as the coach to ensure the Scrum Team is following the framework and performing at a high level. Scrum Masters also work to resolve issues that prevent progress and shield the developers from outside distractions.

Who are the Developers?

This is the group that does the work – they're self-organized, cross-functional and collectively responsible for accomplishing what they've committed to doing.

What does the Project Manager do?

The Project Manager provides an additional layer of coordination and risk management when multiple Scrum Teams, complex delivery processes, vendors and governance are involved.