

Artifacts: Planning Poker & Chronometer



In the previous news we introduced the *Sprint Backlog* as the list of tasks to be done during the different *sprints*. These tasks are detailed and assigned during each specific *Sprint Planning Meeting*. In this month's news we will see what kind of *artifacts* are available for the process of assigning tasks to the team members.

There are two steps in assigning the tasks. The first one does not require any artifact to complete it. The team members assign themselves to those tasks they can commit based on their skills and their time availability.

What to do with the not yet assigned tasks? Should they be randomly distributed? Of course not! Why should we do so instead of betting them at a poker game? The company deals the cards. (Drinks and peanuts are taken care of by the *team* themselves ☺.)

Now seriously. When there is no agreement between the team members on the task assignment, the **Planning Poker is the tool used to estimate and align on the time required to execute a specific task of the *Sprint Backlog*.**

It is a kind of poker game –including cards– in which each member of the project team anonymously proposes a time estimate to execute that specific task in case she would have to do it.

The final time estimate agreed by the *team* will be the average of all the proposed times. Then, the *team* members will bid to get the task assigned, like in an auction.

To carry out the **Planning Poker** we need another artifact: a **Chronometer**. As in many other table games, **a chronometer is used to measure and limit the time given to the participants to reflect before putting their bet forward.**

Well! We do not know for certain that we will be able to innovate with our projects, but we will definitely have fun. It will be hard to go back to the process of the boss assigning you tasks without previous notice and without asking!

One more time it is clear that LPM values and stimulates the commitment and active participation from all the *team* members. This is a fundamental aspect to highlight in managing and delivering projects involving creativity and innovation.

The uninhibited and welcome contributions from all the *team* members are key to make progress towards an uncertain outcome. We will not know if we will be happy with the result until we arrive to the end. Only by progressing as a true *team* we will be ready for the successes and failures. The **Planning Poker** is just one more illustration of this attitude.