STEP INTO SCRUM-BAN

Scrumban is an iterative project management framework, based on a mix of two agile practices scrum and kanban, thus creating a brand new agile management approach.

Scrumban is a team and stakeholder friendly framework best suited for fast paced development of a product or service. In its essence, the approach minimizes the risks of over planning and pushes the lean principles to the limit.

Scrumban is driven by events instead of routines. The framework is most effective in environments such as startups, developers and overall lean thinkers.

The goals

Scrumban raises two principle goals – minimal delivery time and a fully loaded team.

All the efforts of a scrumban team are focused on delivering the value as soon as possible. It is essential that the end customer feels incremental addition to the value of the product throughout the process.

To be fully loaded, a scrumban team needs to always be busy. However, the team is considered only as lean as it is loaded with meaningful objectives. That is achieved by developing Muda, Muri and Mura removal strategies.*

*Muda, Muri and Mura - traditional Japanese terms, used to describe waste.

Principles

1. **Visualize the workflow.** The workflow is visualized so that the team can follow how the tasks move from the initial request to completion. This provides both - a sense of project scope and understanding of the end goal.

2. **Pull work.** The team members pull tasks from the backlog into the progress columns themselves, depending on capacity and limits. Each team member chooses their tasks based on their capabilities and the ready column (placed between backlog and in progress columns) highlighting the priority tasks.

3. **Limit the work in progress (WIP).** Each team member should be working on no more than one task at a time. To reinforce this rule WIP limits from kanban are used, limiting the number of tasks in the progress columns. This reinforces team collaboration and ensures any bottlenecks are resolved quickly.

4. **Plan on demand.** To save time and minimize waste, the planning is done only when necessary. The amount of tasks to be planned for an iteration is controlled, by putting a limit on the backlog column. The task limit is based on team capacity and prior iterations.

5. **Feature freeze and triage.** When approaching a project deadline, the feature freeze is used to stop the planning of any new features. At this time the team works on the already planned features and the project manager implements the triage deciding which of those features will live (be released) and which ones are going to wait untill the next release.

6. **Review the work.** Kaizen is important and to improve the work, review and retrospective meetings from scrum are used. This ensures that incremental value is added after every iteration and that the team practices are efficient for future projects.

7. **Update daily.** Besides the planning and kaizen meetings, daily standup meetings are organized. It helps to get progress updates from the team and to solve any current team problems rapidly.

8. **Keep the team small.** The project team needs to be kept small - up to 10 people depending on the project. A team of this size is more efficient and easily managed, thus achieving the best possible result.

Other practices used in scrumban

Bucket size planning. This approach is used for long term planning within the scrumban framework. It is based on three different phases of planning – 1 year for the long perspective, 6 months for committing to specific goals and 3 months for setting up clear requirements. This assists scrumban teams in having a roadmap of actions for the long term perspective.

1 year > **6 months** > **3 months** > **BACKLOG**
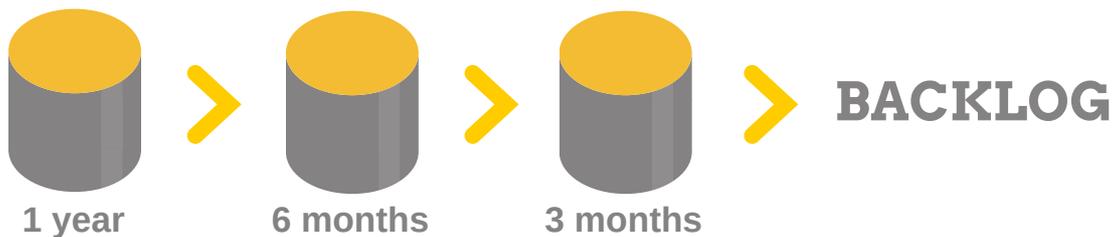
Lead and cycle time. Lead and cycle time are terms taken from kanban and defines the time that it takes from the initial request to the completion of task or the time from starting the task to the completion. It is used in scrumban to estimate how long the iteration will last and what should be the backlog limit for the team.

Request   Started   **Cycle time**   Done

Lead time

Planning trigger. The planning trigger is used to coordinate planning meetings. The trigger corresponds to the number of tasks left in the backlog – once it reaches a certain number, the planning meeting is held. The number for the trigger is individual to the team and the average time they take to finish up a task.