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# What Alternative Estimation Approaches Are There?

The traditional [approach to estimation](#) is based on team relative size estimates is backed by [research](#). The approach has proven to improve outcomes associated with estimation, but that does not mean this is the only estimation approach we can use.

Alternative approaches include:

- #noestimates approaches: there is a lot discussion about this thinking and the discussion is worthwhile. See [Do We Need Points To Generate a Release Burn-up Chart?](#) for this type of thinking.
- Cycle time and throughput: More generally, using cycle time and throughput information directly can help.
- XP based: 0, 1, 2, 4, split. Used to help encourage smaller pieces of work.
- High / low estimates: The approaches generate a single number to estimate size of story as well as a velocity for the team, usually an average. When forecast the future we should be talking about a range of possible values rather than a single number as the future is not certain.
- Probabilities: A more rigorous approach is to use actual probabilities to talk about what might happen. See [Why a Plan Based on Average Velocity Will Fail?](#) for the thinking here.
- Dependencies: Estimation approaches that directly factor a understanding of dependencies to drive better information. See [Why Should We Work Harder to Eliminate the Effect of Dependencies?](#) for some thinking here.
- Expansion: Estimation approaches that also factor in expansion of scope, since in most cases scope increases, rather than decreases as the team implements and the customer sees what is possible.
- Utilization / WIP: Understanding the impact of high utilization on estimates. See [Why Does a High Utilization Rate Make It Impossible to Create Good Estimates?](#) for more information.

Organizations can and should improving their process to so that they produce the least amount of wasted effort in return for the information gained.

## Want to Know More?

- [Why Do We Use Story Points Instead of Hours or Days?](#)
- [What is the Purpose of Estimation?](#)

[Team](#), [Estimates](#), [Forecast](#), [FAQ](#), [Points](#), [EstimationApproach](#), [NoEstimate](#)

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