Table of Contents

How Do We Run Our First Iteration Demo (Sprint Review)?

The Iteration Demo (or Sprint Review or …) is a event where the Team presents information to the (customer especially) stakeholders about the increment of work that was completed during the last Iteration (Sprint) in order to get feedback about that work.

A secondary purpose of the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) is to:

1. Provide information on the Release Plan status by showing the results of work that has been completed.
2. Show stakeholders that the team is operating professionally and high performance, taking responsibility for their goals, commitments and the quality of their work.

Typically, the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) is held using tele-conferencing facilities so that everyone who has an interest can attend and so people who cannot attend can use a captured recording of the tele-conference to provide feedback at a later date. The Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) is structured as a small set of "context setting" activities and a series of demonstrations showing the working system just completed. These demonstrations should not be confused with a sales presentation or a training session. If sales or training sessions are needed, they should be arranged in a separate meeting.

The content of a typical Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) is described in the sections below. This information is relevant in the typical Iteration (Sprint) where the Team wants feedback on a set a new capabilities delivered. Sometimes other information is put in place for other kinds of work. For example:

- A Team doing pure maintenance work may not have anything to demonstrate to stakeholders, and thus no no feedback is required. The team could do an email Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) in this case.
- A Team might be working on an Inception Iteration (Sprint, sometimes called "Sprint 0"), which means progress toward a "release plan" is being reported as well as being used to determine what we have learned so far and what adjustments we need to make.
- A Team might be working on a final Release work, which for many means that defect arrival rates, for example, might be part of the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review).

Irrespective of what the work is, a Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) should be held.

Guidelines

1. The basic rule for Iteration Demo (Sprint Reviews) is simple - functionality that isn't "done" per the "Definition of Done" cannot be presented - no exceptions.
    1. Although the meaning of "done" can vary from organization to organization, it usually means that the functionality is completely engineered and could be potentially shipped or implemented.

2. If "done" has another meaning, make sure that the stakeholders understand it.
3. When doing the demonstration, "done" might also mean that the demonstration shown in something that is "close to the production environment."

2. Be very careful about using a purpose built PowerPoint presentation to structure this meeting. Using PowerPoint (apart from being a potential waste of time generating the slides) typically gives the stakeholders the feeling that this is a more formal presentation, bordering on a sales pitch. This meeting needs to be different to this and so we need to be careful about signals we are sending when using PowerPoint. A better approach is just to use the artifacts that we are using to structure the demonstration. In other words, just show the Iteration (Sprint) Burn-down when talking about what happened during the Iteration (Sprint), just use the Team (Sprint) Backlog to schedule each of the demonstrations one after another and so on.

Structure

Duration: Maximum of 2 hours for a 2 week sprint (10 working days).

Who: Team and Stakeholders especially their customers, management, users and anyone else who might be interested and have feedback.

Summary Agenda

- Set overall context
- Demonstrate done work
- Gather feedback

Result: Feedback captured for the Team (Product) Backlog to be prioritized so that the Backlog is ready for Iteration (Sprint) Planning.

Sample Agenda

- Product Owner: Review current Product goals, timelines, milestones
- Scrum Master: Review Iteration (Sprint) Goals, Iteration (Sprint) Burn-down, and discuss team learning that took place, especially for commitments not met (see How Do We Talk About Sprint Commitments That Have Not Been Met / Done?
- Team Members: Demonstrate functionality
  - Stakeholders: Provide feedback
- Team Members: Show evidence of work using artifacts, for example, showing quality measurements
- Product Owner: What are we thinking will be in next Iteration (Sprint)
- Scrum Master: Announce planned next Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) date
- Scrum Master: Thank participants

Checklist

When setting up the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) meetings (for the first time or ongoing), it may be useful to have a checklist to ensure a successful Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) meeting. The following is such a checklist:

Before the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review)

- Set up a recurring calendar event, with virtual collaboration tool (WebEx, Lync, etc) for the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review).
- By convention, the subject line of the email should help people understand the work being looked at. For example, "Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) – Team name - (Area of Focus)".
- Participants invited include the Team (Product Owner, Scrum Master, all team members), and the stakeholders, especially customer stakeholders.
    - Customers: The Product Owner is responsible for working arrangements with customer stakeholders. If it is the customer's first involvement in Agile, ensure they understand their role (perhaps through an "Introduction to Agile for Customers" session) before the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review).
    - Management: In terms of feedback provided by management, in addition to direct feedback on the functionality delivered, management should also ask about initiatives that the organization is driving. For example, if there is a renewed focus on quality management representatives might ask the team "how do you feel about the quality of the work you have completed?"
- Before the actual Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) meeting the body of invitation for this Iteration Demo / Sprint Review should be updated with the Iteration (Sprint) Goal and the Team (Sprint) Backlog indicating which items were "done".

At the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review) Meeting

- The Iteration (Sprint) Goal is visible to everyone.
- The committed Team (Sprint) backlog is accessible and visible to everyone.
- The Team has prepared workstations, devices, and so forth to demonstrate the new functionality.
- This is not a sales presentation, so its not about creating slick demonstrations. Focus on what you need to show in order to get feedback. This should not take a lot of time to prepare for: hours, not days.
- Make sure your demonstrations can help remote people as well. If you are using a virtual collaboration tool check out what it looks like on the remote session.

Meeting Moderation

- Scrum Master records the virtual collaboration session so others that wanted to see the session but

were unable to turn up can review it at a later date.

- The Team presents the Iteration (Sprint) results and demonstrates the new functionality, Backlog Item after Backlog Item.
- If customers are involved, make sure that functional user stories (as opposed to technical / non-functional or environmental user stories) are demonstrated first.
- Demonstrate the story from the customer's point of view. Treat the user story like a mini-script and start the demonstration by saying, "as a <role>, I have just done this and now want to do …"
- All stakeholders can provide all types of feedback - comments, observations, criticisms, requests for new functionality, and so forth. This is the purpose of the review - to get feedback that is needed to make the product better. We need this data.
- Changes to (or additions of) features may be made to the Team (Product) Backlog at this time. (Note: feedback is a series of proposed changes that have to be reviewed and estimated prior to committing to getting them done)
- If the team reports an obstacle / impediment that is not yet solved, escalate this type of obstacle / impediment to management.
- Explain what could not be completed during the Iteration (Sprint) and why (for example, the team under-estimated effort, there were interruptions to address critical customer issues, and so forth).

Additional Reminders

- Be sure the appropriate proprietary marking appears on any documents / PowerPoint slides used in (or sent out before) the Iteration Demo / Sprint Review or that the proprietary nature of the material shown in the Review / Demo is clearly stated.
- Make sure the virtual collaboration tool (Zoom, Teams, WebEx, etc) recording has been turned on before starting the Iteration Demo / Sprint Review introductions and is turned off before any non-Review-related discussion occurs.
- If showing the Iteration (Sprint) Burn-down and other metrics takes more than ~5 minutes with any discussion expected, ask to return to this subject after demonstrations have been completed. Focus on getting feedback from the demonstrations.
- If the team wants feedback from stakeholders on work not yet completed, make sure there is clear separation between this and demonstrations / discussion of completed work so there is no confusion on the part of stakeholders regarding the difference.

Product Owner Options

As a result of the Iteration Demo (Sprint Review), the Product Owner has a number of options:

- Update the Team (Product) Backlog, for example:
  - Restore and prioritize unfinished functionality to the top of the Team (Product) Backlog
  - Reprioritize the Team (Product) Backlog based on feedback
  - Remove or lower priority of items no longer needed
- Ask for a "Release" to implement the demonstrated functionality, alone or with increments from

previous Iterations (Sprints).
- Stop the project
- Request additional resources if necessary

Challenges of a Iteration Demo (Sprint Review)

Watch for these issues as you do Iteration Demo (Sprint Reviews):

- Team demonstrates work that is not "Done"
- Team has not shown data indicating how they managed themselves
- Team does not demonstrate the product from a user / value perspective
- Team does not accept feedback well; gets defensive
- Product Owner is surprised at Iteration Demo (Sprint Review)
- Stakeholders not available for Iteration Demo (Sprint Review)
- Team uses PowerPoint to demonstrate software functions
- Team does not show product quality metrics
- Feedback is not going into Team (Product) Backlog for consideration
- Great review, but nobody knows where the product or project or release is
- Pro-forma review, where we just go through the steps and do not learn how to get better

Want to Know More?

- Mike Cohn on "An Agenda for the Sprint Review" which also helps in understanding the thinking process.
- How Can We Improve The Quality of Feedback at a Sprint Review?
- How do we Demonstrate Something that Results in a New API?

Consultant, Tools, Team, Review, Ceremony, Event, Demo, Iteration, FirstSprint, FAQ

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