
Course Title: Agile Product Development & Scrum for Startups

Duration: 5 Days (approximately 35-40 instructional hours)

Course Goal: To empower founders and early-stage startup teams with the practical skills and mindset to use Agile and Scrum as a rapid learning engine to build products customers actually want, manage uncertainty, and accelerate their path to product-market fit.

Core Focus: Pragmatic application over dogmatic theory. This course emphasizes speed, customer value, and validated learning over process purity. It merges the principles of the Lean Startup with the operational framework of Scrum.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Internalize the Agile and Lean Startup mindsets for rapid iteration and learning.
- Define and relentlessly prioritize a product backlog based on testable hypotheses and customer value.
- Craft a compelling product vision and a strategy for achieving it via a Minimum Viable Product (MVP).
- Write effective user stories that are small, testable, and focused on user needs.
- Implement the core Scrum framework (roles, events, artifacts) in a way that fits a small, fast-moving team.
- Facilitate all five Scrum events: Sprint Planning, Daily Scrum, Sprint Review, and Sprint Retrospective.
- Use the Sprint Review not as a demo, but as a crucial user feedback and validation session.
- Use the Sprint Retrospective as a tool for survival and rapid process improvement.
- Connect Agile metrics (like cycle time) to key startup KPIs (like user engagement and retention).
- Run a complete, simulated "MVP Sprint" from initial idea to a validated product increment.

Target Audience:

- **Startup Founders and Co-founders.**
- **Early-stage Product Managers and Product Owners.**
- **Solo entrepreneurs and small development teams (2-7 people).**
- **Anyone in a startup environment** who needs to understand how to build and iterate on a product quickly and effectively.

Prerequisites:

- A startup idea or an existing early-stage product.
- A strong desire to learn and challenge assumptions.
- **No prior technical or Agile/Scrum experience is required.**

Teaching Methodology:

This is an intense, high-energy, simulation-based workshop.

- **Learn-Build-Measure:** The course itself is structured like a startup. Each day builds upon the last, culminating in a tangible output.
- **Interactive Workshops:** Over 70% of the course is hands-on. Participants will work on their own startup idea (or a provided case study) throughout the week.
- **"MVP Sprint" Simulation:** The capstone of the course is a full-day, end-to-end simulation of a one-week sprint, allowing participants to experience the entire framework in action.
- **Pragmatic Focus:** Theory is always followed by the question: "How would a 3-person startup *actually* do this with no time and no money?"
- **Tools:** Simple, free tools will be used (e.g., Trello/Miro for backlogs, Google Docs for strategy) to reflect a startup's reality.

Materials Provided:

- **The Startup Agile Playbook:** A digital toolkit with templates for:
 - Lean Canvas / Product Vision Board
 - User Persona

- User Story Map
 - Sprint Retrospective Formats
 - A curated list of essential books, blogs, and resources for startup product development.
 - Certificate of Completion.
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Detailed Day-by-Day Curriculum

Day 1: The Startup Mindset - Why We're Here

- **Module 1: The Problem: Building Products Nobody Wants (Approx. 2 hours)**
 - Welcome, intros, and a fast-paced icebreaker.
 - Why most startups fail. The myth of the "visionary founder."
 - Waterfall vs. Agile: Why traditional project management is a death sentence for startups.
 - The Agile Manifesto and Lean Startup Principles as a survival guide.
- **Module 2: Defining Your Vision and Strategy (Approx. 3 hours)**
 - Crafting a clear and compelling Product Vision.
 - The Lean Canvas: A deep dive into deconstructing your idea into testable assumptions.
 - Identifying your riskiest assumptions. What must be true for you to succeed?
 - **Workshop:** Participants fill out a Lean Canvas for their own startup idea.
- **Module 3: Understanding Your Customer (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
 - The importance of getting out of the building.
 - Creating simple, actionable User Personas.
 - The basics of Customer Discovery interviews (without leading the witness).
 - **Workshop:** Draft a proto-persona for your target customer and script three key discovery questions.

Day 2: The Scrum Framework for Startups

- **Module 4: From Idea to Actionable Backlog (Approx. 3 hours)**
 - What is a Product Backlog? It's not a to-do list; it's a list of hypotheses.
 - Techniques for backlog creation: User Story Mapping.
 - Prioritization for Survival: Using frameworks like Value vs. Effort and RICE.
 - **Workshop:** Create a high-level User Story Map for your product's MVP.
- **Module 5: The Scrum Roles (Startup Edition) (Approx. 2 hours)**
 - **The Product Owner:** The Decider. Often the founder. Responsible for the "What" and "Why."
 - **The Scrum Master:** The Facilitator. A hat someone wears, not necessarily a full-time role. Protects the team from distractions.
 - **The Developers:** The Builders. The cross-functional team that makes it happen.
- **Module 6: The Scrum Artifacts (Your Tools) (Approx. 2.5 hours)**
 - The **Product Backlog:** Your strategic roadmap of bets.
 - The **Sprint Backlog:** Your plan for the next 1-2 weeks.
 - The **Product Increment:** The piece of real, working software you build each sprint.

Day 3: Writing Stories & Planning the Sprint

- **Module 7: The Art of the User Story (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
 - "As a [user], I want [to do something], so that [I get some value]."
 - The 3 C's: Card, Conversation, Confirmation.
 - INVEST criteria for good stories.

- Splitting stories: How to break down big ideas into small, testable chunks.
- **User Story Writing Clinic:** An intensive workshop where participants write and get feedback on stories for their MVP.
- **Module 8: Estimation for Speed (Not for Contracts) (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
 - Why we estimate: To force conversation and understand complexity.
 - Relative Estimation: Story Points and T-Shirt Sizes (S, M, L).
 - **Planning Poker® Workshop:** A hands-on simulation to quickly estimate a backlog.

Day 4: Executing and Learning

- **Module 9: The Sprint Events (Part 1 - The "Doing") (Approx. 3 hours)**
 - **Sprint Planning:** Committing to a realistic goal for the sprint.
 - **The Daily Scrum (Stand-up):** The 15-minute daily sync to solve problems. Not a status report.
 - **Role-Playing Lab:** Conduct a simulated Sprint Planning session.
- **Module 10: The Sprint Events (Part 2 - The "Learning") (Approx. 4 hours)**
 - **The Sprint Review:** The most important meeting in a startup. Demo the increment to real users (or stakeholders) and get feedback. It's a learning event, not a presentation.
 - **The Sprint Retrospective:** The team's honest conversation about what worked, what didn't, and what to improve in the next sprint.
 - **Workshop:** Facilitate a Sprint Retrospective using a simple format (e.g., Start, Stop, Continue).

Day 5: The MVP Sprint Simulation

- **This entire day is a single, integrated capstone project.**
- **Objective:** To take a brand new feature idea through a compressed "one-day-is-one-week" sprint.
- **Morning Session: Plan & Build (Approx. 3.5 hours)**
 1. **Sprint Planning:** The instructor provides a high-level feature. The group refines it into user stories, estimates them, and creates a Sprint Backlog on a Trello board.
 2. **"Build" Phase:** Participants will "build" the feature using non-technical tools like Figma or Balsamiq to create a clickable prototype.
- **Afternoon Session: Review & Retrospect (Approx. 4 hours)**
 3. **Sprint Review:** The team "demos" their clickable prototype to another group (acting as users) to gather live, unfiltered feedback.
 4. **Backlog Refinement:** Based on the feedback, the team discusses how they would change the product backlog. Would they pivot? Persevere?
 5. **Sprint Retrospective:** The team conducts a full retrospective on their one-day sprint: How did they work together? What could they do better in the "next sprint"?
- **Course Wrap-up & "What Now?" (Approx. 0.5 hours)**
 - Final Q&A.
 - A simple action plan for implementing this on Monday morning.