

# 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?
    - The business goal was owned by the eBusiness arm of a manufacturing supplier of tools and parts. The goal was to create a proven SAP Architecture that could hook into an existing R/3 database and access the wealth of realtime information about the catalog and clients that the mother company was using.
  - Length - what was the duration of the project?
    - The project was 4 months in duration covering Xmas. There were 3 iterations that delivered working systems at the end of each cycle.
  - Cost - what were the budgeted and actual costs?
    - The budgeted costs were \$200,000 k and those were the Actual Costs ☺. We always delivered as much as we could.
  - Value - what were the projected benefits and actual (if measured) actual benefits?
    - The value was an SAP architecture that could access the mother companies data using SAP infrastructure and a team that was jelled and ready to deliver more.
  - Size - how many people were on the project team(s), how were they organized into teams?
    - There were 12 people involved, separated into two teams. One team (6 members) was on eBusiness side and held daily standup meetings. The other team was located with the mother company and 1 of the members participated in the daily standup. The mother company had a different reporting structure than the eBusiness team.
  - 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?
    - The eBusiness team was collocated and the mother ship team was remote. The eBusiness team was self organizing. The mother ship team was time sliced into the project and was only available when maintenance or other small projects were not demanded of them 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Initiation - how was the project initiated? How was the team trained to use the Scrum process?
    - The team was introduced to scrum by me and trained as needed in each step. One of the 1<sup>st</sup> things introduced to the team was the idea that no-one will assign you a task todo from the plan. We will produce a plan together, rollup a high level view of that plan to management for validation of overall direction and then produce a detailed breakdown of the work for our 1<sup>st</sup> 30 day cycle. Then the team was allowed to signup for those tasks they felt they could do and start delivering. The team was made aware that we our goal was to deliver value that aligned with the direction requested.
  - Reporting - how did you report progress to management and the customers?
    - A combination of a functional work breakdown structure and a Burndown graph. Front Burner, Back Burner, Fridge using Buckets, Stories and Tasks. These terms map to Front Burner (Active Sprint), Back Burner (Next Stuff), Fridge (Backlog). Initially Microsoft project was used but, after management was pulled

into the planning and introduced to the reporting style of scrum, they agreed to the newer method and dispensed with MS Project.

- Change - what difficulties were surfaced by Scrum that had to be resolved? How were these resolved?
  - One example of a difficulty that surfaced was SAP disk space requirements. This was found in day 4 of the sprint and raised as a block during our Daily Meeting. The team was initially alarmed and ready to replan based on this new information. Instead, I asked for details and it was revealed that SAP documentation was out of date and we made hardware plans based on that spec. Bringing it to upper managements attention in this way got them involved and they then hustled up the extra disk within a day. Less than 2 days after the "Block: Not enough disk Space" the problem was resolved by the UNIX support team. And, best of all, the sprint plan was fundamentally unchanged.
- Management - what was the previous role of the ScrumMaster? Who took on the role of Product Owner? To what degree were they successful in fulfilling their roles?
  - I was the Scrum Master, and was brought in from the outside as a consultant. The Product Owner role was taken over by the team as a collective entity. By centralizing the Product Owner to a collective meeting where our direction was validated by the collective we were able to gain sufficient validation on our direction and steer a course.
- Engineering - what software engineering practices or environment had to be changed?
  - We needed to shift from a "solve the enterprise problem" 1<sup>st</sup> practice to one of manageable problems that we can address one by one. The other big shift was getting people to let go of email as a form of technical communication and Big Up Front documentation drawn from SAP content. By sifting this to a smaller focus we were able to chunk up the work and produce stuff incrementally. SAP's classic massive up front approach was drowning the team in possibilities.
- Stabilization - for how long did the software have to be stabilized before it could be released? How did you structure this stabilization process?
  - An initial release occurred within 2 weeks of iteration one. The release was a migration of Basic Queries (SAP infrastructure language), configurations, and component. The Basic queries pulled data real-time from the mother R/3 implementation. The act of stabilizing was to show that the queries, configurations and components had no adverse impacts on the mother companies' performance. Although, the software was mostly unused the changes showed we could make small frequent stable changes, not big bites as is classically done when following SAP Standard Methodology.
- Success - to what degree was the project successful? To what degree was the Scrum process instrumental in the success of the project?
  - The project was successful considering that no one was expecting us to identify the real problems that were in the way of adopting an SAP infrastructure. The true problem came down to the eBusiness Org was rejecting (culturally) the adoption of SAP as directed by the mother company.
  - Scrum was considered a big success because it was seen by management as a key reason things happened. We set very simple goals during our sprints and were always able to exceed them.
- Scrum Process - to what degree was the Scrum process implemented "out of the box?" To what degree did you have to modify the Scrum process for this project? For each modification, how did you formulate the modification so that the basic inspect/adapt mechanisms continued to function? What parts of Scrum couldn't be implemented, or failed, and why?
  - As with all things I encouraged the team to adopt a validation centric approach. This was often easier said than done. The big encouragement from Scrum that worked was to get the team to identify real doable goals that they could meet and not bite off more than they could chew each day. Our sprint 0 was a little un-

characteristic of regular scrum because we used the in house methodology as a way of doing things and at the same time started creating a bubble for the team to succeed and gain confidence. As the team gained confidence we would inspect/adapt each day and re-work parts of the sprint that were not well planned. This was necessary because the SAP technology was so new for the team and even ball-park estimates were tough to nail down.

- The Scrum practice itself was rolled out in 1-day to the team and then rolled out very gently upwards to management. The full idea of scrum was not raised clearly in the beginning because it would have been seen as another “bright idea” that was not focused on SAP. Instead we gained successes in small steps with SAP technology, advertised those successes outward/upward and attributed it to success of how we were working (SCRUM). This was defiantly a bottom up approach but, it did gain traction, acceptance and a year later, they are in hot pursuit of Scrum techniques.

2. How do you cause the accuracy of Product Backlog estimates to improve? To what degree does their accuracy matter?

- Improving the accuracy of the Product Backlog is best done by getting the team members to feel confident in providing truthful estimates and encourage them to bite off small pieces of work.

- Accuracy will matter if the results of the sprint are not sufficient or not advertised sufficiently to sponsors. The biggest factor in accuracy is setting the team up to succeed and gaining confidence that they can succeed.

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

- Bite small, 1-2 day chunks when possible, put pressure that failing to decompose is the real source of failure and hiding behind poor estimates hurts the whole team. As a team we can only become truly successful when we have started to deliver together. So gain space for the team to feel comfortable in telling the truth and accuracy will improve.

4. What metrics do you use to track the development process? Which metrics have been changed, removed, or newly implemented as a result of using Scrum?

- The team has become focused on stories as the key metric. Prior to this they were tracking phases of the project and percent done based on upfront estimates.

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

- Training, a short course 1-2 days in agile scrum management running through a simulation game with all team members and then transitioning to a real project.

- Resources, case studies and general information about scrum. We need to focus on the simple rules of scrum and keep looking for other very simple organizing rules. Also, better ways to engage management from the top down in the adoption of scrum

- Tools, maybe a list of tools for collocated teams. And tools that encourage the right set of practices as derived from the principles of scrum.

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

- Scrum is focused on making a whole team and including the analyst into the center.

Extreme programming (classic sense, not Industrial XP etc.) is focused on producing code. The classic XP crowd will not be used to having the Customer (analyst) as part of the team.

Incorporating the customer into the team and the customer concerns, causes the team to face the broader issues of building the right thing.