

Scrum for comfortable collaboration

FATIUL HUQ SUJOY

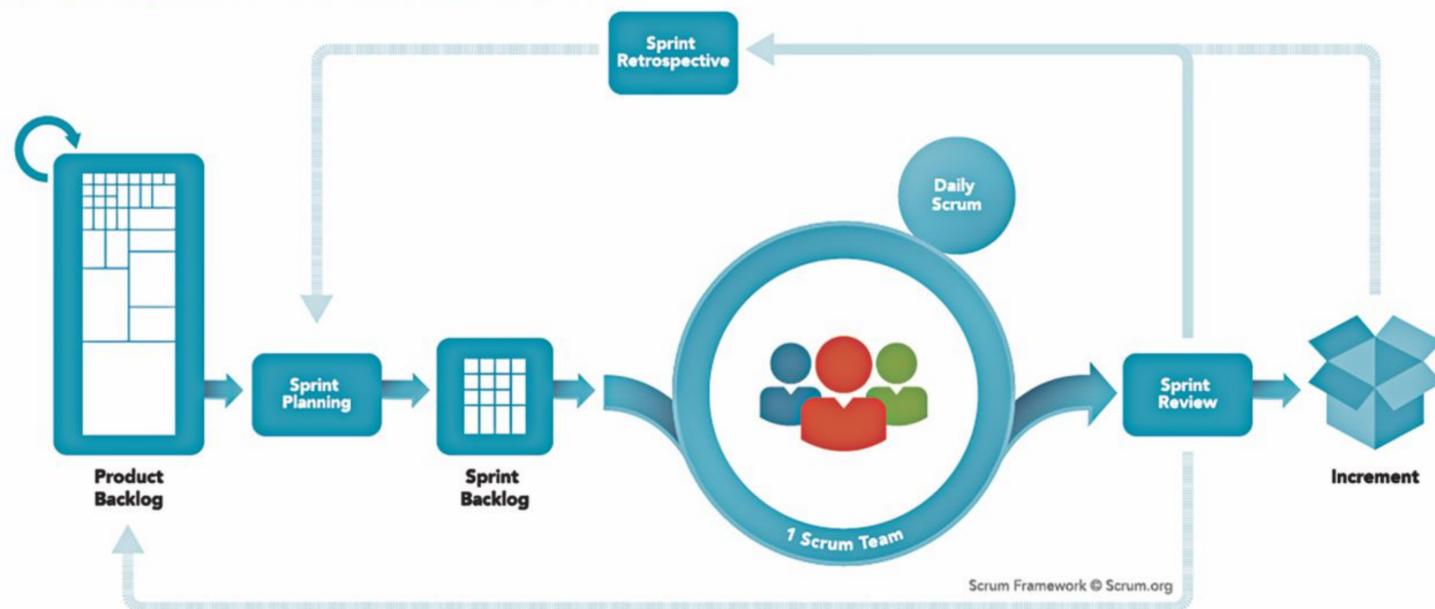
Scrum is a very popular software development method used by software engineers that prioritises project planning and team management. When I first came across this, my initial thought was, quite obviously, which points are important for the upcoming exam. My very next thought, after thoroughly reading it, was that this had quite a few nifty features for managing any kind of group projects, academic or otherwise. If you're interested in easing your own group projects, then I suggest you read on.

Before jumping into Scrum's normalized implementation, let's first see what the real software-based Scrum is all about. The Scrum model, by nature, is quite simplistic. It emphasises on modularity for better management. The first modularization comes in the form of dividing the software's requirements, namely its features. These are called User Stories. The User Stories are listed and prioritized. The Stories together are called the Product Backlog. This is, in simple terms, a collection of tasks to complete to finish the project.

The next modularity is in development sessions called Sprints. A Sprint is a 3-4 weeks long period in which, ideally, a shippable software is produced, with earlier Sprints used for prototyping. Every Sprint takes selected User Stories from the Product Backlog based on priority points. This selected collection is called the Sprint Backlog. At the end of a Sprint, the unfinished or partially finished User Stories are edited and put back to the Product Backlog for the next Sprint.

Now, during each Sprint, the User Stories of the Sprint Backlog are turned into tasks and each task is assigned to a team member. A Sprint has a few defined states for tasks, like "To-do", "In Progress", "Done" and more. The assignees can put their tasks in any of the states and change states when required. The team uses a board and post-its or online tools to display the tasks and their progress in columns. This way, everyone in the team can view the current progress of the whole project and how much everyone is working or contributing.

SCRUM FRAMEWORK



Scrum's most signature aspect, in my opinion, is the Scrum Meeting. Every day during a Sprint, the team members must physically gather and have a quick-fire meeting in 15 minutes. The meeting is coordinated by the Scrum Master, who can be one of the members. This meeting is mandatory for the members and absence would mean punishment, the non-violent sort, like donating to the team's fund for a post project grand feast. A Scrum Meeting consists of team members taking turns and answering three questions- "What have you done since the last meeting?", "What are the difficulties you are facing?" and "What is your goal until the next meeting?" Scrum Meetings are a great way to share development troubles and answer for one's lack of work.

The key to using Scrum for regular assignments is to tweak and modify the rules of the original Scrum to your favour. For example, you can refer the User Stories as the different aspects of writing a report, like interviewing, literature reviewing or writing the appendix. The length

and number of Sprints can also vary. The 3-4 week length is usually applied for year-long projects. Modify the length of Sprints based on the size of your project. If it's a very small project you can just work with one Sprint. Lastly, you can modify the frequency of Scrum Meetings. If daily meetings are difficult you can opt for biweekly ones. If meeting up physically is also not possible, then there are always online video conferences.

As you can see, Scrum is no profound innovation stemmed from mankind's collective creative genius. But it still is a useful structure for team management. And when you're a group leader with a not-so-reliable team, I strongly believe Scrum will be the effective tool to save the day, and the project.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy.

SELLING ART ONLINE

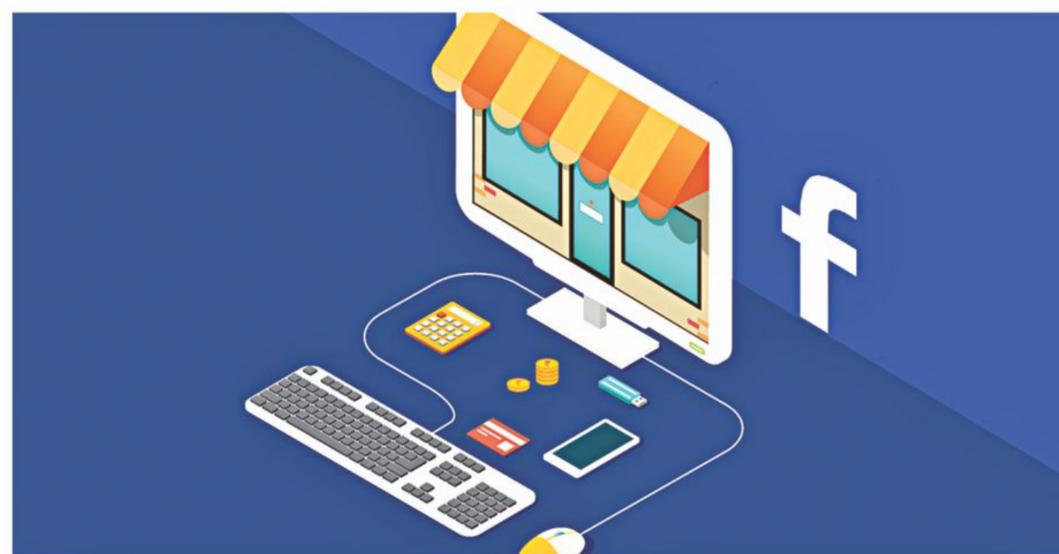
NOOHA SABANTA MAULA

The best thing about the internet is that it gives you the platform to do just about anything. If you're talented in the creative department and wanted to make money selling your artwork, look no further than your social media accounts.

BUILD YOUR AUDIENCE

No matter which platform you choose (or if you choose multiple platforms) to promote your work, the most important part is building your audience. This will take effort, patience and time. Be prepared for slow starts but don't let it dampen your spirit. Post regularly and shamelessly plug in your social media handles - it will pay off down the road.

When building your audience, it's important to interact with those you are hoping to score as patrons. Post during your 'work in progress' phase, ask for feedback even if it's just a casual thing, put up items for sale to see how people react- keep your online 'studio' thriving to keep those following interested and to draw a bigger crowd. If you're looking to pace things up, post an ad but make sure to tune the variables to narrow down on your target audience, you don't want Dark Rider Balok to spam your page with links.



NETWORKING AND SOCIALISING

Whether you choose to do it in person or online, it's always important to create your place in the community by getting to know others in the business. This is one of the best ways to expand your horizons because it allows you to meet like-minded individuals, share ideas and tricks of the trade and also open doors to further opportunity. You'll be in the know about upcoming events or programs that can benefit you, have the chance to collaborate or join up with

other artists and get to meet potential clients as well.

GETTING THE PRICING RIGHT

This one reverts to the points discussed earlier. With the knowledge you gain from building up your audience and networks, you can get a good idea of how to maximise your returns. In order to be truly competitive in a market, you need more than just talent. You've to be smart about selling it right. This means your pricing really makes a huge difference as do other strategies you apply to bring all

the customers to your yard. A little research into what others do will help you get the basic idea but it's only when you engage with your own audience that you can apply a trial-and-error method to see what works best. Post regularly to see what gets responses and play around with prices to see what helps get your artwork off the shelves and to your customers. Encourage even those who don't purchase to give you feedback so you can cater to a bigger audience as you learn.

MAKE APP YOUR MIND

Great photos always help. If your photography skills are a bit rusty, start practising. Make easy editing apps that enhance the quality of the image like Snapseed your BFF. If you're using multiple social media platforms, apps like Hootsuite will help you keep up with all your accounts from one place. Mastering apps you need to create your brand will streamline the process for you so you can focus on putting up good content that pays back. Good luck on your online ventures!

Nooha Sabanta Maula is an Anthropology major whose anthropologising has made her confused about life. Send her your thoughts to noohamaula@gmail.com