

# Large-Scale Scrum (LeSS) Rules

(Bas Vodde, Craig Larman - Oct 2014)

## LeSS Framework Rules

The LeSS framework applies to products with 2-“8” teams.

### LeSS Structure

- Structure the organization using real teams as the basic organizational building block.
- Each team is (1) self-managing, (2) cross-functional, (3) co-located, and (4) long-lived.
- The majority of the teams are customer-focused feature teams.
- ScrumMasters are responsible for a well-working LeSS adoption. Their focus is towards the Teams, Product Owner, organization, and development practices. A ScrumMaster does not focus on just one team but on the overall organizational system.
- A ScrumMaster is a dedicated full-time role.
- One ScrumMaster can serve 1-3 teams.
- In LeSS there is no ‘manager’ role, but managers may exist and they can have a useful role. Their focus is the value-delivering capability of the product development system rather than the specific scope of a product.
- Managers role is to improve the product development system by practicing Go See and Help, encouraging Stop & Fix, and “experiments over conformance”.
- For the product group, establish the complete LeSS structure “at the start”; this is vital for a LeSS adoption.
- For the larger organization beyond the product group, adopt LeSS evolutionary using Go and See to create an organization where experimentation and improvement is the norm.

### LeSS Product

- There is one Product Owner and one Product Backlog for the complete shippable product.
- The Product Owner shouldn’t work alone on Product Backlog refinement; he is supported by the multiple Teams working directly with customers/users and other stakeholders.
- All prioritization goes through the Product Owner, but clarification is as much as possible directly between the Teams and customer/users and other stakeholders.
- One shared Definition of Done for the whole product.
- Each teams can have their own expanded Definition of Done.
- The perfection goal is to improve the Definition of Done so that it results in a shippable product each Sprint (or even more frequently).

## LeSS Sprint

- There is one product-level Sprint, not a different Sprint for each Team. Each Team starts and ends the Sprint at the same time. Each Sprint results in an integrated whole product.
- Sprint Planning consists of two parts: Sprint Planning Part One is common for all teams while Sprint Planning Part Two is usually done separately for each team.
- Sprint Planning Part One is attended by the Product Owner and Team representatives. They together tentatively select the items that each team will work on the next Sprint. The Teams identify opportunities to work together and final questions are clarified.
- Each Team has their own Sprint Backlog.
- Sprint Planning Part Two is for Teams to decide how they will do the selected items. This usually involves design and the creation of their Sprint Backlogs. The Team forecasts how many items they believe they can complete during the next Sprint.
  - *Guidance: For some Teams, do it in a shared space to enhance coordination.*
- Each Team has their own Daily Scrum.
- Cross-team coordination is decided by the teams.
  - *Guidance: Coordination via Open Space, joining other teams' Daily Scrum, Scrum of Scrums, multi-team workshops, or "simply" working in the same space, talking to each other, and using visual management.*
- Product Backlog Refinement (PBR) is done per team for the items they are likely going to do in the future.
  - *Guidance: (1) Hold a Overall PBR with representatives before each team PBR to explore which teams might work on which items, and to increase learning and alignment. (2) Hold a multi-team PBR to increase shared understanding and exploit coordination opportunities.*
- There is one product Sprint Review; it is common for all teams. Ensure that enough stakeholders join to contribute the information needed for effective inspection and adaptation.
  - *Guidance: Use decentralized "diverge-merge" techniques for better feedback and less boring meetings.*
- Each Team has their own Sprint Retrospective.
- A Overall Retrospective is held after the Team Retrospectives to discuss cross-team and system-wide issues, and create improvement experiments. This is attended by Product Owner, ScrumMasters, Team Representatives, and managers (if there are any).
  - *Guidance: Hold it early in the following Sprint, since a Sprint usually ends with team-level Retrospectives.*

# LeSS Huge Framework Rules

LeSS Huge applies to products with “8+” teams. Avoid applying LeSS Huge for smaller product groups as it will result in more overhead and local optimizations.

All LeSS rules apply to LeSS Huge, unless otherwise stated.

## LeSS Huge Structure

- Customer requirements that are strongly related from a customer perspective are grouped in Requirement Areas.
- Each Team specializes in one Requirement Area. Teams are there “long term”; this won’t change each Sprint but Teams will change Requirement Area when others grow in value.
- Each Requirement Area has one Area Product Owner.
- Each Requirement Area has between “4-8” teams. Avoid violating this range.
- LeSS Huge adoptions, including the structural changes, are done with an evolutionary incremental approach.
  - Remember each day: LeSS Huge adoptions take months or years, infinite patience, and sense of humor.

## LeSS Huge Product

- Each Requirement Area has one Area Product Owner.
- One (overall) Product Owner is responsible for product-wide prioritization and deciding which teams work in which Area. He works closely with Area Product Owners.
- Area Product Owners act as Product Owners towards their teams.
- There is one Product Backlog; every item in it belongs to exactly one Requirement Area.
- There is one Area Product Backlog per Requirement Area. This backlog is conceptually a more granular view onto the one Product Backlog.

## LeSS Huge Sprint

- There is one product-level Sprint, not a different Sprint for each Requirement Area. It ends in one integrated whole product.
- All Sprint LeSS rules apply for each Requirement Area.
- The Product Owner and Area Product Owners synchronize frequently. Before Sprint Planning they ensure the Teams work on the most valuable items. After the Sprint Review, they enable product-level adaptations.
- A Overall Review is held per Requirement Area.
  - *Guidance: Hold an additional product-level Overall Review, to inspect key items, and to summarize and synchronize the learnings to enable product-level adaptation.*
- A Overall Retrospective is held per Requirement Area.
  - *Guidance: Hold an additional product-level Overall Retrospective to identify global problems and structural changes, and create improvement experiments.*