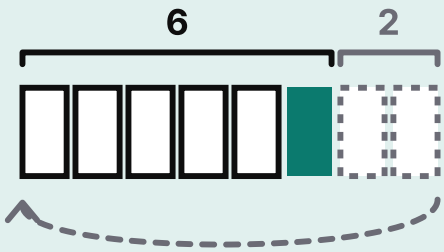
Process

Shape Up

A Basecamp process in six-week cycles with two weeks off: a small group shapes the work, others bet on it, and a team finishes it.



Origin
Ryan Singer, Basecamp (2019)

What it's for

To-do lists keep growing, estimates fail, and projects drag on without anyone deciding whether they are still worth it.

Phases

Shape
A small group leaves the idea solved in broad strokes and bounded, by the time it is worth, not by an estimate.

Bet
During the cool-down, decision makers choose which pitches get built next cycle. There is no backlog.

Build for six weeks
A small team with design and programming makes the whole project and adjusts its scope.

Stop or continue
If it is not done in the cycle, it is not extended automatically. It is stopped and decided again.

How it's done

1 

The idea is shaped with a maximum time, not an estimate.

2 

Bets are placed on some pitches and the rest are dropped.

3 

A team works for six weeks and then there are two weeks off.

Applications in design

When to use it

For a product with a stable team, where it helps to decide what goes in and what stays out of each cycle.

Avoid

Applying it whole without adapting it: it is one company's practice, of a particular size and product.

Don't fall for it

No studies compare it with other methods: what is told is Basecamp's experience.

Connections

Related to

- Agile UX
- Lean UX
- Design sprint

Authors and works

2019	**Ryan Singer**	Wrote the method Basecamp uses to decide what to build and how, and published it as an online book.

Sources

Original sources

- Singer, R. (2019). Shape Up: Stop running in circles and ship work that matters. Basecamp. View source (https://basecamp.com/shape up)

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