

BEST

A ProData Consult magazine about IT, projects and the people behind. 2 2013

PRACTICE



SCRUM THEME



16

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Cover:

'Scrum' is a rugby term for the part of the game when the designated forwards gather in rows to compete for the ball and restart play. The expression is a metaphor for how a development team works as a unit to get a product to the goal.



A world in flux

12½ years ago, in February 2001, 17 software developers met in Snowbird, Utah and formulated the manifesto for Agile Development:

"We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- *Individuals and interactions over processes and tools*
- *Working software over comprehensive documentation*
- *Customer collaboration over contract negotiation*
- *Responding to change over following a plan*

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more (presented in red)."

In this edition of Best Practice we focus on the subject of Scrum, the most popular and most commonly used agile method – a process tool and project method gaining ground everywhere.

There are unmistakable advantages in using this method and we will try to highlight some of these. Unlike "the good old" waterfall method, Scrum is tailored to a world which is in constant motion, where predictability is a foreign concept and where businesses and IT projects must be adaptable, scala-

ble and quickly able to change focus and functionality.

Like all other processes and methods the Scrum model however, also has its limitations and should be used in the correct context on the right projects. Processes for the sake of the process, methods for the sake of methods, have never produced results. Orthodoxy and bigotry have never contributed to sustained progress and results – only imagination and freedom has achieved that.

Søren Rode
Managing Director

SCRUM NOVICES CAN START HERE

HEAD OF IT WEB KASPER FEHREND AND SCRUM MASTER BRIAN FISCHER, WHO BOTH ARE HIGHLY EXPERIENCED AT CREATING EFFECTIVE SCRUM TEAMS, EXPLAIN THE MULTIFACETED ROLE OF THE SCRUM MASTER, THE ESSENTIAL PRODUCT OWNER AND HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING.

Joint interview with Kasper Fehrend, Head of IT WEB, Saxo Bank, and ProData consultant Brian Fischer, Scrum Master.

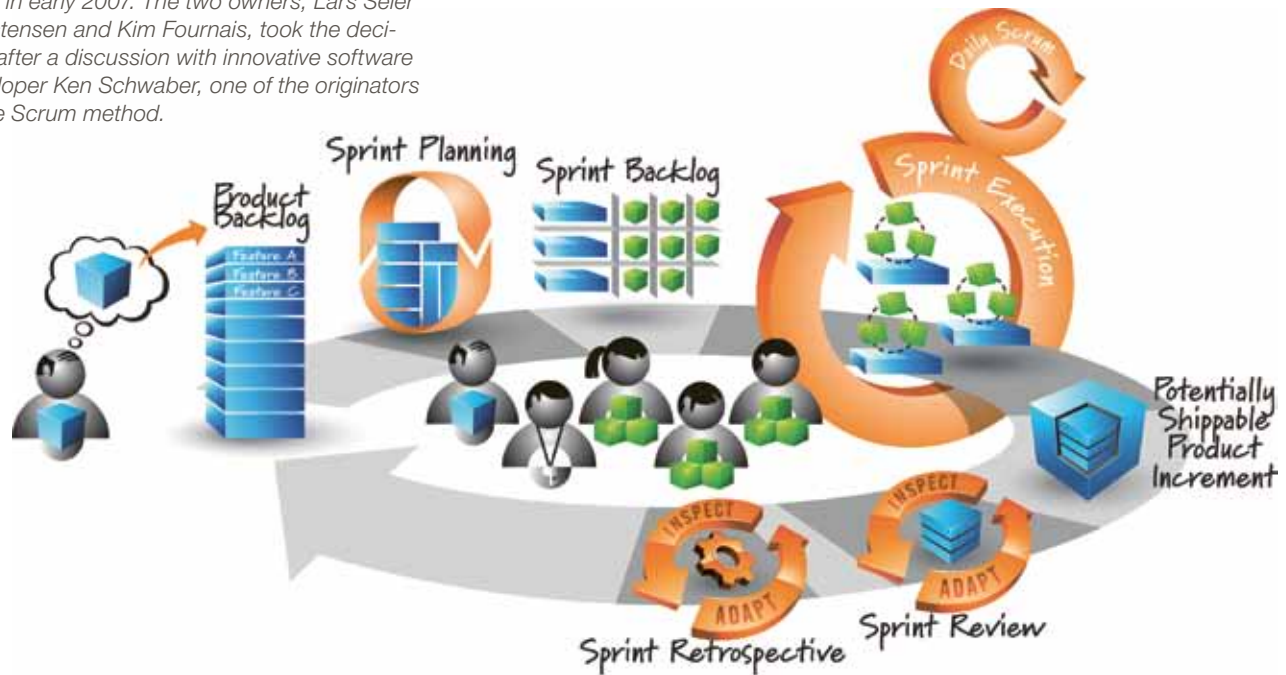
Scrum is easy enough to learn. The challenge is adapting the model to the reality of the individual organisation. Even though Saxo Bank and Scrum are a match made in heaven, since the method can handle the constant flow of input the bank receives, it still takes a lot of legwork to build bridges between operations and IT. The man who has a black belt in precisely that discipline is Scrum Master Brian Fischer.





From an isolated viewpoint, Scrum has been a big part of significantly improving Fehrend and Fischer's team over the last few years.

The Scrum model was introduced at Saxo Bank in early 2007. The two owners, Lars Seier Christensen and Kim Fournais, took the decision after a discussion with innovative software developer Ken Schwaber, one of the originators of the Scrum method.



BETWEEN THE BUSINESS AND THE TEAM

Half of Brian Fischer's time is devoted to working with the business side of operations, planning what will happen in the next sprint and making sure that everyone understands their upcoming tasks. The other half is spent making sure there is a good flow of tasks to the developers and that all impediments have been eliminated once the new sprint starts. 'You are the link between the business and the team – and you have to make sure the interaction is smooth,' says Fischer, who has seven years' experience as a Scrum Master. Compared to traditional project management, you have to be very detail oriented to make it as a Scrum Master, since you are ultimately responsible for making sure the tasks for the next sprint are clearly defined. Kasper Fehrend, who joined the bank in 2008 and was one of the first to use Scrum by the book, does not believe it is an advantage to be a classical project manager:

'If you know code and understand the dynamics of software development, you know where the value of Scrum lies, and if you facilitate that understand-

ing, the path from the business to the developers becomes much shorter. Classical project managers have a hard time with Scrum because the Scrum Master's most important task is to make himself redundant.' Fehrend is no longer a Scrum Master himself. He tried wearing that hat for a couple of years, but realised the role was not for him. Accordingly, IT consultant Brian Fischer was brought on board and the two of them now share the tasks.

Fehrend takes care of people management and the technical side of the solutions, while Fischer handles administration and interfacing with operations. Fehrend is engaged in equivalent cooperation with two other teams.

DEDICATED PRODUCT OWNER

For nearly all Scrum teams, it is a constant challenge to get the business on board in the form of a dedicated Product

Owner. The role is important – without solid requirements, you risk wasting the team's time. When Fehrend and Fischer's current project, development of TradingFloor.com, started three years ago, it was clear that the volume of tasks would require more time than the business

manager for the area could give them.

In response, they asked the business to appoint a dedicated Product Owner. 'Being a Product Owner on the TradingFloor project is more than

one full-time job. Our Product Owner is supported by two graphic designers, a UX consultant and others – we have a team of people who make up the overall Product Owner role,' Fischer relates.

There are great differences in how much time operations dedicate to their Scrum teams at Saxo Bank as well. The Scrum Master has to step in and help the teams whose Product

Owners are pressed for time. Fehrend says:

'A good Scrum Master is able to push their Product Owner in the right direction and show how minor tweaks here and there can produce more value. The two should complement each other in relation to what should be produced.'

HIGH LEVEL PLANNING

Even if you are running a Scrum process, it is still possible to have 'high level' plans – it just works a little differently to what traditional project managers are accustomed. In relation to major features, the Scrum Master may work out a relative estimation in story points. The team's current project is made up of 30 major features, or stories. Fischer knows two or three of them and has an idea of how much time they require. This makes it possible for him to assess the time requirement for other features. He delivers the overall estimate at the roadmap planning level. He explains:

'Our high level forecasts are necessary to secure resources and management commitment to the project we are working on. It works OK, but we also know very well that the plans we make now for what we will

'Our high level forecasts are necessary to secure resources and management commitment to the project we are working on. It works OK, but we also know very well that the plans we make now for what we will be doing in three months will have changed by then.'

Brian Fischer



Bluebook

Name:	Brian S. Fischer
Age:	39
Business:	ProData Consultant, currently with Saxo Bank
Title:	Scrum Master
Education:	IT and Economics, CBS

be doing in three months will have changed by that time.' Fischer wants to understand the business roadmap and what features have to be delivered further on, but he does not want the team to be given detailed requirements too early on. He knows from experience that it is a waste of energy to specify requirements in detail before IT is ready to develop. 'We know changes are going to be made if we do it too early.' This is one of the elements of Scrum that differs significantly from waterfall projects. 'We accept that the requirements will come at the last minute – but it works for us,' he explains.

INSPECT AND ADAPT

Most businesses adapt Scrum to the organisation's reality. For example, a lot of people are inclined to skip the retrospective meeting after a sprint, espe-

cially if they have a conventional project manager mindset. It is expensive to have an entire team sit down for a two-hour meeting every 14 days, and it can be difficult to qualify the benefit. But there is no doubt in Fehrend's mind as to the value of the meeting. At the last meeting, it emerged that tasks had not been broken down to a low enough level. 'That generates questions, so we had to bring the Product Owner closer in. We agreed to break down tasks further and that in future the Product Owner will sit next to Brian. If we had not had that meeting, there would have been no change,' says Fehrend, who posts the results of meetings on the board so that everyone can see what went well and what went wrong. He continues: 'Inspect and adapt' is one of the mantras of Scrum. So,

the retrospective meeting is everything because this is where you inspect and adapt. Not only to the business, but to the process, which evolves and becomes more efficient.' From an isolated viewpoint, Scrum has been a big part of significantly improving Fehrend and Fischer's team over the last few years. One of the major improvements is the entire delivery model for how code goes from idea to live feature as swiftly as possible. The model was optimised iteratively over six months to a year. Fischer explains: 'It was done in small steps, sprint by sprint, where we looked at what we needed to be able to do things just a little better. The Scrum model is incredibly simple, but the things we achieve with it are invaluable to us as a team.'

RELEASE PROBLEMS: ZERO



A Scrum team has been developing the Saxo Bank community website TradingFloor.com for three years.

Along the way, the team has gone from a slow release process to zero faults and as many releases as operations desire.

Joint interview with Kasper Fehrend, Head of IT WEB, Saxo Bank, and ProData consultant Brian Fischer, Scrum Master.

One of the major challenges in Scrum is to figure out what to set up for testing. Development of the TradingFloor.com site was no exception. Scrum Master Brian Fischer explains:

'Back in the day, the development team handed over the final deliverable for testing, but once the test team had done their work, it took too long to get the results back to the development team and correct the faults.'

This was partly connected to the less than agile mindset of classical testers. In a Scrum process, it is not unusual for requirements to change somewhat along the way. Therewith, the product changes before the testing gets started, but classic testers have to have very precise specifications to do their job. So, Fischer and Head of IT Web Fehrend needed a new kind of tester.

'Not just a tester, but one who coordinates things so that the prerequisites for quality are in order, so that everything is in place. One who goes in and talks to the developer about how the task will be accomplished, so that he knows how it should be tested,' says Fehrend.

He used to think that testers should be 'fresh eyes' with no preconceptions, whose only job was to perform the test. But that



TradingFloor.com
– Saxo Bank's
community website
for traders in Forex,
bonds, equities, CFDs
and commodities.

did not work. Experience has shown that it is very important that the tester is able to write code so that they understand how the product was created. 'Getting to that point was something of an epiphany,' says Fehrend.

FOUR AND A HALF HOURS OF TESTING IN 15 MINUTES

Today, Fehrend's testers are the people who know the most about the applications. This new approach to testing means that the 10-person team needs only one tester – a team of that size would normally have three or four testers.

However, the developers were also made responsible for ensuring that the quality they deliver is at production-ready levels. 'The developers have to test their features themselves and make sure everything is in order. They cannot expect someone after them to verify that their work is good enough,' says Fischer.

At the moment, the team is about to reach a major milestone. In that connection, the test coordinator sets up a few test sessions where he asks the entire development team to thoroughly test a specific feature in 15 minutes.

'We have been able to substantially raise quality this way,' says Fischer. All together, this equates to four and a half

hours of testing done and dusted in 15 minutes. Developers who are unfamiliar with the feature push all the wrong buttons. The results are written into a document so the test coordinator can evaluate the outcome. Fehrend adds:

'It is highly efficient and has had much greater impact than we expected. It might be a bit Scrum-geekish, but getting this aspect to work is really interesting because the whole testing process was a hard nut to crack.'

FAR FEWER FAULTS

For a long time, releases were as big a challenge as the test problem.

'We are on the third version of TradingFloor now. "Version 2" is still a put-down among many of our developers and me too, because the fault risk was high every time we released,' says Fehrend.

To handle the problems, Fehrend and Fischer started implementing a set of guidelines called Continuous Delivery. It is not part of Scrum, but the guidelines are a good fit with the agile method. The object was to put all troubleshooting on the developer's desk. In a little bigger set-up, this can be done using automated tests and automated gateways. When the developer checks something in it does not move out to production until it has been put through the troubleshooting mill. Fehrend explains:

'The release is the ultimate feedback: Did it work or didn't it? If you can move the experience as close to the developer as possible, the faults are fixed at once. We have asked for as much feedback as possible and that has enhanced quality.' The combination of Scrum and a general improvement of agile processes has sharply reduced the number of faults in the TradingFloor project.

'Critical faults have been reduced to virtually zero. Amazingly few things are faulty live. The release problems have been eliminated. And that from having been an area where, in bad periods, we spent 30-40% of our time correcting faults,' says Fehrend. Faster releases are an additional bonus of the new delivery model. It used to typically take two to four weeks from the time the code was finished until the new functionality could go live. Nowadays, the team are ready to release about once a week – or more often, if operations ask for it.

Bluebook

Name:	Kasper Fehrend
Age:	41
Business:	Saxo Bank
Title:	Head of IT WEB
Education:	BSc, DTU, and Master, Software and Internet Technology, IT University of Copenhagen

Scrum **trumps** waterfall at Telenor

EFFICIENT SPRINTS, FAST DELIVERIES AND VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ARE A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT TELENOR HAS ACHIEVED BY GOING THE SCRUM ROUTE. BUT IT TOOK A LOT OF WORK TO GET THE MODEL IMPLEMENTED.

Interview with Rasmus Skibye, Section Manager, Information Technology and Services, Telenor.

Competition is fierce in the telecom business and new products are quickly outstripped by the competition if the IT department does not produce fast enough. A year ago, Telenor was still running software development according to the waterfall model. It worked, but development was too slow. A change was in order and the choice was Scrum. It all started with a small pilot project. A Scrum team of six or seven people was put together to find out whether agile system development was a good fit for the Telenor organisation.

'The pilot project showed that with Scrum we can deliver functionality considerably faster than we have been accustomed to,' says Section Manager Rasmus Skibye.

Now all developers at Telenor are part of a Scrum team.

CLEAR ADVANTAGES

Faster delivery times are not the only reason the Scrum method has moved in at Telenor.

Tasks are broken down into small pieces so you can show production for every sprint and adaptations can be made as you go along instead of several months afterwards. Skibye is especially happy that the Scrum Master protects the team so outsiders cannot squeeze in

tasks during a sprint.

'I see a clear advantage in that people are not disturbed like they used to be. It is not particularly efficient to work on three or four different tasks at the same time.'

As well, the section manager feels that the team members devote themselves to completing their given tasks over the course of a 14-day sprint and take ownership for making it work. 'Sometimes we fall short, but at least we have tried. Perhaps the task was too big or the estimates wrong. You learn from that and put the lessons to use the next time.'

OPERATIONS MUST BE INVOLVED

Introducing Scrum at Telenor was a bit of an effort. The organisation was built up around the waterfall model and it is not enough for a handful of enthusiasts in the IT department to try and change familiar methods. 'You also have to get the business side involved since it has to feed tasks to the team and prioritise them so that they yield

the most value for the organisation,' says Skibye.

Filling the role of Product Owner is probably the biggest challenge for the Scrum people at

Telenor. Under optimal conditions there will be a Product Owner on the team so that questions and challenges can be immediately resolved, but that is not the reality at the moment.

'Luckily, you can call or write and hopefully get an answer pretty quickly, but we are still working towards greater involvement from the rest of the organisation. This is necessary because otherwise you are sitting there on your own and prioritising tasks and the prioritisations might be wrong,' says Skibye.

SCRUM FROM SCRATCH

There were no Scrum experts at Telenor when the decision was made to introduce the method. So, in the first round, they had a consultant as the Scrum Master for the pilot project to get the other teams started, using a peer training approach. Knowledge transfer groups

'Sometimes we fall short, but at least we have tried. Perhaps the task was too big or the estimates wrong. You learn from that and put the lessons to use the next time.'

Rasmus Skibye





Photography: Telenor

were set up and in order to get further with the process, the entire IT department attended Scrum seminars at ProData Consult. Skibye relates:

'We were well on the way, but we had run into some challenges. Among else, we lacked clarity about the various roles, team sizes and 'ready' criteria. The seminar also focused on how you should not start a sprint with a bunch of doubting questions. That knowledge was a really good kick-off.'

Seminar participants from other companies also asked questions, and the Scrum pioneers from Telenor discovered that they were not alone in their start-up challenges. These questions sparked rewarding discussions with the instructor and with representatives of other companies.

'You don't become a world champion overnight, but we are in training: We always support each other in these matters and try to learn from each other,' says the section manager.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IS KEY

Knowledge transfer is not only a means to get better at the Scrum method. It is also a motivational factor for the team members. Tasks are allocated to the team rather than to the individual: Everyone on the team can give up tasks or claim tasks if they feel inclined. There may very well be someone else on the team who is more suitable for the specific task and the first person can instead act as a support to the other one, who is eager to take on the task and thus expand their skills. In some cases, team members

can also choose to work on a task in pairs and thus facilitate knowledge transfer through peer training.

'In this way, we can share knowledge about systems that few people understand. The team members learn something and feel they are developing professionally. This has a hugely positive impact,' says Skibye.

He smiles when asked whether Telenor faithfully follows Scrum principles.

'As much as we can within our present framework. In terms of IT we probably do, but we probably fall short a bit at getting the business side on board in relation to the Product Owner role. We are not quite there yet, but we are working on it.'

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Novozymes

'I have been sent the requested skills within 24 hours, as promised, and we have gained a few project manager profiles who are absolutely spot-on!'

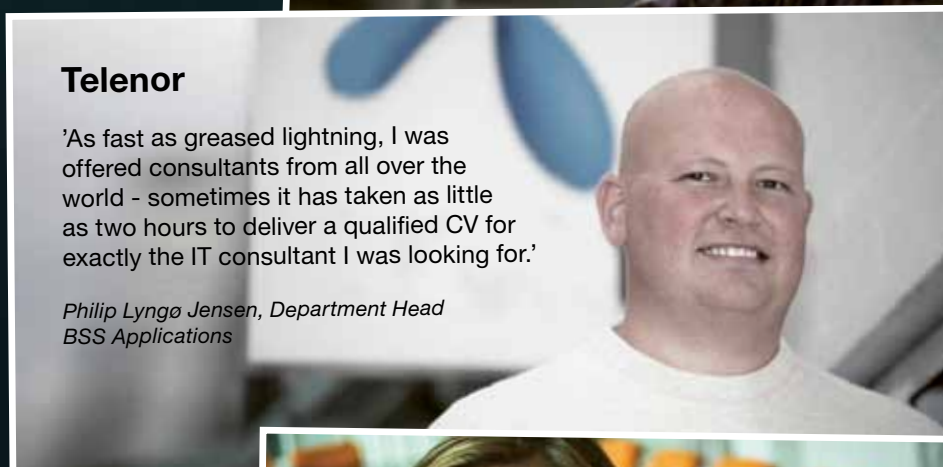
*Henrik Ferdinand, IT Relationship Manager
Supply Chain Management*



Danish Agricultural Advisory Services

'ProData Consult was able to swiftly and easily give me access to skills and development resources in an incredibly flexible and efficient manner.'

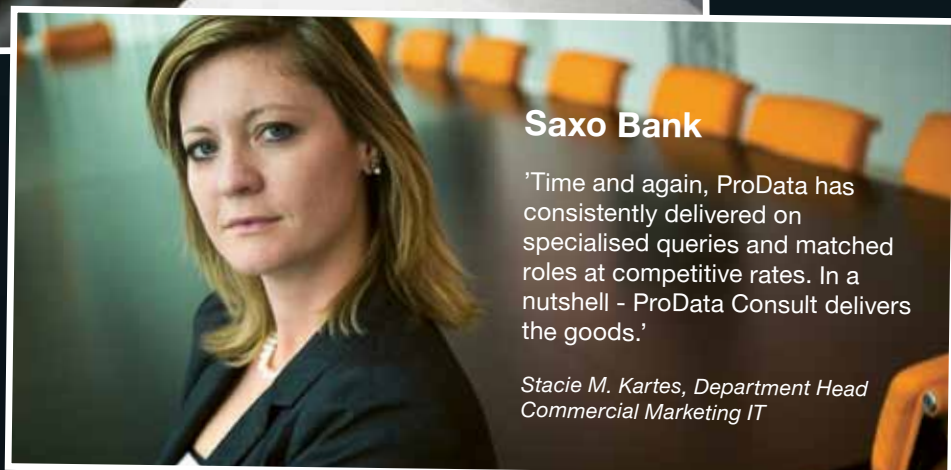
*Ole Helbo,
IT System Development Manager*



Telenor

'As fast as greased lightning, I was offered consultants from all over the world - sometimes it has taken as little as two hours to deliver a qualified CV for exactly the IT consultant I was looking for.'

*Philip Lyngø Jensen, Department Head
BSS Applications*



Saxo Bank

'Time and again, ProData has consistently delivered on specialised queries and matched roles at competitive rates. In a nutshell - ProData Consult delivers the goods.'

*Stacie M. Kartes, Department Head
Commercial Marketing IT*

SCRUM HAS TO GET INTO THE BLOOD OF THE BUSINESS

Brandon Mayo was thrown into the Product Owner role without knowing anything about Scrum other than what he had read on the net. Today, he is enthusiastic about the method which works well across considerable distances and a large organisation.

Interview with Brandon Mayo, Project & Business Development Manager, Products & Distribution, Nordea.

Brandon Mayo has been spending his days at Nordea since 2006 and has worked in several business areas. In 2010, he was appointed head of processes, concepts and advisory tools in pension advisory services. It was time for a new IT solution that could do the job more efficiently and find synergies across the countries in which Nordea operates. A project was launched towards that end in early 2011. The bank's internal IT providers and an offshore partner in India were tasked with delivering the goods. These types of projects are normally run at Nordea according to the waterfall model, but an IT colleague suggested that Mayo choose another kind of development process. And so he was introduced to Scrum – and to the Product Owner role.

HYBRID MODEL

Nordea runs Scrum according to a hybrid method. Specifications are not developed only by the IT people. The company's product team is also involved because the bank has a few major processes that require various expert inputs in order to uncover the need for the product.

'However, a requirement is not put into the backlog until the Scrum team has had a chance to review it, ask questions and

perhaps redefine the requirement. In this sense, you could say that we run a waterfall method around a Scrum model,' explains Mayo. The hybrid is necessary so that the bank can ensure that the process does not bog down, that the Scrum team is able to prioritise and that all of the countries involved are on board. The essence is that the developers have to deliver to three countries in addition to Denmark and one of the challenges at the bank is to devise solutions that are scalable and usable across all countries. There is a wide range of products at various levels and some products are delivered embedded in other products. 'Nordea is a big bank, so there are lots of things around the project that have to be coordinated inside and across business areas.'

For the same reason, Mayo is not the only business representative. When you are dealing with pension advisory services, it is impossible for one person to cover four countries. Accordingly, local experts contribute to specifying the requirements along the way.

DENMARK, SWEDEN, INDIA

The deliverables to multiple countries also mean that Mayo's team is dispersed across sev-

eral locations. As a result, much of the dialogue is virtual so that he has a constant overview of progress – how many tasks are open, who is working with what and whether there is anything he needs to follow up. 'Absolutely, I can see how the job would be easier if we were all in the same place. I do try to get as many of us as possible together physically for the retrospec-

tive meetings,' says Mayo, who is in Stockholm at the moment for a meeting of the Swedish product team and the IT department from Copenhagen. The IT team, on the other hand, which runs the daily stand-ups, is gathered in one place, other than India, which is always present by phone. The Product Owner attends as needed, usually a couple of times a week, if he can.

'But with a long value chain and a product team to coordinate, I cannot put myself into isolation with the Scrum team.' Mayo's goal is to be available to the development team half the time and to the product team the other half.

If the Scrum team needs to clarify something on the days

he belongs to the product team, he can usually be reached by phone or email.

PRODUCT OWNER COURSE

Mayo did not become an effective Product Owner overnight, but he quickly became highly

dedicated. In the start-up phase of the project, he read a few articles on the net that gave him an initial idea of what Scrum

is. Thereafter, the former Scrum Master guided him through the process. Six months went by before Mayo signed up for a Product Owner course. The experiences he had gained in the first few months had generated a few questions and he was ready to delve deeper into the method and debate the advantages and drawbacks with other Product Owners. He explains: 'I learned a little from the Scrum Master, but I needed more knowledge and deeper understanding. It is not enough for IT to use the method. If the process is going to work, Scrum has to get into the blood of the business.'

CLOSER COOPERATION

And the process seems to be

'With a long value chain and a product team to coordinate, I cannot put myself into isolation with the Scrum team.'

Brandon Mayo



Bluebook

Name:	Brandon Mayo
Age:	29
Business:	Nordea
Title:	Project & Business Development Manager, Products & Distribution, Nordea
Education:	MSc Master's programme in Economics and Business Administration, CBS

working. The roles already established in IT and operations were opened and became less rigid. This is something that was a major success criterion for Nordea: The team has to work closely together, even if the members of the team have different titles on paper or come from different departments.

'And distance is no excuse. We are successful in spite of a lot of limitations. If you are thinking about trying Scrum, the fact that you are a large organisation or there are large distances and an offshore team involved should not be a deterrent,' says Mayo.

Overall, there are many advantages to using the Scrum method in the pension project. The method keeps focus on the product, the team can deliver faster than they could with the old model and Scrum brings everything closer to the surface. There is more buy-in among both the product team and the Scrum team – and colleagues at the bank are inspired by the project and the process.

'Regardless of whether you call it Scrum or a hybrid, other Product Owners and teams are doing something similar in the part of operations where I work. That must be a sign that we are doing something right.'

POSSIBLY THE BEST IN DENMARK

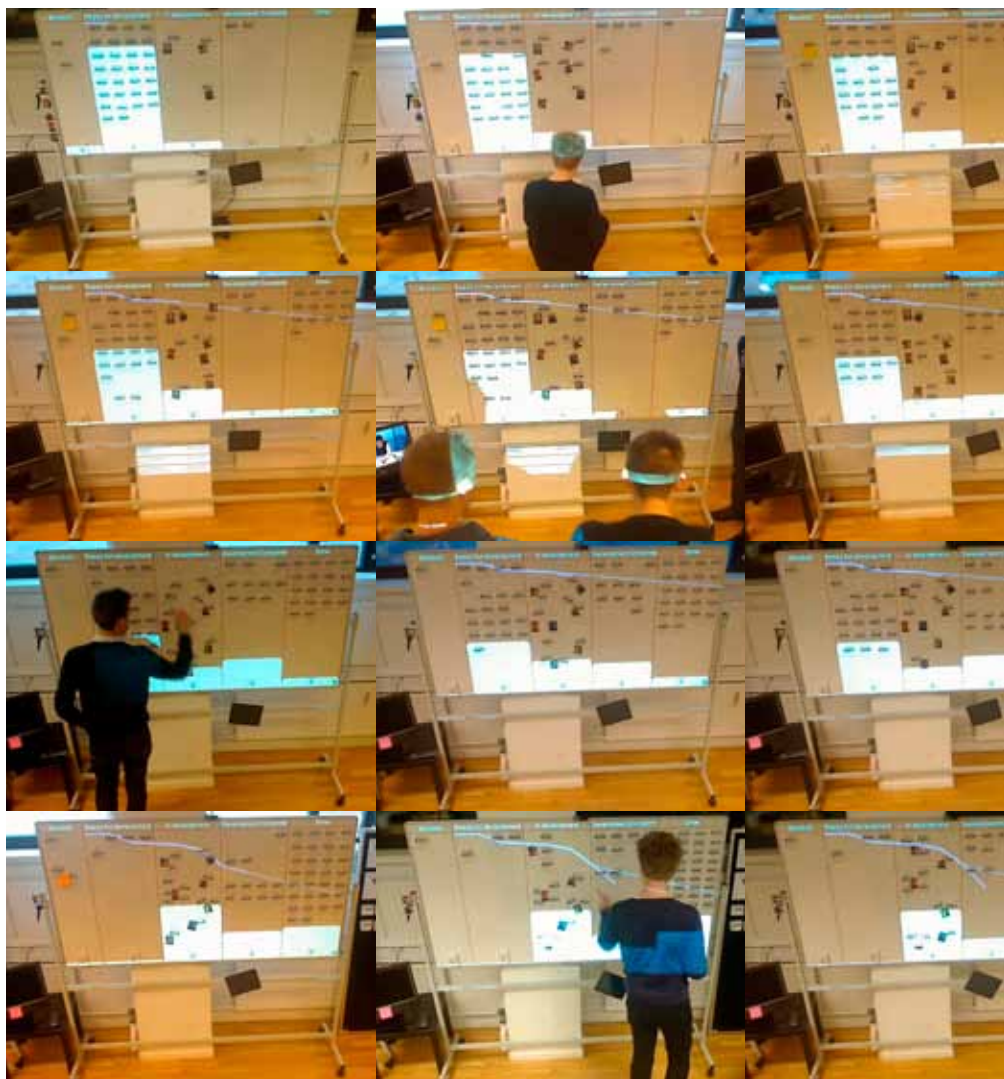
Ole Højriis Kristensen optimises everything he touches. As an agile project manager, he is a real geek when it comes to automating Scrum processes. Here he tells ConsultantNews about an award-winning intelligent Scrum board he developed in a project for Vodafone.

Article by Project Manager Ole Højriis Kristensen



THE SCRUM MASTER'S

most important task is to remove impediments for the team. For some, the most bumps in the road lie in the coordination with the business representative, but in my experience, the greatest challenge is much closer at hand. The tools the developers are given to work with are often themselves a barrier to reaching the team's full potential.



The Scrum board is a good example of a potential impediment. You build a wallboard with stories on cards to give everyone an overview of what has to be done, but the wallboard often becomes outdated and ignored because no one has time to update it. Only the digital project management tool is updated. That does not make the wallboard's original purpose less important – the big picture is always useful.

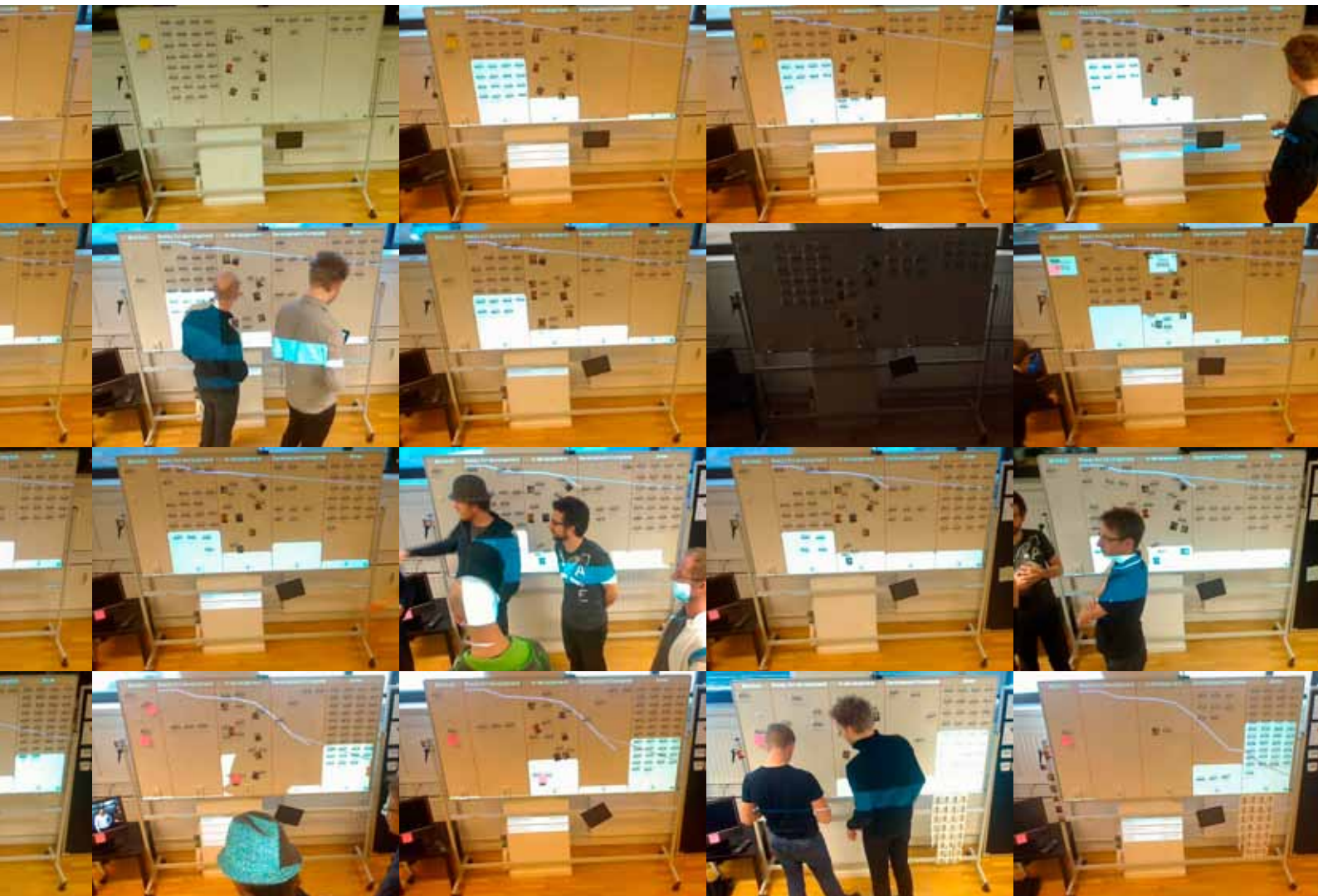
We in the IT business are fortunate in that we can create our own tools as part of the job. We can mould and adapt the systems we work with, as we wish, so they fit our working methods perfectly. The problem is that too few of us have realised this.

I was Scrum Master at Vodafone in 2010. We had several different project management tools that we rummaged around in to find the stories we were supposed to be working on. At the same time, we were supposed to make sure our colleagues in England and Ukraine could keep up with what we were doing. I created a large Scrum board to gain an overview. Every day, I took pictures of the board and

sent them to our colleagues abroad. The effort to keep an eye on what had happened in the digital project management tools and then move the paper cards around soon became a huge chore.

If we were to be able to work efficiently, and if I as the Scrum Master was going to avoid being buried in paperwork and reporting, there was no way around it: We had to build our own tool.

The idea to cobble together a physical/digital Scrum board came when I first set up a webcam and then a projector in front of the board so I would not have to take pictures of it every day. It took a couple of months from the initial thought to the finished tool that could be used daily. But we continued developing it. For example, sitting around drinking a Friday evening pint, it struck us that it would be nice if the system could talk. It was our own tool and we were free to do whatever we wanted with it, whatever worked for us. It did not have to be beautiful, it just had to work – and that fact had a huge impact on creativity.



The result was a tool that could do everything. It could communicate effectively to the members of the team what they were supposed to be working on by means of automatically printed cards on a physical whiteboard. The developers could move the cards around and swipe their avatars to move stories and assign them to themselves in our digital project management tools. The board tweets progress updates in the sprint to our designers in London and our testers in Ukraine. It also took care of producing builds for our test environment as soon as a story was finished. And it read aloud messages from team members who were delayed.

It could do everything we needed. It was an ugly pile of PHP hacks and duct tape, but it worked.

And it has attracted a great deal of interest. I have described the digital Scrum board at conferences and have been interviewed for various blogs. The Board even won the Ultimate Wallboard contest run by Atlassian, which sells the Jira project management tool, among else. But almost every time I

talk about the tool, I hear the same question: 'Where can I buy one just like it?'

The answer is you can't and you never will be able to. Our board worked because we built it ourselves. We saw a problem and we solved it. We thought there was something wrong with the process, so we changed it. To me, that is the essence of agile development. This process is not right for everybody – and if you keep trying to push square pegs into round holes, you end up with a mediocre solution to a far too important challenge.

A typical Scrum team is usually professional and relatively expensive to run. But when companies are happy to splash out on company massage schemes and Artesian spring water in the canteen, developers should also be allowed to take a time-out from the job to build their own tools – tools that are tailor-made and so much more ef-

ficient than existing tools. The only problem is this happens far too rarely.

As for me, I drive a car with an automatic transmission. Why is that relevant? Because I look at agile development teams much the way I look at my car. I have no need to micromanage how the gears should move. I assume that a group of highly paid German engineers are better at that than I am. As long as I can control the direction and speed, I have no need to concern myself with the details under the bonnet.

This process is not right for everybody – and if you keep trying to push square pegs into round holes, you end up with a mediocre solution to a far too important challenge.

Ole Højris Kristensen

Likewise, I wish more businesses would give their developers the freedom to decide for themselves how they want to work and which tools they want to work with. As long as we can agree on a common goal, it should be up to the individual teams to figure out how they can attain the goal in the best and fastest way.



Old school board



RFID reader



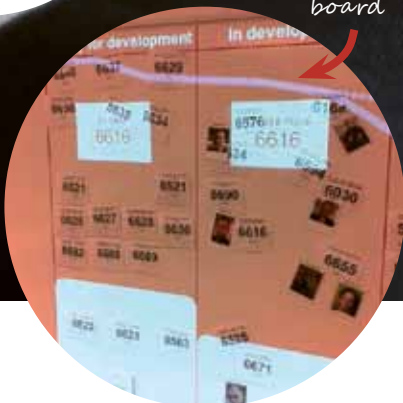
PHP hack



Receipt printer



= an intelligent board



THE INTELLIGENT SCRUM BOARD

Our digital Scrum board was built over an ordinary white board that was divided into columns, or 'swim lanes', that represented the various stages through which a story could progress.

the burndown chart and other details about how the project was progressing. It also wrote upcoming deadlines directly below the board and listed the meetings various team members had on the day.

There was an RFID reader at the bottom of each swim lane, which was connected to a computer behind the board. There was a little receipt printer under the board and a box of plastic pockets.

Ole Højriis Kristensen's intelligent Scrum board won the title *The Ultimate Wallboard* in a contest arranged by Atlassian, the company behind the Jira project management tool. One of the experts on the contest panel had this to say about it:

'The integration of physical elements (RFID tagging, projection, printing) with the virtual/technology elements is incredible.'

Every time a new story was added or updated, the printer spat out a new card. The card was placed into a pocket containing an RFID touch tag and then placed on the board.

When a developer started a task, he moved the matching task card over to the next swim lane and swiped it past the RFID reader. The reader updated the system behind the board. The developer then swiped his avatar alongside the task card to assign himself to a task. This action was also reflected in the project management tool behind the board. A projector was mounted in front of the board which constantly showed

In addition to updating the digital project management tool, the board also sent tweets of all updates, including a current picture of the person responsible for the update.

When team members sent emails to the board, a Google Translate voice read the messages aloud, and the tool simultaneously

sent printouts to team members who were not onsite when the message was read. In this way, we made sure that notifications about delayed colleagues reached the entire team without having to have an email program open and interrupting your work.

The whole thing was controlled by an unholy PHP hack on a server somewhere in the US. I would rather not say how I got permission to access the systems in the world's biggest telecom company.

Bluebook

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Business:	ProData Consultant, currently with Saxo Bank
Title:	Agile project manager
Education:	Self-taught



Succeed with Scrum

SCRUM CAN SPEED UP A PROJECT AND MINIMISE ERRORS, BUT FOR MANY BUSINESSES THE AGILE ADVENTURE ENDS WITH A TICKET BACK TO THE WATERFALL MODEL. THAT IS A SHAME, ACCORDING TO PRODATA CONSULT'S HR AND SALES DIRECTOR, BECAUSE MINOR CHANGES CAN BRING MAJOR SCRUM SUCCESS.

Interview with Jan Wolff, HR and Sales Director

Many businesses have jumped on the agile development model bandwagon in recent years. Scrum is one of them and it is an efficient way to perform major development products - especially when it is difficult to define product requirements in advance and thus establish a development timeline.

Unfortunately, many businesses feel they are not gaining the promised advantages. Implementing Scrum is difficult in practice because for many the method is an unfamiliar way to manage projects.

Jan Wolff: 'The challenges are such that some businesses give up and go back to the old project model, which is a shame, since usually only minor changes are needed to make Scrum work.'

ProData Consult has extensive experi-

ence helping businesses succeed with agile projects and can help make the necessary adjustments with consultant assistance.

'We have a great many specialists and experts in agile methods in our stable and provide consultants who have precisely the knowledge your business needs. That applies to all roles from Scrum Masters and agile developers to Scrum Coaches and Product Owners,' says Wolff.

If the business has units outside Denmark that can use an agile helping hand, ProData Consult also provides consultants in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Poland and The Netherlands.

Contact ProData Consult via the website, www.prodataconsult.com, or phone Jan Wolff for a no-obligation discussion on +45 604 311 70.



