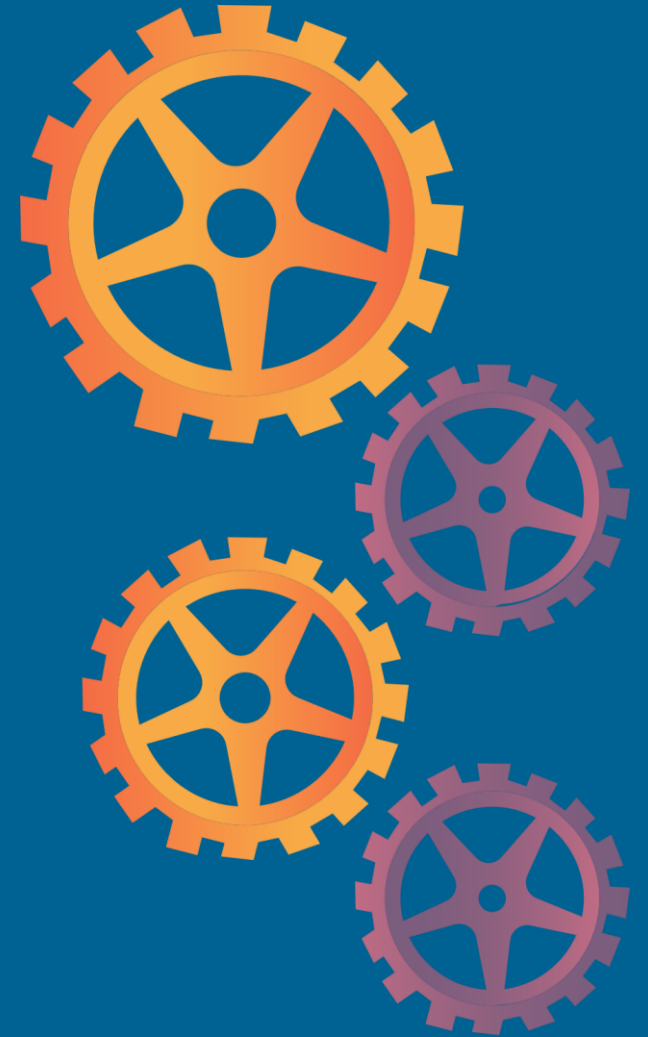# Introduction to Agile Ceremonies

Dr. Vyron Damasiotis
University of Thessaly
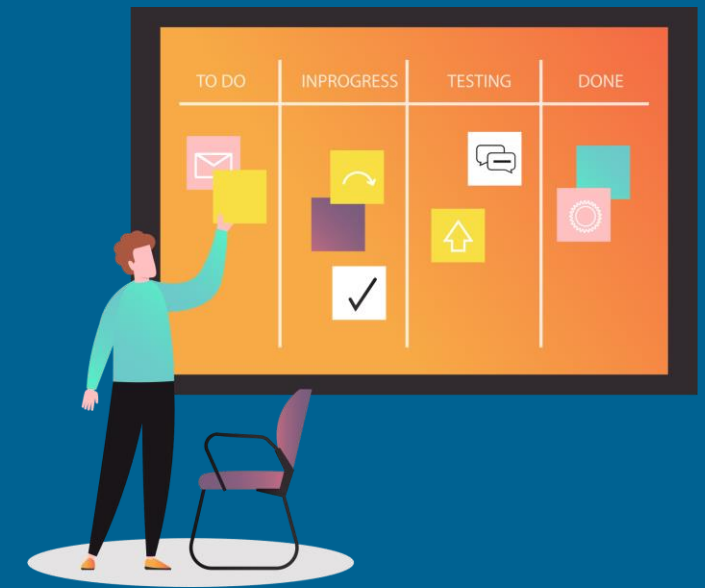
Agenda

- Definition of agile ceremonies
- Presentation of ceremonies
- Ceremonies articulation
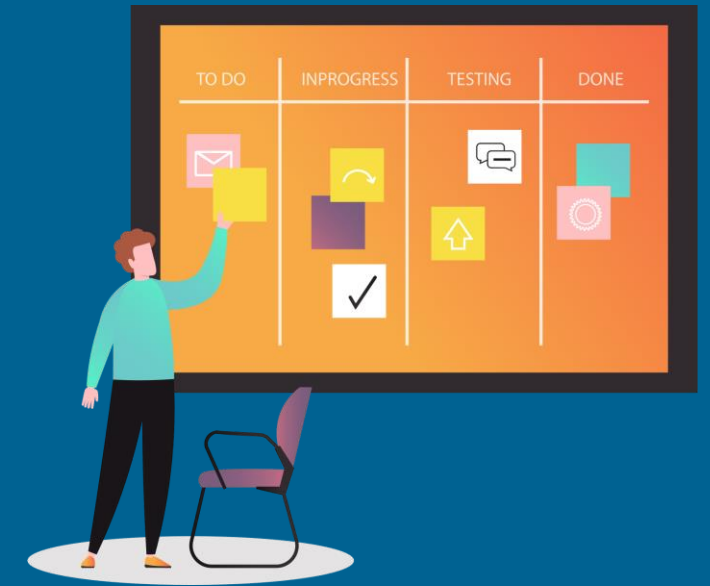- Ceremonies best practices

Agile methodologies

- **Agile methodologies** follow an iterative approach to project management and to product development in general, that helps teams deliver value to their customers faster and with fewer problems.
  - Instead of implementing everything on a monolithic way, an agile team delivers work in small, but consumable, increments.
  - Requirements, plans, and results are evaluated continuously so teams should have a mechanism for responding to change quickly.
- All these are implemented during a set of meetings known as **Agile ceremonies**.
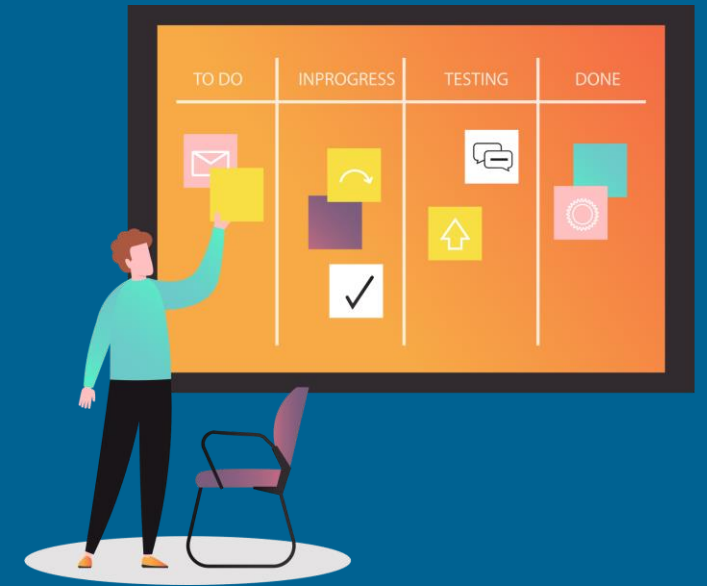
Agile ceremonies definition

- **Agile ceremonies** are meetings with defined length, frequency and goals.
  - Their aim to help project team members to plan the work need to be done, track and evaluate current project progress, engage team members to project and help them to reflect on how well or not the work has been done during the previous stage.
  - Agile ceremonies are closely related with Scrum framework, but their general idea is also adopted by other agile frameworks.
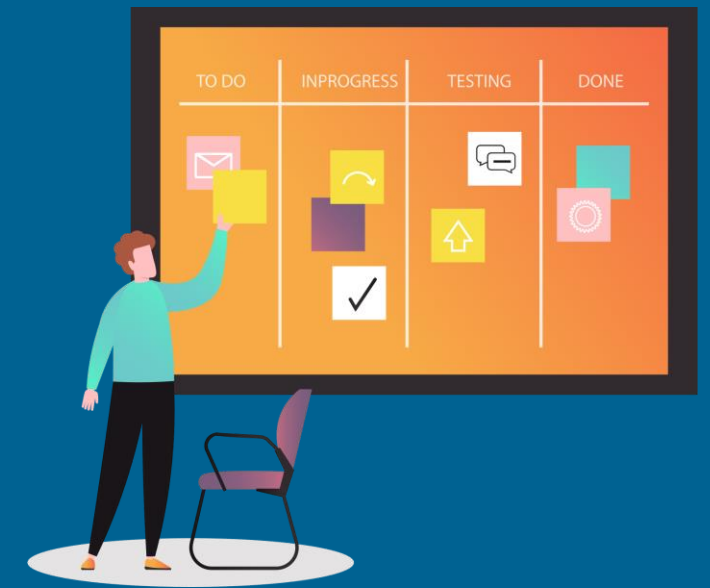
Scrum ceremonies

- **Scrum framework** defines a set of meetings aiming to facilitate the adaptation of some of the aspects of the process, the product, progress or relationships.

- The **Sprint** is the basic unit/event of work for a Scrum team and four ceremonies are organized during this unit. They are the following:

  - **Sprint Planning**

  - **Daily Scrum**

  - **Sprint review**

  - **Sprint Retrospective**

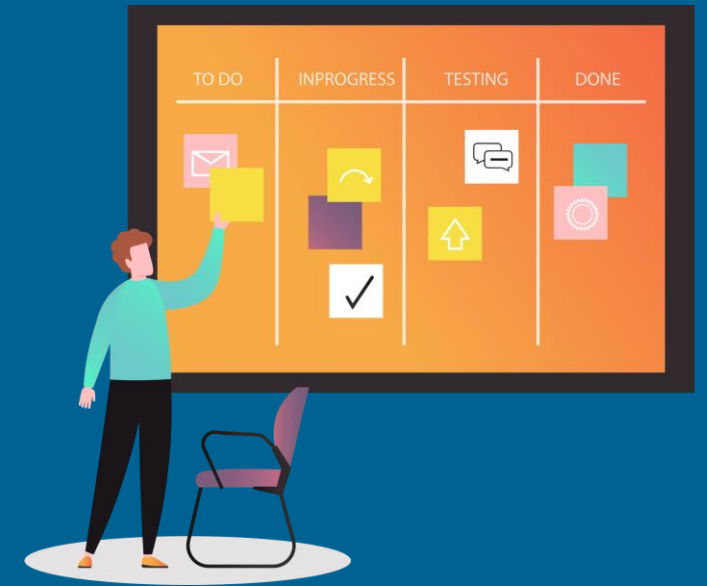- A sprint usually lasts one month or less.

Kanban ceremonies

- **Kanban framework** defines a set of ceremonies that in general are similar to Scrum ceremonies. These are:

  - **Replenishment**

  - **Daily Kanban**

  - **Service Delivery Review**

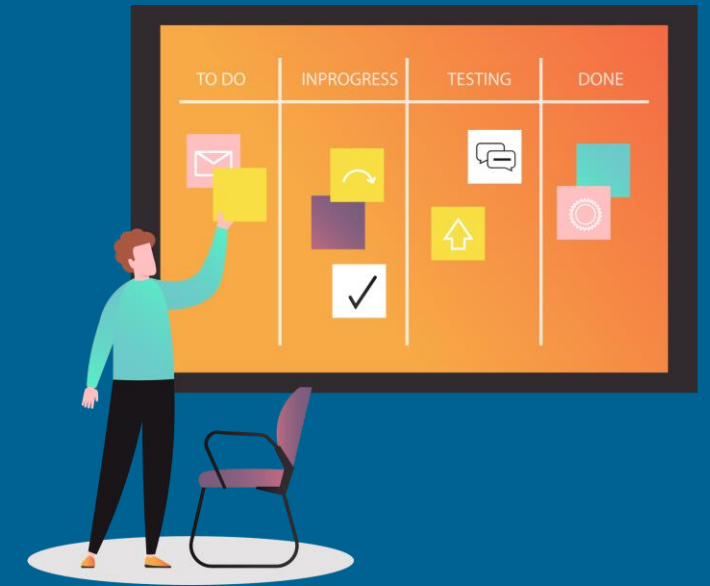 - **Operation Review**

  - **Strategy Review**

Scrum ceremonies – Sprint planning

- The **Sprint Planning** meeting is one of the most important steps in a Scrum development project.

  - During this meeting, the development team selects the items from the Product Backlog that they think they can achieve during the sprint.

  - This collaborative work of the whole Scrum Team results in the creation of a sprint planning

- Other frameworks such as Kanban have a plan meeting like sprint planning, but it has not the formal and iterative character that it has on Scrum framework.
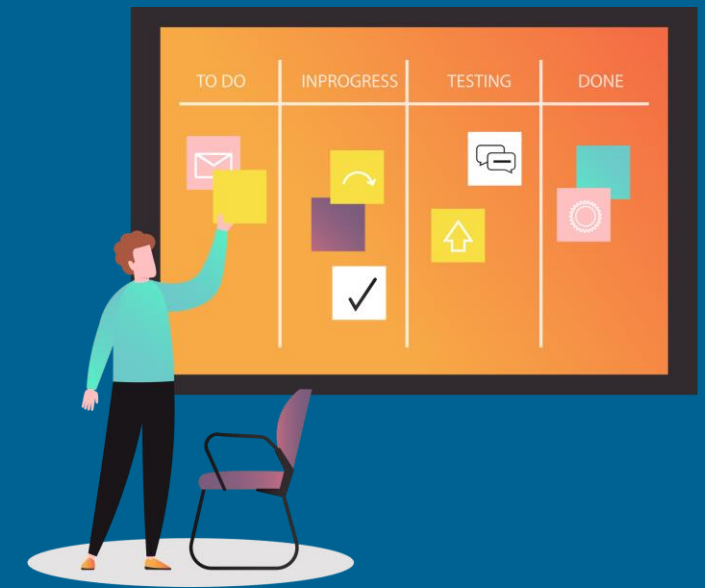
Scrum ceremonies – Sprint planning properties

- **A Scrum team consists of**:

  - The Scrum master

  - The development team

  - The product owner

- Sprint planning takes place at the **beginning of each sprint (1st day).**

- The **duration** of a sprint planning depends on the duration of the work needs to be planned. A general rule is about 1-2 hours per week of work.
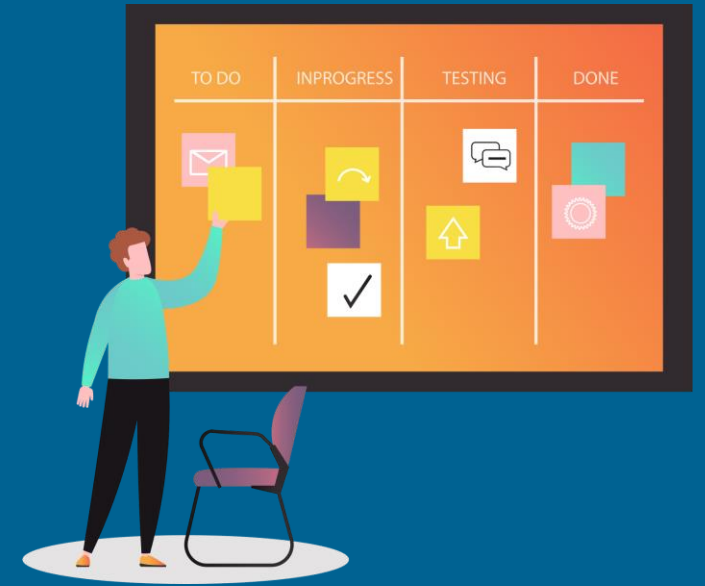
Scrum ceremonies – Sprint planning – how it works…

- Initially, the Scrum master introduces the event, introduce participants, explains the purpose of the meeting and sets the agenda.

- Next, the product owner provides an overview of the project aim and specifies the product goal. E.g. "By the end of the month, we have to set up an electronic payment system for all cards."

- Product owner and developers go through the product backlog and prioritize the activities. Each item of the product backlog is discussed with the other members of the meeting.

- An estimate about the required effort for each item is made.

- An assumption about the work that can be done is the specified period is also made.

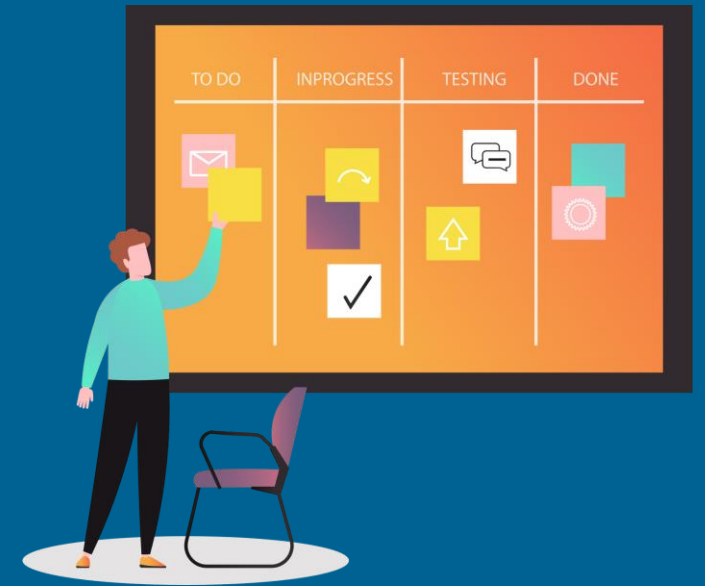- The result of the meeting becomes the sprint backlog.

Scrum Ceremonies - Daily Scrum

- Daily Scrum (or Daily Stand-up) is a daily meeting aiming to:
    - Identify blockages to the work needs to be done.
    - Discuss problems to the work done the previous day.
    - Set up the work for the day.
    - Keep all team members in sync
    - Enhance trust building between team members
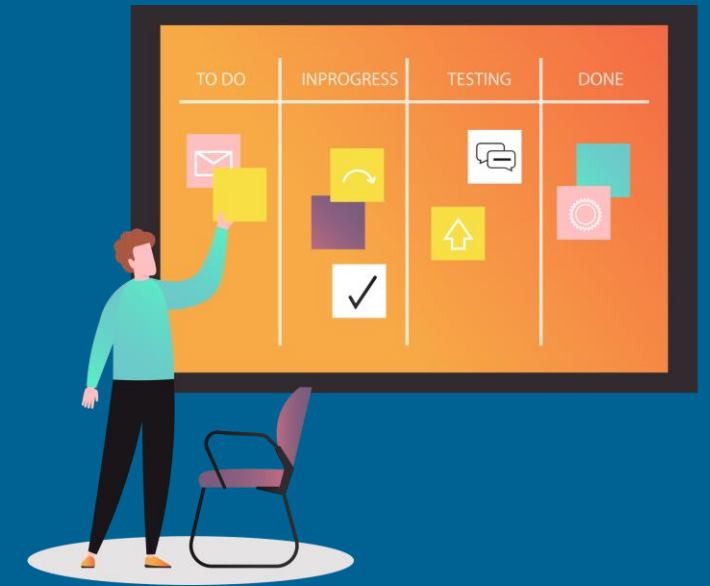- Daily stand-ups exist both in Scrum and Kanban agile frameworks.

Scrum ceremonies – Daily Scrum properties

- **Participants** in a Daily Scrum meeting are:

  - The Scrum master

  - The development team

  - The product owner (optional)

- The meeting **takes place** everyday morning before the work begins. It is a short stand-up meeting.

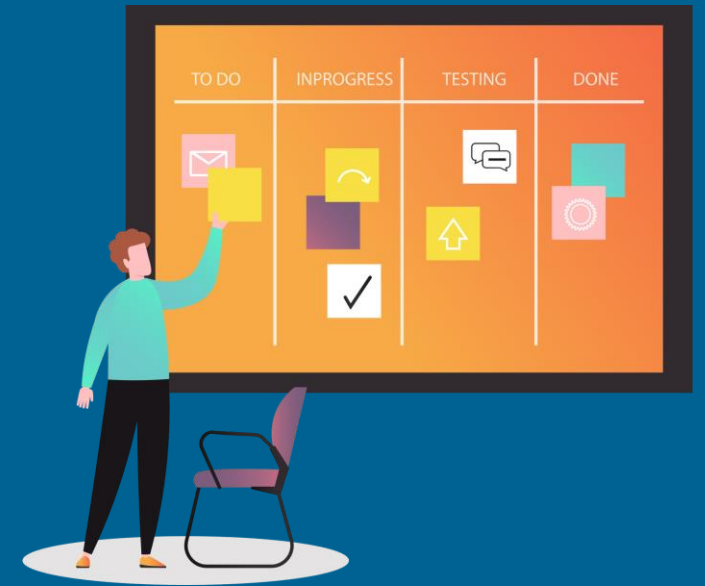- The **duration** of a Daily Scrum is no more than 15 minutes.

Scrum ceremonies – Daily Scrum – how it works…

- Each members of the development team informs others, in a sharp way, about:

  - what they did the previous day.

  - what they are going to do today.

  - If there are/were blockages

- In Kanban, team members stand up in front of the Kanban board and "walk"/move right the part of work on the board that is closer to be completed.

- This type of accountability between team members motivates them to make progress as no one wants to be seen as the person that makes always the same thing.
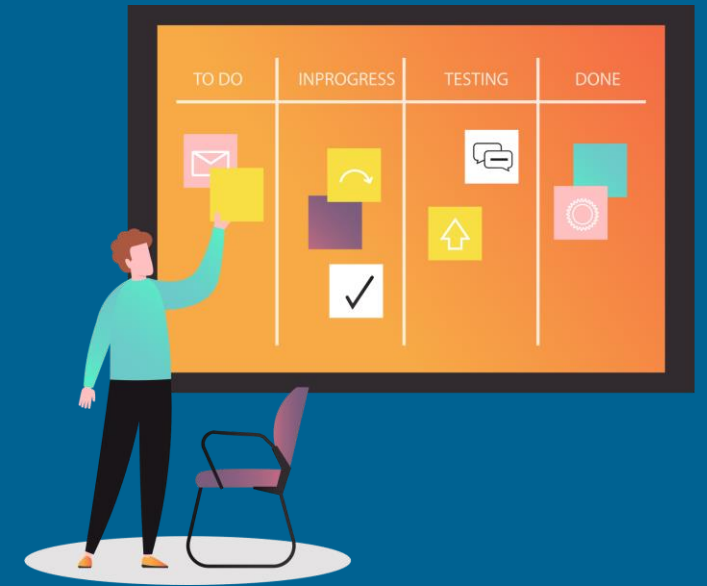
Scrum Ceremonies – Sprint Review

- Sprint review is a meeting where the team:
  - Showcases the work done during the last sprint.
  - Receives feedback from stakeholders
    - This allows immediate adaptations to the product

- The work showcased during this meeting should be fully demonstratable and fully meet the quality restrictions set by the development team for what is considered as completed work.

- Daily stand-ups exist both in Scrum and Kanban agile frameworks. However, in Kanban it takes place after the completion of a milestone instead of a sprint.
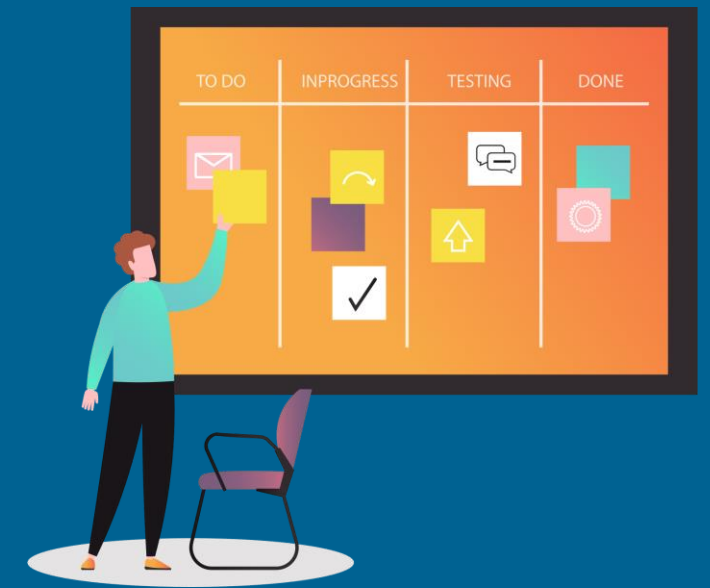
Scrum ceremonies – Sprint Review properties

- **Participants** in a Sprint Review meeting are:
  - The Scrum master
  - The product owner
  - The development team
  - Optionally, can attend customers, management, developers from other projects and other stakeholders.
    - By that way the building of trust between all stakeholders is enhanced.

- The meeting **takes place** at the end of each sprint.

- The **duration** of a sprint review depends on the duration of the work done. A general rule is about 1 hour per sprint-week.
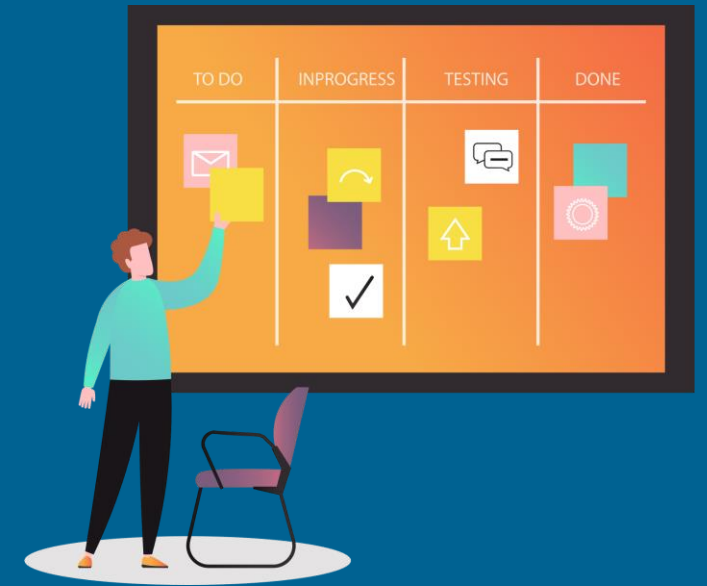
Scrum ceremonies – Sprint Review – how it works…

- The scrum master is the one that is responsible to organize and prepare the event.

- The product owner is responsible for gathering the feedback by asking questions to stakeholders.

- Product owner is also responsible to provide answers to stakeholders' questions.

- Received feedback, can be converted into new product backlog items. These items will be discussed and prioritized in a later stage.

- The presentation beyond the showcase of the work done should also highlight the effect of the work done to business value and user experience.
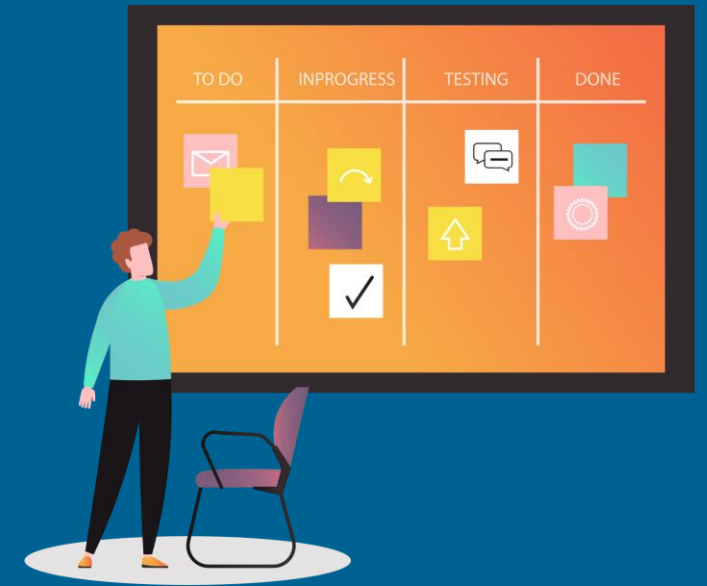
Scrum Ceremonies – Sprint Retrospective

- Sprint retrospective is the final scrum ceremony that allows the team to reflect on the work that has been done in order to:

  - identify items that went well or not and

  - propose what items can be improved or can be done differently in the future.

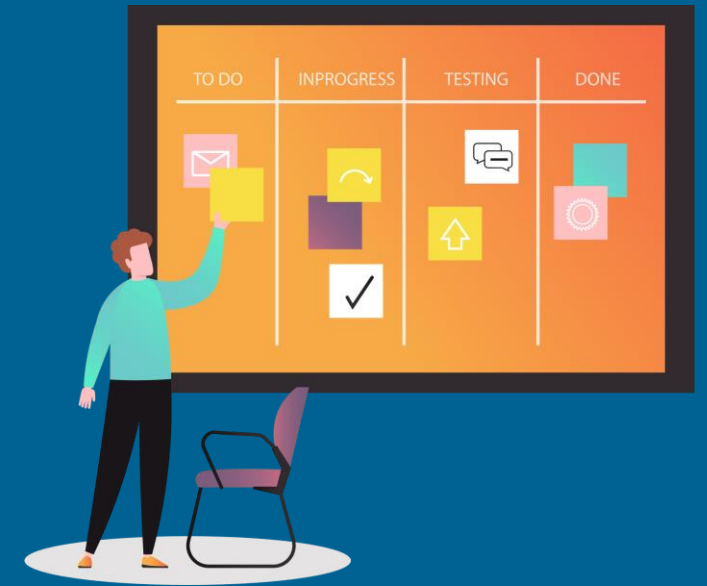- Sprint Retrospective exists both in Scrum and Kanban agile frameworks.

Scrum ceremonies – Sprint Retrospective properties

- **Participants** in a Sprint Retrospective meeting are:

  - The Scrum master

  - The development team

  - The product owner (Optional)

- The meeting **takes place** at the end of the sprint.

- The **duration** of a sprint review depends on the duration of the work done. A general rule is about 45 minutes per sprint-week.
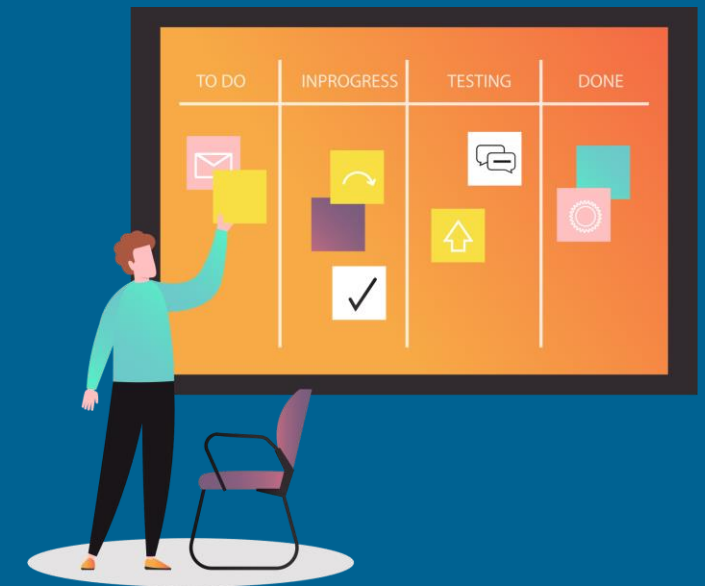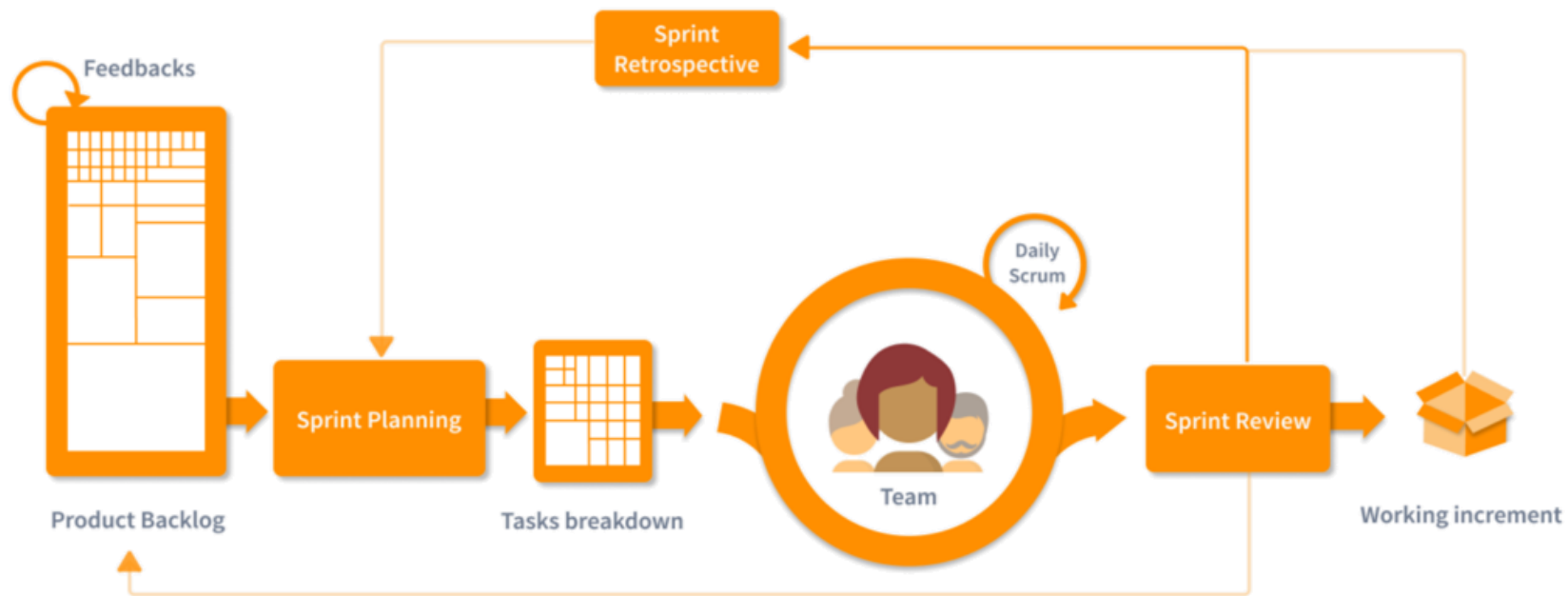
Scrum ceremonies – Sprint Retrospective – how it works…

- The scrum master encourages team members to speak up and share their experiences and feelings from the sprint process.

- The aim is to receive feedback for continuous improvement and emphasize at good practices being followed.

- Participants can bring color sticks , markers etc. to encourage participation and make it a more interactive.

- Enhance team's ability to self-organize.
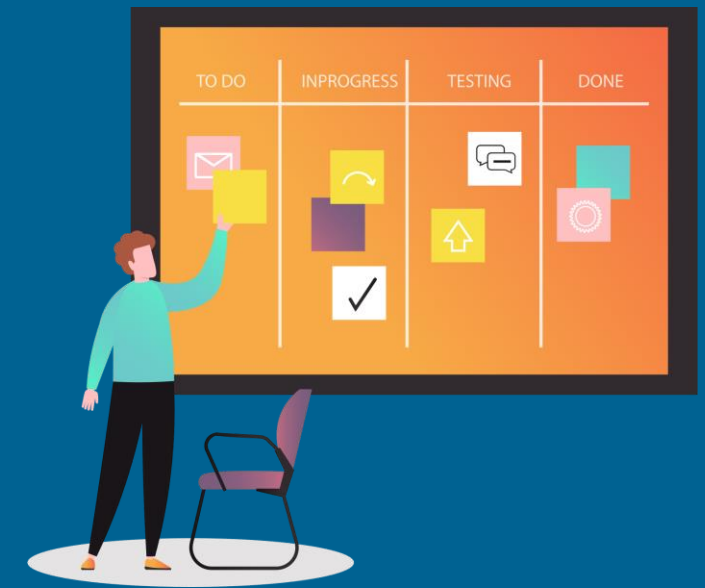
- It is not a blame game.
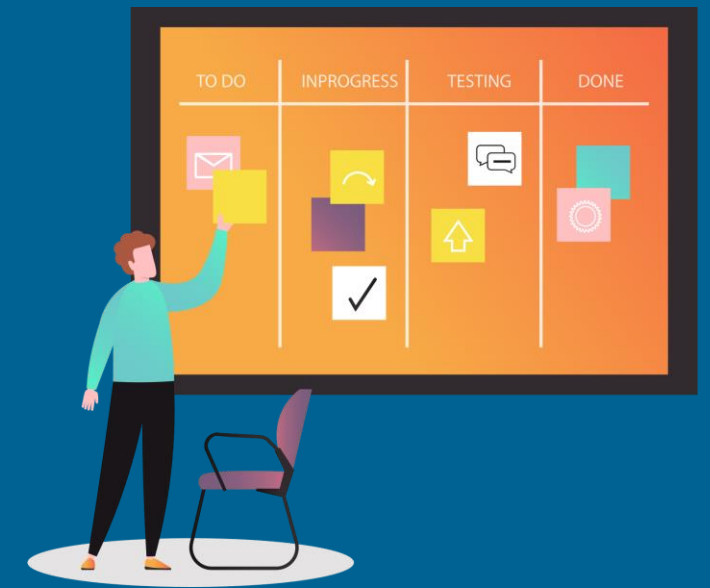
Scrum ceremonies articulation

Make agile ceremonies better…

- **Be actively present**. During the ceremonies stay focused to the reason you were there, show to others that you give them your full attention using verbal or body language.

- **Be an active listener**. Always consider what others saying, who are they, what are their motives and what they need from you.

- **Be flexible**. Always remember that there is not only one way to do things and that what that works for one team may not work for another. As such you must be ready to tailor the processes according to special characteristics of each case.

- **Create a culture of participation.** People participating in agile ceremonies should feel confident to speak, raise issues and value continuous improvement through open communication and reflection.

- **Give time**. Teams, especially new, may need some time to adapt to agile ceremonies. Clear structure and achievable outcomes will help the to speed up the process.
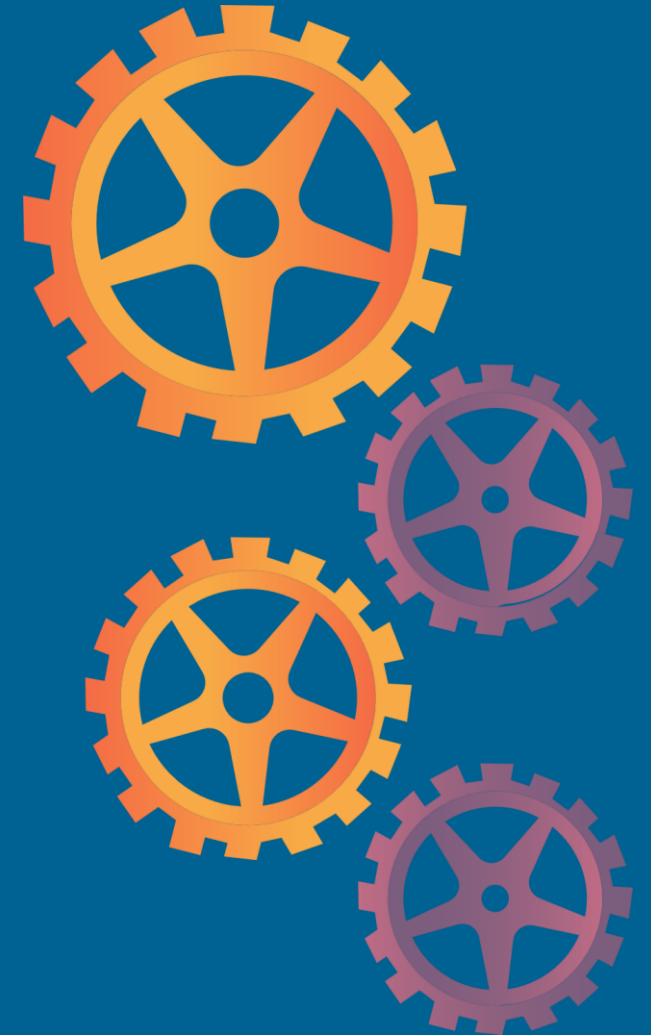
Tips for a successful meeting…

- All meetings should take place at the same place at the say time every day.

- Always meet face to face or use video chat in case of virtual teams.

- Keep meetings short in time.

- Focus only on updates from previous meeting and on the work that should be done until the next meeting.

- Take immediate actions if problems occur.

- Use the following questions to maintain focus during a Scrum meeting:
    - What have you accomplished since we last met?
    - What do you plan to accomplish in the next 24 hours?
    - What issues or problems are you currently facing?

- Always stick to scheduled agenda and don't let the meeting get off track

- Try to visualize progress e.g., use boards

- Don't bring outsiders to the meeting unless necessary

- Be strict to scheduled meeting timeboxes

- Demand from team members to come prepared to the meetings

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Thank you.

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