

PATTERN 11

Scope Creep



11. Scope Creep

Intuitively, we all know what Scope Creep is — along with its associated risks. Still, there are plenty of different definitions for the issue so here's what we're focusing on:

Scope Creep (noun): a pattern whereby the originally agreed upon scope increases or changes **after implementation has begun**. Often, though not always, Scope Creep happens incrementally and thus invisibly.

Using data to make Scope Creep visible to all parties can help mitigate the risks of unexpected work, and can also be used to combat this pattern moving forward.

Even in the most well-defined projects, out-of-scope tasks arise. As a manager, you need to watch for runaway situations where engineers are being asked to shoulder an unreasonable increase in scope.

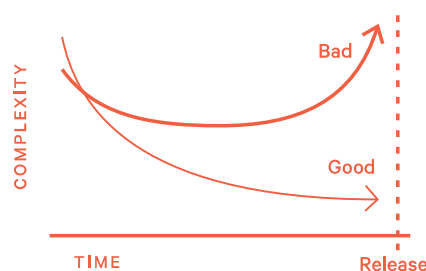
How to recognize it

Scope Creep is characterized by **a sharp uptick in progress toward the back of a sprint that wasn't driven by code review**.

Generally, the problem a team is solving should be getting smaller over time as features are completed. So a sudden spike in activity, particularly in the later stages of a project, tends to be a signal that something new came in.

When you see this occurrence become a pattern sprint over sprint with the same

team, look to the external stakeholders that interface with that team to see what might be causing the issues.



What to do

Use Pluralsight Flow data to show the additional work caused by the scope creep. Scope creep is caused by poor planning and insufficient attention during design. It's not the engineer's responsibility to shoulder the work resulting from bad specs. Call it out! Let the people who are responsible for pushing a poorly designed project into implementation know that it's simply not ok.

Then show them how much additional work their carelessness caused. Show them the data. This more than anything will make the true consequences of scope creep visible and thus actionable.