Why SCRUM works
- also in distributed projects

Nine good reasons - and how to ensure that SCRUM works in your project?

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Our Point

- Scrum seems to work extremely well as an agile project management approach.
- An obvious question is why?
- To answer that question, we carried out a longitudinal case study of a distributed project using Scrum across Denmark and India.

- We conclude that Scrum works so well because it provides communication, social integration, control, and coordination mechanisms that are especially useful for distributed and agile project management.
- We then discuss how to ensure the full working potential of SCRUM in your distributed project.
SCRUM – short introduction
The Danske Bank Case

• Danske Bank gave us the opportunity to follow a distributed project team using Scrum.
• We found a project using the agile method Scrum with participants distributed across the two countries: Seven in a Scrum team in Denmark and eight in a Scrum team in India.
• First Interview with Project Manager before project start. And last interview after.
• Numerous interviews + observation.
• Analysis of data revealed 9 good reasons.
Social capital has 3 dimensions

- **The structural dimension** of social capital involves the network of ties and relationships possessed by group members and reflect the degree to which groups of individuals openly communicate.
- **The relational dimension** concerns the nature and quality of the relationship ties, and refers to the trust that exists among a group.
- **The cognitive dimension** can be described as the shared language and shared narratives that together form a shared system of meaning.
Conclusion 1

1. Scrum support building relations and networks within the project team;
   - A network is more or less prescribed within each team
   - Ties between the teams related to roles
   - Ties were established quickly and developed into strong ties during the first couple of sprints
Conclusion 2

2. Scrum has mechanisms for building trust – even at a distance;
   - Frequent deliveries and short feedback loops support building trust
   - Very early in the project the interviewees expressed confidence in each others and sympathy and understanding towards each other
   - The Project Manager expressed great confidence in the team after the first release
3. Scrum gives the project team a common language and both short and long term targets to aim for;

- A shared vision develop quickly using the product backlog as the cornerstone
- Breaking the product backlog down into a release plan and sprint backlogs make the shared vision very operational
Checklist for your project (Part 1)

1. Make sure to build up relations and networks within and for the project team – all roles are understood, filled and enacted?

2. Use Scrum for building trust – for example by letting participants demonstrate early that they can deliver on their promise(s)

3. Use the vocabulary of Scrum consistently – to ensure the common language provided, and focus on emphasizing short and long term targets
In addition our 2nd round interview analysis had categories of data on the three “C”s

- **Coordination**
  
  *The additional information processing performed when multiple, connected actors pursue goals that a single actor pursuing the same goals would not perform – Articulation Theory*

- **Communication**
  
  *Boundary objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites*

- **Control**
  
  *Best practice in distributed teams takes in common milestones, frequent delivery, quick feedback, frequent meetings, and frequent progress reports – Project Management*
Conclusion 4-7

4. Scrum is very useful for coordinating work in the project team;
5. Scrum makes a number of boundary objects and boundary spanner roles available;
6. Scrum includes a certain meeting structure that works well for communication in the project team;
7. Scrum includes simple but effective mechanisms for tracking project progress;
Checklist for your project (Part 2)

4. Use all the Boundary Objects all the time to ensure the coordination of work in the project team;

5. Fill all the Boundary Spanner Roles and make sure that roles are enacted

6. Use the Daily and Iterative meeting structure to ensure good communication in the project team;

7. Use the simple but effective mechanisms for tracking project progress that Scrum provides;
What about Quality?

• As for Quality, the Scrum Board division between *Done* and *Done Done* ensured quality of the deliverables produced by the team.

• In the DELHI project, however, there was a specific role as Professional Tester, both in Denmark and India, which ensured quality.

• We could see that Scrum was plastic enough to allow such roles to be part of the Scrum team.
8. Scrum has simple mechanisms built in for ensuring quality;
9. The use of Scrum gives energy and motivation to the team.
### SCRUM Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Stories</th>
<th>Ready (to do)</th>
<th>In progress</th>
<th>Done</th>
<th>Done Done</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Checklist for your project (Part 3)

8. Use the simple mechanisms (*i.e.* Done Done) to ensure quality;
9. Enjoy that the use of Scrum gives energy and motivation to the team.
What the participants told us

• Team members interviewed expressed great satisfaction working on the project …
• First, they pointed to the closer contact with, and immediate feedback from the customer and the project manager.
• Second, they felt increased commitment and feelings of ownership.
• Third, they pointed to the energy released from being able to focus on and deliver quick results.
• The CMMI assessor found that the collaboration within and between the teams were the best experienced in the organization at any time.
Our Point - again

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