

Scrumban – The best of two agile project management methods

The most important frameworks for agile project management are Scrum and Kanban. Scrumban is a fusion of the two project frameworks, whereby the best elements of both frameworks are used together for the management of projects in the company. Scrumban is particularly suitable for companies that want to streamline their work processes and improve their management. This hybrid project framework is very flexible and enables project teams to organize the tasks to be completed on a board visible to all and to structure them through integrated sprints. Sowohl der Product Owner als auch der Scrum Master arbeiten eng mit ihrem Projektteam zusammen mit dem Ziel, die genutzten Arbeitsabläufe zu optimieren. Unternehmen, die auf der Suche nach einer flexiblen, effektiven Arbeitsmethode sind, sollten ihre Projekte mit dem agilen Framework Scrumban organisieren.

In order to successfully implement the Scrumban framework in a project team, a few important factors should be taken into account. They are important in order to create a smooth and effective working environment. An important element in this context is the Kanban board, which visualizes the work processes within the team and promotes an agile way of working. The product owner is responsible for successful implementation within the company. He defines the tasks within the team and determines the prioritization of the tasks. The project's Scrum Master has an important role in the introduction of the Scrumban framework in the company. It is their job to ensure that all members of the team understand the methods to be used and apply them correctly at all times. Overall, the use of Scrumban offers companies the opportunity to streamline workflows and processes and work in an agile manner.

It is important to recognize the principles of Scrumban. These include visualizing the different team tasks, defining the workload for individual team members and promoting team collaboration by prioritizing the tasks to be completed. The primary aim of this methodology is to ensure that teams are always on the lookout for potential for improvement. As repetitions take place at short intervals during the processing time, this has a positive effect on the feedback loops. This hybrid approach makes it possible for the teams to flexibly design the workflows within the team and shape them in such a way that they meet their individual requirements. The basic premise is the prioritization of tasks and activities within the project. The focus here is on creating added value for the customer.

What advantages does Scrumban offer?

This agile project framework enables teams to react quickly and flexibly to changes in the project by effectively combining different approaches from Scrum and Kanban and to make the necessary adjustments promptly. The team can quickly incorporate new tasks into the work process from the Kanban backlog and adjust the limits of the work that is currently pending. This helps to avoid potential bottlenecks and achieve a high level of productivity.

Another advantage of the Scrumban framework is the long-term but continuous improvement. This is based on the lean principle of "Kaizen" and is supported by the use of the Kanban board. Kaizen is a

continuous improvement process that aims to optimize the underlying work processes on a regular basis. At its core, this is about both the quality and the efficiency of the respective work process.

Another advantage of Scrumban is the significant increase in efficiency. This increase is primarily achieved by applying the so-called “pull principle”. This principle allows the individual team members to choose the tasks within the project themselves. As Scrumban relies on standardization and value stream analysis, there is hardly any waste. As metrics and key figures are calculated in Scrumban, better planning and forecasting is possible.

Step-by-step implementation of Scrumban projects

The Scrumban process begins with sprint planning, daily stand-up meetings and retrospective meetings from the Scrum framework. A continuous work flow is then ensured through the use of visual boards and limits for ongoing work from the Kanban framework. The team adapts to the new priorities and focuses on delivering added value quickly. To manage projects using the Scrumban methodology, various steps need to be taken.

The first step is to develop the Scrumban board. To do this, the phases of the workflow must first be defined and a column set up for each phase. To do this, those responsible use task cards with descriptions, the person responsible and the associated deadlines. Colour cards should be used to determine prioritization. The next step is to move the most urgent tasks to the “To do” category. This board must be accessible and visible to every team member. Regular assessments must be carried out.

In order to limit the ongoing work in terms of time, old team performance data must now be collected to identify bottlenecks in the work process. On this basis, the maximum number of tasks that can be completed during a phase of the project without the team members being exposed to an excessive workload is determined. These limits should be visualized directly on the Scrumban board, and each team member must understand and adhere to them. These time limits prevent productivity problems.

In the third step, the priorities for the team are defined on the Scrumban board. The first step is to record all unfinished tasks. The tasks still to be completed must then be sorted according to urgency and importance. A colour code or labels that highlight the prioritization should be used to categorize the tasks. The most urgent tasks belong at the top of the board’s to-do list. It should be constantly adjusted to maintain efficiency.

The fourth step focuses on collaboration within the team. In this phase, the team – not the individual employee – assesses the complexity of each task and determines an approximate time value for the completion of each task. This approach improves and encourages communication and collaboration within the team, optimizes the ability to assess the tasks at hand and strengthens the shared understanding of the work to be done. This flexible approach strengthens the productivity and efficiency of the team.

In the final step, the daily meetings – also known as daily stand-ups – are organized. This process begins with setting a time and place. These meetings should always be short, focused and last no longer than 15 minutes. During the meeting, each team member should briefly analyze the progress of their work

and mention any problems that have arisen. A brief outlook on the next tasks is also included. During these short team meetings, all things that need to be considered are discussed. This strengthens the team's ability to find solutions.

When should Scrumban be used and when not?

The Scrumban project framework is ideal for project teams that want to work flexibly and autonomously. It is an excellent choice when decisions need to be made spontaneously. Scrumban is also the ideal solution for team members who learn via visual stimuli. In summary, Scrumban is an asset for these scenarios:

- **Projekte, die zeitlich begrenzt sind:** Die 14-täglichen Wiederholungen, im Scrumban-Framework integriert sind, sind für Teams, die strikte Fristen einhalten müssen, optimal geeignet.
- **Ideal für Teams, die lange Meetings scheuen:** Scrumban machen stattfindende Sitzungen nach dem anfänglichen Planungstreffen überflüssig. Berufserfahrene, die Autonomie und konzentrierte Arbeitsstunden bevorzugen, profitieren.
- **Unterstützt flache Hierarchien:** Da Scrumban das formale Rollenverständnis meidet, eignet es sich für KMUs, die auf traditionelle Strukturen und Machtgefälle verzichten, sehr gut.

Rigid teams that follow precise protocols should refrain from using Scrumban. This categorization also includes highly regulated industries, such as the healthcare sector. Scrumban requires a deep level of trust and a high degree of work autonomy. If the team needs to be continuously monitored, Scrumban is unsuitable, as is the case with

- **Teams that work at a slower pace:** Scrumban's 14-day recurrence cycles are shorter than the cycles of other frameworks. These cycles may be too short.
- **Young, inexperienced teams:** Since efficiency is a core requirement for the smooth functioning of Scrumban, this framework should only be used with teams that require little supervision.
- **Non-negotiable workloads:** When using Scrumban, each team member receives a task within the 14-day cycle. Scrumban is unsuitable for inflexible, strict task lists.

In summary, it can be said that only teams that are equipped with the desire for independence, spontaneity and a creative, fast approach to work can use Scrumban successfully. If the team lacks these characteristics, the Scrumban framework is not the right approach.