

Scrum-Kanban Selector

INSTRUCTIONS:

This worksheet is designed to help you choose Scrum or Kanban for the teams in a particular workflow. Remember that Kanban teams can benefit from many of the same roles, events, artifacts, and concepts that provide benefit to Scrum teams. For a worksheet on creating Scrumban blends, see [Scruban Blend Designer](#).

- If you are considering more than one workflow with different characteristics, use more than one worksheet.
- Consider each question and mark one point in the column that most closely corresponds to your answer. If you think a row is especially important, you can post more than one point. If your answer is “sometimes yes, sometimes no” you can mark both columns. (This may mean you should think in terms of separating the workflows.)
- Add up the totals in the Scrum and Kanban columns.
 - ❖ If the tally balance clearly favors Scrum or Kanban, there’s the recommended direction.
 - ❖ If the tally balance is close to evenly divided, consider going to a mixed model with distinct teams handling separated workflows.

Questions	Considerations	Neutral	Advantage Scrum	Advantage Kanban
Is the organization ready for a significant step?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Scrum</i> can require significant shifts in role expectations, planning, requirements definition, and the working relationship between a software development organization and its business stakeholders. ➤ <i>Kanban</i> is less prescriptive. It may be more practical for an organization to begin with a Kanban approach built closely on existing practices, then gradually apply improvements as bottlenecks in the workflow become visible. ➤ <i>Both</i> make bottlenecks and dysfunction visible. 	If yes		If no
Need a cadence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Scrum</i> uses a regular sprint cadence to help teams develop good habits of defining, completing, and demonstrating small units of work that can be accomplished within the sprint length. The sprint cadence can also simplify some cross-team planning situations and support regular engagement of the stakeholder community. ➤ <i>Kanban</i> has no prescribed rhythm or forcing function. 		If yes	If no

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Can work items be made small?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Product backlog items in <i>Scrum</i> need to be small enough to complete within the timespan of a single sprint. ➤ <i>Kanban</i> may be a better choice when some units of work seem to be inherently too big for a sprint length without awkward or expensive partitioning. Larger items are also more difficult to estimate and test. ➤ <i>Kanban</i> may also be a better choice when the amount of work in an item is inherently unpredictable (e.g., defects), or where there are significant off-team dependencies. ➤ If working with large items in <i>Kanban</i>, it's important to use tasks or sufficient columns (queues) to visualize progress. ➤ <i>Note</i>: requirements often arrive in large units of functionality, and learning to break stories down to consumable size can take considerable practice. Many items that look big have simply not been split yet. 	If yes		If no
Is estimating work items practical?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the general case it's difficult to know ahead of time even the approximate size of the job of resolving a given defect. ➤ It's important in <i>Scrum</i> to be able to know enough about an item of work that it can be sized to a reasonable approximation before scheduling. Defect flows are difficult to accommodate within a planned <i>Scrum</i> backlog, but sometimes this is desirable or necessary in order to keep the fix responsibility with those who generated the issue or have the relevant expertise. ➤ Defect flows are easier to handle in <i>Kanban</i> because Kanban does not require planning based on estimates. 	If yes		If no

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Are work items similar or repetitive, or are they more variable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Kanban</i> is ideal for maximizing throughput with similar or repetitive work items. Control chart analysis will yield better predictability with such items than when the workflow has a lot of variation. Predictability is key to being able to establish service-level expectations with stakeholders. If work items span a recognizable range of sizes, consider sizing by small/medium/large and tracking metrics separately for the size classes. ➤ <i>Scrum</i> excels when the work is groundbreaking and innovative, or highly variable; it is good at supporting and dealing with the kind of emergent, iterative work that such situations rely on. Note that this requires discipline to assign discovered work to new work items, rather than allowing the scope of existing ones to creep. 		If variable	If repetitive
Does work tend to arrive as a continuous flow or in project-like batches?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The continuous flow of work through a <i>Kanban</i> team is best matched by a continuous flow of arriving work requests. ➤ <i>Scrum</i> is more useful in an environment where work arrives in large batches, as typically seen in project-oriented or release-oriented workflows. 		If batches	If continuous flow
Need to deliver independent, completed items immediately?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Very quick turnaround is not natural to <i>Scrum</i>, where planning and delivery occur at intervals of a sprint length, typically 1 to 3 weeks. ➤ <i>Kanban</i> is oriented to delivering items immediately as completed. Emergent and date-driven items can easily be given priority in Kanban, whereas this can be achieved but is less natural in <i>Scrum</i>. 		If no	If yes
Is work subject to rapidly shifting priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Changing priorities is difficult on short notice in <i>Scrum</i>, where plans are expected to be firm for the duration of a sprint. The backlog for a shorter sprint (1 week) can be easier to hold stable. ➤ In <i>Kanban</i>, it is easy to shift priorities in an intake queue; there is no pre-commitment to the next work item to be started. ➤ In <i>both</i>, a high level of churn can be disorienting and expensive. 	If no		If yes
	TALLY		Total	Total