

CSM Practicing Certification Renewal Assessment

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Scrum depends on the inspect and adapt mechanisms of process control to manage the complexity of projects. For inspection to work, everyone must know what is being made visible. To implement the Scrum process, such regulating mechanisms as defined roles, involvement versus commitment, time-boxes, and regular cycles are used.

1. Describe one project on which you have used Scrum over the last twelve months. Describe:
 - Purpose - what business goal was the project intended to deliver?
Re-establish credibility of IT organization
 - a. This was the initial effort and details can be found in my paper Business Rules; Managing Released Software and IT Operations.
 - Length - what was the duration of the project?
Phase 1. 12 months
 - Cost - what were the budgeted and actual costs?
 - This was one of the problems. There was no budgeting as such as well as little planning. Actual costs of the SCRUM effort blended into 4 programs that were in play totaling around 1.4 million.
 1. Being a teleworker model, losing access to the site equaled no work for over 100 teleworkers. (1 minute down = 1 resource minutes therefore each minute lost was worth about 2 hours of labor, burdened. 1 resource hour = 50 clock minutes. 100 resource hrs = 2 labor hours @ \$125.00, or about \$250 lost labor for every minute the site was down. Add in the SLA penalties, and the account time.
 - Value - what were the projected benefits and actual (if measured) actual benefits?
 1. The projected benefits were cost reduction in the order of magnitude range,
 - a. 3 failed releases in 1 year
 - b. problem resolution turnaround approaching 3 weeks internal and 2.5 weeks for external customers.
 2. Improved customer satisfaction with software products, support, and systems.
 3. Improved quality of life for all IT personnel.

Actual

1. The actual benefits showed a cost reduction of a little less than an two orders of magnitude.
 2. Customer satisfaction went from under 2 to 4 on a scale of 5. Clients asked us to slow down on the rate of delivery. Unresolved bugs were under 129 for 10,000 opened.
 3. Quality of life improved for Manager who opted to move to a Expert level Individual Contributor job. VP's who were able to report good news and receive accolades and the folks who went from 60 – 70 hour a week siege mentality to 40 – 45 hour never late on a delivery mode.
 4. The Ability of IT to deliver so much functionality to the growing customer base was a intriguing point to the firm that bought us out. What baffled them is we did it without adding staff.
- Size - how many people were on the project team(s), how were they organized into teams?
 - Entire Department was 18 people
 - Agile Team were between 3 and 6 people

- Teams were organized by task and functions needed in production, development and in Problem Resolution
- Teams - were the teams cross-functional and self-organizing? Were the teams collocated in an open space? Were the teams physically separated within one location, or located in more than one physical location?
 - Teams were built around existing efforts. Development and Production teams were at one location, and problem resolution teams were at two locations. Cross-functional members were brought in as needed. This took on the approach of the Ensemble that Jim Highsmith talks about.
 - Teams were split with parts of the team located in the same space and other members of the team located in separate locations and in different time zones.
 - Development and Production Scrums held telecom respective dailys in the AM. Production Scrum held daily meeting locally and invited others when the SCRUM indicated they were needed. Problem resolution. Problem Resolution met on a semi weekly basis due to travel and time zones.
 - After about 3 – 6 months all Teams ‘threw out the Scrum Master’ from the daily scrums and only engaged him – as a Scrum Master – when they needed help getting a rock moved. (I also served as an integration architect on the teams – oink and cluck)
- Initiation - how was the project initiated? How was the team trained to use the Scrum process?
 - This began when I was brought in to do a turnaround in IT and required coaching, mentoring and insertion. Insertion requires that you ‘co-manage’ a group so that you can redefine the groups direction and approach and then transition out. As it turned out the existing manager took another career path and I replaced the production department as a ‘titular’ manager and moved the technical lead into SCRUM MASTER role. Both have been accepted, but the production team does not see itself as ‘Scrum’ but as ‘production team’.
- Change - what difficulties were surfaced by Scrum that had to be resolved? How were these resolved?
 - Pre-existing Communication issues with business and other groups created anxiety and a ‘micro-nitpicking’ approach to production status reports to the point that they would call or ‘visit’ more than twice a day. Resolved by separating the information into operational – scheduled tasks as opposed to ad-hoc tasks then posting daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly views of planned action (note updated only as needed.) I sent out the schedule and used the problem tracking system as the controller for the adhoc requests. This package had an emailing capability that would notify everyone what the status of a work order was.
 - Consistent over commitment of resources by business led to the 60 hour weeks. Created Resource Consumption Sheet and then asked business to ‘balance the act’ by either limiting the activities to resources available, increasing the resources, or reducing the functionalities. In addition created Rule of Business Rule committing to building only what IT understood feasible not what was operationally functional.
- Management - what was the previous role of the ScrumMaster?
 - The ScrumMaster began as a Consultant who used “insertion” techniques to back group into Agile and Scrum Methods. I have since become an employee.
- Who took on the role of Product Owner?

- The Product Owner(s) were the business and operational heads of the organizations and customers we supported. They, in effect, appointed a person to be the final authority on the project at hand. This wavered until the most skeptic business person – the one most burned by IT in the past – became the product owner for the software. It took 6 months of hanging tough and then we were taken for being real. From that point on we were the dynamic duo.
- To what degree were they successful in fulfilling their roles?
 - Very successful. Both have been recognized by all sides of the merged organization. More importantly they have become a team recognized for 'getting the job done'.
- Engineering - what software engineering practices or environment had to be changed?
 - In progress. Initial organization was a 1.5 – 2.5 shop. Team lead for development 'old school EE' who has some of the most stringent engineering standards I have ever worked with. At first skeptical, he is the first to announce to new partners that his organization does Scrum – his style.
- Stabilization - for how long did the software have to be stabilized before it could be released? How did you structure this stabilization process?
 - Stabilization is done by 'taking many small steps quickly' extended automatic builds to load to acceptance areas where business can sign off on any new function ready for release. Release occur approximately twice a month. Release Management is in need of a warp engine.
- Success - to what degree was the project successful? To what degree was the Scrum process instrumental in the success of the project?
 - Prior to the acquisition of the firm, the plan was to have the Scrum model moved into Senior Management to develop a style of operation that was working in IT.
 - The IT department was cited by national certification boards for having superior actively followed IT, policies, procedures and follow through, signing off on us after the first – initial review.
 - The IT department was a part of the core motivation for the acquisition of the firm.
 - After only a year in the new organization, five (5) of the 23 programs recognized in the annual corporate awards were directly associated with the Scrum Effort and three (3) were done using Scrum.
- Scrum Process - to what degree was the Scrum process implemented "out of the box?"
 - What Box?
 - Due to the traditionalist, chaotic, and dysfunctional mindset, SCRUM as an approach, was not highlighted until six months into the process.
- To what degree did you have to modify the Scrum process for this project?
 - This led to many variances including extension of Scrum into Problem Management, the adaptation of the length of a Sprint to fit the work style of the team involved. The creation of a Resource Consumption Sheet to counter resistance to the traditionalist obsession with estimates; the lack of use of a burn

down sheet, because we had to modify Backlogs to take in problem resolution;

- The improvement of the throughput and quality due to the Rule of the Business Rule made the Burn sheet less effective because our time actively cycling on a task was so short (5 – 15 days).
- For each modification, how did you formulate the modification so that the basic inspect/adapt mechanisms continued to function?
 - The Resource Consumption sheet success hinged on the inspect /adapt model, as every week each task had to be revisited. Since we applied it to all work done in the IT organization. it now provides a consistent picture to senior management.
 - Burn Down Sheets became problematic because of the variety of tasks the team was working on. However once we established a rhythm we found that few projects took long enough to warrant a burn down sheet. Finally business became too busy trying to implement what they asked for to spend time worrying about how we spent our resources.
- What parts of Scrum couldn't be implemented, or failed, and why?
 - Retro's have not been implemented except as part of our hand off processes to other organizations.

2. How do you cause the accuracy of Product Backlog estimates to improve?

The Resource Consumption Sheet forces people to revise estimates every week as part of the Staff meeting that focuses only on what we are doing.

To what degree does their accuracy matter?

The importance of their accuracy does not seem to be as important as the consistency they show in improving as more is known. This does matter when senior managers need something to justify a risk decision on or something to bolster an opinion. Finance likes them, I think, because they improve knowing what they missed.

3. How do you cause the accuracy of what a team commits to for a Sprint to what the team actually delivers?

- We have found the rule of business rules has made the accuracy of what is being worked on the key to what we do AND do not commit to. Since business is part of the rule of business rules they often take items off the backlog if they are not happy with the rules they gave us.

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4. What metrics do you use to track the development process?

- Acceptance of the Delivery of functionality.
- This replaced a business list (taken to the Board) of the late and failed deliveries?

5. What type of training, resources, or tools would best help you successfully employ Scrum in the future?

- Inserting the daily scrum meeting into the normal flow of actions, and insisting that only the three questions be asked.
- Meeting your commitment to address problems and do it successfully.
- Communicate EVERYTHING To EVERYONE. FREQUENTLY
- Making sure that everyone, especially management, has a link back to traditional

project Management Model of DEFINE PLAN EXECUTE DEPLOY AND IMPROVE so that what we are doing can be easily communicated to the world and the differences explained when people ask How are you getting so much done so quickly and so well?

6. (Optional) Scrum and Extreme Programming are sometimes used together. What must be considered when this is done?