

: What are the Scrum Framework fundamentals?

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Scrum is an agile framework and structured set of ideas that is intended to help teams collaborate on complex tasks. Agile is both a way of thinking and a set of principles that guide decision making. Scrum.org materials state "Scrum is a framework within which people can address complex adaptive problems, while productively and creatively delivering products of the highest possible value. Scrum itself is a simple framework for effective team collaboration on complex products."

Scrum has gained increasing popularity over the years due to its simplicity, and its capability to incorporate various overarching practices in other Agile models. Much has been written about Scrum and this discussion abstracts and interprets three primary sources -- the Schwaber and Sutherland (2017) "Scrum Guide", Rubin's (2013) "Essential Scrum", and Nicolaas's (2018) "Scrum for Teams". The summary also builds upon web materials including videos at scrum.org and mountaingoatsoftware.com.

Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland (2017) assert that "Scrum's roles, events, artifacts, and rules are immutable and although implementing only parts of Scrum is possible, the result is not Scrum. Scrum exists only in its entirety and functions well as a container for other techniques, methodologies, and practices." This is an abstract, overview, and simplification of Scrum. The path to agility requires active learning and participating in project teams that use Scrum. This discussion attempts to complement and summarize the official Scrum framework, cf., Schwaber and Sutherland (2017).

Scrum is presented by some authors and consultants as a lightweight, easy to understand framework and process that has only a few rules and practices. The more intensively one studies Scrum and learns about the framework, the more complexity that is encountered and hence mastering Scrum becomes a challenging, ongoing quest. Scrum is a framework for guiding a process, it is not a methodology or a step-by-step recipe. The Scrum framework identifies what needs to be done and the Scrum team must figure out how to do it. Scrum must be interpreted and modified to fit a specific situation and set of circumstances. Finally, all Scrum elements or parts are needed to create an effective process and to deliver a valued result. The three pillars of Scrum are transparency of the significant aspects of the process, an inspection of progress to goals, and adaptation and adjustment as needed to minimize problems.

The **Scrum framework** consists of Scrum Teams and their associated roles, events, artifacts, and rules. Each component within the framework serves a specific purpose and "is essential to Scrum's success and usage". The rules of Scrum bind together the roles, events, and artifacts, governing the

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relationships and interaction between them. The essence of Scrum is a small team of people. The individual team is highly flexible and adaptive.

The five **Scrum values** of commitment, courage, focus, openness, and respect must be understood and "lived" by the Scrum Team. These 5 principles and values create a code of behavior for a team member that must be understood and followed. Examining the definitions for these values helps internalize the values. By pursuing these values, the three Scrum pillars of transparency, inspection, and adaptation gain meaning and can help build trust for everyone. Scrum team members learn and explore these values as they work with the Scrum events, roles, and artifacts. Schwaber and Sutherland (2017) claim "Successful use of Scrum depends on people becoming more proficient in living these five values. People personally commit to achieving the goals of the Scrum Team. The Scrum Team members have courage to do the right thing and work on tough problems. Everyone focuses on the work of the Sprint and the goals of the Scrum Team. The Scrum Team and its stakeholders agree to be open about all the work and the challenges with performing the work. Scrum Team members respect each other to be capable, independent people."

The fundamentals include: 1) Scrum roles and responsibilities; 2) writing requirements and user stories; 3) creating and managing the Product or Project Backlog of work; 4) estimating effort and prioritizing backlog items; 5) planning and executing a short duration Sprint; 6) sprint reviews and retrospectives; and 7) the "Definition of Done" and why it is important to know when a project is "Done".

Scrum Team roles include a Product Owner, the Development Team, and a Scrum Master. Scrum Teams are self-organizing and cross-functional. Scrum teams are described as self-organizing because members choose how best to accomplish tasks and create value. Teams consist of people from different areas of an organization who have diverse skills that are needed for a specific, complex project. The Product Owner is a single person who is responsible for managing the Product or Project Backlog, the list of features, changes, tasks or other activities that when completed achieve specific outcomes. The Development Team is the professionals who do the work and deliver "a potentially releasable increment of 'Done' product at the end of each Sprint". The Scrum Master is a servant-leader for the Scrum Team who helps everyone understand Scrum theory, practices, rules, and values.

References

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