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Factsheet: How to scrum a public report

Many organisations or project teams struggle at the beginning of the year with their annual report or at the end of a project with their public report. Although the communication experts are mostly in charge, it is after all a mutual effort with the project team or organization team delivering input. Texts have to be delivered, deadlines met and photo's collected. Scrum is a nice way to organise the development of the public report, in time and without too much friction.

Define the customer story

A customer story tells you what the (potential) client expects from the product and what for. There can be different persona with different needs. So it is important to go through them and make a choice for the optimal product delivered. Will it be 'one size fits all' or can you diversify into several versions.

*Example: You, being the product owner, start to think of persona that will receive the end product like: Our **funder** will need a concise annual report **in order to** know what we have achieved **so he can** make a decision for continuation of his support. But it can also be an **individual supporter** who wants to have a very short, on line infographic **in order to** see how her donation is spent **so she can** make a decision for the next donation.*

Assemble the team

When you have a clear customer story with a well-defined end product you can start looking for the best people to make the team.

Example: The customer story asks for an on line glossy with nice pictures and short statements referring to longer background stories. The statements come from beneficiaries of your project. The background stories are diverse, one interview, one reportage, one statistical overview of results. What you need for the team is two people with excellent writing skills, an insider from the project, a designer with IT skills, someone who can deliver first class photos and one fixer who can make phone calls, send emails and arrange pizza. The team is facilitated by the scrum master.

Estimating the time needed to finalise the product

In a scrum planning meeting you look with the team at the desired end product, the online glossy. This is only ready when it can be sent to the potential clients. You have defined a number of tasks needed to be fulfilled to get there. Facilitated by the Scrum master the team discusses the list of tasks and checks (1) if this is indeed what has to be done to finalise the product. Secondly the team (2) prioritizes the tasks and thirdly (3) estimates if the tasks are small, medium, large or extra large. If they are L or XL they cannot be fixed in one week so you either have to cut them in sub tasks or you take away barriers that make the task M or S. The team members decide on the size of the tasks.

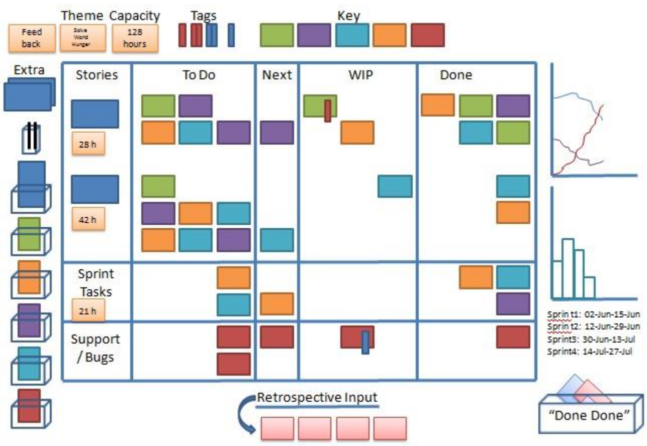
Example: One of the team members suggests an additional task: making info graphics for the statistical overview. Everybody agrees so the task is added to the list. Another member suggests to give priority to the content list, this is logical so everyone agrees. One member gives the infographics an XL estimation. This is discussed and solved by the fact that earlier in the project a set of infographics was made that can be used.

The team has to be one week free of all other tasks

One of the SCRUM adagiums is that multitasking is wasting time. The more tasks you try to do simultaneously, the more 'switch' time you lose. So stick to this one assignment only. This means one week for the team to make the glossy. The team agrees they can do it and the week is planned.

All tasks are put on the SCRUM planning board

The SCRUM planning board has at least 5 columns. Column 1 contains the customer story, Column 2 the tasks, column 3 next task on the line, column 4 work in progress and column 5, work done. Every morning the team stands in front of the SCRUM board to discuss progress.



Stand up meetings

From the first day the team has a stand up meeting of 20 minutes at the start. Tasks are moved from one column to another. If something is done it is according to the 'definition of done'. If some task is still in progress while it should be finished the team members ask what can be done to help finish this task. During the stand-up meeting three questions are important:

- What did I do since last meeting?
- What will I do until the next meeting?
- Which barriers will I encounter in doing this task and who can support me to overcome them?

Example: Wednesday morning, the third day of the SCRUM sprint, the whole team stands in front of the scrum board. The interview is still not ready while it was supposed to be done by Tuesday. The responsible team member took the interview, made an article out of it and sent it for reflection to the respondent. He is waiting for a reaction. The team decides to keep the interview on the WIP column and the team member will call today to ask when the respondent will react. Another team member wants to put the task photo's in the column done. The scrum master asks, are you sure you have all photo's ready for publishing. This is not the case, some pictures still need permission from the owner. The task stays on WIP.

Scrum evaluation meeting

All tasks are done, the magazine is finished and presented to the product owner. In an evaluation meeting the team looks back on what went well and where improvements could be made. Remember during Scrum the team is almost constantly looking for improvements. During the evaluation the lessons learned are repeated and shared with the team, the scrum master and the product owner.