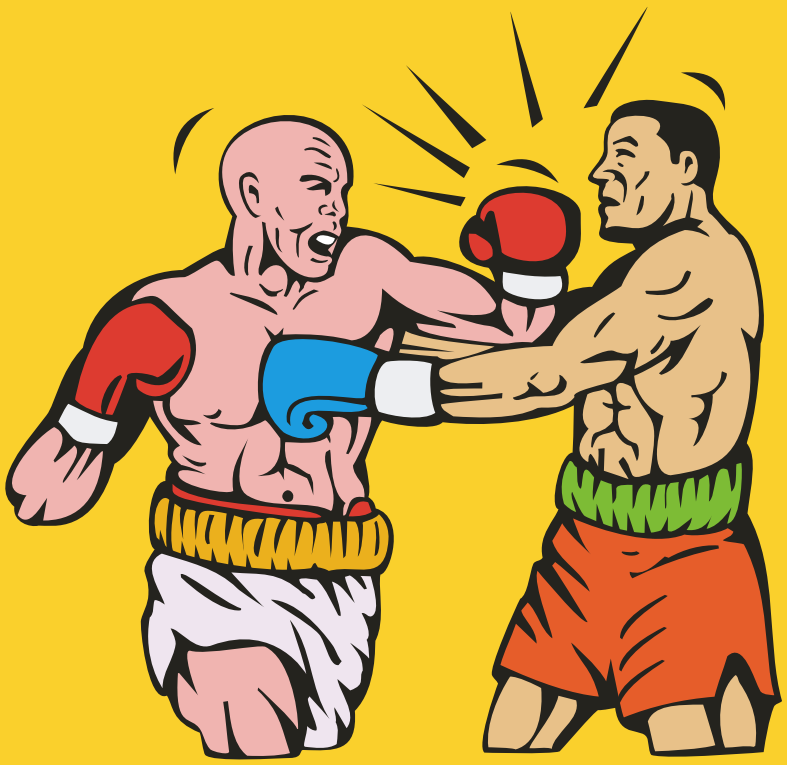
WHY ALL SCRUM TEAMS SHOULD USE SPRINT GOALS

WHY SPRINT GOALS?

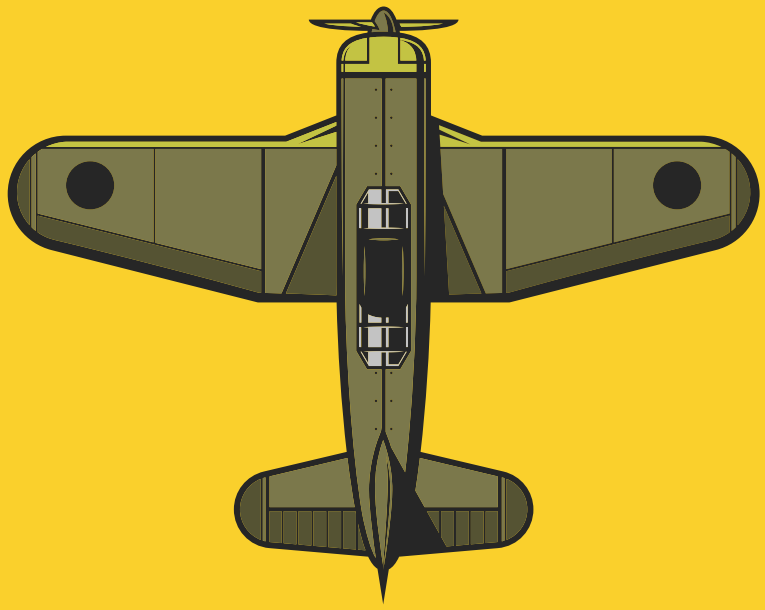


"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

- Mike Tyson

"No battle plan survives contact with the enemy."

- Helmuth von Moltke the Elder



YOUR PLANS WILL FAIL

No matter how much time you spend planning, you can never make a plan that covers everything.

A plan that covers all scenarios and every (re)action of the enemy. Reality is too complicated and unpredictable to fit in a plan.

Unless you are the A-Team of course.

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HOW TO FIX THIS

To address the complexity and uncertainty of reality, the army accompanies all battle plans with a Commander's Intent (CI).

The Commander's Intent explains what we're trying to achieve and why it matters.

The Commander's Intent of the D-Day operation for Britain, Canada and the U.S. was:

WHAT?

"To secure key bridges, road junctions and other locations in Normandy that would allow the ground invasion forces to advance inland."

WHY?

WHY COMMANDER'S INTENT WORKS

When all goes to hell and the plan crumbles after a confrontation with reality, armed forces can fall back on the Commander's Intent.

The CI explains the purpose and the goal of the mission. The why that will never become obsolete even if the original plan does.

The Commander's Intent prevents following the plan to become more important than meeting the objective of the plan.

WHY COMMANDER'S INTENT WORKS

By understanding the purpose and goal of a mission, the people on the ground enjoy the freedom to make decisions in the spirit of the original plan.

It promotes teamwork and incorporating new information into battlefield decisions.

The result is a better plan and a better outcome.

THE SPRINT GOAL IS THE COMMANDER'S INTENT OF THE SPRINT

The Sprint Goal provides the Commander's Intent for the Sprint.

What are we trying to achieve and why does it matter?

It gives teams the freedom to make changes to plans as necessary when surprises are discovered or circumstances change.

THE FOCUS ACRONYM FOR CREATING AWESOME SPRINT GOALS

FUN

OUTCOME-ORIENTED

COLLABORATIVE

ULTIMATE

SINGULAR

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FUN

Nothing prevents a SMART Sprint Goal from boring your team to death.

Try to inject a sense of play and fun where possible, and if not possible or desirable, at the very least, make it memorable.

Factually accurate and correct, does not mean it's memorable or likely to be talked about. Come up with a title for your Sprint Goal that's likely to be dropped into conversation.

OUTCOME-ORIENTED

What is the valuable outcome we're trying to achieve?

Phrase it in a way that it's decoupled from the way we intend to achieve the outcome.

Give the team as much freedom to figure out how to obtain the best result.

COLLABORATIVE

Don't miss out by throwing the Sprint Goal over the fence to the Scrum Team. Involve the whole team in the creation of the Sprint Goal.

Together is better. You will achieve common understanding, buy-in, and a better result all at the same time.

ULTIMATE

Why are we are we trying to achieve the outcome? What's the ultimate and final reason?

This gives the teams the full context why the objective we're trying to achieve matters, and to adapt in case circumstances change.

By providing the why and the outcome we're trying to achieve, we're providing the teams with intent.

SINGULAR

What is the one thing that matters most?

Not five things, not three things or two things. One thing only.

Either you make that decision together, or when shit hits the fan, the decision will be made for you. You will no longer have control over priority.

STILL NOT CONVINCED?
LISTEN TO MR. T

"I pity the fool who doesn't use Sprint Goals."

The Addison-Wesley Signature Series

A Mike Cohn Signature Book

Driving Value with Sprint Goals

Humble Plans, Exceptional Results

Maarten Dalmijn

Want to read more? To be released in August