Scrum True-and-False
humane workplaces – systems thinking – lean thinking – agility – craftsmanship – value – sustainability

Self-check your knowledge of Scrum   **NeoPragma**

Scrum True-and-False

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Using Scrum? Leading Scrum? Teaching Scrum? Learning Scrum?

Just for fun, see if you recognize your own organization or team in some of the these assertions about Scrum.

1. During a Sprint, scope may be clarified and re-negotiated between the Product Owner and Development Team as more is learned.

> **True**. Teams learn more about what is to be built and how best to build it as they make progress toward the goal. Scrum allows this learning to be incorporated into the process to ensure the best possible result is delivered. The Sprint Backlog is not merely a miniature version of a traditional Requirements Specification.

2. A team must deliver on its Sprint Commitment no matter the cost to team member health, personal lives, family and relationships, product quality, or sustainable delivery capability. The word "commitment" implies "do or die."

> **False**. The word "commitment" was removed from the Scrum Guide as of November, 2011, because it led to undesired behaviors that were not intended by the creators of Scrum. Teams forecast the amount of work they think can be done in a Sprint, based on demonstrated past performance. All parties understand and accept the forecast is an approximation and not a guarantee.

3. Scrum mandates a team size of seven people, plus or minus two.

> **False**. The Scrum Guide states optimal team "size is small enough to remain nimble and large enough to complete significant work within a Sprint." The exact team size depends on context. However, groups smaller than four do not benefit from Scrum process management overhead, and groups larger than about twelve have difficulty functioning seamlessly as a true team.

4. The standard duration of a Sprint is defined as two weeks.

> **False**. The Scrum Guide calls for Sprints to be one month long or less. Many teams begin with a two-week Sprint, but this is not a standard or a requirement of Scrum. Generally, the best results are achieved by using the shortest time-box in which it is feasible to deliver a fully "done" product increment. Organizations should strive to evolve toward continuous delivery so that the need for time-boxes is eliminated altogether.

5. During a Sprint, anyone with sufficient formal authority in the organization may require the Development Team to take on additional tasks.

> **False**. In an organization that adopts Scrum, all parties agree that Sprints are not to be interrupted for unplanned work except in an emergency, and even then the Product Owner decides which backlog items may be removed to make space for the unplanned work.

6. Scrum is an Agile software development method officially recognized by the Agile Alliance.

> **False**. There are no official Agile software development methods. Scrum was defined in 1993, based in part on work published in 1986, and the Agile Manifesto was published in 2001. Scrum is one of several software development processes consistent with the values and principles stated in the Agile Manifesto, but it is not "part of" or synonymous with Agile.

7. The creators of Scrum welcome the addition of any new roles, artifacts, events, and practices that people find helpful in delivering software.

> **False**. Scrum is fully defined by the Scrum Guide, written and maintained by Scrum's creators, Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber. Scrum may be combined with other useful practices, but that does not make such practices "part of" Scrum.

8. Scrum allows a brief hiatus after each Sprint to allow teams to rest before starting the next Sprint.

> **False**. Each Sprint begins immediately following the previous Sprint.

9. Scrum allows individual team members to be specialists.

> **True**. Scrum calls for a cross-functional team, called the Development Team, and "recognizes no titles for Development Team members." However, the work each team member performs may be specialized. In many cases, it is desirable for team members to have multiple areas of expertise, but this is not part of the definition of Scrum.

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10. With the self-organizing team concept, there is no longer any need for managers.

  False. The concept of self-organization is limited to the Development Team deciding how best to realize the Sprint Goal. Self-organization does not extend to administrative or human resources matters.

11. Without a formal certification in Scrum, the chance of getting value from Scrum is very slight.

  False. By design, Scrum is structurally simple and easy to learn. People find it challenging to apply Scrum because of organizational constraints and ingrained habits, not because of any complexity inherent in Scrum itself. You can definitely learn and apply Scrum effectively without a formal certification.

Want to know more about Scrum?

Contact us or check out some of these online resources. Come to think of it, why not do both?

- Scrum Alliance. http://www.scrumalliance.org
- Scrum.org. http://www.scrum.org
- Scrum Guide. http://www.scrumguides.org