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Can We Trust Story Points as a Measure of Effort?

Many people worry that Story Points do not help us estimate effort. They are after "estimates" - how does that work.

It turns out that "estimated effort" is highly correlated with actual work time. This assertion because Agile practices are designed to help teams drive toward high correlation between estimation points and actual time. One goal of agile is to improve overall forecasting. Teams that embrace agile estimating principles examine their estimation points and outcomes, trying to ensure that their sprint forecasts are roughly met by the sprint result.

In many ways the approach leads to better tracking of effort. When we track stories, estimation points and completion dates (sprint end dates), we know exactly which team did the work, we usually have a day-by-day task burndown and we have a proportional allocation. The stories are well documented and understandable (thanks to the story form). Team members say the same thing executives say when asked about work as there is a common language. Managers and executives reporting aggregate data are verifiably backed by statements from individual contributors.

Team, Estimates, Forecast, FAQ, Points, EstimationApproach, Capitalization

~~LINKBACK~~ ~~DISCUSSION~~

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