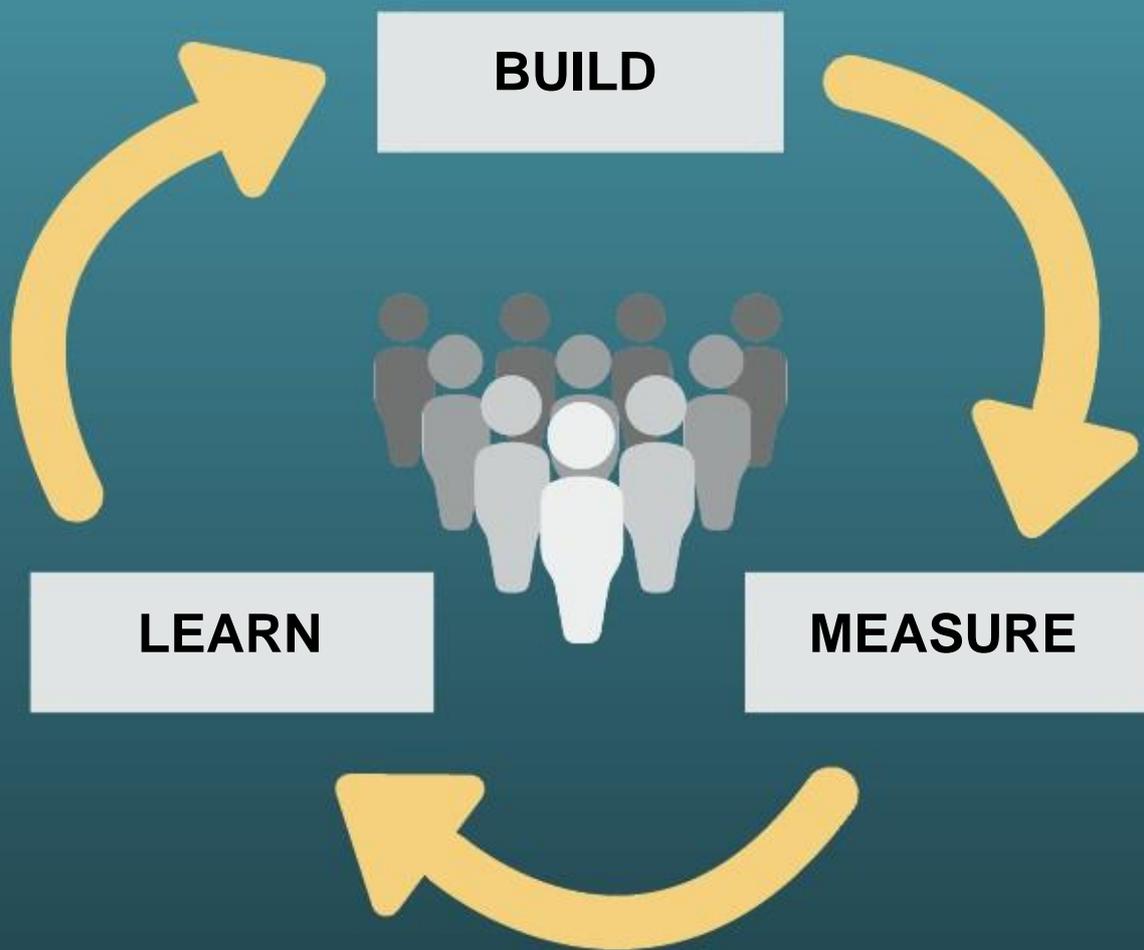


Would you like to have a process that unlocks ability to learn and produce faster?

Agile - your unfair advantage in the competition.



DEFINED



MEASURABLE



REPEATABLE



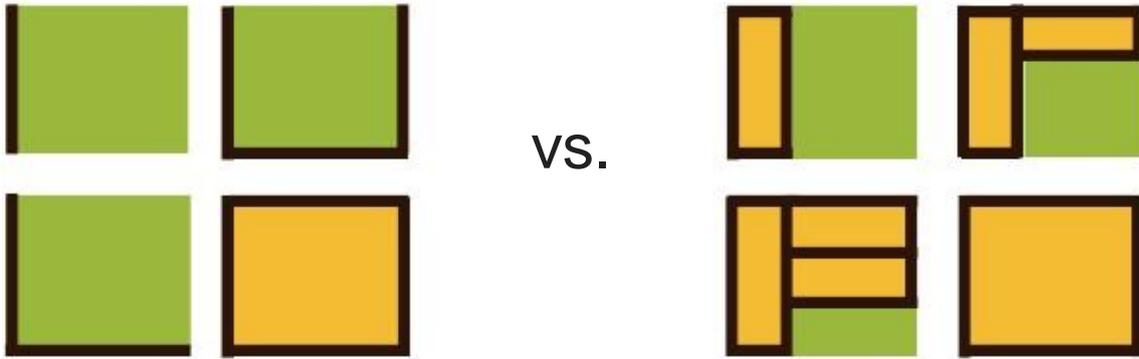
COLLABORATIVE



IMPROVABLE

Agile is an iterative and incremental project management methodology focused on delivering continuous end value.

It keeps some of the traditional project management elements, but organizes the process itself in a different way. Instead of running the whole project one stage at a time (design, production, testing), portions of deliverables are run through all of the stages separately, each time delivering a small finished part of the project.



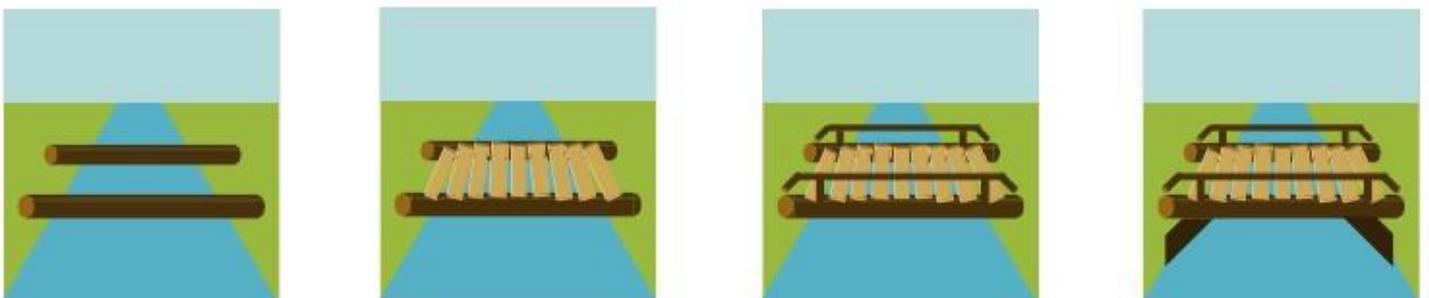
To make this a little more clear, let's look at an example of building a wooden bridge.

When following the traditional project management approach, the bridge would be designed first, then the separate parts would be made, after they would be put together and lastly tested. This process is linear and in case there is a problem when the finished bridge is tested, the team would face a huge setback of having to go back to the design stage and start over.

By splitting the project into smaller parts and completing the bridge one part at a time, Agile project management seeks to eliminate project waste. In this case, the bridge would be built in stages:

1. Putting a couple of logs across the river, so the people can walk across.
2. Adding planks between the logs, so cars could pass by
3. Putting in handrails, so children could pass safely.
4. Strengthening the bridge with poles, so large trucks could use it as well.

Each of these stages would go through design, building construction and testing, which would allow to identify and fix any problems faster. Also the bridge would be bringing value even before being finished and this value would be incrementally growing through the process.

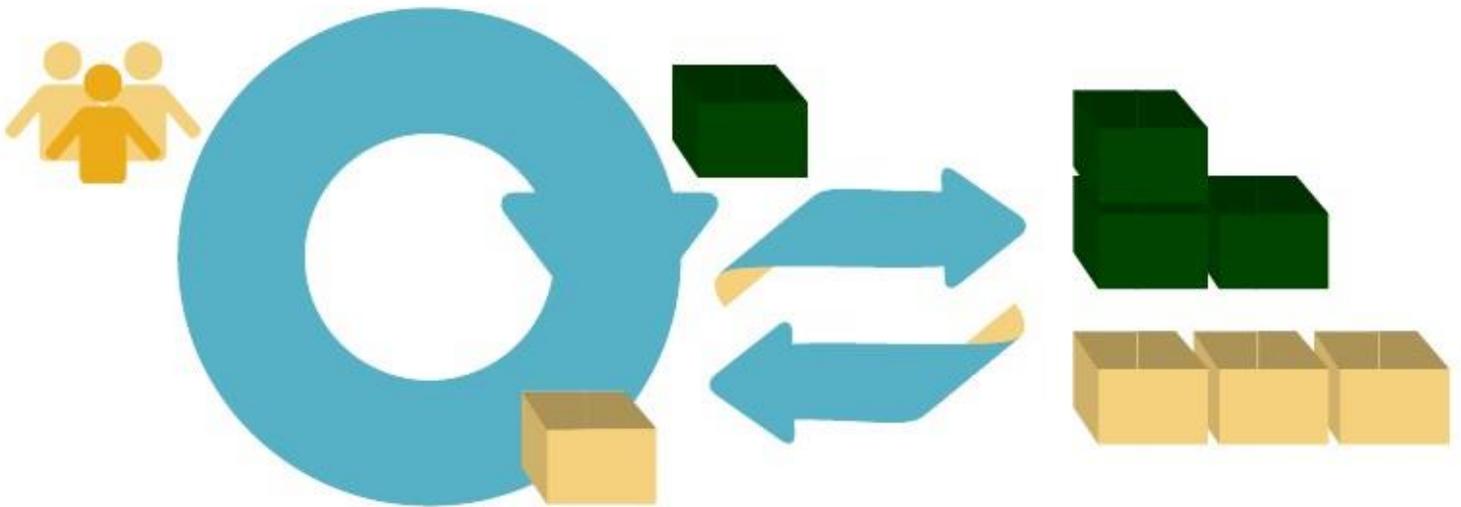


Therefore the main difference between the traditional and agile project management approaches is that small portions of deliverables are completed in each stage instead of the whole project being completed at once. This means saving time, resources, reaching the goals on time and is achieved by stakeholder communication, incremental and guided process.

Agile in practice – SCRUM

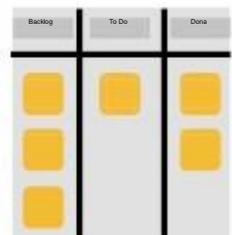
Scrum is a framework that realizes agile practices and fulfills agile goals.

While agile is simply a methodology, scrum puts the theory into practice and provides the team with a clear set of rules to follow and adapt agile to the real life projects.



Scrum uses the following tools:

TASK BOARD	A physical or electronic board that represents all the user stories for the team. VALUE: Transparency, priorities and progress overview.
BACKLOG	Place to put abstract user stories. VALUE: Continuous project planning.
USER STORY	A customer requirement regarding a certain deliverable. VALUE: Project breakdown into work items.
STORY POINT	Estimation metric to define how large the task is compared to others. VALUE: Task estimation without stress - focus on value instead of fixed hours.
SPRINT	A period of time during which a number of tasks are completed to add incremental value. VALUE: Repeatable increment to create a fixed amount of value.
DAILY SCRUM	A daily stand-up meeting to coordinate work and communicate problems. VALUE: Team progress coordination and communication.
BURNDOWN CHART	A graphic representation of the work remaining within a sprint. VALUE: Easy evaluation of the project progress.



To understand how the scrum framework works, we will go through the main steps of organizing a project within a scrum methodology. The bridge example is used to provide examples.



BACKLOG PLANNING. Any scrum project begins with arranging the project backlog. This is done by adding user stories to the backlog and then prioritizing them based on their importance. For the bridge project we have added the following user stories:

As a pedestrian I want a bridge so that I can walk across the river.	As a car driver I want a bridge so that I can drive across the river.	As a parent I want a bridge so that my kids can walk across the river.	As a truck driver I want a bridge so that I can drive across the river.
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User stories are usually written in this format: As a [end user role], I want [the desire] so that [the rationale].



PLANNING THE FIRST SPRINT. Once the user stories are prioritized, the first sprint can be planned. The sprint planning consists of three stages:

1. One or couple of the highest priority user stories are taken from the backlog and committed to the sprint.
2. User stories are divided into clear tasks that need to be completed.
3. The team estimates how much time it will take to complete each task.

For the bridge project, one user story is chosen and then divided into the tasks.

As a pedestrian I want a bridge so that I can walk across the river.	Measure the distance between banks	Cut down trees	Lay the trunks across the river
	Calculate how many trees are needed	Dry the wood	



DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS. After the team starts the sprint, besides completing the tasks they have committed to, they have to perform two daily operations:



1. Attending daily scrum - a 15 min stand-up meeting to coordinate work and communicate any problems to the scrum master.

To do		Done
Calculate how many trees are needed	Lay the trunks across the river	Cut down trees
Dry the wood		Measure the distance between banks

2. Updating the task board with the tasks that have been completed.

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SPRINT REVIEW MEETING. Once the sprint ends, a sprint review meeting is organized. During this meeting the team presents a working result of the sprint to the project stakeholders for their approval. If the result is approved, the element is considered to be done and the team can move on to the next element. For our first sprint, stakeholders would check if people can cross the river and confirm that this part of the project is done.

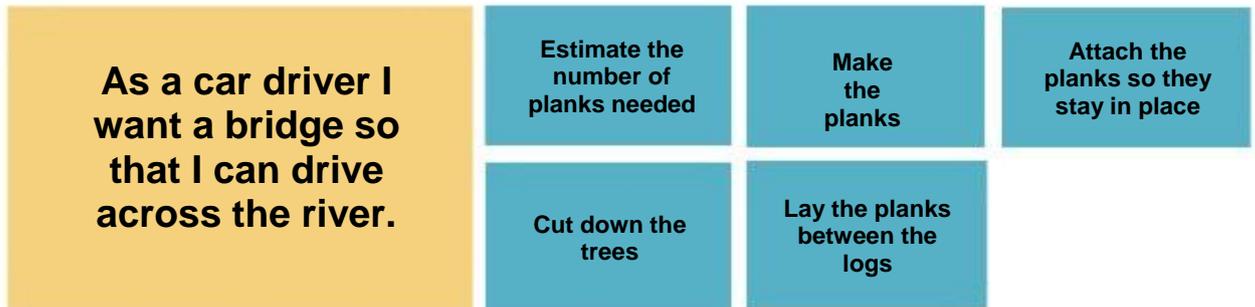


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RETROSPECTIVE MEETING. The last part of the sprint is the retrospective meeting. It is held to discuss the sprint process and ways to improve the work progress for the next sprint. During this meeting the team would discuss their overall impressions of building the first part of the bridge and suggest improvements for next stages.

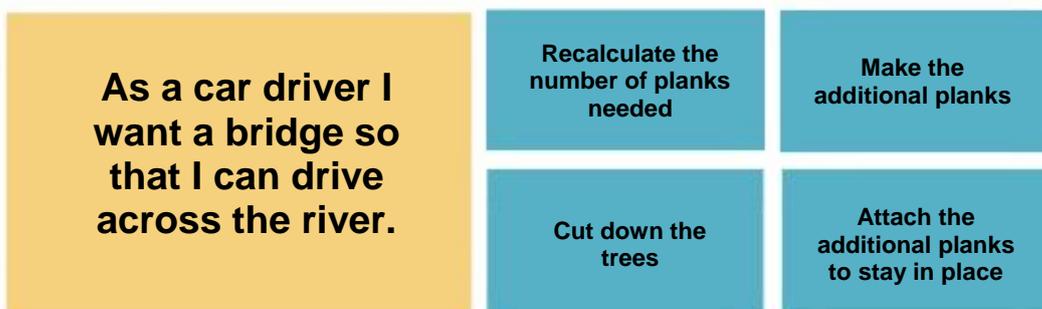
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THE SECOND SPRINT. After finishing the first sprint, the team goes on to planning the second one. The process is exactly the same, except that a new user story is being worked on. The result is again approved in the review meeting and the team discuss the sprint in the retrospective. For the bridge project our second highest priority user story would be taken.



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THE RESULT IS REJECTED. If the sprint result is rejected in the sprint review meeting that means the user story in question is not done. In this case the team still holds the review meeting and goes on to planning a new sprint. In this case, they will be working on the same user story (not taking a new one) in order to complete it correctly. For example, if the second part of the bridge would be rejected, the team would need to discuss the sprint and then go back to this user story in their next sprint.





REST OF THE PROJECT. The rest of the project is carried out the same way- team organizes the sprints and completes the work until all the user stories are accepted as complete.

The bridge team would go on completing the third and fourth user stories.



FINAL RETROSPECTIVE. When the project is completed, the final retrospective meeting is held. The goal of this meeting is to discuss the overall result of the project and possible improvements that could be made in the future. For the bridge example, the team would discuss how the building of a bridge and the work organization for the team could be improved in the future projects.

These are the main steps that SCRUM framework provides in order to accept agile practices to your team. There are some changes that the team needs to make to their usual process, such as getting a task board, organizing a bit more meetings. However, if executed correctly, the effort brings more clarity and less waste into the teams project management and day-to-day work.