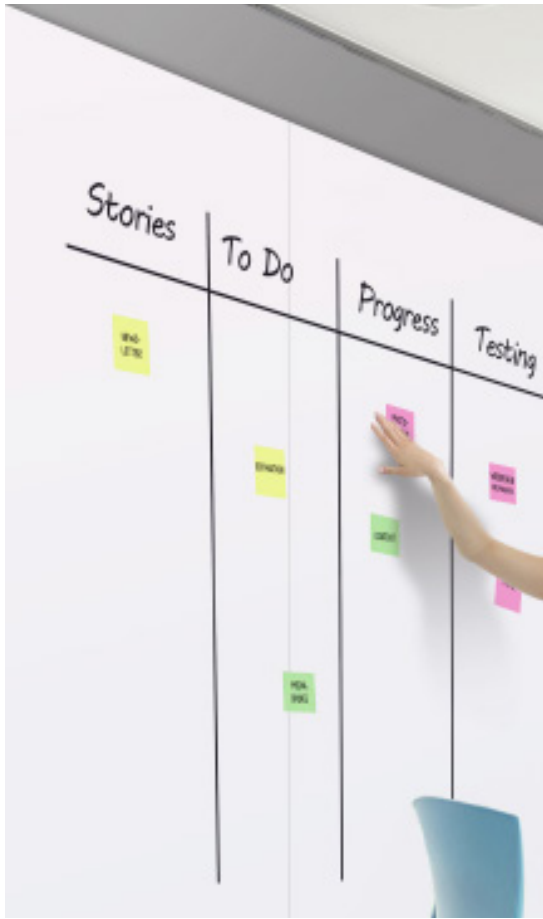


## Guideline



## Planning Poker A planning poker guideline

## What is Planning Poker?

Scrum's success is largely down to the efficiency that results from having clearly defined goals. Goals are therefore defined at the start of each sprint. The entire Scrum team gets together for a Planning Poker session, during which the following are discussed:

- the wishes everyone wants to realise over the next two to three weeks (the upcoming sprint);
- how the team wants to realise those wishes (user stories);
- the complexity of realising each wish.

By estimating the complexity of each wish (user story), a high level of transparency is created between team members and the product owner. You can be sure that everyone is speaking the same language when it comes to what exactly needs to be done, and you also save time.



## Planning Poker: **the preparation**

Before the start of the sprint (during which the subproject will be completed), the product owner (customer) and Scrum master (moderator) jointly prepare a sprint backlog. This is an overview of the user stories (wishes) with the highest priority and/or stories on a specific theme that need to be dealt with in the upcoming sprint.



## Planning Poker: Step by step



### Step 1 *Product owner defines expectations*

Planning Poker starts with the product owner. He or she explains to the team exactly what the expectations are for each user story.



### Step 2 *Ask questions*

All team members, based on their own expertise, now ask questions in relation to the specific user story in order to bring the "conditions of satisfaction" into focus. How should a specific filter work? Are there any dependencies? If necessary, the user story can be defined in greater detail.



### Step 3 *Estimate complexity of user story*

It's now time to play poker. The purpose is to estimate the complexity of each user story. To do this, everyone places a Planning Poker card face down on the table, there being a number on each card. These are the "story points" and the numbers indicate the complexity of the tasks of the entire team. User stories that have been estimated previously can serve as a point of reference. Once all the cards have been laid on the table, they can be turned face up.



### Step 4 *Explain highest and lowest numbers*

Those individuals with the highest and the lowest numbers now explain their choice. It could be that they have different kinds of solution in mind. Through discussion, the best approach to solving the problem in hand can be chosen from the very outset.



### Step 5 *Determine number of story points*

Finally, the definitive number of story points is determined – possibly after another estimate. The product owner is the person who decides on this.

After Step 5, we go back to Step 1 to estimate the complexity of another part of the project. Depending on the complexity of the project in question, the Planning Poker's sprint session usually takes between two and four hours in total.

## The Planning Poker cards

Each team member holds a set of cards. These cards contain a series of numbers, derived from the Fibonacci sequence, according to which the gap between the numbers continues to increase:

0 – 0.5 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 8 – 13 – 20 – 40 – 100

The more complex a user story, the greater the risk of disappointment. As a rule, the highest number should be chosen in cases of doubt. Because the numbers are further apart as the sequence progresses, you can build up a margin for disappointments.

### Example

Imagine this scenario: back-end developer Peter gives 40 points while front-end developer Ronald puts down eight points for the same user story. There may be a whole host of reasons for the difference in the number of points given. Perhaps Peter's thinking is too convoluted, while Ronald has a more efficient solution. Or maybe Ronald is too laid back about the project and is not managing to see everything. Another possibility is that there are two different approaches, each with its own advantages:

- 1** Peter's solution takes more time but will result in greater conversion.
- 2** Ronald's solution takes less time but at the expense of conversion.

In this case, it is up to the product owner to choose between these two options.

It's good to be aware that the numbers in Sprint 1 are not all that significant at this stage, although they will immediately provoke a valuable discussion. The main strength lies in continuation. After Sprint 1, you can take stock and know how many complexity points you can pick up in a sprint. Did you get 120 story points in Sprint 1? If you did, you know that in Planning Poker Sprint 2 you can estimate user stories up to a total of approximately 120 story points.

## The advantages of Planning Poker

With a complete team, Planning Poker takes - on average - between two and four hours. That's quite an investment in terms of time. People often wonder whether it's a waste of valuable time. We don't think so. In our experience, the hours spent on Planning Poker are easily recouped through efficiency during the sprint. The reasons for this are as follows:

- by going through the user stories and engaging in the discussion that follows, each team member knows exactly what needs to be done during the sprint;
- the customer is present while the Planning Poker is in progress. This gives the customer a better understanding of those wishes which are straightforward and those which are more complex. On this basis, the customer may decide to reprioritise his or her wishes;
- the team is thinking about the best solution from the very beginning. This means the approach will not suddenly need to be revised at a later stage in the process.

