

Scrum Master Diary



Keeping a diary throughout the course of a sprint is likely the most significant thing a Scrum Master can do to prepare for the sprint retrospective. Capture the day-to-day happenings of the sprint. What was a surprise? What went well? Did a team member stand out in helping the team? What seemed odd? What does the team seem not to understand? How did the team interact? What distractions did they encounter?

Record what plans you may have for the sprint. What do you want to emphasize? What do you want to introduce or re-enforce? What do you want to change? Then be sure to capture the happenings of each Scrum ceremony and other meetings -- Planning Meeting, Backlog Grooming Sessions, Daily Standup, Sprint Reviews/Demos, Sprint Retrospectives. All of this becomes input to shape meaningful discussions during the sprint retrospective.

Here are some samples of things I have compiled some recent teams of mine. What will you capture about your team?

Plans for Sprint 2:

- Shift lead for product backlog grooming back to product owners
- More discipline around task board and standups
- Monitor Architecture/design decisions - how are they made? who makes them?
- Get caught up on sizing the backlog
- What are the rules for moving a task to Complete and then to Accepted?
- Clarify definition of "done"
- Team agreements - missing standup or sprint boundary ceremony

Planning Meeting - 2012-xx-xx

- Backlog team has met; team knows the candidate stories for the sprint
- Completed hours available for the team
- Having to make some assumptions about stories due to no product owner in the room -- he left to deal with some things
- Took break until product owner returned
- I'm taking too much of a lead in clarifying stories and assumptions -- need to work my way out of this
- Made team define acceptance criteria for each story -- Product owner is still confused about what this should be, think he and the team are getting a better understanding it -- a lot of discussion about what the stories really mean -- team may be overpowering product owner?
- Connie seems to be taking the lead in the discussions about tasks
- Kevin at board drawing out what the team is taking about, trying to agree on what the story means -- need more of this



- Team starting to break down first story at 10am; 2nd story at 10:32am; 3rd story at 10:56am; 4th story at 11:19am - Why is that? What don't they know that they should? Is it just poor meeting practices (unfocused conversations).

Daily Standup 2012-xx-xx - Day 2

- Connie had good questions about the hours update -- subtracting actual hours worked vs. reporting remaining hours -- emphasized this with the team
- Identifying a new tasks for a story thought to be complete - added to the board and sprint backlog
- Got questions about the backlog grooming tasks -- clarified that the output of those is refined/sized stories that can be taken on during a future sprint
- Asked Kevin to confirm arch/design team is working on outstanding issues team is waiting for
- Ask Ken to schedule sprint review/retro and planning meetings

Daily Standup 2012-xx-xx - Day 3

- Still no tasks defined for the backlog grooming work - hold people after standup to complete this
- Emphasized that it is day 3 - 33% of the sprint is gone
- I failed to remind team of the rules
- Reminded team that hours reported are remaining hours - I have no interest in actual hours
- Barry creating documentation to support code check-ins -- took this offline after the standup to see what this is about
- Product Owner attended today!
- I'm asking "who wants to start" and giving them the pen; then asking them to pass the pen to whoever wants to go next -- seems to be working

Daily Standup 2012-xx-xx - Day 4

- Backlog grooming tasks on the board, but no hours - also no completed task on the board for the meeting they had yesterday
- Very little work done in the last day (-6 hours) -- part of that is not having all the non-story work on the board -- need to make this a priority for today
- Good questions from team - how things move from complete to accepted, are there testing tasks versus development task (ID'ed a missing testing task)
- No product owner today



Daily Standup 2012-xx-xx - Day 5

- Emphasized sprint is 50% complete
- Re-emphasize that stories DO NOT cross sprint boundaries -- response to a question
- Also talked about question if all tasks needed to be complete by the end of the sprint
- More tasks have been defined for the backlog grooming -- looks for more than can be done, need to talk about this
- Reported a task went from 6 hours to 8 -- first time we've heard that -- congratulated team.
- Team clarifying understanding of the "select" stories -- What was discussed in the planning meeting? Did something change? Did we not know enough to start these stories"

Daily Standup 2012-xx-xx - Day 7

- Fewer observers today
- Jimmy missed the standup (Dentist appt), but had given report to Kevin prior to leaving -- need to get team agreement around team members missing the standup?
- Started talking about demo - is the team prepared to demo using a customer-like environment? who will demo?
- Marty had good comments - only tasks that move are the tasks that get talked about, tasks not started are not commented on -- what about these? Will they get done?

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Review/Demo Meeting - 2012-xx-xx

- Demo-ing from developers laptops - why is this? does this meet definition of "done"?
- Wendy doing a great job -- identifying story and showing it -- has obviously prepared
- Rusty announced what stories he will demo -- has a script in front of him -- too much detail, actually doing more of a training session! -- Need to talk with him 1:1
- Terry not prepared to capture comments about additional needs or new stories resulting from the demo -- need to talk with him about that.
- Also need team to focus on what their velocity is and why that is important -- no one can identify it?

Questions for the Retrospective

- How much grooming time is needed during the next sprint?
- What do you know now that you wish you had known during the planning meeting? Did the tasks you define for each story work out? Did you add tasks? Were those discoverable in the planning meeting?
- How well did the task board work? Likes? Dislikes? What would you change?
- How effective are the standups? How well did you answer the 4 questions? What did you find of value? What would you change?
- Did we account for people attending OTC during the planning meeting? How did this impact the sprint? How do we avoid this in the future?



- What is the sprint burndown telling you? How did/shoud you react to it?
- Were you available the amount of time you had anticipated?
- What impacts to available time did we see during the sprint? How many of them did we recognize during the planning meeting -- Dentist/doctor appts, Harry out for 3 days, and 2 days for department meeting -- don't remember this in planning meeting
- What documentation did you do during this sprint? How was it useful? Is it enough?
- What does compete mean? What does accepted mean?
- What does "done" mean?