Agile/Scrum Essentials

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Agile (in my experience)

eXtreme Programming (XP): very priority-based, iterations can be scrapped, pair programming, test-driven development (TDD).

Scrum: iterations, commitments neither broken nor changed, broken arrow, no dictates about engineering methods.

My take…

1. Scrum, but…
2. Mandate TDD and unit testing (!), encourage pair-programming for juniors and when smart to do, encourage peer review.
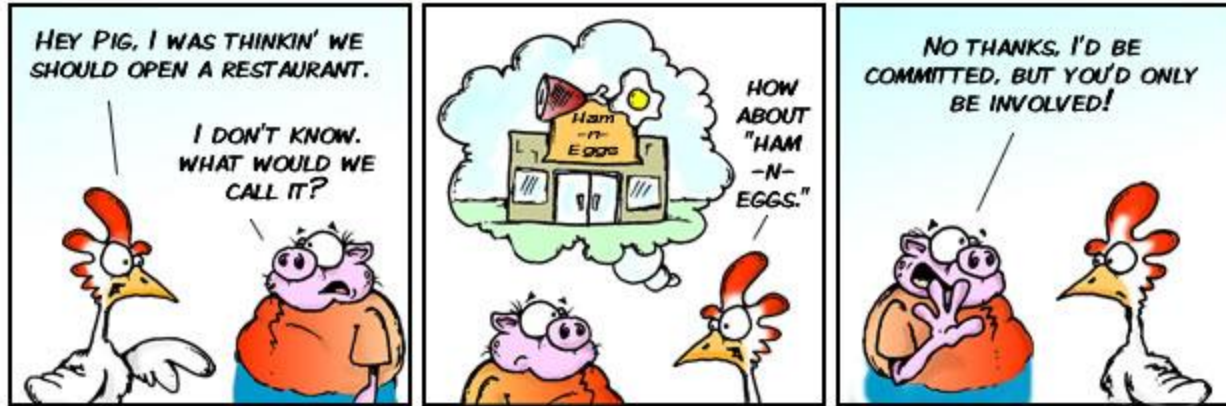3. Scrum is for grown-ups and wastes less time needlessly.

Scrum Terminology

Scrum divides the world up between pigs and chickens.

Chickens include upper-level management, internal customers and other dotted-line parties.

Pigs are the product owner/manager, developer manager and developers. These have more than mere skin in the game!

Pigs and Chickens in Scrum…

Scrum: Practical Elements

1. Backlog of stories (by product owner/manager)
2. Release planning (not Scrum)
3. Iteration planning
4. Iteration (stand-ups and development)
5. Story demonstrations
6. Retrospective

Scrum: the Backlog

Created and maintained by the product manager whose role is to know exactly what customers and/or management want.

Stories written usually in format, "As a _____, I want _____ so that _____."

E.g.: "As an administrator, I want to create user accounts so that new users can be added to the system."

Scrum: Release Planning

(It isn't really Scrum or Agile.)

To appease management, release planning is a stab at approximating the work of numerous sprints in order to guess at the one or more epics* needed or the content of a release.

* An *epic* is a "mega" story suggesting one or more actual stories. It's also not properly Scrum.

Scrum: Iteration Planning I

Planning of the sprint with the product manager.

1. Induct first-cut stories from backlog into sprint backlog.
2. Tabulate pigs' availability (in hours).
3. Pigs assign a Fibonnaci weight to each story: { 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 20, 40, 100, ? }, typically 1-13; others suggest bad planning. This is called *sprint-* or *planning poker*.
4. End meeting.

Scrum: Iteration Planning II

Planning of the sprint with the product manager.

1. Developers break stories down into tasks of 2, 4, 8, 16 hours. If a task must take longer, it's not a single task or it's too ill defined.
2. Reconvene meeting.
3. Pigs signal with fist of fingers confidence in sprint plans, should be unanimous. If not, culture dictates whether to restart sprint planning, compromise or just move on.

Scrum: Iteration Planning (cont.)

Somewhat culture-dictated.

Some organizations do one, long meeting deferring task break-down to later and make assumptions.

Others predict stories that will be done and do task break-down ahead of time.

Senior developers in organizations with senior- and junior-dichotomy do break-downs.

Scrum: the Iteration (Sprint)

Developers execute tasks, may be priority based.

Stand-up each day in the same place at the same time with all pigs.

Scrum: the Iteration (Sprint)

Stand-up meeting, pigs talk. Can be done via chat, phone or face-to-face. Chickens may attend, but are not allowed to speak.

Answer only these questions; no other discussion allowed!
1. What I did yesterday?
2. What I'm doing today?
3. What my obstacles/blockers are?

Scrum: the Iteration (continued)

The "meeting after the meeting" is held by a sub-quorum as needed.

Auto-organized.

Chickens may ask questions.

Pigs (and chickens) may deep-end as needed.

No time limit.

Scrum: Story Demonstrations

Chickens invited to ask questions.

Developers, or QA, demonstrate features in the product that show off story completion.

Acceptance criteria defended.

Backlog story adjustments.

Scrum: Retrospective

Agile-only, not product or story-specific.

Product owner/manager, development team, no chickens.

Meant to answer questions about the implementation of Agile/Scrum in the organization).

1. What did we do right?
2. What can we do better?
3. What should we tackle to do better?
4. ~~How can we make our product better?~~ No!

Scrum: End of Sprint

1. The product is buildable.
2. All tests complete without error.
3. All known bugs are excised.
4. The product could be shipped if desired.
5. Direction can be changed in next sprint planning.

Scrum Summary

Agile and Scrum Summary

This is the essence of Agile especially with Scrum...

1. Turn on a dime.
2. No long periods of brokenness.
3. Predictable.
4. Quantifiable progress or non-progress.
5. Cost-saving.
6. Heuristic.