



Strategic Plan

October 2010 – October 2011

The Scrum Alliance Board met to determine a vision, mission, values and objectives for the coming year. The results are contained in this document

Scrum Alliance Board of Directors
10/15/2010

Executive Summary

As we enter 2010, the Scrum Alliance is facing new opportunities and challenges from without and within the agile community. Many other certifying bodies are beginning to catch on to what we've known for some time—Scrum certification is valuable, in demand, and of growing importance to the software industry and beyond.

Beginning in 2011 we will be opening our arms to embrace individuals who desire to learn more about Scrum but may not wish to take advantage our certification programs. For the first time we will be offering membership in our association to those who have not attended certification courses. We will retool our CSM exam and create a CSPO and a CSP exam, ensuring that all are based on published learning objectives and meet certain certification standards.

We will also continue to emphasize the agile value of continuous improvement. Becoming more agile with Scrum is not a once-and-done proposition but a lifetime journey of education and improvement. As such, we believe that a strong CSP and CSC certification program is essential to a meaningful Scrum journey. We will be publishing a ScrumBok, creating a proctored exam for the CSP designation, and offering two levels of CSP certification.

To provide training for our members, we will continue to rely on CSTs for certification courses (CSM and CSPO) and SA REPs for extended education courses. To ensure that the CST selection process is fair, expedient, and comprehensive, we will implement a new CST application process before the end of 2010. Beginning in or around March 2011, all existing CSTs will also have to go through the application process in order to renew their certifications. The SA REP application process will remain unchanged.

The website will continue to improve and offer new features that reflect our vision, values and mission. We want to be the source for Scrum knowledge; the website is a key part of offering a portal to the resources, courses, articles and community-building opportunities we offer.

We are under new leadership with Donna Farmer as Managing Director. She will be working with the staff to implement the strategic plan throughout 2011. Expect to see many new faces on the Scrum Alliance team as we bring in the personnel necessary to accomplish the goals set out for them by our Board of Directors. Donna will also be reaching out to key thought leaders and media contacts to ensure that our vision and mission are clearly communicated to the world of work.

Values, Vision, Mission

Values

- Respect
- Focus
- Openness
- Commitment
- Courage

Vision

"Transforming the World of Work"

There are many possible ways to transform the world of work and we believe the Scrum framework to be one of the best.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a community for those who seek an effective solution to business problems and to serve as the source of Scrum knowledge for those who want to learn Scrum, those who want to improve their understanding of Scrum, and for those who want to share their education in and experience with Scrum. We will accomplish that mission through three primary objectives.

1. Expanding our presence
2. Providing meaningful membership in the Scrum Alliance
3. Offering valuable certification in the Scrum framework

How well we do these three things above will be the measure of our success.

Expanding Our Presence

Too many people who use Scrum on a day-to-day basis have only a vague awareness of the Scrum Alliance, and often they have no awareness at all, even when directly involved with training, initiatives, or events with which the Scrum Alliance is directly involved.

Extending the reach of the Scrum Alliance and promoting awareness of the organization will be a key strategic focus for 2011. This isn't an issue of pride or ego—if anything, the organization has a habit of working hard in the background with little public acknowledgement—but rather an effort to solidify the Scrum Alliance brand as a public platform for its ongoing mission to transform the world of work.

To this end, the organization will focus on several ongoing outreach activities; some are listed below.

Gatherings

The Scrum Alliance will hold two full-scale Gatherings (with solicited speakers, workshops, and open space elements) in 2011, providing opportunities for the broad Scrum community to come together for networking, collaboration, learning, and personal growth. These events can significantly strengthen the overall Scrum community, and will serve to emphasize the Scrum Alliance's prominent leadership role.

- Seattle May 16-18, 2011
- London October 2011

Partner Events

In the spirit of community and collaboration, the Scrum Alliance will partner with members of the Scrum community to sponsor four to six smaller events, similar to Gatherings, over the course of the year. These events will take place around the world, and will lean on local community members to handle much of the operational burden, while the Scrum Alliance provides promotion, visibility, credibility, financial support, and other resources. We have plans so far to sponsor the following:

- Portugal February, 2011
- Salt Lake City August 7-13, 2011 (Agile Alliance co-op)
- Japan Dates TBD
- India Dates TBD

Organizational Outreach

To reinforce its position within the software development world and explore opportunities to extend Scrum to other areas, the Scrum Alliance will be

- Reaching out to organizations such as PMI, Microsoft, etc.
- Fostering relationships to special interest groups
- Activating and supporting local user groups
- Promoting Scrum Beyond Software / moving beyond the software industry
- Underwriting cost of trainers in developing nations

Providing Meaningful Membership

The Scrum Alliance has a membership base of over 100,000 and growing. We'd like to further expand that base over the year and offer even more benefits to those who choose to be an active part of the community.

Currently, membership is only open to those who have completed a certification course. These members receive an active online profile, access to discussion groups, discounts to Gatherings and some training courses, a voice on the site in the form of submitting articles for review and commenting on existing articles, and the ability to download logos pertinent to their specific certifications.

Open Membership

Over the next year, we want to offer a non-certified membership level. The planned fee is \$50 per year.

Coaches Corner

We would like to offer an online coaching service, where members attend regularly scheduled online chats with one or more of our Certified Scrum Coaches. While any visitor will be able to attend in a listen-only mode, only members will be able to submit questions and engage with the CSC.

Website

We will continue to enhance our website, offering additional resources and well-researched papers to our visitors. We intend to keep content free for all users.

The Scrum Alliance would like to offer self-posting of articles to some group of our members, perhaps those at the CSP level or above, or even to all of our members. These articles will appear on the site and populate the middle section of the homepage. Those who want a featured article (appearing at the top or the bottom of the homepage) should continue to submit articles to the editor for review.

The website is being iteratively upgraded so that the primary landing pages match the design of the homepage. This will continue throughout 2011.

Offer Valuable Certification

The Scrum Alliance has a unique brand in CSM and its other certifications and will continue to offer CSM and CSPO courses. At the same time, we want to emphasize a career path rather than focus solely on entry-level certifications.

The Scrum Alliance should be the place to go for resources, continuing education, and a community of like-minded individuals. We want to be that “next step” that people are looking for after their initial exposure to Scrum.

To this end, we would like to implement the following:

Emphasis on CSP & CSC

- Enhanced Profiles
- Increased exposure
- CSP will be more challenging to attain: proctored exam, prep courses, internationally accredited
- CSP will have two levels in 2011: CSP1 and CSP2
- Publish a ScrumBoK—reading list determined by the board with input from the TCC and CSPs.

More meaningful CSM and CSPO

- Publish Learning objectives for CSM and CSPO courses derived from a shortened version of the CSP ScrumBoK—an essential-reading list.
- Create a more challenging test for CSM and a new test for CSPO (both should be hard to pass if you haven't attended a course) based on those objectives
- Candidate must pass test to receive certification

Continue CSD

No major changes are planned to the CSD. We are continuing to add to our CSD ranks.

Emphasize Journey, Quest, Continuous Improvement

We want our message to be that CSM/CSPO or other introductory courses are just first step. Becoming agile and growing in Scrum is a continuous journey.

We want to use the website to engage people on this journey, offering them opportunities to display and track their progress in continuing education, volunteer activities, community involvement, etc. Everything leads to CSP.

REP and CST Application / Renewal Process

The CST application process is not working well and will be improved by 2011. In essence, trainer candidates would complete an application packet similar to that of a REP. This application would pass through a staff review for completeness before passing to a subsection of an elected committee for initial review. Those that pass the initial review stage would have an in-person interview with a larger cross-section of the full committee. These interviews would be at a set schedule, in conjunction with a Gathering or other large event. Details about that plan are forthcoming.

Overview of Scrum Business Model

The Scrum Alliance is a not-for-profit professional membership organization created to share the Scrum project methodology framework. Our mission is to provide a community for those who seek an effective solution to business problems and to serve as the source of Scrum knowledge for those who want to learn Scrum, those who want to improve their understanding of Scrum, and for those who want to share their education in and experience with Scrum.

Revenue

Scrum's revenue is derived from three primary sources:

Certification Fees: Annual fees charged to instructors who teach the Scrum model. The typical annual fee is \$7,500 per instructor, and the majority of fees are collected in advance. For accounting purposes, these fees are recognized as revenue over the term of the certification period.

Class Revenue: The Scrum Alliance earns a portion of the fees that Scrum-certified instructors charge their classroom participants. The fees are collected and recognized as revenue as the classes are conducted. This is Scrum's largest source of revenue.

Gathering Revenue: The Scrum Alliance collects fees from participants in and sponsors of the organization's various gathering events held at sites around the world. The gatherings provide a forum to support Scrum user groups and promote interactive learning. In 2010, the Scrum Alliance is scheduled to host five such events.

Depending on the location of a particular gathering, revenues may or may not cover direct costs of the event, although the organization attempts to minimize the net excess of costs over revenue. In 2010, for example, the Scrum Alliance budgeted \$600,000 in gathering revenues and \$700,000 in direct gathering expenses.

Interest and Investments: In addition to the primary sources of revenue, Scrum earns interest and dividends on its cash and investments. Because of the low interest rate environment, investment income has been relatively insignificant in recent years.

Expenses

The significant components of Scrum's expense structure are as follows:

Staff Compensation: Scrum has historically retained a staff of contract professionals to oversee the operational and administrative activities of the organization. Staff positions, which change from time to time, have included a Managing Director, as well as positions in marketing, membership, certifications, gatherings/events, user group support, accounting and administration. Historically, staff compensation has represented the largest of the organization's expenses.

Membership Support & Development: The organization incurs costs to maintain and enhance user materials, including information provided through its web site.

Certification and User Group Expenses: Sponsorships and speakers are provided to user groups around the world in support of the Scrum methodology.

Program Development Costs: The Scrum Alliance continually strives to provide the most up to date programs reflecting the issues their members are currently facing. Materials and tools are subject to ongoing development to meet the needs of users.

Gathering Expenses: These are expenses directly associated with the gathering events and typically include costs of the facility, speakers, equipment use and travel.

Merchant Fees: The organization collects the vast majority of its revenue via credit card, using its web site. Fees are paid to the merchant processor for providing the mechanism and licensing to accept credit card payments.

Administrative and Other Expenses: These include legal costs, office expenses, and other costs necessary to run the business.

Excess Revenues over Expenses

Overall, the excess revenue over expenses for certification and class revenue is designed to cover administrative and other operating costs of the business. Historically, the organization's revenues have exceeded expenses, resulting in cash reserves to be applied to future years.

Certifications

Certifications currently offered through the Scrum Alliance are as follows:

Certified Scrum Trainer (CST)

As an ambassador of Scrum, a CST will have a solid understanding of the Scrum framework, a deep understanding of the principles and values that are the foundations of Scrum, and clarity on what belongs to Scrum vs. what is an extension or complement. A CST will also have extensive experience in implementing and/or coaching Scrum within organizations, be active in the wider Scrum community, and have training experience beyond Scrum.

Certified Scrum Master (CSM)

The CSM certificate is granted to those who have taken a CSM course from a Certified Scrum Trainer and who have made the effort to assess their progress through Scrum's online evaluation tool. The certification requires three steps, including becoming familiar with Scrum basics, attending a CSM course and assessing progress through an online CSM evaluation.

Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO)

The CSPO certificate is granted to those who have taken a CSPO course from a Certified Scrum Trainer.

Certified Scrum Developer (CSD)

At least five days of formal training are required to earn a CSD credential. CSD applicants must also demonstrate an understanding of agile engineering practices by taking and passing a five-day CSD assessment program. At least three of the five days must consist of technical CSD training, and at least

one of the five days must be dedicated to the study of Scrum through a CSD-track Intro to Scrum course or CSM/CSPO course.

Certified Scrum Professional (CSPs)

Active CSMs, CSPOs, and CSDs can apply to become Certified Scrum Professionals. Applicants must demonstrate that they have at least one year of actual experience using Scrum on a project, that they know how to apply Scrum concepts, practices, and principles, and that they understand how and why Scrum works. Potential employers can be assured that when someone is a CSP they have taken the initiative to go beyond a foundation-level understanding to achieve a depth of knowledge and experience in the Scrum process.

Certified Scrum Coach

Certified Scrum Coaches (CSCs) are experts in Scrum, both in theory and in practice. They have an in-depth understanding of the practices and principles of Scrum and have real experience on actual Scrum projects. As such, they play a vital role within the Scrum Alliance, bringing Scrum out of the classroom and into your world of work.