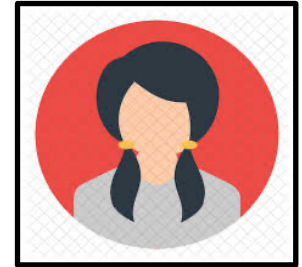


SE 329 – Software Project Management

Developing Project Communication Plan

Lotfi ben Othmane

Deployment Challenges



Communication Planning

“The goal of any communication planning is to establish communication with stakeholders that manage their perceptions on the project - which means supporting and championing the project”

Abudi, 2013

Determine who needs to know what and when

Reasons for Planning Communication



Keep stakeholders engaged through open communication



Get stakeholders involved through two-ways conversations



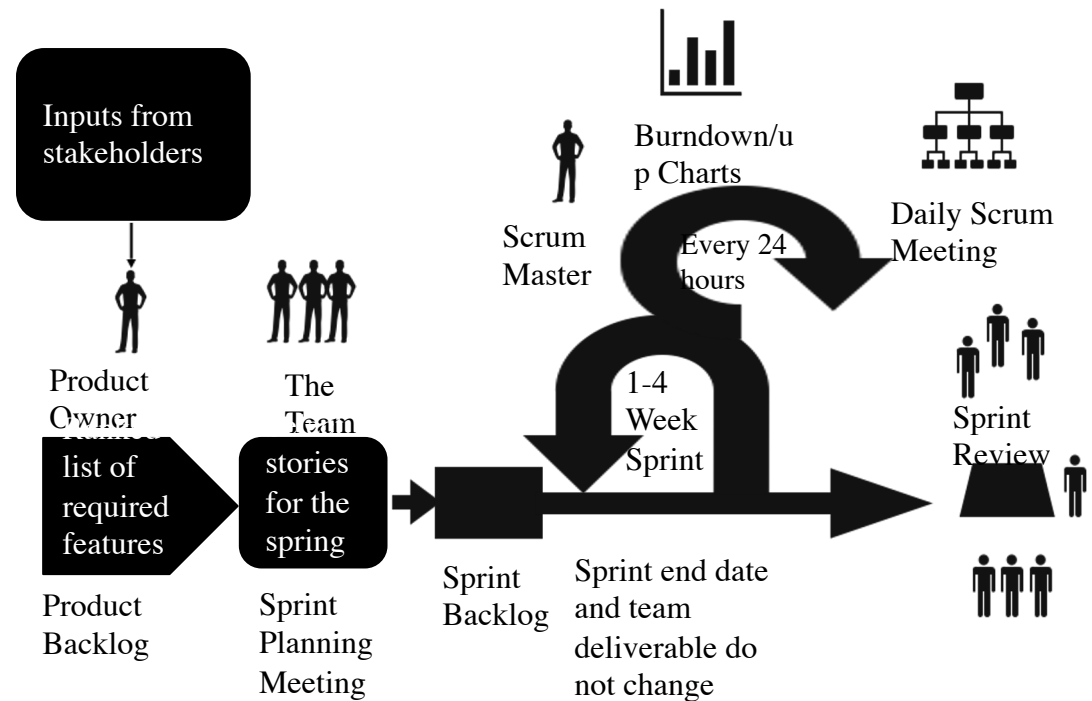
Improve the effectiveness of communication – frequency and quality

Communication Content

How to identify the communication contents to include in the communication plan?

Discussion

- Does scrum include the need to share the project scope and the budget?
- Does Scrum address the need to communicate team members performance?



Need for “Commonness”

It is not easy to work on a project without knowing:

1. Project requirements
2. Design of the project solutions
3. Schedule of the project
4. Project progress/status
5. Technical challenges
6. Test plan and results
7. Project support plan

Simple Communication Plan Components

1. With whom you will communicate?
2. What will be communicated?
3. When you will communicate?
4. How you will communicate?
5. What communication format should you use?

Simple Communication Plan Components

Kickoff

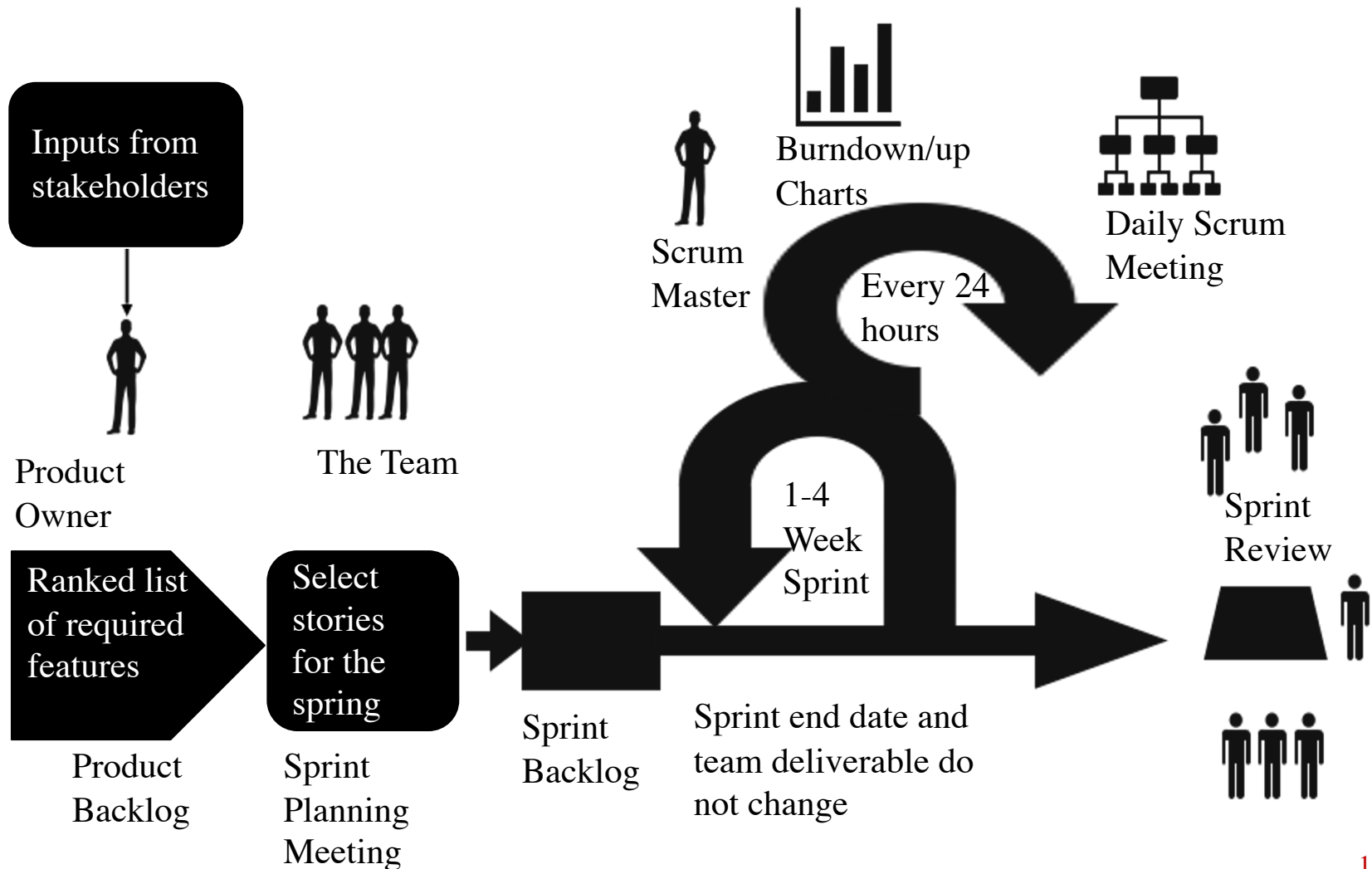
1. Whom: sponsors, senior developers, representatives of the customer, architect, HR, etc.
2. What: scope, schedule, budget, risk, etc.
3. When: few days before the start of the project
4. How: face-to-face meeting and videoconference
5. What format: presentation and brainstorming

Practice 8

Plan for the following:

1. Project progress
 2. Scope change
1. Whom
 2. What
 3. When
 4. How
 5. What format

What Message Delivery Frequencies Does Scrum Use?



Detailed Communication Plan

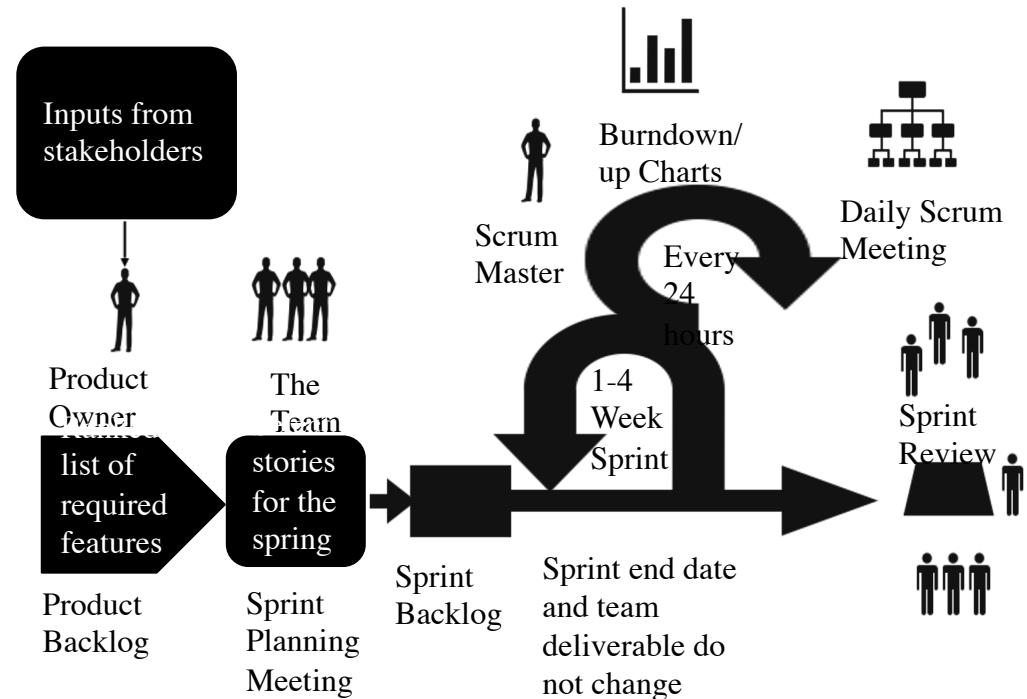
1. List of stakeholders + responsibilities
2. Requirements for how the information will be distributed to stakeholders
3. Requirements for how the information will be gathered and reported
4. Guidelines for gathering and distributing the information

Template of Communication Plan

- For each message
 - Message name
 - Message content – e.g., regular update on project issues
 - Delivery method – e.g., email
 - Frequency – monthly
 - Format – e.g., report
 - Owner – e.g., PM
 - Audience – e.g., project sponsor, project team

Practice 9

1. Identify one stakeholder that scrum does not consider
2. Identify one important message that Scrum does not cover
3. How would you address the limitations?



Control Communication

- Process of monitoring and controlling communications to ensure information needs of stakeholders are met.
- Tools:
 1. Information management system
 2. Expert judgment
 3. Meetings

Enterprise Communication Environment

- The logistic and organizational infrastructure
 - Organization structure
 - Available technology
 - Available databases
- The policies and procedures
 - The project work authorization system
 - Change management procedures
- Project management information system
- Historic information and lessons learned
- The stakeholders risk tolerance

Impacts of Poor Team Communication

1. Conflicts between team members
2. Misunderstanding about the project goals and objectives
3. Missed deadline
4. Team members moving in different directions
5. Decreased productivity
6. Lack of commitment to accomplish the project

Impacts of Poor Stakeholders Communication

1. Limited buy-in and commitments to the project
2. Misunderstanding about stakeholder expectations
3. Conflicts between project team and stakeholders
4. Stakeholders may act against the project
5. Failed project

Obstacles for Communication

- Political
 - Game of powers
 - Escalation
- Cultural
 - Can-do-supplier vs. risk-averse customers
- Linguistic
 - Specialized terminology –fall is USA is not in Australia

Best Practices



Involve the team in planning communications and procedures for communication



Establish trust/relationship through socializing with key stakeholders



Identify the best communication medium for the different stakeholders

Best Practices - Use of Communication Technology



Use appropriate technology for appropriate situation



Consider lack of knowledge about availability of communication technologies



Be careful about overuse of technology – face-to-face work better sometimes

Best Practices wrt Cultural Differences (1)

- There are cultural differences in
 - Attitude towards hierarchy
 - Communication styles
 - Non-verbal behavior
 - Feedback questions
 - Mastery of foreign language
 - Etc.

Best Practices wrt Cultural Differences (2)



Keep number of topics in one meeting minimum



Use visuals and charts in presentations



Avoid funny stories



Use simple terms



Be aware of non-verbal cues



Speak clearly and ask specific questions

Communication for Virtual Teams

- PM needs to setup essential processes and procedures for effective communications early on
- Components:
 1. Communication needs
 2. Communication flow
 3. Communication channels and tools
 4. Communication response time
 5. Communication status (priority, information only)
 6. Timing of regular communications

Self-check

- What are the main reasons for planning communication?
- What are the main limitations of Scrum in communication?
- How communication for virtual team is different from communication with onsite teams?