Why is it called Scrum?

When Jeff Sutherland co-created the Scrum process in 1993, he borrowed the term "scrum" from an analogy put forth in a 1986 paper by Takeuchi and Nonaka, published in the Harvard Business Review. In that paper, the authors compare high-performing, cross-functional product development teams to rugby teams using the Scrum formation when they restart play.

What is Scrum?

Scrum is now the leading Agile development method, used by Fortune 500 companies and others around the world. Scrum exists to transform the way people tackle complex projects, bringing the Scrum framework and Agile principles beyond software development to the broader world of work. Scrum originally was formalized for software development projects, but it works well for any complex, innovative scope of work. The possibilities are endless.

The Scrum framework is deceptively simple:
- A product owner creates a prioritized wish list called a product backlog.
- During sprint planning, the team pulls a small chunk from the top of that wish list. That chunk becomes the sprint backlog. The team decides how to implement the sprint backlog within the time frame of the sprint.
- The team has the given sprint (usually two to four weeks) to complete its work, but it meets each day to assess its progress (in the Daily Scrum).
- Along the way, the ScrumMaster keeps the team focused on its goal.
- At the end of the sprint, the work should be potentially shippable: ready to hand to a customer, put on a store shelf, or show to a stakeholder.
- The sprint ends with a sprint review and retrospective.
- As the next sprint begins, the team chooses another chunk of the product backlog and begins working again.

Beyond the sprint, the cycle repeats until enough items in the product backlog have been completed, the budget is depleted, or a deadline arrives. Which of these milestones marks the end of the work is entirely specific to the project. No matter which impetus stops work, Scrum ensures that the most valuable work has been completed by the time the project ends.

Scrum's core values

All work performed in Scrum needs a firm foundation of values for the team's process and principles. With its emphasis on teamwork and continuous improvement, Scrum both creates those values and relies on them. From the team's perspective, the values are:

- **Commitment.** Because we have great control over our own destiny, we become more committed to success.
- **Focus.** Because we focus on only a few things at a time, we work well together and produce excellent work. We deliver valuable items sooner.
- **Openness.** As we work together, we practice expressing how we're doing and what's in our way. We learn that it is good to express concerns so that they can be addressed.
- **Respect.** As we work together, sharing successes and failures, we come to respect each other and to help each other become worthy of respect.
- **Courage.** Because we are not alone, we feel supported and have more resources at our disposal. This gives us the courage to undertake greater challenges.

Scrum is the most widely adopted and globally recognized of the Agile frameworks. It is ideal for completing any complex project and innovative scope of work. Scrum has streamlined software development, and professionals around the world are starting to see its value. Of all the possible Agile frameworks used by companies in the *2015 State of Scrum Report* by Scrum Alliance, 95% are using Scrum or Scrum variants.

Scrum Alliance

Scrum Alliance is the largest, most established and influential professional membership organization in the Agile community. More than 400,000 professionals around the world have been certified by Scrum Alliance trainers. Most of those certified come from the software development world and are interested in Scrum as an alternative to traditional Waterfall project management.

Scrum Alliance's vision is to transform the world of work. It operates as a nonprofit organization. Please visit www.scrumalliance.org for more information. For all media inquiries, please contact our Public Relations and Communications Director, Heather Leigh, at hleigh@scrumalliance.org or call her directly at 720-443-7314.

#####