

LEARNING MADE EASY



3rd Edition

Scrum

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Learn the simplicity of
scrum and how it brings results

Apply an iterative and incremental
approach in any industry

Improve your organizational
and personal agility

Mark C. Layton

Mr. Agile[®], Executive Advisor & Agile Strategist

Steven J Ostermiller

Agile Trainer, Mentor, & Community Builder

Dean J. Kynaston

Agile Coach & Trainer



Scrum

3rd Edition

by Mark C. Layton, Steven J Ostermiller,
& Dean J. Kynaston

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dummies[®]
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Scrum For Dummies® , 3rd Edition

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Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Beyond the Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[**Part 1: Getting Started with Scrum**](#)

[**Chapter 1: The Basics of Scrum**](#)

[The Bird's-Eye Basics](#)

[The Feedback Feast](#)

[Agile Roots](#)

[The Five Scrum Values](#)

[**Chapter 2: The First Steps**](#)

[Getting Your Scrum On](#)

[The Power in the Product Owner](#)
[Why Product Owners Love Scrum](#)
[The Company Goal and Strategy: Part 1](#)
[The Scrum Master](#)
[Common Roles Outside Scrum](#)

Part 2: Scrum Product Development

Chapter 3: Planning Your Work

[The Product Roadmap](#)
[Breaking Down Requirements](#)
[Your Product Backlog](#)
[Product Backlog Common Practices](#)

Chapter 4: The Talent and the Timing

[The Developers](#)
[Getting the Edge on Backlog Estimation](#)
[Your Definition of Done](#)
[Common Practices for Estimating](#)

Chapter 5: Release and Sprint Planning

[Lean Startup](#)
[Release Plan Basics](#)
[Sprinting to Your Goals](#)
[Planning Your Sprints](#)
[Your Sprint Backlog](#)

Chapter 6: Getting the Most Out of Sprints

[The Daily Scrum](#)
[Team Task Board](#)
[The Sprint Review](#)
[The Sprint Retrospective](#)

Chapter 7: Inspect and Adapt: How to Correct Your Course

[Need for Certainty](#)
[The Feedback Loop](#)
[Transparency](#)

[Antipatterns](#)

[External Forces](#)

[In-Flight Course Correction](#)

[Testing in the Feedback Loop](#)

[Culture of Innovation](#)

Part 3: Scrum for Any Industry

Chapter 8: Software Development

[Scrum and Software Development: A Natural Fit](#)

[Software Flexibility and Refactoring](#)

[Embracing Change](#)

[Scrum Applications in Software](#)

Chapter 9: Tangible Goods Production

[The Fall of Waterfall](#)

[Construction](#)

[Scrum in Home Building](#)

[Manufacturing](#)

[Hardware Development](#)

Chapter 10: Services

[Health Care and Scrum](#)

[A Worldwide Pandemic](#)

[Education and Scrum](#)

[Military and Law Enforcement](#)

Chapter 11: Publishing: A Shifting Landscape

[A Changing Landscape in Publishing](#)

[News Media and Scrum](#)

Part 4: Scrum for Business Agility

Chapter 12: IT Management and Operations

[Big Data and Large-Scale Migration](#)

[Commercial-Off-the-Shelf \(COTS\) Implementations](#)

[Oracle Primavera Unifier](#)

[ServiceNow](#)

[Broadcom's Clarity](#)
[DevOps and Beyond](#)
[Profit-and-Loss Potential](#)
[Innovation versus Stability](#)

Chapter 13: Portfolio Management

[Portfolio Management Challenges](#)
[De-scaling Scrum for Large Portfolios](#)
[A Vertical Slicing Overview](#)
[Scrum of Scrums](#)
[Large-Scale Scrum \(LeSS\)](#)
[Scrum@Scale](#)
[Nexus](#)
[Scaled Agile Framework \(SAFe\)](#)

Chapter 14: Human Resources and Finance

[Human Resources and Scrum](#)
[Creating the Right Culture](#)
[Finance](#)

Chapter 15: Business Development

[Marketing Evolution](#)
[Scrum for Marketing](#)
[Marketing Tools](#)
[Scrum in Action \(Marketing\)](#)
[The Gap Between Marketing and Sales](#)
[Scrum for Sales](#)
[Determining Roadmap to Value \(Sales\)](#)

Chapter 16: Customer Service

[Customers: The Most Crucial Stakeholders](#)
[Scrum and Customer Service](#)
[Scrum in Action in Customer Service](#)

Part 5: Scrum for Everyday Life

Chapter 17: Dating and Family Life

[Finding Love with Scrum](#)

[Families and Scrum](#)

Chapter 18: Scrum for Life Goals

[Getting to Retirement](#)

[Achieving Fitness and Weight Goals](#)

[Keeping Life Balance](#)

[Planning Travel](#)

[Studying](#)

Part 6: The Part of Tens

Chapter 19: Ten Key Benefits of Scrum

[Higher Customer Satisfaction](#)

[Better Product Quality](#)

[Reduced Risk](#)

[Improved Performance Visibility](#)

[Increased Investment Control](#)

[Increased Collaboration and Ownership](#)

[More Relevant Metrics](#)

[Improved Predictability](#)

[Optimized Team Structures](#)

[Higher Team Morale](#)

Chapter 20: Ten Key Factors for Enabling Scrum

[Dedicated Team Members](#)

[Collaborative Environment](#)

[Done Means Releasable](#)

[Empowered Product Owner](#)

[Don't Ignore Reality](#)

[Clear Product Goal and Roadmap](#)

[Developer Versatility](#)

[Scrum Master Clout](#)

[Leadership Support for Learning](#)

[Leverage Industry Experts](#)

Chapter 21: Ten Key Resources for Scrum

[Scrum For Dummies Cheat Sheet](#)

[The Scrum Guide](#)

[Scrum Alliance](#)

[Agile Alliance](#)

[Business Agility Institute](#)

[State of Agile Report](#)

[ScrumPloP](#)

[Certification Resources](#)

[Scaling Scrum Resources](#)

[Platinum Edge](#)

[**Index**](#)

[**About the Authors**](#)

[**Advertisement Page**](#)

[**Connect with Dummies**](#)

[**End User License Agreement**](#)

List of Tables

Chapter 4

[TABLE 4-1 Teams and workgroups](#)

Chapter 10

[TABLE 10-1 Summary of Typical Components in a Filtering Facepiece Respirator wit...](#)

Chapter 12

[TABLE 12-1 Sample COTS Sprint & Release Definition of *Done*](#)

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: The roadmap to value.](#)

[FIGURE 1-2: A simplified overview of the events and cycles of scrum.](#)

[FIGURE 1-3: A scrum team has the developers at its core.](#)

Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: The product goal is on the roadmap to value.](#)

Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: The product roadmap in the roadmap to value.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: An example product roadmap, broken down by quarters.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: Decomposition levels.](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: The product backlog is your product's ordered to-do list.](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: A format for writing user stories.](#)

[FIGURE 3-6: A completed user story index card.](#)

Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Developer skill progression.](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: Estimation poker cards for estimating the amount of effort required...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: Fist of five is an efficient way of finding consensus in many situa...](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: Affinity estimating uses T-shirt sizes for story sizes and gives ea...](#)

Chapter 5

[FIGURE 5-1: Release planning on the roadmap to value.](#)

[FIGURE 5-2: A typical release plan with the release goal, date, and an optional...](#)

[FIGURE 5-3: Applying the Pareto Principle \(80/20 rule\) to scrum.](#)

[FIGURE 5-4: Backlog priority matrix.](#)

[FIGURE 5-5: The one-week sprint life cycle.](#)

[FIGURE 5-6: Sprint burndown chart.](#)

[FIGURE 5-7: A sprint backlog is a key scrum artifact.](#)

[FIGURE 5-8: Prioritization within a sprint.](#)

Chapter 6

[FIGURE 6-1: The daily scrum is an integral aspect of the sprint and the roadmap...](#)

[FIGURE 6-2: A team task board.](#)

[FIGURE 6-3: The sprint review is a scrum event on the roadmap to value.](#)

[FIGURE 6-4: Multiple layers of feedback exist in a typical scrum product develo...](#)

[FIGURE 6-5: The sprint retrospective — the final element on the roadmap to valu...](#)

Chapter 7

[FIGURE 7-1: Cone of Uncertainty.](#)

[FIGURE 7-2: Feedback process.](#)

[FIGURE 7-3: Flight path.](#)

Chapter 8

[FIGURE 8-1: The historical flow of video-game development.](#)

[FIGURE 8-2: The game-development process with scrum.](#)

Chapter 10

[FIGURE 10-1: Overview of the four-week chronological development process ending...](#)

Chapter 12

[FIGURE 12-1: DevOps balancing a business requirement against stability.](#)

[FIGURE 12-2: A common practice for separating maintenance from the developers i...](#)

[FIGURE 12-3: Team members are rotated among teams at reasonable intervals to en...](#)

Chapter 13

[FIGURE 13-1: Financial cost of delay due to thrashing instead of dedicating tea...](#)

[FIGURE 13-2: Vertical slices of product features implemented by multiple scrum ...](#)

[FIGURE 13-3: Scrum of scrums for coordinating between scrum teams.](#)

[FIGURE 13-4: LeSS framework.](#)

[FIGURE 13-5: LeSS Huge framework.](#)

[FIGURE 13-6: Scrum@Scale scrum of scrums model for five teams.](#)

[FIGURE 13-7: Scrum@Scale scrum of scrums of scrums model for 25 teams.](#)

[FIGURE 13-8: Scrum@Scale third-level scrum of scrums of scrums model with EAT.](#)

[FIGURE 13-9: Scrum@Scale metascrum for product owners.](#)

[FIGURE 13-10: The Nexus framework.](#)

[FIGURE 13-11: The SAFe Essential Big Picture.](#)

Chapter 14

[FIGURE 14-1: The 360-degree performance review.](#)

[FIGURE 14-2: Traditional project management versus agile risk — time and cost a...](#)

[FIGURE 14-3: OpEx and CapEx mapped to product development releases.](#)

Chapter 15

[FIGURE 15-1: The sweet spot where a product is valuable, feasible, and usable.](#)

[FIGURE 15-2: The product canvas.](#)

[FIGURE 15-3: A customer journey map.](#)

[FIGURE 15-4: A customer empathy map.](#)

[FIGURE 15-5: A customer persona.](#)

[FIGURE 15-6: A classic sales funnel depicting the sales process from beginning ...](#)

[FIGURE 15-7: A sales task board with columns representing the sales funnel stag...](#)

Chapter 18

[FIGURE 18-1: Sample financial independence roadmap.](#)

Introduction

Welcome to *Scrum For Dummies*. Scrum is an agile product development framework with proven results in decreasing time to market by 30–40 percent, improving product quality, and heightening customer satisfaction — all while lowering costs by 30–70 percent. Scrum accomplishes these results through integrating business and development talent, improved communication models, increased performance visibility, regular customer and stakeholder feedback, and an empirically based inspect-and-adapt mentality. You can solve even the most complex problems more effectively by using scrum to increase your bottom line.

About This Book

The goal is to explicitly demonstrate how you can use scrum for any product or solution, not just software development. This book is intended to be a field manual for the application of scrum in real-world situations. Although it covers scrum fundamentals in detail, this book also delves into how to get out and experience the amazing benefits of scrum.

By design, scrum is easy to explain, but the application and mastery are often difficult. Old habits and organizational mindsets need to be shifted and new ways embraced. For this reason, we've included success stories so that you can see how scrum can fit into your situation.

The main thrust of understanding scrum lies in the three accountabilities, three artifacts, and five events that form its foundation — each of which is thoroughly

covered in this book. We also include common practices that we and others in the field use so you can choose what works best for your product. Throughout the book, we use the word *product* to describe a channel for delivering value to a defined customer, whether a physical product, project, service, outcome, or even something more abstract.

Scrum isn't technical. In fact, its basic tenet is common sense. In many cases, we've wrapped this information within the technology world and used technical terms to help explain it. Where useful, we've defined these terms.

We also cover common practices from scrum experts throughout the world. You can learn so much from others who use this framework in a seemingly limitless spectrum.

Scrum falls under an umbrella of approaches to project management called *agile project management*. Neither *scrum* nor *agile* practices are proper nouns. *Scrum* is a framework for organizing your work, whereas *agile* is an adjective used to describe a variety of practices that align with the values of the Agile Manifesto and the 12 Agile principles. Scrum and agile are not identical or interchangeable, but you frequently see them used interchangeably in many written sources, especially online. In this book, you will see terminology from both scrum and agile because scrum is a frequently used subset of agile practices.

Foolish Assumptions

Several books about scrum are available, but this one differs in its practicality. Each of the authors has nearly two decades of experience with agile methods and scrum, and we bring this experience to you in a practical

guide. We make no assumptions about what you already know: You don't need to be a rocket scientist or a whiz programmer; all you need are a problem to solve and a passion for getting it done in the best way possible. We give you examples ranging from building jet fighters to organizing a family vacation. We focus on the steps necessary to get scrum's magic working for you.

Our audience includes code programmers, sales professionals, human resource specialists, publishers, marketers, product manufacturers, executives, midtier managers, families, educators who are looking for a way to engage their students, and many others.

If you're in the technology industry, you've probably heard the terms *agile* and/or *scrum*. Maybe you've even worked in a scrum environment but want to improve your skills and vocabulary in this area and bring others in your firm along with you. If you're not in technology, you may have heard that scrum is a great way to run projects, which is true. Perhaps scrum is new to you, and you're searching for a way to make your project more accessible, or maybe you have a great idea burning inside and don't know how to bring it to fruition.

Whoever you are, a simpler way exists to run your project, and that way is called *scrum*. Within these pages, we show you how to use it.

Conventions Used in This Book

If you do an online search, you may see the words *agile*, *scrum*, roles, meetings, documents, and various agile methodologies and frameworks (including scrum) capitalized. We shied away from this practice for a couple of reasons.

To start, none of these items are really proper nouns. *Agile* is an adjective that describes a number of product development items: agile projects, agile teams, agile processes, and so on. But it is not a proper noun, and except in chapter or section titles, you will not see us use it that way in this book.

For readability, we did not capitalize agile-related roles, meetings, and documents. Such terms include *agile project*, *product owner*, *scrum master*, *developers*, *user stories*, *product backlog*, and more. You may, however, see these terms capitalized in places other than this book.

Some exceptions exist. *The Agile Manifesto* and *The Agile Principles* are copyrighted material. The Agile Alliance, Scrum Alliance, and Project Management Institute are professional organizations. A Certified ScrumMaster and a PMI-Agile Certified Practitioner are professional titles.

Icons Used in This Book

The following icons in the margins indicate highlighted material that we think will be of interest to you.



TIP

Tips are ideas that we'd like you to take note of. These ideas are usually practical advice that you can apply to the given topic.



WARNING This icon is less common than the others in this book. The intent is to save you time by bringing to your attention some pitfalls you're better off avoiding.



TECHNICAL STUFF If you don't care much about the technical stuff, you can skip these paragraphs without missing much. If technical stuff is your thing, you may find these sections fascinating.



REMEMBER This icon marks something we'd like you to take special note of, such as a concept, idea, or best practice that we think is noteworthy.

Beyond the Book

You can find an online Cheat Sheet for this book at www.dummies.com. The Cheat Sheet covers

- » *The Agile Manifesto*
- » The principles behind scrum
- » The roadmap to value we frequently reference throughout this book
- » A snapshot of various definitions for roles, artifacts, and activities related to scrum
- » A summary of scrum community resources

Go to www.dummies.com and type this book's title into the search field to find the Cheat Sheet.

Where to Go from Here

To start getting scrum working for you, you can begin applying it on smaller projects to get the feel of it. Soon, you'll be handling your most important projects similarly. This book applies to a diverse set of readers and is organized to allow you to find specific areas of interest relevant to you. Each chapter can be a reference whenever you have a technical question or want to see an example of scrum in real life.

- » If you're new to scrum, begin with [Chapter 1](#) to understand introductory concepts and terminology; then work your way through [Chapter 7](#) to find out about the entire framework. As you continue past [Chapter 7](#), you see how to apply scrum in any situation.
- » If you're familiar with scrum and want to learn more about how it applies to many industries, check out [Chapters 8](#) through [11](#), and read about scrum being practiced in various industries.
- » If you're a product owner, scrum master, or business leader and want to know more about scrum on a larger scale, start by reading [Chapter 13](#) and all of [Part 6](#) for valuable resources.
- » If you're familiar with scrum and want to know how it can help you address daily life, read [Chapters 17](#) and [18](#) for inspiration and examples.

Part 1
**Getting Started with
Scrum**

IN THIS PART ...

Connect scrum with the principles of agile product development.

Use constant feedback through transparency and adaptation to elevate the success rates of product goals.

Become tactically flexible to create strategic stability.

Chapter 1

The Basics of Scrum

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Seeing essential scrum principles
 - » Identifying scrum values and structure
-

Scrum is an exposure framework based on empiricism, meaning people who employ the scrum framework gain knowledge from real-life experience and make decisions based on that experience. It's a way of organizing your work — releasing a new smartphone, coordinating your daughter's fifth-grade birthday party, or exposing whether your approach is generating intended results. If you need to get something done, scrum provides a structure for increased efficiency and more effective results.

Within scrum, common sense reigns. You focus on what can be done today with an eye toward breaking future work into manageable pieces. You can immediately see how well your effort is working, and when you find inefficiencies in your approach, scrum enables you to act on them by making adjustments with clarity and speed.

Although empirical process controls go back to the beginning of time in the arts, its modern-day usage stems from computer modeling. For example, in sculpting, you chisel away, check the results, make any adaptations necessary, and chisel away some more. The empirical exposure model means observing or experiencing actual results rather than simulating them based on research or a mathematical formula and then

making decisions based on these experiences. In scrum, you break your work into actionable chunks, observing your results every step of the way. This approach allows you to immediately make the necessary changes to stay on track.

The Bird's-Eye Basics

Scrum isn't a methodology; it's a new way of thinking. It isn't a paint-by-numbers approach in which you end up with a product or outcome; it's a simple framework for clearly defining accountabilities and organizing your actionable work so that you're more effective in prioritizing and more efficient in completing the work selected. Frameworks are less prescriptive than methodologies and provide appropriate flexibility for the processes, structures, and tools that complement them. When this approach is used, you can clearly observe and adopt complementary methods and practices and quickly determine whether you're making real, tangible progress. You create usable results within weeks, days, or (in some cases) hours.

Like the process of building a house brick by brick, scrum is an iterative, incremental approach. It gives you early empirical evidence of performance and quality. Roles are distinct and self-ruling, and individuals and teams are given the required autonomy and tools to get the job done. Lengthy progress reports, redundant meetings, and bloated management layers are nonexistent. Scrum is the approach to use if you just want to get the job done.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Scrum is a term that comes from the rough-and-tumble game of rugby. Huddles, or scrums, are formed with the forwards from one side interlocking their arms with their heads down and pushing against the forwards from the opposing team, who are also interlocking arms with their heads down. The ball is then thrown into the midst of this tightly condensed group of athletes. Although each team member plays a unique position, all team members play both attacking and defending roles and work together to move the ball down the field of play. Like rugby, scrum relies on talented people with varying responsibilities and domains working closely together in teams toward a common goal.

We want to emphasize — and have written two-thirds of this book on — an overlooked concept of scrum: its amazing versatility. People who know about scrum commonly think that it's customized for software, information technology (IT), or tech use, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Applications for using scrum can be found everywhere, including large, small, tech, artistic, social, and even personal use. In [Chapters 8](#) through [18](#), we show you how. Be forewarned! Scrum is such an addictive framework that you'll be using it to coach your kid's soccer team, plan your neighborhood watch, and even ratchet up your exercise routine.

Roadmap to value

Throughout this book, we discuss techniques some expert scrum practitioners apply as common practice extensions to scrum. These techniques complement, not replace, the scrum framework. We point out the

differences when they occur. All the common practices we include and recommend are tried and tested — always with a clear understanding these practices are outside the basic scrum framework and are suggested for consideration in your own situations.

We call this aggregation of scrum and vetted common practices the *“roadmap to value.”* This roadmap consists of seven elements that walk you through the goal of your product to the task level and back again in a continual, iterative, and incremental process of inspection and adaptation. In other words, the roadmap to value helps you see what you want to achieve and progressively break that goal into pieces through an iterative cycle that leads to real results every day, week, and month.

You know that billion-dollar idea that’s been lurking in the back of your head for years? Follow the roadmap to value. It will show you the feasibility or fallacy of your idea and where to make your improvements — step by step, piece by piece.

[Figure 1-1](#) shows a holistic view of the roadmap to value. This figure shows that you begin with the product goal; work through planning; and then enter the cyclical world of sprints, reviews, and retrospectives.

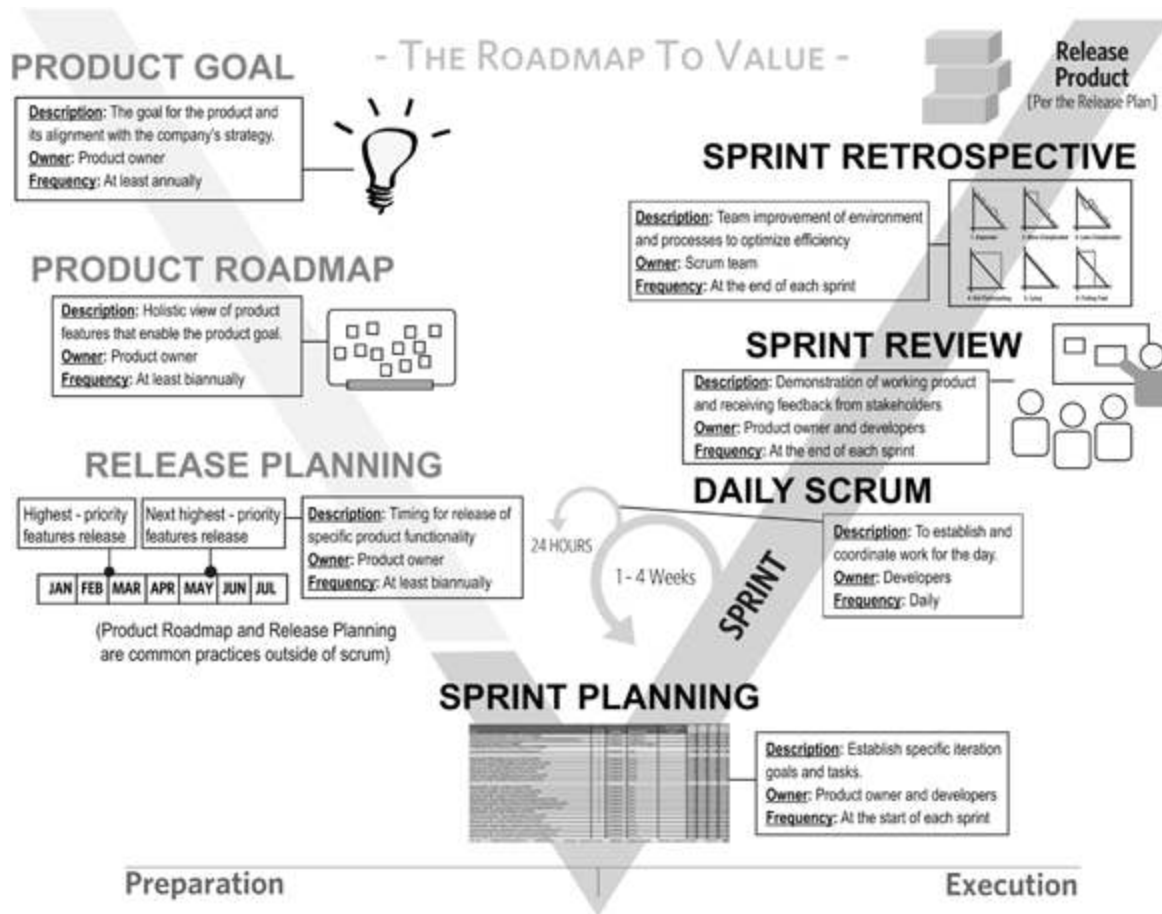


FIGURE 1-1: The roadmap to value.

Scrum overview

The scrum process is simple and circular, with constant and transparent elements of inspection and adaptation. First, a deliberately ordered to-do list — called a *product backlog* — is created and maintained. Then top-priority items are selected for a fixed, regular period — called a *sprint* — during which the scrum team strives for a predetermined and mutually agreed upon sprint goal.

[Figure 1-2](#) shows a scrum overview.

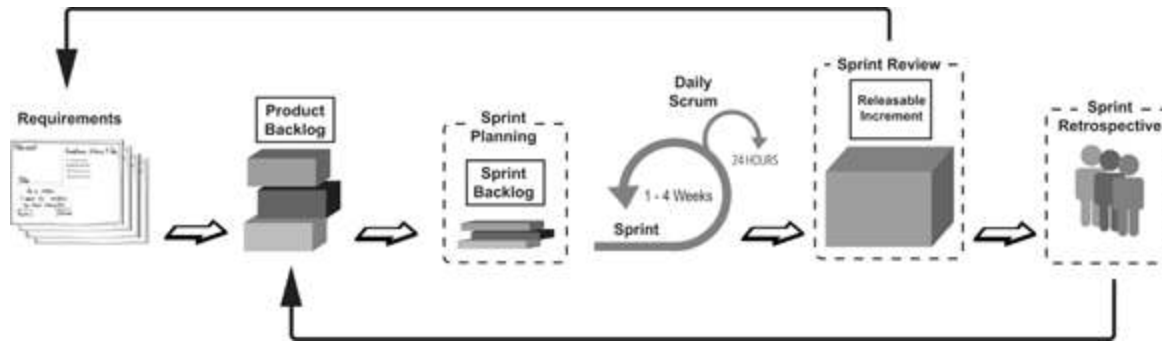


FIGURE 1-2: A simplified overview of the events and cycles of scrum.

The scrum process allows you to adapt quickly to changing market forces, technological constraints, regulations, new innovations, family preferences, and almost anything else you can think of. The key is the ongoing process of working on the highest-priority items to completion. Each of the highest-priority items gets fully developed and tested through the following steps:

1. Requirement elaboration
2. Design
3. Development
4. Comprehensive testing
5. Integration
6. Documentation
7. Approval



REMEMBER The seven steps to fully build the scope of each requirement are performed for every item. Every requirement taken on during a sprint, no matter how small or large, is fully built, tested, and approved or rejected. When a backlog item is approved and deemed “releasable,” you know it works. Hope and guesswork are taken out of the equation and replaced by reality. You showcase these tangible results to stakeholders for feedback. This feedback generates new items that are placed in the product backlog and prioritized against existing known work.



TIP What’s more important: efficiency or effectiveness? Hands down, it’s effectiveness — working on the right thing at the right time. Don’t worry about efficiency until you figure out how to be effective. A very efficient team working on the wrong things is a waste of time. A super-effective team, however, can easily learn efficiency. Always work on the *right* things first. As economist and management author Peter F. Drucker said, “There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

The scrum cycle is run again and again. The constant flow of feedback and emphasis on developing only the highest-priority items helps you reflect what your customers are looking for, deliver it to them faster, and deliver it with higher quality.

Scrum teams

No matter what the scope of your product is, your scrum team will have similar characteristics. The sizes of teams vary somewhat, but the roles or accountabilities remain the same. We discuss the specific accountabilities in detail throughout this book. [Figure 1-3](#) depicts a scrum team.

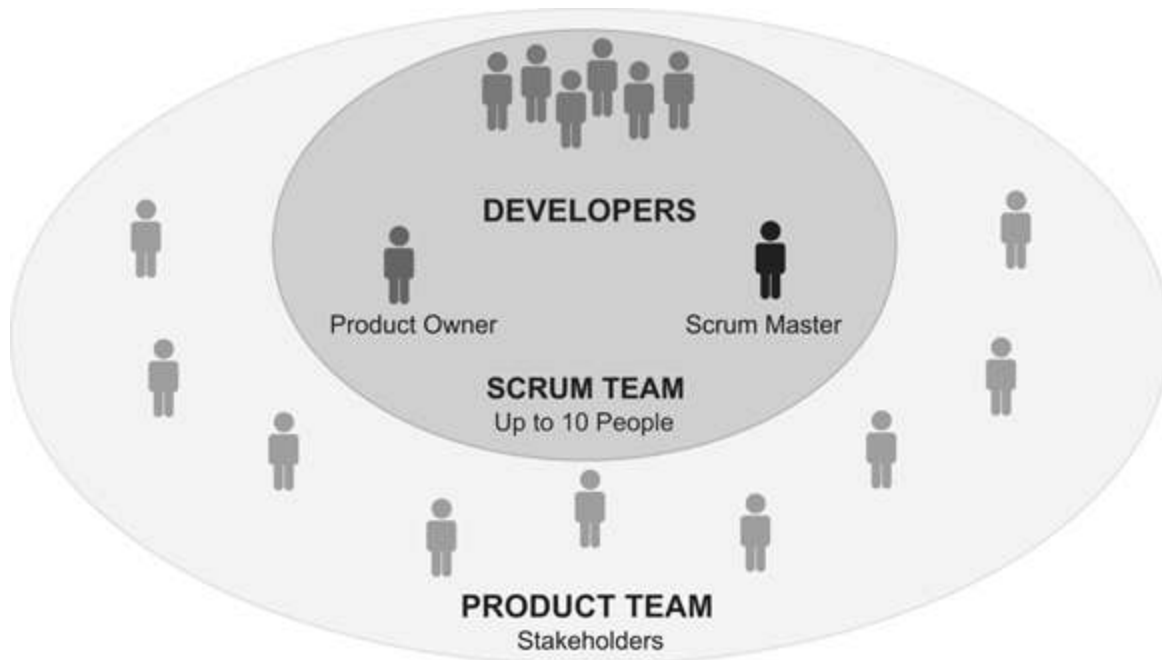


FIGURE 1-3: A scrum team has the developers at its core.

The developers are the heart of a scrum team — the folks who work together to create the product, service, or solution itself. They work directly with a product owner and scrum master, who align business and development priorities for the organization and eliminate distractions so that the developers can focus on “developing” a quality result.



REMEMBER Don’t get hung up on the term “developer,” thinking it refers to software development. Developers on a scrum team are simply the people